UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 24-05-2025

SPICED Scheme

***Prelims**: Public policy| Government Initiatives | Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in news?

The Spices Board recently unveiled the Sustainability in Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative, and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED) scheme for FY 2025–26.

- **Nodal Agency**- Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Aims to** - Boost the productivity of small and large cardamom, enhance post-harvest quality, and encourage the production and export of value-added, GI-tagged, and organic spices.
- It also focuses on ensuring compliance with global food safety standards and strengthening stakeholder capacity across the value chain.
- It also offers financial assistance across various components to enhance sustainability, foster innovation, and promote export development in the Indian spices sector.
- **Farm-Level Support -** The scheme supports replanting and rejuvenation of cardamom, water resource development, micro-irrigation, organic farming, and Good agricultural practices (GAP).
- **Financial assistance -** Is provided for improved post-harvest infrastructure, including modern dryers, slicers, dehullers, and grading machines, guaranteeing superior product quality.
- **Farmers & Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** - Can also procure essential machines like spice polishers and turmeric boilers.
- **Entrepreneurship -** SPICED supports the creation of Spice Incubation Centres, fostering entrepreneurship and product development for startups and MSMEs.
- **Enhancing** - Market access and branding for Indian spices.
- **Capacity Building -** Through training and extension services, the scheme empowers spice farmers, SHGs, and FPOs with the latest technical know-how, best practices, and crucial market intelligence, improving their overall capabilities.
- **Export Promotion -** The scheme assists in participating in international trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, and other market linkage programs.
- The scheme aids in export development and promotion by assisting first-time exporters and small businesses in participating in international trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, and market linkage programs, enabling them to showcase Indian spices globally
- **Eligible** - Exporters with a valid Certificate of Registration as Exporter of Spices (CRES), with preference given to first-time applicants and SMEs are Eligible
- **Transparency & Accountability -** All scheme activities will be geo-tagged.

Information on fund availability, application status, and beneficiary lists will be publicly available on the Spices Board's website, ensuring full transparency.
- **Cultivating India's Global Spice Leadership** - The Spices Board is implementing the SPICED scheme to enhance India's global spice leadership through innovation, quality enhancement, and inclusive development, providing support to stakeholders throughout the application process.

References

1. Business line
2. United News of India

Rah-Veer Scheme

***Prelims**: Public policy| Government Initiatives | Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in news?

Recently Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has approved the implementation of Rah-Veer Scheme.

- **Rah-Veer scheme** – It is a formal reward-based initiative was launched in April 2025 by the Union Government.
- It is the erstwhile **Scheme for grant of Award to the Good Samaritan** who has saved life of a victim of a fatal.
- **Launched by – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.**
- **Objective** – To encourage **fellow citizens** to assist road accident victims within the **"Golden Hour"** and save lives.

> *The "golden hour" in the context of accidents refers to the critical one-hour period immediately following a traumatic injury when prompt medical attention is most crucial for improving a patient's chances of survival and reducing the severity of injuries*

Key Provisions:

- **Reward** – Rs 25,000 per case (earlier Rs 5,000)
- **Eligibility –** Any citizen who takes a road accident victim to a hospital within the golden hour and helps save a life.
- **Process**:
  - Hospital notifies police.
  - Police inform the District Collector.
  - Verified individual gets reward via **direct bank transfer** from the **Transport Department**.
- It emphasizes on Recognition through certificates and cash awards.
- It boosts morale and encouraging others to assist in emergencies.

As per Ministry of Road, transport and Highways report India reported 1.68 lakh deaths in 2022 and the major cause of the death is delay in getting medical help during Golden hour.

- **Legal Backing** – The scheme is legally backed to provide **legal protection** to individuals who assist accident victims and prevents harassment by police or legal authorities.
    - **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019**
    - **Good Samaritan Rules** notified on **29 September 2020**

Significance

- **Golden Hour Response** – Reduces fatality risk drastically.
- WHO says 50% of accident deaths occur within first hour.
- **Citizen Participation** – Encourages public to become active first responders.
- **Legal Clarity** – Reduces fear of harassment; encourages help without legal repercussions.
- **Support to Emergency Services** – Bridges gap until ambulances arrive.
- **Public Awareness** – Promotes road safety culture and human responsibility.

Reference

Times of India| Rah-Veer Scheme

Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) Portal

***Prelims**: Public policy| Government Initiatives | Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in news?

Telangana has emerged as the top-performing state in India in recovering lost or stolen mobile phones through the CEIR portal, with over 78,000 devices recovered as of May 2025.

- **CEIR Portal** – It is a crucial digital tool designed to recover mobile phones by blocking, tracking and managing lost or stolen devices.
- **Launched by -** Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- **Purpose -** To combat mobile phone theft and loss by blocking, tracking, and managing lost or stolen devices through their IMEI numbers.

Key Features of CEIR Portal

- **IMEI Blocking -** The portal enables blocking of mobile phones by blacklisting their unique IMEI numbers.
- Once blocked, these devices become unusable on any cellular network in India, regardless of SIM card changes.
- **Centralized Database -** CEIR maintains a centralized database accessible to all

telecom operators, ensuring consistent enforcement of device blocking and tracking nationwide.

- **Device Status Lists -** The portal manages three lists -
  - **White List -** Devices allowed on networks
  - **Black List -** Lost, stolen, or unauthorized devices banned from networks
  - **Grey List -** Devices with pending status for verification
- **Tracking Lost Phones -** CEIR integrates advanced tracking technology to aid in locating and recovering lost or stolen mobile phones.
- **Coordination with RPF and Police -** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and other law enforcement agencies can use CEIR to block stolen devices quickly, reducing illegal resale and possession.
- **Citizen-Friendly Reporting -** Users can report lost or stolen devices via the CEIR portal or integrated police portals, facilitating swift action and recovery.

Reference

The Indian Express| CEIR portal

16th Asiatic Lion Census

***Prelims**: Conservation | Ecology and Environment | Government Initiatives | Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in News?

The 16th census (2025) on Asiatic Lion by Gujarat Government marks the highest population since conservation efforts began.

> *The **Asiatic lion census** is conducted once every 5 years by the Gujarat Forest Department under the State Government.*

Asiatic Lion (Panthera leo persica)
• **Habitat & Distribution –** It is endemic to India, found only in the **Gir Forest region** of **Saurashtra, Gujarat**. • Current range includes **Gir National Park**, **Girnar**, **Mitiyala**, **Pania**, **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary**, and adjoining areas. • **Physical Characteristics –** It is slightly smaller than African lions. • **Threats** - Single population risk that is all lions in one geographical region, habitat fragmentation and human animal conflict. • **Single population risk -** All lions in one geographical region. • habitat fragmentation, human-lion conflict. • **Conservation status:** - Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. - IUCN Status - Endangered (earlier *Critically Endangered* until 2008).

- **Record Population Growth -** It records **891 Asiatic lions** in Gujarat that is a **32%**

increase from 2020.

- **Expanded Lion Range -** The lions now occupy **35,000 sq km** across **58 talukas in 11 districts**, up from 30,000 sq km in 2020 which is a **17% range expansion** in five years.
- **New Habitats Identified -** Lions have colonised areas like **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary**, **Jetpur**, and **Babra-Jasdan**, indicating the species' adaptability beyond Gir Forest.

Significance of the Rise

- It reflects successful **conservation efforts** by the Gujarat government.
- **IUCN status** upgraded from *Critically Endangered* to *Endangered* in **2008**.
- It demonstrates the lion's natural **range expansion** and **adaptive recovery**.

Project Lion
• **Project Lion** was launched to ensure **long-term survival** of Asiatic lions through habitat diversification and scientific monitoring. • **Launched in 2020** • **Focus Areas -** It promotes **meta-population management**, creation of **new lion habitats**, and use of **technology** like GPS tracking and drone surveillance. • **Proposed Relocations -** Initially identified **seven sites** across India (including Kuno), though later limited to sites **within Gujarat**, such as **Barda Sanctuary**.

Reference

DD News | Gujarat has completed its 16th lion population census

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

***Prelims**: Public policy| Government Initiatives | Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in news?

Recently Delhi Government approves Rs 30,000 subsidy for 3 kW rooftop solar panels, taking total support to Rs 1.08 lakh.

- **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana –** It is an initiative to promote renewable energy adoption and providing financial relief to households across India.
- **Objective –** To promote rooftop solar panel installations in residential homes by providing substantial subsidies and making solar power affordable.
- **Target –** The scheme aims to benefit **1 crore households** across India by 2027.
- As of December 2024, over **26 lakh (2.6 million)** rooftop solar systems have been installed under the scheme.
- **Subsidy support –** The scheme offers a subsidy of up to **40%** of the cost of installing rooftop solar systems, with the maximum subsidy capped at Rs 78,000 for systems up to 3 kW capacity.
- The Central Government offers a subsidy of **Rs 78,000** for installing rooftop solar

panels up to 3 kW capacity.

- **Eligibility Criteria** – To avail of the benefits, applicants must,
  - Be Indian citizens.
  - Own a residential property with a suitable rooftop for solar panel installation.
  - Have a valid electricity connection.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana in Delhi

- The Delhi government has introduced 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana ***State Top-Up' scheme*** to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the initiative.
- **Highest Subsidy Support –** Delhi offers a total subsidy of **Rs 1.08 lakh** (Central + State), the highest in India.
- **Large-Scale Solar Adoption –** The scheme targets installation of rooftop solar panels on **2.3 lakh residential units** over the next three years, boosting solar energy use in the capital.
- **Significant Electricity Bill Savings -** Residents can save around **Rs 4,200 monthly** on electricity bills, reducing household expenses and easing power demand on the grid.
- **Zero Upfront Cost –** Easy loan options combined with subsidies allow Delhi citizens to install solar panels **without any upfront payment**, encouraging wider participation.
- **Cleaner and Greener City –** Adoption of rooftop solar helps reduce Delhi's heavy pollution levels by lowering dependence on fossil-fuel-based electricity.
- **Energy Security –** Distributed solar power generation strengthens Delhi's energy security by reducing load on the centralized grid and minimizing power outages.
- **Supporting Delhi's Climate Goals –** The scheme aligns with Delhi's commitment to sustainability and clean energy under the National Solar Mission and other environment policies.

Reference

Money Control | Delhi government has introduced 'PM Surya Ghar

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