UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 25-03-2025

National E-Vidhan Application (NeVA)

Syllabus

Prelims *– Current events of National importance | Indian Polity.*

Mains *– GS II – e-Governance and applications & Parliament | State legislatures conduct of Business.*

Why in News?

Delhi becomes the 28th legislature to join the national e-vidhan application platform.

- **NeVA platform** – It is a *work-flow system* which helps the Chair of the House to conduct the proceedings of the House smoothly.
- **Nodal Ministry – *Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.***
- **Umbrella Scheme –** It is one of 44 Mission Mode Projects under the *Digital India Programme*.
- **Objectives** – To conduct Legislative Business of the House in a *Paperless manner*.
- To *enhance legislative procedures* by promoting greater efficiency, accessibility, and sustainability.
- **Hosted on** – ***Meghraj 2.0***, India's cloud infrastructure, ensuring robust scalability, security, and data integrity.
- **Tagline** – One Nation One Application.
- **Features** – It provides *real-time access* to key legislative documents, such as agendas, bills, and reports.
- It features a *secure digital repository*, safeguarding the confidentiality and integrity of legislative data.
- It offers *multilingual capabilities*, catering to the linguistic diversity across states and regions.
- Its *device-agnostic nature* allows it to be accessed seamlessly across smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktops.
- **mNeVA** – It is a user-friendly *Mobile App of NeVA* which is available on Android as well as on iOS.
- **Significance** – It will help in *streamlining legislative functions* and enables seamless coordination among legislators and secretariat staff.
- It will contribute to enhance *transparency and accountability* within legislative processes across the nation.
- It would help in *saving lakhs of trees annually* promoting cleanliness and achievement of UNDP Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Reference

PIB| Delhi Joins NeVA Platform

Fast Track Special Courts

Syllabus

Prelims *– Indian Polity & Governance*

Mains *– GS II – Government Policies & Interventions | Judiciary*

Why is in News?

The government has extended the Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) Scheme until 2026, allocating funds under the Nirbhaya Fund.

Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)

- FTSCs were launched under the *Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).*
- **Established on -** October 2, 2019.
- **Objective -** To provide *speedy justice in cases of sexual offenses*, particularly under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and rape cases.
- **Other cases dealt by FTSCs**
  - Specific cases of heinous nature,
  - Civil cases related to women, children, senior citizen, disabled persons, persons infected with terminal ailments and
  - Property related cases pending for more than 5 years.
- Currently, *745 courts are operational* across 30 States and UTs.
- These courts are established by *State Governments in consultation with their respective High Courts*.
- **Nodal Ministry -** Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Funding**
  - 60:40 between Centre and States.
  - 90:10 for Northeastern, hilly States, and J&K.
  - 100% funding for UTs without a legislature.
- **Role in Speedy Justice -** FTSCs focus on ***rape and POCSO Act cases,*** ensuring swift legal proceedings.

Key Recommendations by Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)

- *Scheme Continuation -* Essential for handling sexual offense cases.
- *Specialized Appointments -* Appoint trained Special Judges and female public prosecutors for POCSO cases.
- *Modernization of Courts -*Upgrade courtrooms with audio-video systems, digital records, and e-case filing.

- *Forensic Lab Support -* Increase forensic labs and train manpower for timely DNA report submissions.
- *Child-Friendly Courts -* Establish *Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centers (VWDCs)* and deploy child psychologists to support victims.

Reference

PIB | Fast Track Courts

India's First Frozen Zoo

Syllabus

Prelims *– General issues on Environmental ecology*

Mains *– GS III – Conservation*

Why in News?

Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling is now home to India's first frozen zoo.

> *A **frozen zoo** is a genetic cryobank that stores genetic material (like DNA, sperm, eggs, and embryos) from animals that are typically endangered and are on the verge of extinction.*

- **Collaboration between** – Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park and Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.
- **Area coverage** – It spreads across 67.8 acres.
- **Altitude** – 2,150 metres (7, 050ft), it is *India's highest-altitude zoological park*.
- **Levels of preservation process**
- **Genetic sampling** – It requires storage at ***-20°C***.
- **Bio-banking** – It is a *cryogenic conservation initiative* to preserve the genetic material DNA of endangered Himalayan species.
- The genetic material is stored in liquid nitrogen tanks at ***extremely low temperatures of -196°C*** for long-term preservation.
- **Aim** – To ensure that species such as red pandas, snow leopards, gorals, Mishmi takins, and others do not become extinct in the wild, their genetic blueprints are preserved.

> *The **Red Panda** is one of the species that will be preserved at the Frozen Zoo.*

- **Species conservation** – The zoo is a leader in conservation breeding programs for red

pandas, snow leopards, and Tibetan wolves.
- It has also undertaken conservation work for species like the Markhor (screw-horned goat), Mishmi takin, and Himalayan black bear.

Quick Facts
• **Frozen zoos around the world** – There are less than a dozen frozen zoos across the globe. • **1st frozen zoo** – It was created by *Kurt Benirschke in 1975* at the Institute for Conservation Research in San Diego.

References

1. The Times of India| India's First Frozen Zoo
2. Outlook Traveller| Frozen Zoo Around the World

Spring/Vernal Equinox 2025

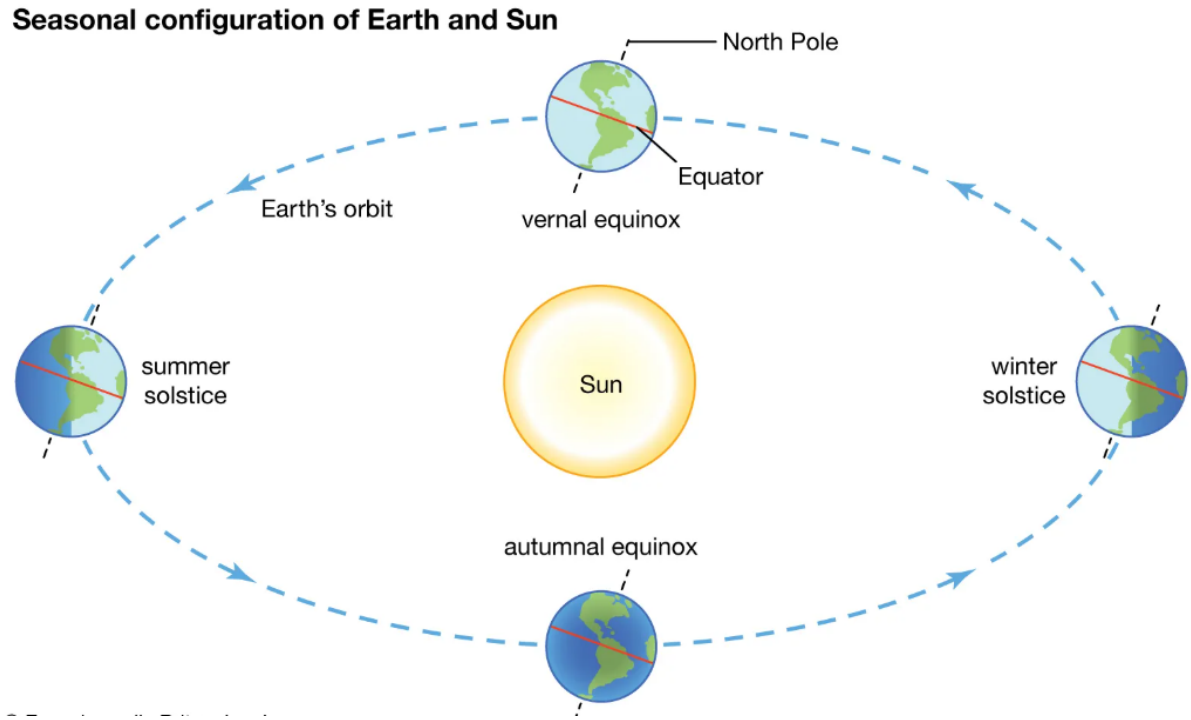
Syllabus

Prelims *– Physical geography of world*

Why in News?

March 20 marks the start of the spring season for the Northern Hemisphere and autumn (fall) in the Southern Hemisphere, with the arrival of the Spring equinox.

- **Equinoxes –** An equinox is a time when the Sun appears directly above the Earth's equator, resulting in roughly equal day and night lengths across the planet.
- Equinoxes happen due to the Earth's axial tilt of approximately 23.5 degrees.
- **Timing -** It occurs twice a year, in the **Northern Hemisphere,**
    - The spring equinox, typically occurs between ***March 19 and 21***,
    - While the autumnal or fall equinox occurs between ***September 21 and 24***.
- In the **Southern Hemisphere**, the March equinox is called the autumnal equinox, and the September equinox is called the vernal equinox.
- The March equinox brings later sunrises, earlier sunsets, chillier winds, dryness, and falling leaves in the Southern Hemisphere, while the reverse happens in the Northern Hemisphere.



- **Cultural Significance**
- **Global -** The ancient Babylonian calendar began the 1st full moon following the March equinox, celebrating the new year in the spring.
- The ***Persian new year, Nowruz***, coincides with the vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere.
- The Vernal Equinox Day is a *national holiday in Japan*, while Easter (Christianity Festival) is determined according to the vernal equinox.
- In the Jewish calendar, ***Passover, the Jewish festival*** begins on the 1st full moon following a vernal equinox.
- The Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, two of the holiest days of the Jewish calendar, fall in this period.
- The autumnal equinox on the other hand sees the observance of autumnal harvest festivals, such as ***Chuseok***, celebrated over 3 days in both Koreas.
- **In India -** The festival of Holi, a vibrant celebration of spring, is often associated with the spring equinox.
- Parsis celebrate Nowruz, which is associated with the spring equinox.
- Ugadi falls during the spring equinox while Navaratri falls around the time of fall equinox.

Reference

The Indian Express | About the vernal equinox

Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)

Syllabus

Prelims *– Indian Polity & Governance*

Mains *– GS III – Inclusive growth and issues arising out of it.*

Why in News?

According to the Telangana Socio-Economic Outlook-2025, the state has demonstrated strong performance, securing the 4th position nationwide under the SPMRM recently.

Tamil Nadu topped the national rankings followed by Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana.

- **Launched in** – 2016.
- **Predecessor scheme -** Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA), 2003.
- **Nodal Ministry -** Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).
- **Objective –** Bridging Rural-Urban divide.
- To strengthen rural areas by providing economic, social and infrastructure amenities, thus leading to sustainable and balanced regional development in the country.
- **Rurban Clusters -** For the purposes of SPMRM, Rurban areas refer to a cluster of 15-20 villages having about ***30 to 40 lakh population.***
- The clusters will be Geographically contiguous
    - Gram Panchayats with a population of about 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and
    - A population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas.
- **Selection Procedure -** There are 2 categories of clusters under SPMRM - Non-Tribal and Tribal.
- Rurban clusters are identified across the country's rural areas showing *increasing signs of urbanization* - i.e.
    - Increase in population density,
    - High levels of non-farm employment,
    - Presence of growing economic activities and
    - Other socioeconomic parameters.
- **Role of states -** The State Government identifies the clusters in accordance with the ***Framework for Implementation*** prepared by the MoRD.
- **Funding** – ***Centrally sponsored scheme.***
- The Ministry of Rural Development provides *Critical Gap Funding (CGF)*, which constitutes up to 30% of the total investment.

Reference

The Hindu | Rurban mission

Strait of Hormuz

Syllabus

Prelims *– Current event of International importance*

Mains *– GS I – Geography*

Why in News?

Iran has showcased new missile systems on 3 strategic islands (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa) near the Gulf's Strait of Hormuz, claiming the ability to strike enemy bases, vessels, and assets.

- It is a tiny strip of water located between the ***United Arab Emirates, Oman and Iran.***
- It is in the territorial waters of ***Iran and Oman.***
- It is 33 km wide at its ***narrowest point***, with the shipping lane just 3 km wide in either direction.
- It flows into the ***Gulf of Oman***, where ships can then travel to the rest of the world.
- It connects Gulf countries like Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia to the Arabian sea beyond.



- **Strategic Importance –** The Strait of Hormuz transmits about 30% of global liquefied gas and 25% of oil.
- OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UAE, Kuwait and Iraq export most of their crude via the Strait.

- Qatar, the world's biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter, sends almost all of its LNG through the Strait.

Reference

The Defense Post | Strait of Hormuz

One Liners 25-03-2025

History, Art and Culture

Grand Memorial for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

Maharashtra government is taking efforts to honor Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by establishing a grand memorial in Agra, a site of historical significance where Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was held under house arrest by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.

• **Historical Background -** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, born in 1630 in Shivneri fort, Pune.
• **Challenged** - Mughal rule & Rule of Ali Adil shah of Bijapur.
• **Agra Escape -** In 1666, Aurangzeb detained him, who then escaped ingeniously.
• **Maratha Empire -** Shivaji Raja was officially crowned as Chhatrapati in 1674 in Raigad.
• **Legacy and Purpose -** The memorial will showcase Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's military genius and governance, educating visitors about Maratha history and his enduring legacy.

Kishangarh's Legacy

March 19 commemorates the anniversary of the Muzhara movement, a significant agrarian struggle in Punjab.

• This movement began in the 1930s under British rule, aiming to secure ownership rights to land that farmers had cultivated for years.
• **Muzara Movement's Origins** - It was initiated in Punjab, where Jagridars sought a share of the farmers' crops, which would then be passed on to the Maharaja of Patiala and ultimately to the British.
• **1949 Kishangarh Clash** - Post-independence, Maharaja's land allocation sparked farmer protests. A confrontation on March 19th led to casualties.
• **PEPSU Province** - Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) formed in 1948, comprising eight princely states, including Patiala and parts of present-day Himachal Pradesh.
• **Agrarian Reforms** - The 1952 PEPSU Tenancy Act aimed to grant land ownership to tenants, addressing the movement's demands.

Geography

Mount Lewotobi Laki Erupts Violently

Located in island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara province, Indonesia, experienced 3 significant eruptions on a single day.

• **Categorized as** - Stratovolcanoes.
• **Huge Ash Plume -** The eruptions generated an ash plume that rose to a height of 8,000 meters, leading officials to widen the danger zone surrounding the volcano.
• The volcano belongs to a dual-volcano system that the nearby inhabitants view as masculine and feminine peaks.
  - The male volcano is called Lewotobi Lakilaki, whereas the female peak is referred to as Lewotobi Perempuan.

Hemavathi River

Recent reports indicate that 2 young individuals drowned while swimming in the Hemavathi River.

• **Tributary** - Of the Kaveri River.
• **Originating** - In the Western Ghats near Ballala Rayana Durga in Karnataka's Chikmagalur District.
• **Coverage** - Flows through Tumkur & Hassan District, where it meets its main tributary, the Yagachi River, before continuing into Mysore District and eventually merging with the Kaveri at Krishnarajasagara.
• **Hemavati Reservoir** - located near Gorur village.

Polity & Governance

Central Government Plans Single Job Application Portal

Union government is developing a "Single Job Application Portal" to streamline the job search process for young people.

• **Nodal agency**- Ministry of Science and Technology
• **Objective** – Ease the burden on job seekers and save their time and energy" by eliminating the need to apply on multiple platforms.
• **Recruitment Reforms –** Average recruitment cycle to be significantly reduced from 15 months to 8 months.
• Recruitment exams are now conducted in 13 regional languages.

International Relations and Issues

Iran Unveils Missile Systems on Strategic Gulf Islands

*Recently, Iran's Revolutionary Guards have deployed new missile systems on 3 strategic **Gulf islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa** near the Strait of Hormuz, a globally vital shipping lane.*

• The weapons can target enemy bases, vessels, and assets.
• The deployment comes as Iran prepares to respond to a letter from US President Donald Trump urging resumption of nuclear talks.
• Iran has controlled the islands since 1971, despite their sovereignty being disputed with the UAE.
• The new systems can completely destroy any target within 600 kilometers.

Environment

Anthurium flowers

Recently India has achieved a significant milestone by exporting Anthurium flowers from Mizoram to Singapore for the 1st time, showcasing progress in the country's floriculture industry.

• Anthurium is a tropical plant celebrated for its ability to purify the air.
• **Grown indoors**- It effectively eliminates harmful substances such as formaldehyde, ammonia, toluene, xylene, and various allergens from the environment.
• **Recognized by** –NASA as one of the top air-purifying plants, highlighting its role in enhancing indoor air quality.
• **Naturally grown** - In the northeastern regions of India, including Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh.
• **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** - Operates under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry in India.
• **Aims** – At promoting & developing the export of agricultural and processed food items while creating global market connections for Indian products.

Security

India-France Bilateral Naval Exercise Varuna 2025

23rd edition of the India-France bilateral naval exercise, held in the Arabian Sea from March 19th to 22th.

• **Exercise -** Officially named 'Varuna' in 2001.
• **Aims to** - Enhance combat readiness, strengthen joint tactical coordination, deepen maritime security cooperation & also testing underwater domain awareness and tactics.
• **Key highlights** - Includes joint carrier battle group operations, advanced air defense drills, anti-submarine warfare exercises, surface warfare operations, maritime patrol aircraft, and logistics cooperation.

Science

GPS Spoofing

Between November 2023 and February 2025, 465 incidents of GPS interference and spoofing were reported in the Amritsar and Jammu border region.

• **Spoofing attack –** It is a cyberattack where fake data is disguised as coming from a trusted source to deceive systems or users.
• **Types of spoofing**
• **GPS spoofing & IP spoofing –** Is frequently employed to evade detection during the execution of *Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks.*

> A DDoS attack refers to a deliberate effort to interrupt the standard flow of traffic to a specific server, service, or network by inundating the target and its associated infrastructure with an excessive amount of Internet traffic.

• **SMS spoofing & caller ID spoofing** – Where communications, such as messages or calls, appear to come from an alternate number or caller ID.

Noma: A Devastating Disease

Noma, or cancrum oris, is a severe gangrenous illness, primarily affecting young children.

• **WHO Classification** - It's recognized as a neglected tropical disease by the World Health Organization (WHO).
• **Geographic Prevalence** - Most common in sub-Saharan Africa, with cases also in Asia and the Americas.
• **Disease Characteristics** - Rapid progression leads to severe disfigurement and social stigma.

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