UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 07-08-2025

Reintroduction of Asian giant tortoise in Nagaland

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Ten Asian giant tortoise has been reintroduced into the Zeliang Community Reserve in Nagaland by the Nagaland Forest Department and the India Turtle Conservation Program (ITCP).

> *The released tortoises are marked and tagged with a VHF-based telemetry system to study their dispersal and survival in deep rainforests.*

- It is the ***largest tortoise*** in mainland Asia. They are considered one of the oldest tortoise lineages globally.
- **Scientific Name -** Manouria emys.
- It is also known as the Asian forest tortoise or Asian brown tortoise and small elephants of the forests.
- **Size & weight -** They can weigh up to 37 kg and reach a shell length of 60 cm.
- **Appearance**
  - **Shell -** Broad, flattened carapace and a large plastron.
  - **Limbs -** Thick, scaly legs with elephant-like feet, used for digging.
  - **Head -** Flattened with a sharp beak for tearing vegetation.
  - **Color -** Grayish-brown as hatchlings, darkening to charcoal as adults.
- **Habitat** - Hilly, wet tropical and subtropical forests, often found near streams or in damp soil.
- **Distribution** – These species are found in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia and other places.
- **Unique nesting -** It is the only tortoise species that builds an above-ground nest.
- Females construct large mounds of leaf litter and guard their nests, protecting their eggs from predators and potentially regulating the incubation temperature.
- **Diet –** Primarily herbivorous, feeding on leaves, fruits, fungi, bamboo shoots and other vegetation, occasionally consume invertebrates or small amphibians.
- **Threats -** Habitat loss, especially due to logging, agriculture, forest fires, and hunting for consumption and the illegal pet trade.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN** - Critically endangered.

    - **CITES** - Appendix II
- **Significance for ecosystem-** They play a vital role in forest health by dispersing seeds, turning over soil, and grazing on plants.
- They are considered a keystone species, meaning their presence is crucial for the health of their ecosystem.

Quick Facts

• **India Turtle Conservation Program (ITCP)** is a joint countrywide initiative focused on the conservation of freshwater turtles and tortoises and their habitats across India.
• It's spearheaded by the Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation India (TSA India) in partnership with the Government of India and State Forest Departments.
• **Zealiang community reserve -** It plays a crucial role as a wildlife corridor and reservoir, linking to the *Ntangki National Park and the Dhansiri Reserve Forest in Assam.*
• The local communities, particularly the *Zeliang Naga tribe*, are actively involved in conservation efforts within the reserve.
• They practice sustainable farming and are engaged in protecting the forests.
• **Tortoise Guardians -** Youths from the local community have been engaged by the project as 'tortoise guardians' to ensure protection of the released tortoises and assist in data collection.

Reference

The Hindu | Asian giant tortoise

India Electricity Mobility Index

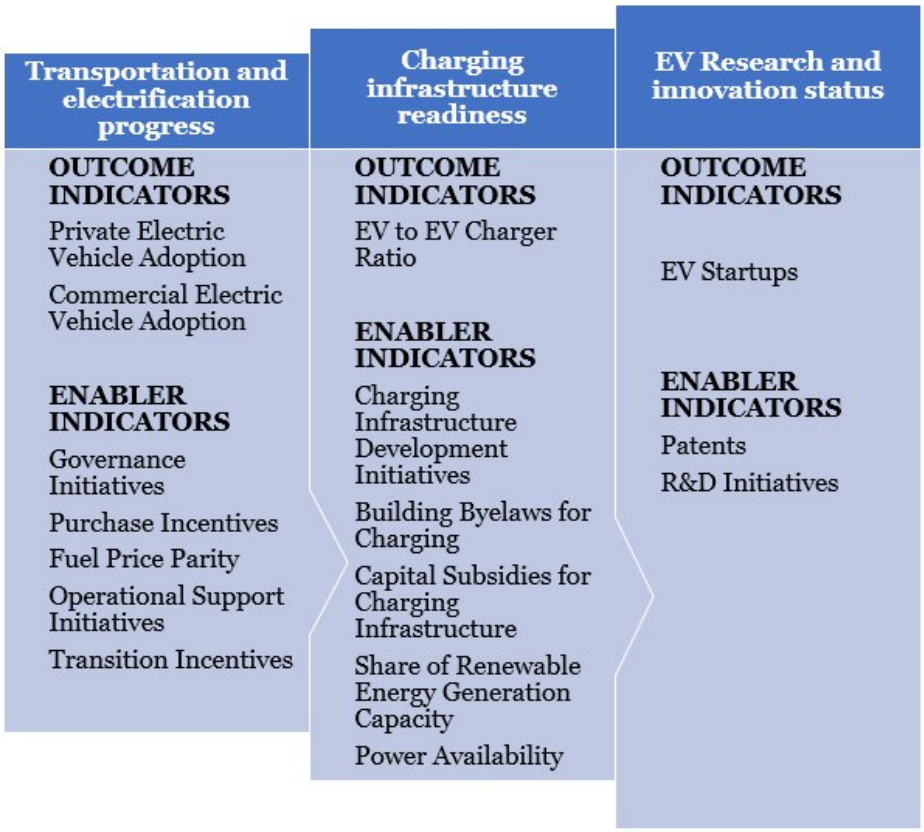
Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, India launched a Pioneering India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI), first-of-its-kind tool to Track States/UTs Progress in EV Transition.

- **Aim –** To comprehensively track and benchmark the progress of States and Union Territories (UTs) in *achieving their Electric Mobility goals*.
- **Launched by –** Niti Aayog.
- To inform decision-making, foster healthy competition among states, and promote sharing of best practices.
- **Score -** *0-100 scale*.
    - States are grouped into 3 categories based on scores namely, Frontrunners (65-99), Performers (50-64), and Aspirants (0-49).
- **Index indicators** – The *16 unique performance indicators under 3 thematic categories* that form the building blocks of the Indian e-mobility ecosystem.
- **Core themes** – **Transport Electrification Progress** to capture demand-side adoption.

- **Charging Infrastructure Readiness** to track allied charging infrastructure development**.**
- **EV Research and Innovation Status** – Covers supply-side ecosystem R&D efforts.



- **Top performing states (5)**

Delhi	**77**
Maharashtra	**68**
Chandigarh	**65**
Karnataka	**64**
Tamil Nadu	**59**

- **Bottom 5 states in index** – Sikkim (rank 32), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (33), Nagaland (34), Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (35).
- **Significance** – It will help policy makers, industry and researchers in monitoring EV transition outcomes and aligning with India's goal for achieving net-zero by 2070.

Reference

1. PIB| India Electricty Mobility Index
2. Niti Aayog| IEM Index

Gyan Bharatam Mission

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently union government has launched Gyan Bharatam Mission, a major initiative for digitization of manuscripts.

> *A **manuscript** is a handwritten composition on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back at least seventy-five years that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value. Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts.*

- **Aim** – To Survey, Document, Conserve, Digitize, and *make accessible more than One Crore Manuscripts* located in academic Institutions, Museums, Libraries, and Private collections across India to people.
- To revive its civilizational knowledge traditions for future generations.
- **Ministry** – Ministry of Culture.
- **Under** – National Manuscripts Mission (NMM).
- **Key objectives** – Digitize and catalog more than 10 million manuscripts nationwide.
- Create a National Digital Repository for manuscripts.
- Incorporate Articificial Intelligence, OCR (Optical Character Recognition – technology that converts different types of documents, images, PDFs into machine-readable text),
- blockchain technologies to enable smart access, transcription, and tracking of origins.

> *Around 80% of manuscripts in India are with private parties.*

- **Strategic pillars & implementation plan- Scholarly leadership & institutional development** – Led by experts in Indology, philology, and conservation.
- Establish a full-time Director (CEO) and a multidisciplinary team.
- **Technological integration** – Create an AI-assisted platform for digitizing manuscripts.
- Utilize blockchain for provenance tracking and cloud storage for preservation.
- Develop APIs (Application Programming Interface) for connecting with national and international manuscript archives.
- **Conservation & capacity building** – Set up new labs for conserving palm leaf, birch bark, and paper manuscripts.
- Launch "*Pandulipi Mitras*," a network of trained volunteers in around 100 districts.
- **Public engagement** – Create educational modules for schools and universities.
- Offer immersive Virtual Reality/Augumented Reality experiences highlighting manuscript heritage.
- Organize Manuscript Melas and national social media campaigns.
- **Timeline Overview (2025–2031)** – **Phase 1** – Institutional setup, pilot digitization, and training.
- **Phase 2** – Launch national repository and activate tech platforms.
- **Phase 3** – Expand outreach and integrate with manuscript archives.

Reference

1. PIB| Gyan Bharatam Mission
2. Ministry of culture| GBM

Mahabodhi Temple

Prelims: *current events of national and international importance| art & culture*

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court turned down the plea for exclusive control of the Mahabodhi temple to Buddhists and directed the petitioner to first approach the high court.

- **Plea** – It challenged the constitutional validity of the 9-member management committee for the temple with a Hindu majority i.e. established by the Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949.
- **Issues raised** – Petitioner claiming that inclusion of members in the committee who are non-Buddhists i.e. Hindus, is violative of protections guaranteed to the Buddhist citizens of India.

Mahabodhi temple



- **Location** – In Bodh Gaya, Bihar, *on the banks of the Niranjana River*.
- **Sacred site** - One of the 4 sacred locations associated with the life of Lord Buddha that he attained enlightenment here.
    - **Other Temples -** Lumbini in Nepal(Birth place), Sarnath (Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana - 1st Sermon given) and Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana- death) in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Built by** – Emperor ***Ashoka*** in the 3rd century B.C.
- **Recognition – *World Heritage site by UNESCO*** in 2002.
- **Architectural influence** – Entirely constructed of brick, influencing the development of brick architecture over centuries.
- **Specifications –** The temple comprises the 50 m high grand Temple, the Vajrasana, sacred Bodhi Tree.
- It is surrounded by numerous ancient Votive stupas, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries**.**
- *The Lotus Pond*, is located outside the enclosure to the south**.**
- Entrances from the east and from the north and has a low basement with mouldings decorated with honeysuckle and geese design.
- Curvilinear shikhara or tower of the temple surmounted by amalaka and kalasha (architectural features in the tradition of Indian temples).
- Above the sanctum is the main hall with a shrine containing a statue of Buddha, where senior monks gather to meditate.
- **Archaeological significance** - In respect of the events associated with the time Lord Buddha spent there, as well as documenting the evolving worship, particularly from emperor Ashoka Era.

Reference

Hindustan Times| Mahabodhi Temple

One Liners 07-08-2025

History, Art and Culture

Kartavya Bhavan

Recently, Indian Prime Minister visited and inaugurated Kartavya Bhavan at Kartavya Path in Delhi.

• It is *state-of-the-art* office complex.

• **Aim –** To *streamline administrative processes* and enable agile modern governance infrastructure.

• **Features –** *Zero-discharge campus*, energy-saving automatic technologies to use 30% less energy.

• Special glass windows to keep the building cool and reduce outside noise.

Social Issues

Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC) 2025

It has been conferred with the Guinness World Record for the "Most people registered on a Citizen Engagement Platform in one month."

• It is part of the larger movement *'Exam Warriors'*.
• **Organised by –** Ministry of Education with MyGov platform since 2018.
• **Recognition –** Achievement of 3.53 crore valid registrations during the 8th edition of this programme.
• **Significance –** To reflect country's collective commitment to holistic and inclusive education.
• Aligns with the vision of a *Viksit Bharat.*

'Exam Warriors'

• It is a movement that is driven by Indian Prime Minister's efforts *to create a stress-free atmosphere for youngsters*.
• To bring together students, parents, teachers and the society to foster an environment where the *unique individuality* of each child is celebrated, encouraged.

Economy

PFRDA CONNECT

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) launched new website under the project PFRDA CONNECT initiative.

• **Initiated by –** Ministry of Finance.
• **Aim –** To promote *transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in pension sector governance* through cutting-edge technology.
• To building an inclusive, technology-driven *regulatory ecosystem for India's pension sector.*

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)

• It is a regulatory body of the nation's pension system.
• **Established in –** 2003.
• **Objective –** To promote old age income security by regulating and developing pension funds, such as the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

Security

Annual Trident Lecture Series (ATLS)

Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS) will inaugurate the 1st ATLS at the Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt.

• It is an annual forum for fostering critical reflection, policy innovation and joint vision to address dynamic challenges of national security.
• **Tribute to –** India's 1st Chief of defence Staff, Bipin Rawat.
• **Theme –** *Dominating the Future Battlespace*.
• **Release –** 'General Bipin Rawat Paper' on 'Manned-Unmanned Teaming'.

Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS)

• It is an *autonomous think tank.*
• **Launched by –** Ministry of defence, in 2007.
• **Mission –** To promote integration and jointness among Indian armed forces as *a synergistic enabler of national power*, providing policy alternatives through research and development.

Science

Medicinal Plants Conservation and Awareness

Two significant MoUs were signed between the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) and private & public ventures.

• ***MoU 1*** – Between NMPB and IshVed-Bioplants Venture

• To preserve and maintain the *germplasm of rare, endangered and threatened (RET) medicinal plants* through tissue culture methods.

• **MoU 2 –** Among NMPB, All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), and AIIMS.

• Establishment of a *national level medicinal plants garden* in the premises of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)

• **Established in –** 2000, set up by government of India.

• **Nodal ministry –** Ministry of AYUSH.

• **Aim –** To develop an appropriate mechanism for coordination between various stakeholders and implements & support policies for overall *conservation, cultivation, trade and export of medicinal plant.*

All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)

• It is an *autonomous organization* under Ministry of Ayush.

• **Aim –** To bring a synergy between traditional wisdom of ayurveda and modern tools and technology

• To offer *postgraduate and doctoral courses* in various discipline.

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