UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 29-03-2025

Eczema

Prelims *– Current events of national and international importance.*

Mains *– GS III | Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

Why in news?

Recently, public health experts have advised the public to be aware of different types of eczema for correct diagnosis and appropriate management of the disease.

- **Eczema** – ***A skin disorder*** that induces skin inflammation while creating dryness and producing an *intense itching sensation* in millions of patients every year, globally.
- **Non-contagious** – It can't spread through person-to-person contact.
- **Causes**

    o A family history of eczema, exposure to environmental triggers (such as Pollen, dust mites, mold, cigarette smoke), stress, etc.,

- **Pathology** – It *weakens skin's barrier function*, which is responsible for helping skin retain moisture.

7 Types of Eczema	
Atopic Dermatitis	• **Development** – From inherited characteristics as well as allergic processes. • **Controlled by** – Using ceramide-rich moisturizers, a healthy diet, and a well-balanced lifestyle.
Dyshidrotic Eczema	• A stressed person with allergic issues being exposed to metal can develop. • Itchy blisters appears on one's feet and hands.
Contact Dermatitis	• **Allergic contact dermatitis** – Caused by a reaction to allergic elements, metals, cosmetics, etc., • **Irritant contact dermatitis** – Caused as an immediate response to ingredients present in acids, soaps, detergents, or cleaning agents.
Nummular Eczema	• A *coin-like appearance* of scaly patches. • It usually appearing on the arms and legs.
Stasis Dermatitis	• It is a condition of very little to poor blood circulation in their legs.
Seborrhoeic Dermatitis	• **Non-contagious skin condition** – Patchy, red, funal-like formations *and white flakes* around the glands that produce oil in the body.

- **Challenges** – The *appearance of eczema differs across skin tones*, often leading to ***incorrect diagnoses***.
    - **In light skin tones** – Appearing red and inflamed symptoms.
    - **In dark skin tones** – Appearing purple, grey, or brown
- Several *other skin conditions have similar symptoms.*

Psoriasis vs. Eczema
• **Similarities** - Dry and itchy skin. • Eczema demonstrates more inflammation. • Psoriasis shows evident silvery scales and clear borders.
Fungal Infections vs. Eczema
• **Fungal infections** – Specific border characteristics that tend to appear in ring-shaped patterns. • **Eczema** - Diffuse spreading is observed.
Rosacea vs. Eczema
• **Eczema** – It shows up across the body instead of only on the face. • **Rosacea** – It makes the skin red, causing blood vessels to become visible.

- **Management** – There is no cure and can only be treated.
- Using topical steroids, *application of moisturisers,* taking *natural oatmeal baths* and implementing stress management practices.

A topical steroid *is an anti-inflammatory preparation used to control eczema and other skin conditions.*

Reference

The Hindu| Understanding the Different Types of Eczema

Global Dam Safety: A Growing Crisis

Prelims *– Currents events of national and international events.*

Mains *– General Studies III | Disaster and disaster management.*

Why in news?

A study published in Nature Water (March 7, 2025) has highlighted the increasing failure rates of newly built dams, particularly in low-income countries.

- Dams are critical infrastructure for water management, energy and flood control.
- However, recent study indicate a rising trend of dam failures, especially in low-income countries.
- The consequences of these failures are often catastrophic, leading to significant loss of

life and property.
- **Study Conducted by** – Researchers from Deltares, IHE Delft and Imperial College London.

Key findings of the report/study

- **Increased Failure Rate** – A study in Nature Water predicts 23 large dam failures globally by 2035.
- 4.4% of large dams have a failure probability exceeding 1/10,000.
- **Infant Mortality of Dams** – Newly constructed embankment dams have a higher failure probability in their initial years.
- Modern concrete dams exhibit greater resilience.
- **Ageing Dams** – Older embankment dams (15-70m height, built in the latter half of the 20th century) are prone to future failures.
- **Regional Disparities** – Low-income countries, particularly those in monsoon-dominated regions, show a higher rate of new dam failures.
- This coincides with areas with untapped hydropower potential.

Factors Contributing to Failures

- Inadequate monitoring and maintenance.
- Changing hydrological scenarios (e.g., increased flooding).
- Deglaciating basins, extreme weather events, and geopolitical conflicts.
- Limited resources for upkeep.

Reference

1. Down to Earth | Dam Safety

Draft Telecommunications (Standards, Conformity Assessment and Certification) Rules, 2025

Prelims *– Indian Polity and Governance*

Mains *– GS III | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.*

Why in News?

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has released the draft Telecommunications (Standards, Conformity Assessment and Certification) Rules, 2025.

- It revised and streamlined the framework for the ***standardisation and certification of the telecom equipment*** in India.
- It is notified under *Section 19 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023.*
- Currently, the regulatory framework governing the testing and certification of telegraph equipment is prescribed under the *Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2017.*

- Once the draft is finalised, will supersede and ***replace the Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2017.***
- However, the Draft Rules will not impact the validity of existing standards, essential requirements, specifications, testing requirements, and conformity assessments issued by the Central Government or its authorised entities.
- **Proposed changes** - The Telecommunication Engineering Centre and the National Centre for Communication Security are the authorities that can

    o Change or review rules, standards and conformity measures;

    o Establish guidelines for laboratories to become conformity assessment bodies and issue conformity certificates.

- Operators must ensure that the validity of their *product's conformity certificate* is prominently displayed.
- Exemptions for research, development, demonstration, testing, or personal use exist.
- Penalties can be imposed for *non-compliance*.
- A *dedicated digital portal* for all compliance requirements, with changes and other updates.
- The draft rules will be applicable to telecoms equipment, including original equipment manufacturers, authorised Indian representatives, importers, distributors, sellers, authorised entities, licensees and users.
- The Draft Rules seek to enhance security, standardisation, and compliance oversight, thereby strengthening India's telecom infrastructure and safeguard national telecommunications networks.

References

PIB | Draft Telecommunications (Standards, Conformity Assessment and Certification) Rules, 2025

Malleco Spiny-chest Frog (Alsodes vittatus)

Prelims *– General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

Mains *– GS III | Conservation.*

Why in News?

Researchers discovered a rare amphibian, once thought to be extinct has resurfaced in Chile, South America recently.

- Alsodes vittatus is a rare small frog known is ***endemic to Chile, America.***
- **First described by -** The German-born naturalist ***Rudolph Amandus Philippi*** in 1902 (based on specimens collected in 1893).
- **Habitat –** Limited, in isolated mountain streams of Chile.
- **Appearance -** Adult males ranged from light brown with yellow and green hues to

olive brown, while some juveniles showed darker brown colors.

- **Distinctive feature -** A yellowish stripe running the length of its back.
- In some individuals, this stripe was prominent, while in others, it was completely absent.
- The Alsodes vittatus populations were found to be genetically close to *Alsodes neuquensis*, a species previously known only from Argentina.
- **Conservation Status -** Despite significant threats to the species, researchers have suggested reevaluating the frog's conservation category from Critically Endangered to Endangered.
- **Threats -** Deforestation, the expansion of livestock grazing, invasive species like introduced trout (which may prey on tadpoles), and the looming dangers of climate change.



Reference

Daily Galaxy | Alsodes Vittatus

Vikramshila University

Prelims – *History of India.*

Mains – *GS I | Indian Heritage and Culture.*

Why in News?

A decade after the revival of Nalanda University in Rajgir, the process of reviving another ancient centre of learning ' Vikramashila University' in Bihar has gained momentum.

- **Location -** Situated in Bhagalpur, Bihar, along the banks of the river Ganges.
- **Founded by -** ***King Dharmapala*** of the Pala dynasty in the late 8th to early 9th Century AD.
- It simultaneously existed and flourished during Nalanda's time.
- **Architecture -** Cruciform brick stupa is the centrepiece of the Vikramshila site.
- All around the stupa are the cells, 208 of them, 52 on each side where student-monks

of one of the most splendid universities of its times practised Tantrayana.

Tantrayana is the last of the 3 great vehicles of Indian Buddhism after Hinayana and Mahayana.

- It included a library equipped with a ***unique cooling system,*** channeling water from a nearby reservoir to preserve delicate manuscripts.
- **Education -** Vikramshila was the only university that specialised in tantric and occult studies.
- At its peak, subjects such as *theology, philosophy, grammar, metaphysics and logic* were taught at Vikramshila.
- The university produced several eminent scholars, among them, ***Atisa Dipankara,*** who played a key role in the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet.
- Vikramashila attracted numerous teachers and students, it is said that during the time of ***King Ramapala*** there were 160 teachers and 1,000 students.
- Students flocked to the university from all over north India as well as *Kashmir, Java, Nepal and Tibet.*
- Nalanda is the older of the two universities; at one point, the two centres of learning, which had a typical patron in King Dharmapala, exchanged knowledge and even teachers, who were called ***Acharyas.***
- **Downfall -** It was destroyed by ***Muhammad Bin Bakhtiyar Khalji***'s forces Around 1203 AD.
- **Revival -** Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has, since December last year, been developing the site of the ancient Vikramshila university to attract more tourists.

Reference

The Indian Express | Vikramshila university

GSAT-18

Prelims – *General Science.*

Mains – *GS III | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.*

Why in News?

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee has expressed "dismay" at the avoidable expenditure on the launch of GSAT-18 communication satellite, which had 6 extended C-band transponders for use in 2027.

- It is a ***high-power satellite*** being inducted into the INSAT/GSAT system.
- **Purpose -** It aims to augment and support existing telecommunication, television, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG), and VSAT services in India.
- It is designed to provide continuity of services on operational satellites in C-band,

Extended C-band and Ku-bands.

- **Mission Life -** About 15 years.
- **Type of Satellite** – Communication.
- **Manufacturer –** ISRO.
- **Orbit Type -** GSO (Geosynchronous Orbit).

References

1. Business Standard | GSAT-18 communication satellite
2. ISRO | GSAT-18

One Liners 28-03-2025

History, Art and Culture

India's Cultural Outreach: Global Engagement Scheme

Recently, Ministry of Culture implements "Global Engagement Scheme" to promote India's rich cultural heritage internationally and enhance India's global image.

• **Scheme Objective –** Aims to elevate India's global cultural profile and strengthen international ties.

• **Festival of India –** Showcasing diverse Indian art forms globally, including folk, classical, and contemporary performances, through "Festival of India" events.

• **Indo-Foreign Cultural Societies –** Providing grants to foster cultural exchange and friendship between India and foreign nations.

• **ICCR's Role –** The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian culture through centers worldwide, teaching arts, organizing events, and leveraging digital platforms.

• **Digital Promotion –** Utilizing digital and social media to enhance cultural outreach and promote Indian heritage.

• **Digital Platforms & Initiatives –** ICCR's AIMS, A2A (Admission 2 Alumni), and Gyan Setu portals streamline global operations, student admissions, and scholarship distribution.

• **Universalization of Traditional Indian Knowledge Systems (UTIKS)** - Platform offers online courses on Indian knowledge systems.

Swadesh Darshan (SD) Scheme

After an in-depth evaluation, the Ministry of Tourism has revamped this initiative, now called Swadesh Darshan 2.0, aiming to foster sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.

• **Launched in** – 2015.
• It is 100% centrally funded scheme.
• Under the scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State governments, Union Territory Administrations or Central Agencies for development of tourism infrastructure in the country.
• **Original Scheme (SD 1.0) -** Thematic circuits were developed, encompassing multiple destinations per circuit, to boost tourism.
• **Scheme Revamp (SD 2.0) -**Aiming for sustainable and responsible tourism, SD 2.0 focuses on delineated areas and includes niche tourism elements.
• **Impact Assessment (SD 1.0) -** A 2019 study by the National Productivity Council highlighted the scheme's positive impact on local livelihood and employment during construction phases**.**
• **Monitoring and Evaluation (SD 2.0) -** SD 2.0 guidelines mandate regular evaluation and monitoring based on various parameters to ensure project success.

Sri Sri Harichand Thakur: Social Reformer

PM pays tribute to Sri Sri Harichand Thakur Ji on his Jayanti

• **Birth and Background**: Born in 1812 in Orakandi, Bangladesh, Harichand Thakur belonged to a peasant farmer family of the Thakur (SC) community.
• **Matua Sect Foundation**: He established the Matua sect, a Vaishnavite Hinduism offshoot, based on truth, love, and sanity.
• **Rejection of Traditional Teachings –** Thakur differed from earlier Hindu saints, emphasizing family life and work as integral to spiritual fulfillment.
• **Social Upliftment –** His teachings resonated with the Namasudra community, challenging caste oppression and attracting other marginalized groups.
• **Divine Status –** Followers consider him an avatar of Vishnu or Krishna, addressing him as Sri Sri Harichand Thakur.
• **Legacy –** He dedicated his life to improving the lives of oppressed and deprived people in pre-independence Bengal, passing away in 1878.

Social Issues

PM VIKAS: Uplifting Minority Communities

• **Scheme -** Is a Central Sector Scheme, consolidates five former initiatives to empower six notified minority communities. (Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zorastrians (Parsis)
• **Skilling and Training -** Provides both traditional and non-traditional skill development opportunities.
• **Women Empowerment -** Focuses on leadership and entrepreneurship programs for women.
• **Educational Support -** Facilitates education through the National Institute of Open Schooling.
• **Infrastructure Development -** Integrates with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram for infrastructure improvements.
• **Credit Linkages -** Connects beneficiaries with loan programs from the National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC).
• **Implementation and Outreach -** The Ministry is currently processing proposals and collaborating with government entities. Awareness is spread through events like Hunar Haat, Lok Samvardhan Parv, and digital media.

Polity & Governance

India Measures to improve dak services in rural areas

Recently, Revenue generated by post offices is tracked at various levels at regular intervals. The Department has implemented several initiatives to enhance postal services in rural regions.

• **Real-Time Delivery -** Mobile app updates provide delivery status during door-to-door service.
• **Digitalized Branch Post Offices -** Equipped with digital tools for various transactions (postal, financial, and insurance).
• **Enhanced Savings Access -** Internet banking, mobile banking, eKYC, and e-Passbook improve convenience.
• **Streamlined Parcel Delivery -** Has been established to streamline parcel distribution through mechanized delivery.

Zero Hour: Indian Parliamentary Innovation

• **Unique Origin** - Zero Hour is an Indian Parliament creation, not found in formal rulebooks.
• **Timing** - It follows Question Hour, preceding the day's agenda.
• **Informal Mechanism** - Not in the Rules of Procedure, it allows raising issues without notice.
• **Duration** - Begins post-Question Hour, ending when the House's daily business starts.
• **Purpose -** Provides MPs an avenue for immediate, unplanned issue presentation.
• **Historical Context** - This practice, an Indian innovation, has been operational since 1962.

Economy

Treasury Bills

The Government of India, in consultation with Reserve Bank of India, hereby, notifies the calendar for the issuance of Treasury Bills for the quarter ending June 2025.

• **Definition -** Treasury Bills (T-bills) are short-term government debt instruments, allowing investors to park surplus funds.
• **Issuance -** Auctioned by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at a discount to face value.
• **Market Context -** T-bills operate within India's money market, alongside commercial bills.
• **Issuer Distinction -** T-bills are issued by the Central Government, while commercial bills are issued by financial institutions.
• **Risk Advantage -** T-bills have zero risk weightage, due to their sovereign backing.
• **Liquidity -** High liquidity is ensured by short-term maturities, such as 91 and 364 days.
• **Who can buy** - Individuals, trusts, institutions and banks can purchase T-Bills. But they are usually held by financial institutions.

White Revolution 2.0: Cooperative Dairy Expansion

The Ministry of Cooperation has launched cooperative-led "White Revolution 2.0" aimed at expanding cooperative coverage, employment generation and women's empowerment.

• **Objective**- Aims to increase dairy cooperative milk procurement by 50% within five years.
• **SOP and Targets**- Launched on September 19, 2024, the initiative targets 1007 lakh kg of daily procurement by 2028-29.
• **Strategies -** Achieving this through expanding dairy cooperative coverage and deepening their reach.
• **Implementation** - Plans include establishing 75,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCSs) in uncovered areas and strengthening 46,422 existing ones.
• **Women Empowerment** - Recognizing women's crucial role in dairy farming, the initiative seeks to empower them by bringing more into the organized cooperative sector.
• **Punjab Initiative** - Punjab aims to create 2,378 new DCSs and strengthen 2,440, with 87 already registered, contributing to the national goal. NDDB **(National Dairy Development Board is a statutory body)** will coordinate the activities.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI): Tracking Wholesale Inflation

The annual rate of inflation based on all India Wholesale Price Index (WPI) number is 2.38% (provisional) for the month of February, 2025 (over February, 2024).

• **Definition**: WPI measures price changes of goods before retail, indicating wholesale-level inflation.
• **Scope-** Excludes services, focusing solely on commodity prices.
• **Issuing Authority**- Released by the Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
• **Base Year** - The current base year for WPI calculation is 2011-2012.
• **Index Categories** - The WPI basket comprises three main categories: Manufactured Products (64.2%), Primary Articles (22.6%), and Fuel & Power (13.2%).
• **Purpose** - Provides a macroeconomic overview of price fluctuations at the wholesale stage of the economy.

Miscellaneous

Digital Bharat Nidhi & NABARD: Rural Digital Empowerment

Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) under Department of Telecommunications (DoT), signed a MoU with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for Digital Rural Empowerment for rural areas of the across the country.

• **Partnership Objective –** To enhance rural development via digital services and high-speed broadband under BharatNet.
• **Reference Data Sharing –** Geo-coordinates and contact details of rural institutions will be shared, enabling targeted broadband connectivity.
• **Digital Content & Services –** Both entities will exchange digital content and integrate their digital services for wider dissemination.
• **Capacity Building –** Joint awareness programs will empower rural entrepreneurs and institutions.
• **Digital Economy Promotion –** Leveraging BharatNet, they will foster a digital economy through high-speed broadband access.
• **Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Inclusion –** NABARD will integrate ICT infrastructure into its schemes, ensuring broadband support for rural institutions.



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering