UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 29-04-2025

11th BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting 2025

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

Why in News?

Recently, Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment led the Indian delegation at the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting held under Brazil's Presidency in Brasília, Brazil.

BRICS
• Originally conceived as BRIC by Jim O'Neill, the grouping consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. • **Launched in** – ***2006***. • **Headquarters** – *Shanghai*, China. • **Members** – As of June 2024, it has ***10 members***. • Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia.

- **Aim** – To *deliberate upon core labour and employment issues* with the aim to attain the sustainable goals of poverty alleviation and employment generation.
- **1st Meeting** – A*t Ufa, Russia in 2016* which laid the foundation of *BRICS Employment Working Group (BEWG).*
- **2025 meeting** – Slogan of "Strengthening the Cooperation of the Global South for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance".
- **India in 2025 meet** – It showcased the *National Career Service (NCS) platform*, powered by AI, as a model for bridging skill gaps and connecting millions to employment opportunities.
- The Sector Skill Council for Green Jobs (SSCGJ) and Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) were highlighted as transformative initiatives driving skilling and sustainable practices.
- **Adopted declarations** – It is in line with 2 pivotal themes
  - Artificial Intelligence *(AI) and the Future of Work*
  - The *Impacts of Climate Change on the World of Work* and a Just Transition.
- **Key Outcomes –** The declaration commits BRICS nations to
  - *Promote inclusive AI policies* that balance innovation with worker protection.
  - Advance *social dialogue* to ensure fair climate transitions.
  - *Strengthen South-South cooperation* on labour governance, digital inclusion, and green job creation.
- **Significance** – It reaffirmed BRICS' collective resolve to build a future where ***no worker is left behind in the face of AI-driven disruption or climate challenges***.

The BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' meeting under the Indian Presidency has been convened in 2016 at New Delhi.

Quick Facts

- **Skill Council for Green Jobs (SCGJ)** – Established as a not-for-profit, autonomous, industry-led society, was incorporated under the Societies Registration Act XXI, 1860 in 2015.
- It is promoted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- It is aligned to the National Skill Development Mission.

Reference

PIB| 11th BRICS Labour & Employment Minsters Meeting

Related News - Mission LiFE

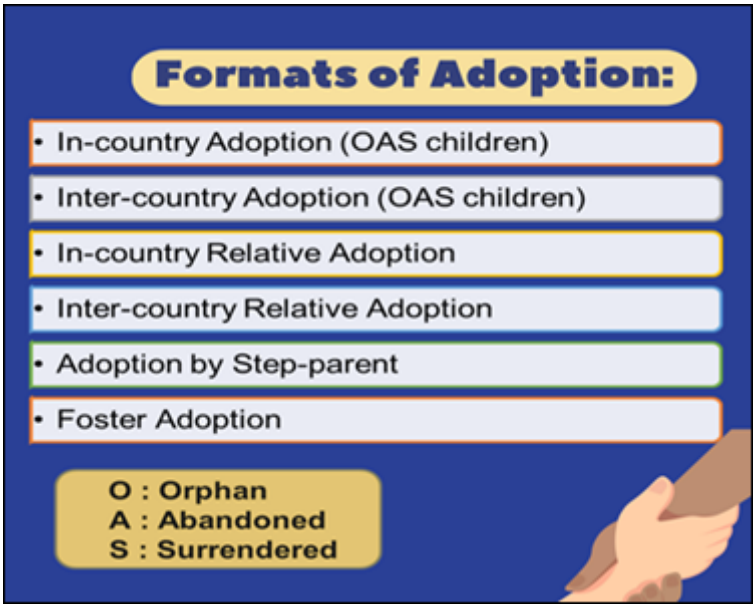
Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Prelims - *Current events of national and international importance| Economic and Social Development – Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector initiatives, etc*

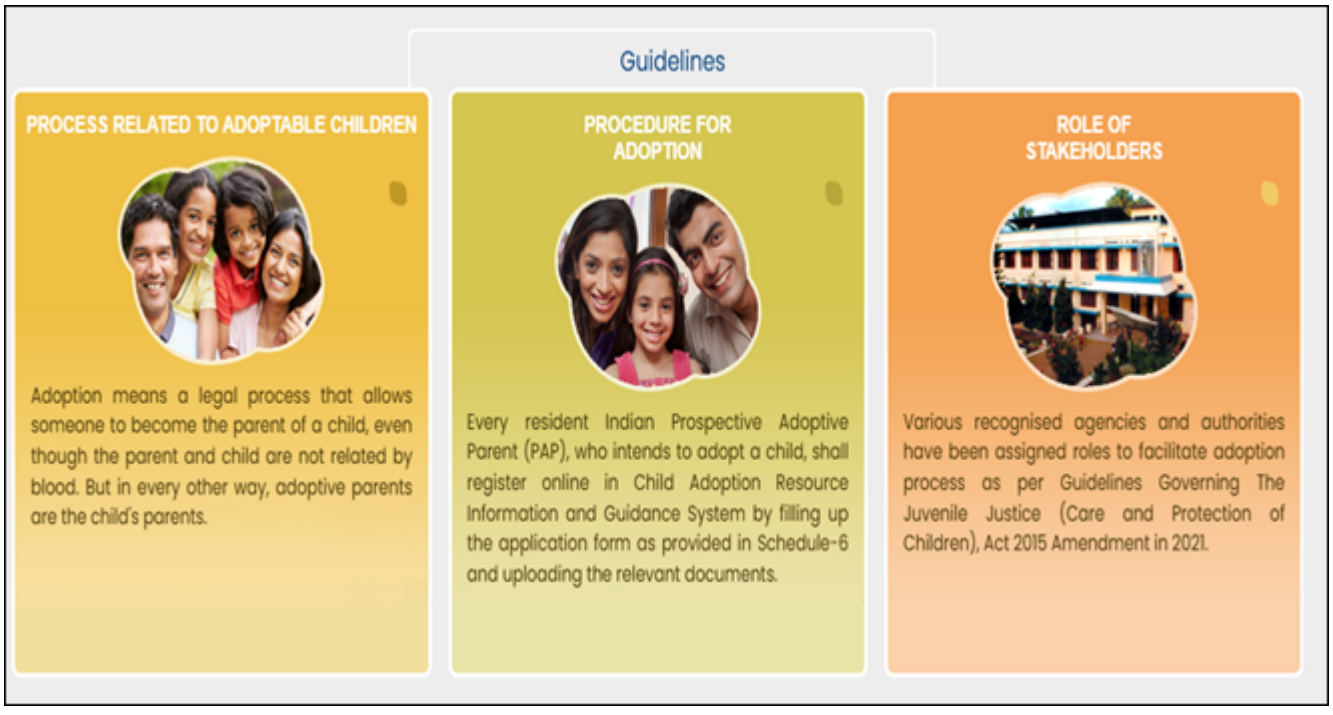
Why in News?

In Financial Year 2024-25, India saw a record 4,515 adoptions, the highest in nearly a decade and of these, 4,155 were domestic, marking a powerful shift in societal attitudes.

- **CARA** – It acts as the nodal body for ***adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered Indian children*** through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.
- **Set up** – 1990
- **Legality** – It is a *statutory body* through Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- It is headed by Member Secretary & CEO
- **Nodal ministry** – Ministry of Women & Child Development.
- **Mission –** To ensure ***no child is left behind***.
- **Mandate** – To monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions through Child Adoption Resource Information & Guidance System (CARINGS).



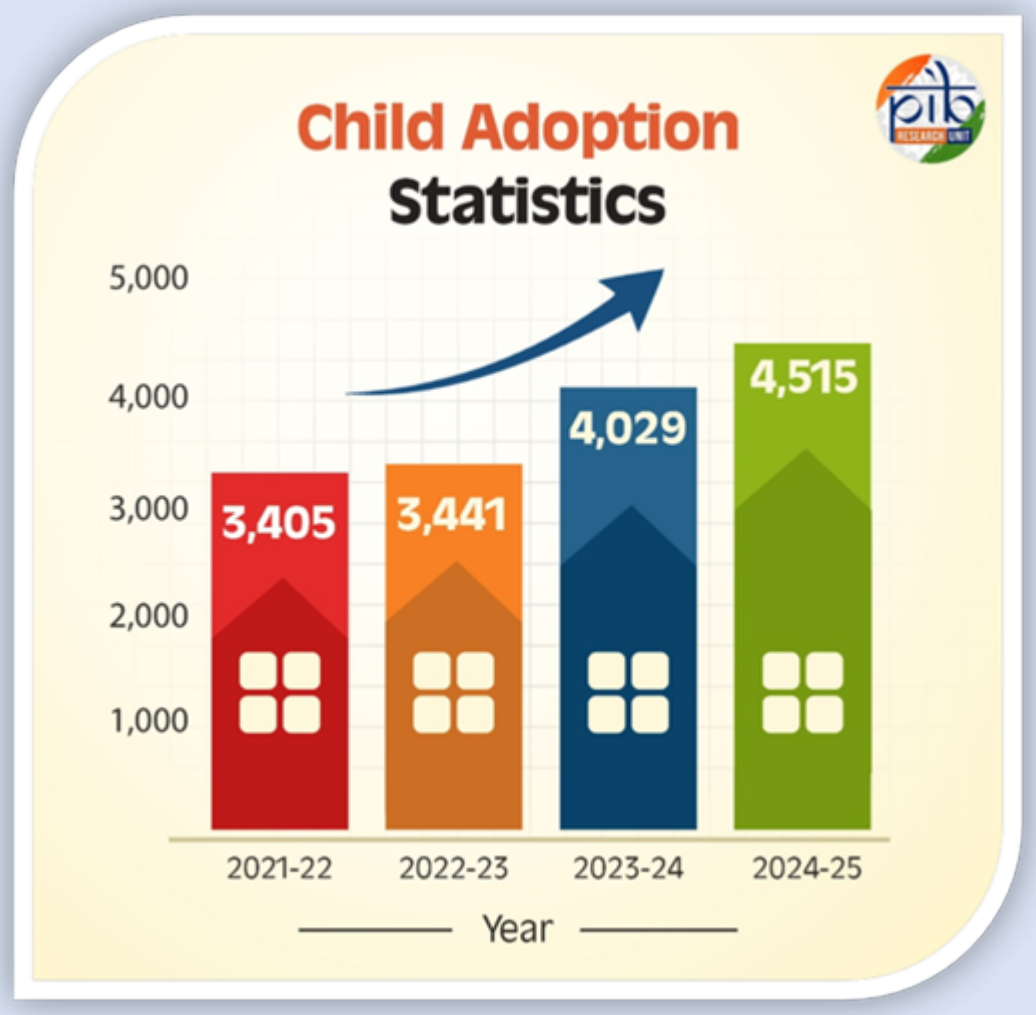
- **Functions** – To promote In-country adoptions and to facilitate Inter-state adoptions in coordination with State Agency.
- To regulate Inter-country adoptions.
- To carry out the functions of the Central Authority *under the Hague Convention* on protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, 1993, ratified by India in 2003.
- To *frame regulations on adoption* and related matters from time to time as may be necessary.



- **Fundamental principle** – Preference shall be given *to place the child in adoption with Indian citizens* with due regard to the principle of placement of the child in their own socio-cultural environment, as far as possible.
- **Illegal adoption** – It *amounts to child trafficking* and is a punishable offense under The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021.

Recent Status of Child Adoption in India

• **In 2023-24** – Over 8,500 children were identified and added to the adoption pool—many of them from institutions where they had long waited to be seen, chosen, and loved.
• 245 new agencies were added to CARA's network, making adoption more accessible than ever.



References

1. PIB| Successful Stories of Child Adoption
2. CARA| Central Adoption Resource Authority

Similipal National Park

Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of national and international importance| Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

Mains (GS I) – *Conservation*

Why in news?

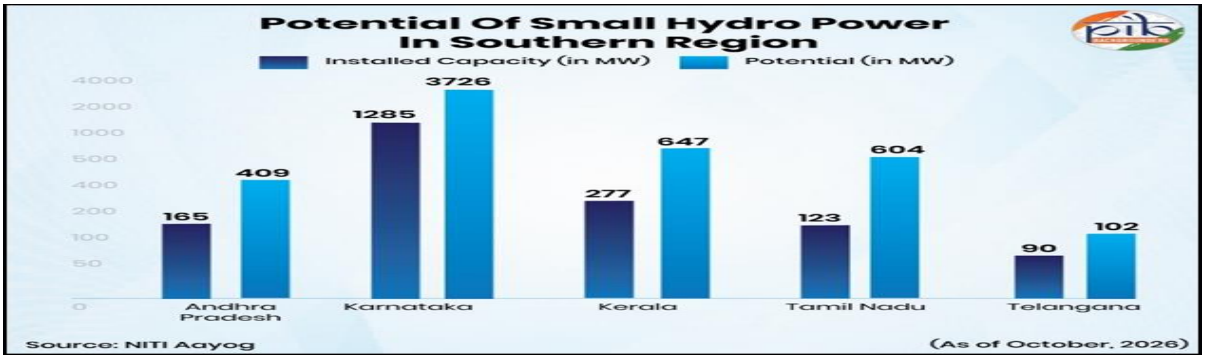
Recently, the Odisha government officially notified Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) as a National Park.

- **Similipal National Park** – Is the 107th national park in India and 2nd national park in Odisha.

Similipal is also a wildlife sanctuary, tiger reserve, UNESCO biosphere reserve and elephant reserve.

- **Location** – Similipal in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.
- **Vegetation** – Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests, Semi-Evergreen Forests, Dry Deciduous Forests, Grasslands.
- **Fauna of Similipal National Park:**
  - Royal Bengal tigers (Panthera Tigris) - 40
  - Asian Elephant (Elephas maximus) - 25% of Odisha's elephant population
  - Leopard (Panthera pardus)
  - Sambar (Rusa unicolor)
  - Mugger Crocodile (Crocodylus palustris)
  - 360 species of birds

The tigers of Similipal possess higher-than-normal levels of melanin, giving them coats that are blacker with yellow stripes and are described as pseudo-melanistic tiger.



The pseudo-melanistic tiger is a colour variant of the Bengal tiger and its strange coat is a result of a mutation in a particular gene.

Greater Similipal Landscape Programme

- It is a conservation *initiative by the Odisha Forest Department* to conserve Similipal national park and its surrounding ecological corridors.
- **Key Components of the programme:**
- ***AI-powered camera towers*** systems for real-time wildlife monitoring and poaching prevention.
- *V-SAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) communication* networks to ensure surveillance in remote, connectivity-challenged zones.
- Diversifying Tiger population by introduction of two female tigers from Tadoba

Andheri Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) and to increase tiger population to 100 by 2036.

- **Community Engagement** – Integrated with the Ama Similipal Yojana, which focuses on:
  - Livelihood enhancement and skill training for local tribal communities (e.g., Kolha, Santhala, Khadia).
  - Promotion of *eco-tourism and cultural tourism* to generate income while raising conservation awareness.

Reference

The Indian Express| Similipal designated Odisha's second national park

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)

Prelims – *Current events of national and international importance*

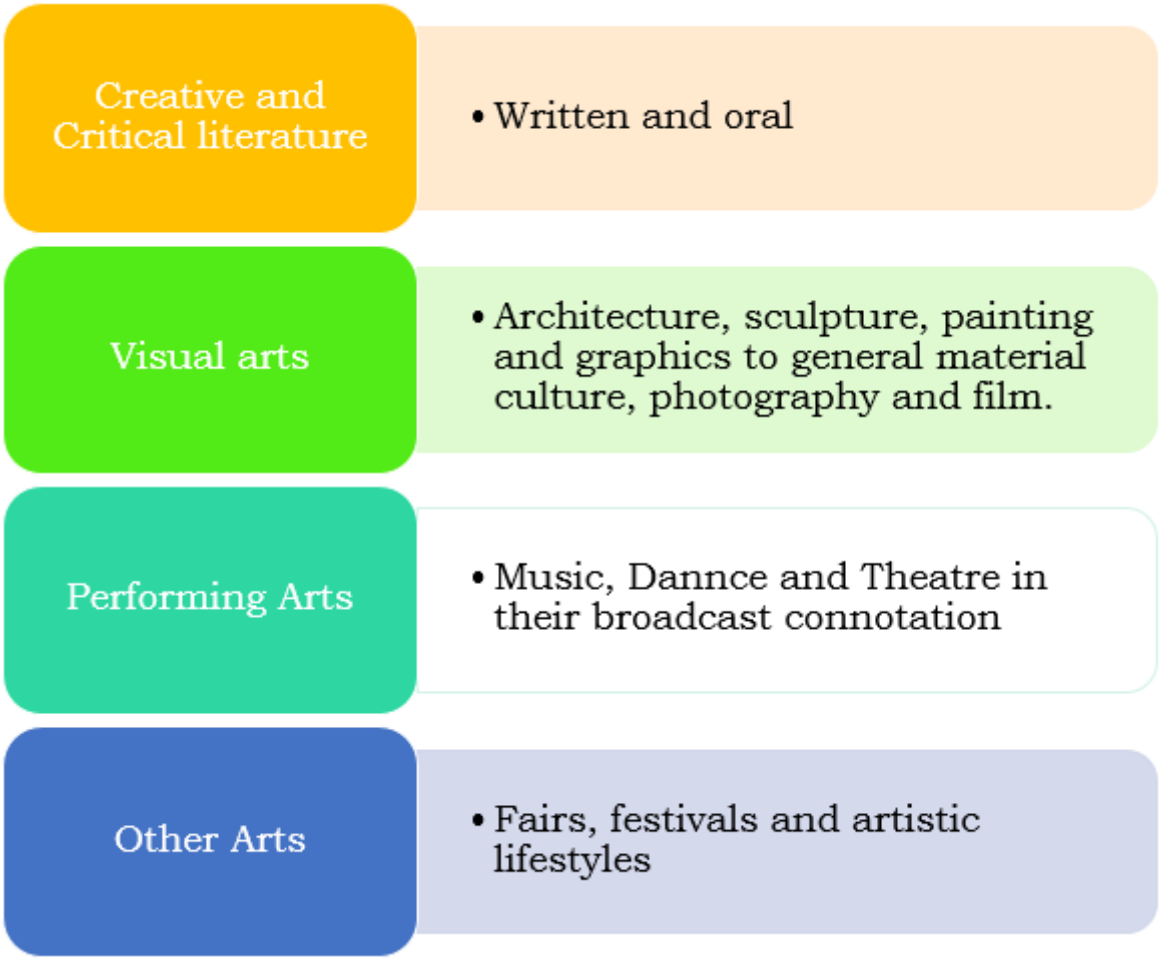
Why in News?

Recently, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) launched Essential Book on the Preservation and Interpretation of India's Manuscript Heritage.

- **IGNCA** – It is visualised as a *centre encompassing the study and experience of all the arts*.
- It envisions to place the arts within the context of the natural and human environment.
- **Established in** – ***1987 as an autonomous institution*** under the Ministry of Culture.

> *IGNCA was initially conceptualised and launched in 1985 at a function where **5 rocks from 5 major rivers** – Sindhu, Ganga, Kaveri, Mahanadi and the Narmada (where the most ancient ammonite fossils are found) were composed into sculptural forms.*

- **Objectives** – To serve as a major resource centre for the arts, especially written, oral and visual source materials.



- To *undertake research and publication* programmes of reference works, glossaries, dictionaries and encyclopaedia concerning the arts and the humanities.
- To establish a *tribal and folk arts division* with a core collection for conducting systematic scientific studies and for live presentations.
- To provide a *forum for a creative and critical dialogue* through performances, exhibitions, multi-media projections, conferences, seminars and workshops.
- To foster dialogue between arts and current ideas in philosophy, science and technology.
- To *promote a network* with national and international institutions.
- To conduct related *research in the arts, humanities and culture*.

6 Functional Units of IGNCA
• **Kala Nidhi** - The multi-form library. • **Kala Kosa** – It is devoted mainly to the study and publication of fundamental texts in Indian languages. • **Janapada Sampada** – It is engaged in lifestyle studies. • **Kaladarsana** – It is the executive unit which transforms researches and studies emanating from the IGNCA into visible forms through exhibitions. • **Cultural Informatics** – It applies technology tools for cultural preservation and propagation. • **Sutradhara** – It is the administrative section that acts as a spine supporting and coordinating all the activities.

References

1. PIB| IGNCA Launches a Book on Manuscripts
2. IGNCA| Objectives of IGNCA

Urban Heat Island (UHI)

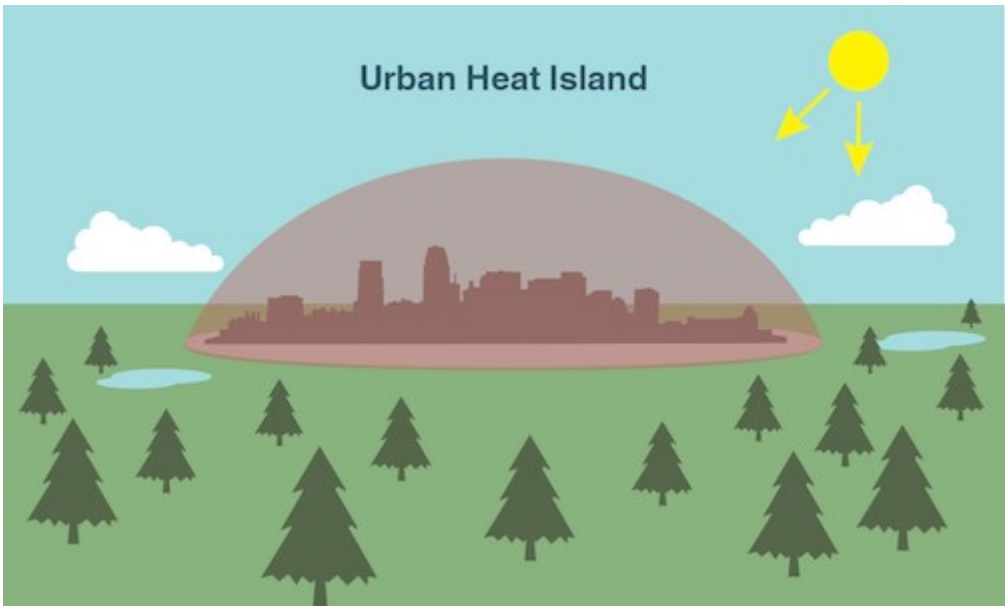
Prelims (GS I) – *Current events of national and international importance| General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

Mains (GS I) – *Conservation*

Why in news?

A recent study published in Nature Climate Change provides a global perspective on how UHI impacts both heat and cold related mortality.

- **Urban heat island (UHI)** – A phenomenon that occurs when a city experiences much warmer ambient temperatures than nearby rural areas.



- **Causes** – Existence of Concrete buildings, asphalt roads and reduced vegetation in cities that lead to trap and absorb heat, limiting dissipation of heat.
- Lack of green spaces and high energy use (e.g., air conditioning), that further elevate temperatures.
- **Temperature variation** – Urban areas can be 3–5°C warmer than rural surroundings, sometimes more during heatwaves.
- **Impacts** – Increased energy consumption, air pollution, heat-related health issues and stress on nearby ecosystems.

Implications of UHI

- **Dual impact of UHI on mortality** – While heat islands increase heat-related deaths *in hot seasons*, they can reduce cold-related deaths in cooler conditions
- **Heat-related mortality** – UHI *increases temperatures in hotter* seasons, leading to

higher heat exposure and subsequent deaths, particularly in summer.

- **Cold-related mortality** – In cooler seasons, the warmer urban temperatures *reduce cold-related deaths* by mitigating extreme cold exposure.
- Globally, in 2018, the reduction in cold-related mortality was 4.4 times greater than the increase in heat-related mortality due to UHI.
- **Regional and seasonal variations** – Cities at high latitudes experience a greater reduction in cold-related deaths.
- For instance, Moscow saw an 11.5 times greater reduction in cold-related mortality compared to heat-related mortality.
- **Poor air and water quality** – Urban heat islands can have worse air and water quality than their rural neighbours.

Way forward

- The Common strategies such as *urban forests, green roofs and reflective buildings* that mitigate the urban heat island could be avoided, since they potentially ***increase cold-related deaths*** more than they decrease the heat-related deaths.
- Cities need *region and season specific strategies* to balance UHI mitigation with health outcomes, avoiding unintended increases in cold-related deaths.
- *Take a seasonal approach to heat island mitigation* is crucial for effective urban planning in the context of climate change and urbanization.
- Using lighter-coloured materials on buildings helps to reduce the heat of the surrounding areas.

Reference

1. The Hindu| Urban Heat Islands
2. National geographic

One Liners 29-03-2025
History, Art and Culture

Bajirao Ballal

Baji Rao I, also known as Bajirao Ballal, was a significant figure in the Maratha Empire passed away on 28th April 1740 at Raverkhedi, near the banks of the Narmada River in present-day Madhya Pradesh.

• **Birth**- Born as **Visaji** on **August 18, 1700**, in Sinnar, near Nashik.

• **His parents** - Were **Balaji Vishwanath Bhat**, the Peshwa of Chhatrapati Shahu, and **Radhabai Barve**.

• **About Baji Rao I -** Baji Rao I served as the **7th Peshwa** of the Maratha Empire and is renowned for his military prowess, strategic thinking, and significant expansion of the Maratha influence.

• He is credited with transforming the Maratha kingdom into a vast empire through a series of successful military campaigns.

• He never lost a battle in his 20-year military career.

• His campaigns extended the Maratha influence significantly into North India, including **Gujarat, Malwa, Rajputana, and Bundelkhand.**

• **Political Influence -** He played a key role in establishing Maratha supremacy in the Indian subcontinent, effectively displacing Mughal dominance.

Geography

Netravathi river

Recently, Kallapu-Sajipa Riverfront Road project along Netravathi river in Mangaluru receives a Rs 40 crore boost from the state government.

• **This vital road will link** - *Mangaluru to key areas including Harekala, Pavoor, Innoli, and Ranipura along* ***Netravathi River****.*

About Netravathi River - *A significant west-flowing river in Karnataka, India, also known as the Nethravathi Nadi.*

• **Geographical Significance -** Flows westward and drains into the Arabian Sea south of Mangalore.

• **Origin Point -** Begins in the Western Ghats, specifically the Bangrabalike Valley of Yelaneeru Ghat.

• **Kudremukh Range Connection -** Its source lies within the Kudremukh range of the Chikkamagaluru district.

• **Alternative Origin Mention -** Some sources also cite Gangamoola, a hill in the same district, as a potential origin.

International Relations and Issues

World Day for Safety and Health at Work

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed annually on April 28th.

• **Organized by - International Labour Organization (ILO)**

• **Established in** - **2003**.

• **Themes -** Revolutionizing health and safety: The role of AI and digitalization at work."

• **Objective – Promote the prevention** of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

• **Raise awareness** about the importance of creating and maintaining safe and healthy work environments for all workers.

• **Commemorate** workers who have been injured or lost their lives due to work-related incidents or illnesses (as the date also coincides with the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers).

Economy

National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)

Recently, NICDC was honoured with the Udyog Vikas Award during the Udyog Vikas event organised by Janmabhumi Daily, a leading news daily in the state of Kerala.

• **All About NICDC**

• **NICDC began with** - launch of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) in 2007.

• **Objective to Create Industrial Cities** -Focuses on creating new "Smart City" industrial hubs.

• **Technology Integration** - It integrates next-generation technologies across infrastructure sectors for efficient urban development.

• **Investment Catalyst** - NICDP aims to attract significant investments from large industries and MSMEs.

• **Export Growth Driver** - It serves as a key catalyst in achieving India's $2 trillion export target by 2030.

• **Under the NICDP, new industrial areas have been sanctioned in** - Uttarakhand (Khurpia), Punjab (Rajpura-Patiala), Maharashtra (Dighi), Kerala (Palakkad), Uttar Pradesh (Agra, Prayagraj), Bihar (Gaya), Telangana (Zaheerabad), Andhra Pradesh (Orvakal, Kopparthy), and Rajasthan (Jodhpur-Pali).

Environment

Tree Shrews of South Asia

Recent research by the Zoological Survey of India has transformed the understanding of South Asian tree shrews.

• **Published in –** The journal Ecology & Evolution, which marks the need for targeted conservation efforts.

• **Research** – Uncovered morphological distinctions among these small mammals, which have often been misidentified due to their resemblance to other species.

• **Order Scandentia –** Tree shrews belong to the order Scandentia, distinct from true shrews or squirrels. They are characterized by elongated snouts and moist nasal pads.

• **Dietary Habits** – Their primary diet consists of insects and fruits, making them omnivores playing a role in controlling insect populations and seed dispersal.

•

Tree shrews

Also known as banxrings, are small mammals native to the tropical forests of South and Southeast Asia.

Classification of Tree shrews.

They belong to the order Scandentia, which is divided into 2 families:

- **Tupaiidae:** This family contains 19 species of "ordinary" tree shrews in four genera: *Anathana*, *Dendrogale*, *Tupaia*, and *Urogale*.
- **Ptilocercidae:** This family contains only one species, the pen-tailed tree shrew (*Ptilocercus lowii*).

Ecological Importance - As seed dispersers and insect predators, tree shrews contribute significantly to the health and balance of forest ecosystems.

Security

Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR

Recently, IOS SAGAR reached Port Louis Harbour, Mauritius after finishing Phase I of joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance with the National Coast Guard (NCG) Mauritius. This surveillance was part of its deployment to the South Western Indian Ocean.

• **Participating Nations** - Involves India and 9 African partner nations: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and South Africa.
• **Regional Engagements** - The deployment included port calls at Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), Nacala (Mozambique), Port Louis (Mauritius), Port Victoria (Seychelles), and Male (Maldives), fostering regional maritime cooperation.
• **EEZ Surveillance** – Joint surveillance exercises were conducted within the EEZs of Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, and Seychelles, enhancing maritime security and domain awareness.
• **Capacity Building** – Furthermore, African personnel received training at Indian naval institutions in Kochi, focusing on essential naval operations, watch keeping procedures, and security protocols.

Science

Dr. K. Kasturirangan: A Legacy of Space and Education

Recently, former ISRO Chairman Dr. Kasturirangan's passing on April 25, 2025, at 84, marks the loss of a visionary who profoundly impacted India's space program and education system, inspiring generations.

• **Early Life and Education –** Born in Ernakulam, Kerala, in 1940, Dr. Kasturirangan earned degrees in Physics from Bombay University and a doctorate in High Energy Astronomy in 1971.
• **Leadership at ISRO –** As ISRO Chairman (1994-2003), he spearheaded the operationalization of PSLV and successful GSLV testing, marking a period of significant technological progress.
• **Chandrayaan-1 Mission –** Dr. Kasturirangan conceptualized India's first lunar mission, Chandrayaan-1 (launched 2008), which famously discovered water molecules on the moon.
• **Contributions Beyond ISRO –** Post-ISRO, he served in the Rajya Sabha and Planning Commission, notably chairing the committee for the transformative New Education Policy 2020.
• **Awards and Recognition –** His immense contributions were recognized with India's highest civilian honors: Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan.

Miscellaneous

National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)

Recently, NIELIT signs MoUs with 8 Visionary Organizations to Propel Digital India Initiatives.

• **NIELIT Status** - Operates as an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
• **Mission** – To Provide Advance education, specialized training, and foster research and development in the fields of Electronics, Information Technology, and cutting-edge technological domains.
• **Also recognized –** As a National Examination Body for accrediting institutions and organizations conducting non-formal sector courses in IT and Electronics.
• **Organisations with whom NIELIT has signed MoU** – Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL), ERNET India, National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, SKYROOT Aerospace, Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR) and Kyndryl India.

World Veterinary Day 2025

Recently, World Veterinary Day 2025, was observed on April 26th.

• *The 2025 theme, "Animal Health Takes a Team," underscores the collaborative spirit within veterinary medicine.*

• **First initiated by**- World Veterinary Association (WVA) in year 2000.

• **In India initiated by** - Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

• **Aims to** - Honor the dedication of veterinary professionals but also emphasizes their crucial contributions to animal well-being, human health, and environmental protection.

• **Livestock Statistics** - India is home to over 536 million livestock, the largest in the world and nearly 70% of rural households depend on animals for income, food, and security.

Prestigious French Award

Recently, Mumbai filmmaker Payal Kapadia received the 'Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' from the French Government for her cinematic contributions.

• **Joining Illustrious Company** – This honor places Payal Kapadia alongside prominent Indian artists like Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Lata Mangeshkar.

• **About 'Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres'**

• **French Recognition** – Prestigious French award for significant contributions to arts and literature.

• **Order of Merit** – One of France's four ministerial orders, ranking below the Ordre National du Mérite and Légion d'Honneur.

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