UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 19-04-2025

Dawoodi Bohra Community

Prelims – *Current events of National Importance | History of India.*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian Heritage and Culture.*

Why in News?

A delegation from the Dawoodi Bohra community met Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently to express their gratitude for the recently enacted Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

- The Dawoodi Bohras are a religious denomination within the ***Ismaili branch of Shia Islam.***
- **Key populations -** They are primarily from West India, with members settled in over 40 countries worldwide.
- **Heritage -** The community traces its heritage to the Fatimid Imams, direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, in Egypt.
- **Leader-** Throughout the world they are guided by their leader known as the ***al-dai al-mutlaq (unrestricted missionary),*** who first operated from Yemen and then, for the last 450 years, from India.
    - The present leader is the 53rd al-Dai al-Mutlaq, His Holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin.
- **Occupation -** They are generally highly educated, mostly self-reliant, typically traders, businesspersons, and entrepreneurs.
- **Faith** - The foundation of their faith is based on peace, love and humanity.
- **School of Thought –** They follow the Fatimi Ismaili Tayyibi school of thought.
- Their faith is based on the belief in one deity, Allah Ta'ala, in the Holy Quran as the word of Allah and in the sacred mission of the Prophets and their successors.
- **Language - *Lisan al-Dawat***, a distinct language commonly known in the community as dawat ni zaban.
- **Power to excommunicate -** The members of the Dawoodi Bohra community acknowledge their leader's authority to excommunicate individuals from the community.
    - Excommunication entails being barred from entering the community's mosque or accessing its designated burial sites.

Female genital mutilation (Khatna)

• Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures ***that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia***, or other injury to the female genital organs ***for non-medical reasons.***
• It has no health benefits for girls and women.
• It can result in severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, menstrual difficulties, infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.
• FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between ***infancy and age 15.***
• FGM is a *violation of the human rights of girls and women*.
• The reasons for following this practice vary from one region to another as well as over time and include a mix of sociocultural factors within families and communities.
• In India it is predominantly ***followed by the Bohra community.***
• More than 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where FGM is practiced.
• **UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** collaboratively spearhead the largest global initiative in 2008, aimed at ***eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM).***
- It works alongside communities to educate them about the detrimental effects of FGM and to promote a change in social norms that encourages collective abandonment of the practice.

References

1. PIB | Dawoodi Bohras
2. Times of India | Dawoodi Bohras

MacGregor Memorial Medals

Prelims – *Current events of National Importance.*

Why in News?

Five military personnel were recently conferred the MacGregor Memorial Medal by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.

- **Instituted on -** July 03, 1888.
- The medal commemorates Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, founder of USI (established in 1870).
- **Aim -** Originally intended to recognize the acts of military reconnaissance and exploratory journeys.
- The medal's scope was expanded in 1986, post-Independence, to include military expeditions and adventure activities.
- **Eligibility -** The medal is ***available to individuals of all ranks***, both active and retired, from the *Indian Armed Forces, Territorial Army, and Assam Rifles.*
- **Recent Awardees - Awardees for 2023** - Wing Commander D. Panda from the Air Force and Electrical Artificer (Radio) Rahul Kumar Pandey from the Navy.

- **Awardees for 2024** - Chief Electrical Aircraft Artificer (Radio) Ram Ratan Jat of the Navy and Sergeant Jhumar Ram Poonia from the Air Force were honoured with the medal.
- Colonel Ranvir Singh Jamwal, Director of the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports in Arunachal Pradesh, was also awarded.
- The event also featured the launch of the book ***Bravest of the Brave***, inspirational chronicle on the life and heroic journey of Naib Subedar Chunni Lal, AC, VrC, SM, by the Chief of Defence Staff.

United Service Institution of India (USI)
• It is a ***national security and defense services think tank*** based in New Delhi, India. • **Founded in** - Simla in 1870 by Col. (later Maj Gen) Charles Metcalf MacGregor. • **Aim -** Established to advance military knowledge and professional development among British Indian Army officers. • Its mission encompassed promoting knowledge in the art, science, and literature of national security, with a particular focus on the Defence Services. • It focuses on national security, defense, and military affairs, providing a platform for research, debate, and the advancement of knowledge in these areas.

References

1. PIB | MacGregor Memorial Medal Award
2. The Hindu | MacGregor memorial medals

Old Rock Art Sites in Mizoram

Prelims – *Current events of National Importance | History of India.*

Mains (GS I) – *Indian Heritage and Culture.*

Why in News?

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has announced the discovery of 4 centuries-old rock art sites in Mizoram, estimated to date between the 16th and 19th centuries.

- **Survey conducted areas -** Champhai, Khawzawl, Saitual, and Serchhip districts.
- **Findings -** In Maite village, a rock cliff features a prominent human figure surrounded by smaller human figures, animals, gongs, a row of mithun heads, and some unidentified symbols.



- The ***mithun (Bos frontalis)*** is a semi-domesticated bovine found in the region.
- Carvings found at Lianpui in Champhai district include a prominent human figure, stacked rows of human figures, animals, fish, spears, dao (a type of machete), hornbills, and rectangular chambers.



- In Khawzawl district, findings at Tualte included etched mithun heads, human figures, grooved marks, and rectangular figurines on a vast rock surface.
- At Chhawrtu, also in Khawzawl, carvings comprised a unique combination of human figures, mithun heads, rows of human heads, a *circular figurine with tendril-like lines*, and a fish motif, all intricately carved.
- These discoveries highlighted the rich cultural heritage of Mizoram and the artistic expression of its ancient inhabitants.
- **Vangchhia site -** The recently identified rock art sites, recommended for preservation, are situated in the area around Vangchhia in the Champhai district.
- In January 2016, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recognized Vangchhia as a location with indications of a substantial settlement, possibly linked to a "lost civilization" from the Neolithic Era, and referred to it as a ***"living history museum."***

- The Vangchhia site, covering about 45 square kilometres yielded pictographs etched on large stone slabs, *menhirs (large standing stones), a necropolis (a large burial ground),* and other relics.
- Particularly noteworthy were a structure identified as a *water pavilion and numerous strategically drilled holes*, ranging from less than one foot to one metre in diameter, found in sandstones across several hill slopes.
- Archaeologists developed theories behind the seemingly simple science of water harvesting techniques employed at Vangchhia, likely capable of sustaining local populations for at least a year.
- They noted how inhabitants appeared to have trapped rainwater flowing down slopes by utilizing natural fissures and veins in the rocks, enhanced by the drilled holes.
- Researchers suggested this natural adaptation might have obviated the need for constructing large water tanks, despite the apparent capability to do so.
- Among the theories proposed for the *drilled holes were denying enemies easy access to water sources*, luring animals for hunting, and possible ritualistic practices.
- However, all theories converged on the primary function of efficient water harvesting.

Reference

The Hindu | old rock art sites in Mizoram

Fixed-dose combination drugs (FDCs)

Prelims – *General Science| Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS II) – *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.*

Why in news?

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has recently prohibited the manufacture, sale, and distribution of 35 FDCs that were authorized by drug regulators across all States and Union Territories, citing the lack of prior safety and efficacy assessments.

- **Fixed-dose combination drugs –** FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of *two or more Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)* in a fixed ratio.

  ***Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)** is the biologically active component of a drug product (tablet, capsule, cream, injectable) that produces the intended effects.*

- FDC drugs are widely used in the treatment of tuberculosis, Diabetes and as painkillers and nutrition supplements.
- **Advantages of FDC drugs**
  - Increased patient acceptance

    - Increased health worker compliance
    - Easier drug management
    - Lower risk of misuse of single drugs
    - Lower risk of emergence of drug resistance
- **Regulation of FDC** – In India FDC are regulated by CDSCO as per the provision of NDCT (New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules) Rules 2019 under the ***Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940.***
- As per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, ***FDCs that Combined for the first time in a fixed ratio are classifies as New Drugs*** and it requires evaluation of safety and efficacy by CDSCO.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)
• **CDSCO** - The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) is India's national regulatory body for ***pharmaceuticals and medical devices*** under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 • **Headed by –** Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) • It functions under the *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare*. • **Zonal Offices** - CDSCO has 6 zonal offices of at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Ghaziabad, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad. • **Functions -** CDSCO is responsible for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the ***Drugs and Cosmetics Act - 1945***. - Approval of new drugs and novel drug formulations including Fixed-Dose Combinations (FDCs) - Oversight of clinical trials conducted in India. - Quality control of imported drugs and medical devices. - Coordination with State Drug Control Organizations to ensure uniform enforcement of regulations.

References

1. The Hindu| Govt bans 35 fixed-dose combination drugs
2. CDSCO| Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation

Registration of Births and Deaths in India

Prelims (GS I) – *Economic and social development | Demography.*

Mains (GS I) – *Population and associated issues.*

Why in news?

Recently, the Registrar General of India (RGI), under the Union Home Ministry, issued directions to private and government hospitals to report incidents of births and deaths within 21 days.

- **Registration of Birth and death** –The Civil Registration System (CRS) in India, as the birth and death registration system, is a framework for recording vital

events—births, deaths, and stillbirths.

Stillbirth is when a baby dies before she or he is born, after 28 weeks of pregnancy.

- CRS falls under the *Concurrent list* of the Constitution of India.
- **Registrar** – Government hospitals have been entrusted with the responsibility of functioning as registrar.
- Private hospitals are supposed to report the events in their jurisdiction to the registrar.
- **Legal provision** – Registration of Birth and Death (RBD) Act, 1969 mandates registration of all births and deaths.
- As per Section 23(2) of the RBD Act, negligence by the registrar in registering any birth or death is punishable with a fine.
- **BDR 2023 amendment** – It mandated all births and deaths in the country are to be digitally registered through the Civil Registration System portal.
- It also mandates RGI to maintain a database at the national level and it is obligatory that Chief Registrars and Registrars share the information with the Centre.
- **Current status of registration** – Approximately 10% of births and deaths remain unregistered in India despite legal requirements.
- 90% of birth or death events are getting registered which marks significant improvement from 2011, the registration levels were 82.4% for births and 66.4% for deaths.

National Population Register (NPR)
• The NPR is a comprehensive database of residents in India, serving as a foundation for identity management and policy planning. • It is also the first step toward creating the National Register of Citizens (NRC), as ***mandated by the Citizenship Act, 1955.*** • First compiled in 2010, Updated in 2015. • Current database covers 119 crore residents. • **Current Status –** The NPR update is on hold, as it is designed to occur simultaneously with the first phase of the Census. • The Census, originally scheduled for 2021, has been indefinitely delayed due to logistical challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and other administrative issues.

Reference

The Hindu| Registration of Births and deaths in India

One Liners 19-04-2025
Geography

Red Sea

Recently, Environmental advocates are expressing serious concerns over Egypt's plans for extensive tourism development at Ras Hankorab Beach, which is a part of the Red Sea.

• **Red Sea** – It is a *semi-enclosed tropical sea*, an extension of the Indian Ocean and spans approximately 1,930 km from the *Suez Canal to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait*.
• **Border by – 6 countries** – Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti.
• **Geographical connections** – It connects the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal and the Arabian Sea via the Gulf of Aden.
• **Geological formation** – It was formed by the *separation of the African and Arabian tectonic plates*, a process that continues today, widening the sea by about 15 mm annually.
• **Marine Ecosystem** – It harbors climate change-resistant coral reefs, crucial for global marine biodiversity and provides habitat for endangered species like hawksbill turtles and dugongs.
• **Environmental threats** – Over-tourism, coastal development, oil spills, and the increasing risk of coral bleaching due to rising sea temperatures.

China Restricts Rare Earth Elements (REEs) Exports

Recently, China has imposed new export restrictions on 7 critical Rare Earth Elements (REEs).

• **REEs** – They are a set of *17 metallic elements* possessing *similar chemical characteristics* and a silvery appearance and it encompasses the lanthanides along with scandium and yttrium.
• **7 restricted REEs –** Samarium, Gadolinium, Terbium, Dysprosium, Lutetium, Scandium, and Yttrium.
• **Vital properties and applications** – It exhibits exceptional magnetic and optical properties, making them indispensable in manufacturing magnets for electric vehicles and wind turbines, as well as digital displays, defense systems, smartphones, and lasers.
• **Reasons for restrictions –** China cites national security, adherence to international obligations, and non-proliferation concerns as the reasons behind these export limitations.

• **Global implications –** These restrictions are anticipated to create significant disruptions across global industries, underscoring the pressing need for supply chain diversification.

Social Issues

Adarsh Sanskrit Village Program

The Uttarakhand cabinet recently approved the Adarsh Sanskrit village program.

• **Aim** – To *teach the language to one village* in each district of the hill state.
• To promote Sanskrit, which is the state's second official language, and follows other comparable programs, including financial support for girls and SC/ST students who choose to study Sanskrit in schools.
• The Village are selected on *pilot basis*.

Selected Villages & its Districts	
Bhogpur – Dehradun	Urg – Pithoragarh
Mukhem – Tehri	Pandeykota – Almora
Kotgaon – Uttarkashi	Seri – Bageshwar
Baiji – Rudraprayag	Khark Karki – Champawat
Dimmar – Chamoli	Nurpur – Haridwar
Goda – Pauri	Pandeygaon – Nainital
Nagla Terai – Udham Singh Nagar	

Polity & Governance

Chief Justice of India (CJI)

Recently, Justice B.R. Gavai has been recommended as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI), following the established seniority practice.

• **Appointment by** – The *President under Article 124(2)* of the Constitution.
• **Recommended by** – The outgoing CJI recommends their successor based on seniority.
• The Union Law Minister forwards the recommendation to the Prime Minister, who then advises the President.
• **Related case** – As per the *Second Judges Case (1993)*, the senior-most Supreme Court judge is appointed as the CJI.

Economy

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), recently commemorated its 150th anniversary on April 17, 2025, in Mumbai.

• **BSE Ltd** – It is the *Asia's oldest stock exchange*, stands as a primary Indian platform for trading equities, debt instruments, mutual funds, derivatives, and commodities.
• **Evolution** – In 1874, trading operations moved to Dalal Street, leading to the formal establishment of the exchange.
• **Established in** – *1875*, by cotton merchant Premchand Roychand.
• It was initially known as the *Native Share & Stock Brokers' Association*.
• BSE holds the distinction of being the ***1st exchange*** recognized under the *Securities Contract Regulation Act, 1956*.

Agriculture

AQUASTAT

Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) marked the 30th anniversary of AQUASTAT and the celebration included the launch of the enhanced AQUASTAT Dissemination Platform.

• **Launched in** – *1990s* by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Land and Water Division.
• It is a FAO's comprehensive global database on *water resources and agricultural water management* and offers open access to over 180 variables across numerous countries.
• **Objectives** – To monitor *global water use and irrigation practices*.
• It plays a vital role in tracking Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.4, focusing on water use efficiency and water stress levels.
• **AQUASTAT Dissemination Platform** – Aimed at improving access to crucial global water information in line with SDG 6.
• **Features** – To offer extensive data coverage on water resources, irrigation infrastructure, and efficiency indicators.
• To boast interactive maps, multilingual options, CSV/Excel download capabilities, and sophisticated search functionalities.

IISR Surya

Recently, Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode, has unveiled IISR Surya, to addresses the requirements of the modern turmeric powdering industry.

• It is a *new light-coloured turmeric variety* tailored for the masala industry's specific needs.

• **High yield** – It is a high-yielding variety, offering a 20% to 30% increase in yield compared to existing local light-coloured varieties, potentially reaching up to 41 tonnes per hectare.

• **Curcumin content** – It ranges from 2% to 3%, which is comparable to other light-coloured turmeric varieties currently available.

• It directly addresses the requirements of the modern turmeric powdering industry, which often prefers a lighter hue.

• **Significance** – It benefits farmers specializing in high-quality turmeric powder production and help alleviate the shortage in both domestic and export markets.

Environment

Colossal Squid

Recently, a juvenile colossal squid was filmed alive for the first time in over a century. This historic sighting occurred at a depth of 600 meters in its natural Southern Ocean habitat.

• **Scientific name** – Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni.

• **Classification** – Belonging to the Cephalopoda class, which also includes octopuses and cuttlefish.

• It is the *planet's largest known invertebrate*, a formidable deep-sea predator seldom seen alive.

• It possesses the *largest eyes in the animal kingdom*.

• **Habitat** – Deep waters of the Southern Ocean, particularly surrounding Antarctica.

• **Size & weight –** Reaches up to 14 meters in length and weighing as much as 500 kilograms.

• **Diet** – Feed mainly of large fish like the Patagonian toothfish and other squids.

• **Conservation status**:

- IUCN – *Least concern*.

Cheetah Relocation

Recently, the Cheetah Project Steering Committee, formed by the NTCA in May 2023, has approved relocating cheetahs from Kuno National Park to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, approximately 300 km apart.

• **Aim** – To establish a *meta-population of 60–70 cheetahs* across a connected landscape spanning Kuno-Gandhi Sagar and parts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

• **Project Cheetah** – Launched in *2022*, involved translocating 8 cheetahs from Namibia and 12 from South Africa to Kuno National Park.

• **Kuno mortality** – So far, Kuno National Park has witnessed the death of 8 adult cheetahs and 5 cubs since the project's inception.

• **Concerns and challenges** – The decision comes amid concerns regarding prey availability in the new sanctuary, potential heat stress during transportation, and possible conflict with existing leopard populations.

Miscellaneous

National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)

Recently, the NADA India organized a conference on "Building Together a Clean Sport Ecosystem" in New Delhi as part of Play True Week 2025, uniting various stakeholders.

• **Established in** – *2005*, by the Indian Government as an *independent anti-doping organization*.

• **Aim** – To *dope-free sports in India*.

• **Functions** – To implement the Anti-Doping Code, coordinating dope testing programs with stakeholders, promoting anti-doping research and education, and adopting best practices for continuous program improvement.

• **Building Together a Clean Sport Ecosystem** – The event emphasized fostering a clean, fair, and values-based sporting environment in India.

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