UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 16-05-2025

National Consultation on Dissemination and Awareness of POCSO

***Prelims**: Social Development | Social Sector Initiatives*

Why in News?

Recently, an online National Consultation on Dissemination and Awareness of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) CAL (P&R) Act was organised in India.

- **Organised by** - National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).
- **Participation** – Around 300 participants from various Central and State Ministries, State Police Departments, SCPCRs and NGOs.
- **Highlights** – It underscored the pressing need for *coordinated inter-ministerial action* to ensure the effective ***implementation of the POCSO Act, 2012, and the CAL (P&R) Act, 1986***.
- Emphasis was laid on the *establishment of Fast Track Courts* across all States & UTs.
- The importance of *standardizing the format of Medico-Legal Reports (MLRs)* nationwide in POCSO cases was highlighted.
- The integration of the NCPCR's Child Safety Manual into the school curriculum, capacity-building programmes for teachers and *strengthening of School Management Committees (SMCs)* was also stressed.
- The need for ***accessible legal aid for child victims*** and the *timely disbursement of compensation* in accordance with statutory provisions was reiterated.

Quick Facts

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
• **Established in** – 2007, under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. • **Mandate** – To ensure that all laws, policies, programs and administrative systems conform to the vision of the rights of the child as enunciated in the Constitution of India as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO)
• **Enacted in** – 2012 • **Aim** – To protect children aged less than 18 from sexual assault. • It is a *gender-neutral law*. • Definition of a child - A person falling in the *age group of 0 to 18 years*.
Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act

• **Enacted in** – 1986
• **Objectives** – To prohibit the engagement of children in all occupations and to prohibit the engagement of adolescents in hazardous occupations.
• **Definition of a child** - A person who has n*ot completed his 14th year of age* or such age as may be specified in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (35 of 2009), whichever is more.

Reference

PIB| National Consultation on Dissemination and Awareness of POCSO

Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India

***Prelims**: Indian Polity and Governance | Current events of national importance*

Why in News?

Recently, the Bar Council of India (BCI) has released new rules to govern the entry of foreign lawyers and law firms in India.

- **Amended rules** - Rules for Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2022.
- **Coverage**
  - It prescribes the areas these firms are allowed to practice in
  - Registration requirements and the fees they have to pay
  - Disciplinary action they may be subject to for non-compliance
- **Registration fees** – It may be *revised periodically by the BCI* and may be adjusted to reflect the costs imposed on Indian lawyers or firms practicing in the foreign jurisdiction.
- **Working jurisdiction** – Foreign lawyers and firms can practice law in India ***in non-litigious matters only***.
- They are strictly ***prohibited from appearing before Indian courts***, *tribunals* or other statutory or regulatory authorities unless explicitly permitted by the BCI.

Permitted Areas of Practice
• Engaging in *corporate legal matters.* • Representing clients in both *institutional and ad hoc international arbitration cases* conducted in India. • Providing legal advice and opinions concerning the laws of their country of primary qualification, international law, and the foreign laws of other jurisdictions. • Providing legal expertise and advice, and appearing as a lawyer for entities having a principal office or address in the foreign country of their primary qualification or any other foreign country
Barred Areas
• Conveyancing of property, title investigation, or similar work. • *Drafting, preparing, or filing documents* for proceedings before Indian courts, tribunals, or other authorities.

- They *can open offices in India* subject to informing the BCI of the particulars of such offices.
- They may *engage Indian advocates* registered as foreign lawyers and/or Indian-Foreign law firms and who were enrolled under the Advocates Act for advice on Indian law.
- *Indian lawyers or firms may enter into partnerships* with foreign lawyers or law firms only if they are registered under these Rules.
- Indian lawyers may work as employees, consultants, or advisors in law firms abroad without requiring registration under these Rules.
- **Disciplinary action** - Foreign lawyers and firms "shall normally be subject to the same ethical and practice standards laid down ***under the Advocates Act, 1961***".

Quick Facts

Bar Council of India
• It is a *statutory body* under Advocates Act, 1961 to regulate and represent the Indian Bar. • **Composition** – It consists of Members elected from each state bar council, Attorney General of India (ex-officio member) and Solicitor General of India (ex-officio members) • It *elects its own chairman and vice-chairman* for a period of 2 years from among its members. • **Functions** – It *prescribes standards* of professional conduct and exercises disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar and sets standards for legal education and grants *recognition to law universities*. • It protects the *rights, privileges of advocates* and also provides financial assistance to organise welfare schemes.

Reference

Bar and Bench| New Rules for Regulating Foreign Law Firms & Lawyers

Climate Change and Pregnancy Complications Study

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance| General issues on Environmental ecology*

Why in news?

A recent report from the US-based research group Climate Central reveals that climate change increases the heat exposure for pregnant women worldwide and leads to health risks.

- The report examined data from 247 countries and territories that focused on measuring increased heat exposure for pregnant women since 2020.

Key Findings of the Study

- A report reveals that climate change has significantly increased exposure to dangerous heat levels during pregnancy.

- **Pregnancy heat-risk days** – In 222 out of 247 countries climate change has ***at least doubled the average annual number*** of "pregnancy heat-risk days" over the past five years.
- **Impact on developing countries** – Developing countries with limited healthcare access showed the largest increases in heat exposure.
- Most affected regions include the Caribbean, Central and South America, Pacific islands, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Implications

- **Public health risk** – Pregnant women are increasingly vulnerable to heat-induced complications, posing a growing maternal and fetal health crisis, especially in under-resourced regions.
- Heat-related pregnancy complications are,
    - Premature birth
    - Stillbirth
    - Birth defects
    - Gestational diabetes
- **Policy urgency** – Beyond tackling climate change at a global level, there is a need for local adaptation strategies, such as:
    - Urban greening
    - Pollution control
    - Creation of cooling zones
    - Public advisories specifically targeting pregnant women
- **Research gaps** – There is a limited understanding of the physiological mechanisms behind heat-related pregnancy risks, underscoring the need for further scientific studies.
- **Health communication** – Heatwave warnings and health advisories must include pregnant women as a high-risk group, which is currently rarely done.

Reference

The Hindu| Climate change increasing risk of pregnancy problems

SAMRIDH Scheme

Prelims*: Current events of national and international importance| Economic and Social Development.*

Why in news?

Recently Delhi police arrested two persons who exploited the SAMRIDH scheme by making false representations to obtain government funds.

- **SAMRIDH** - Start-up Accelerator of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development, and

Growth.

- **Goal** - It aims to support ***IT based start-ups*** through accelerator to scale for solving India's problems creating positive social impact.
- A start-up accelerator is a mentor-based program that provides guidance, support and limited funding in exchange for equity.

Incubators focus more on the longevity of a start-up and are less concerned with how quickly the company grows but accelerators focus on ***rapid growth,*** *have fixed timeframes, and help start-ups attract investment and scale their operations.*

- **Nodal ministry** – Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY)
- **Implementing agency** – MeitY Start-up Hub (MSH)

As per the research by MIT Sloan, around 50% of the Start-ups fail by 4th year of their inception.

Key Features

- **Bridging the funding gap** – It address the gap between prototype stage and commercialization.
- Once a Start-up gains traction, there is a gap in accessing the growth stage funding to scale up the operations.
- **Funding support and fiscal incentives** - Equal matching investment by accelerator/investor up to ₹40 lakh government investment per start-up.
- **Support for proven concepts –** It provides start-ups which already have brilliant solutions and proof of concept for their product, better facilities to enhance their product using innovative technologies for the market with a solid business plan.
- **Accelerator support system –** It supports existing and upcoming Accelerators to select and accelerate potential IT based start-ups to scale for solving India's problems creating positive social impact.
- **Platform for growth –** It provides start-ups with a platform to enhance their products and secure investments for scaling their business.

Reference

1. MeitY| SAMRIDH
2. The Hindustan Times| Two cheat MeitY using SAMRIDH scheme

The Centralised Information Management System (CIMS)

Prelims*: Current events of national and international importance| Economic and Social Development | Governance*

Why in news?

Recently RBI has mandated all Regulated Entities (REs) to report details of their Digital Lending Apps (DLAs) through RBI's Centralised Information Management System (CIMS) portal.

- **The Centralised Information Management System (CIMS)** – It is a portal designed to collect and manage information about digital lending applications in India.
- **Developed by** – ***Reserve Bank of India (RBI)***
- **Key features of CIMS –** It serves as the official reporting platform for Regulated Entities (REs) like banks, NBFC to submit details about their Digital Lending Apps (DLAs).
- It collects standardized information about digital lending applications operating in the Indian financial ecosystem.
- It acts as the ***central database*** that will power the public directory of legitimate lending apps.
- The RBI will publish this public directory of DLAs by July 1 on its website.
- The database will update automatically whenever REs adds or remove apps from their submissions.

Significance

- To create ***enhanced transparency for borrowers*** in the digital lending sector.
- To establish a *verification system for borrowers* to identify legitimate lending apps.
- To support RBI's broader regulatory framework for digital lending.
- It will help RBI by improved communication with banks and other regulated companies.
- To bring greater oversight and accountability to the rapidly growing digital lending space in India.

Reference

CNBCTV18| The Centralised Information Management System (CIMS)

One Liners 16-03-2025
History, Art and Culture

Ayurveda Day: September 23rd

Government of India has declared September 23rd as the annual Ayurveda Day, commencing in 2025.

• **Significance of the Date -** September 23rd aligns with the autumnal equinox, symbolizing nature's balance, mirroring Ayurveda's principle of equilibrium in body, mind, and spirit.

• **Understanding Ayurveda -** Derived from 'Ayu' (life) and 'Veda' (knowledge), Ayurveda, the "science of life," encompasses human, animal, and plant health, promoting positive health and spiritual growth.

• **Structure and Practice -** Ayurveda integrates preventive measures like hygiene and lifestyle with curative therapies including herbal remedies and personalized treatments based on individual constitution and imbalances.

• **Formal Recognition -** The Indian Medical Council Act of 1971 formally recognizes Ayurveda, ensuring standardization and regulation within the Indian medical systems.

• **Core Principles -** Based on the tridosha theory (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), seven body tissues (dhatus), and waste products (malas), Ayurveda defines health as their balanced state, treating the root cause of imbalances.

Geography

Mearim River's Tidal Bore

A Brazilian surfer recently used the Mearim River's powerful tidal bore, known as "pororoca," to highlight climate change and ecological issues.

• **Mearim River -** Located in Maranhão, northern Brazil, this ~800 km river originates in the south and flows north into the Baía de São Marcos, forming an estuary with other rivers.

• **River Characteristics -** Its upper and middle sections feature rapids, hindering navigation, while only the lower course is navigable. It borders a vital biodiversity hotspot.

• **The "Pororoca" Phenomenon -** The Mearim is renowned for its "pororoca," a tidal bore where high ocean tides surge upstream, creating a "great roar" from the water collision.

• **Understanding Tidal Bores -** A tidal bore is a surge of water caused by rising ocean tides pushing against river currents, typically during spring tides and supermoons, lasting around 30 minutes.

• **Significance of Mearim's Bore -** The Mearim's pororoca is a significant remaining tidal bore in Brazil, attracting surfers and researchers alike.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) Establishes Srinagar Office

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has opened a new office in Srinagar to boost river navigation infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir.

• **Focus on National Waterways** - The initiative targets development in three national waterways within the Union Territory: NW-26 (Chenab), NW-49 (Jhelum), and NW-84 (Ravi).

• **About the IWAI**- IWAI is a statutory body established in 1986 under the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act.

• **Parent Ministry**- The IWAI operates under the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.

• **Core Functions-** Its primary function involves undertaking projects for the development, maintenance, and regulation of Inland Water Transport (IWT) infrastructure on national waterways.

• **Boosting River Navigation** - The new Srinagar office signifies IWAI's commitment to expanding and improving river navigation capabilities in the region.

Himachal Notifies Tsarap Chu Reserve

The Himachal Pradesh government has notified the Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve in Spiti Valley, now India's largest.

• **Location of Tsarap Chu** - Situated at the confluence of the Unam River and Charap Nala in the Spiti Valley region.
• **Geographical Boundaries** - The reserve is bordered by Ladakh to the north, Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary to the east, Kabjima Nala to the south, and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary to the west.
• **Key Wildlife: Snow Leopard** - Tsarap Chu is particularly renowned as a habitat for the elusive snow leopard, often referred to as the 'ghost of the mountains'.
• **Other Notable Species** - The reserve is also home to the Tibetan wolf, bharal (blue sheep), Himalayan ibex, kiang (wild ass), Tibetan argali, and various rare bird species like the Rose Finch.
• **Conservation Significance** - This notification underscores Himachal Pradesh's commitment to preserving the unique biodiversity of the Spiti Valley, especially its endangered high-altitude fauna.

Polity & Governance

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Offshore Bond Plans

NaBFID recently held non-deal investor meetings in Hongkong to prepare for its inaugural offshore bond issuance.
• **Genesis of NaBFID -** Established in 2021 through an Act of Parliament (NaBFID Act, 2021).
• **Core Objective -** A specialized Development Finance Institution focused on bridging long-term non-recourse finance gaps in infrastructure.
• **Market Development Role -** NaBFID also aims to strengthen the development of India's bonds and derivatives markets.
• **Regulatory Oversight -** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulates and supervises NaBFID as an All India Financial Institution (AIFI) under the RBI Act, 1934.
• **Offshore Bond Preparation -** The Hongkong meetings signify a crucial step towards NaBFID's first venture into the offshore bond market.

International Relations and Issues

International Day of Families

Observed annually on May 15th, this UN-established day in 1994 highlights the family's central role in society and promotes its well-being.
• **Historical Roots -** The UN General Assembly recognized family stability in the late 1980s, leading to resolutions in 1989 and 1991 acknowledging evolving challenges and the need for support.
• **Global Significance -** The day raises awareness about hardships families face, emphasizing their role in values, support, and identity development for stronger communities.
• **Heartfelt Wishes -** Common messages convey love, warmth, togetherness, and enduring happiness within family bonds.
• **Inspirational Insights -** Quotes from figures like Louis Zamperini and Mother Teresa underscore the unique love, support, and irreplaceable nature of family.
• **Celebrating Diversity -** The day promotes respect for all family structures and cultural traditions, advocating for inclusive support to ensure every family can thrive.

Security

Anti-Terror Operations Intensified in J&K

May 2025, Indian security forces executed significant anti-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir, responding to recent attacks with strong resolve.

• **Operation Nader Underway -** Launched on May 15, 2025, in Tral, Awantipora, a joint operation by the Army, J&K Police, and CRPF encountered terrorists. A gunfight ensued following suspicious movement; the operation is ongoing.

• **Shopian Encounter Success -** On May 13, 2025, a joint operation in Shopian's Keller Forest resulted in the killing of three terrorists, including a local commander of LeT/TRF.

• **Joint Forces Involved -** These operations saw the coordinated efforts of the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

• **Significant Recoveries -** Following the Shopian encounter, security forces recovered AK-series rifles, substantial ammunition, grenades, and other war-like materials.

• **Firm Stance Against Terrorism -** These actions underscore India's determined approach to counter terrorism in the region based on specific intelligence inputs.

Shahid Kuttay Neutralized in Operation Keller

Indian Army successfully neutralized Shahid Kuttay, TRF chief and Pahalgam attack mastermind, in Operation Keller, Shopian, Jammu & Kashmir.

• **Operation Keller Details -** Launched on May 13, 2025, in Shoekal Keller, Shopian, this search and destroy mission was based on Rashtriya Rifles intelligence.

• **Joint Forces Involved -** The operation was a coordinated effort by the Indian Army, Jammu & Kashmir Police, and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

• **Operation Objectives -** The primary goals were to neutralize TRF terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack and eliminate Shahid Kuttay to prevent further threats.

• **About Shopian District -** Located in southern Kashmir Valley, Shopian, granted district status in 2007, is bordered by several districts and the Pir Panjal mountains.

• **Shopian's Significance -** Historically a trade route on the Mughal Road, Shopian's economy is mainly driven by apple orchards and agriculture. Its name's origin is debated.

Pakistan's Troop Buildup Near Shakargarh

the recent, Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan has increased its military presence, including troops, tanks, and artillery, near the Shakargarh Bulge, raising alertness on India's western border.

• **Shakargarh Bulge -** This protruding landmass in Pakistan's Sialkot district, bordered by the Ravi and Chenab rivers, offers Pakistan strategic depth for offensive operations due to its flat terrain and access to infrastructure.

• **Strategic Importance -** For India, protecting the Jammu-Pathankot axis was crucial for maintaining connectivity with Jammu & Kashmir. For Pakistan, capturing it could have isolated Indian forces in Kashmir.

• **Battle of Basantar Context -** The Shakargarh Bulge was the site of the Battle of Basantar during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, a major tank battle.

• **Battle of Basantar (1971) -** Fought from December 4-16, 1971, around the Basantar River in the Shakargarh Bulge, India preempted a Pakistani offensive, protecting northern supply lines.

• **Battle Outcomes -** Indian forces, using tactics like night operations and air-land coordination, destroyed over 60 Pakistani Patton tanks, enhancing India's negotiation position and preventing a strategic thrust into J&K.

Miscellaneous

Neeraj Chopra Honored with Lieutenant Colonel Rank

The Ministry of Defence announced on May 13, 2025, the conferment of the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army upon Ex-Subedar Major Neeraj Chopra.

Celebrated Javelin Thrower - Born in Khandra village, Panipat, Haryana, Neeraj Chopra is a distinguished athlete. He secured a Gold Medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, a Silver Medal at the Paris Olympics 2024, and became World Champion in 2023

• **The Territorial Army (TA**) - Is a part-time volunteer reserve force supporting India's regular army in national security and essential services.

• **Establishment and History** - Inaugurated on October 9, 1949, by Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Territorial Army Day commemorates its founding, evolving from earlier volunteer forces.

• **Core Roles** - The TA primarily relieves the regular army from static duties and aids civil administration during disasters and essential service disruptions.

• **Structure and Personnel** - Composed of officers and other ranks equivalent to the regular army, it includes departmental and non-departmental units of employed civilians.

• **Volunteer Nature** - The TA is a volunteer force of working citizens who undergo military training to serve the nation when needed.

• **Key Functions -** Its functions encompass war support, disaster relief, and maintaining essential services, demonstrating civil-military cooperation.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
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