

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelimbits 11-08-2025

### Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants

**Prelims** - Current events of national and international importance | Government policies and interventions.

#### Why in News?

Recently, government has approved projects under integrated Component of Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants.

- It is a central sector scheme that was approved by the cabinet in 2008.
- **Aim** - To provide project-based support throughout the country for different activities.
- **Implemented by** - National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of Ayush.
- **Coverage** - All across India.
- **Support** - Both financial and technical support are provided.
- Technical support was provided to farmers including tribal farmers.
- **Integrated component** - Forward and backward linkage in supply chain of medicinal plants.
- It includes activities like
  - Infrastructure for Quality Planting Material
  - Information Education Communication (IEC) activities
  - Infrastructure for Post-Harvest Management and Marketing
  - Quality Testing and Certification of raw material
- **Importance** - It provided local employment through project activities approved under integrated component.
- It provided short-term income especially to women.
- These efforts led to direct income generation and promoted inclusive economic growth at the grassroots level.

Other Government Support for Medicinal Plants	
<b>Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)</b>	Provide <u>financial assistance for area expansion</u> of short duration medicinal plants.
<b>Ministry of Tribal Affairs</b>	It supports <u>value addition, processing and marketing</u> of forest and agricultural produce gathered by tribal communities under <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)</li> <li>• PM- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) scheme</li> </ul>

***Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture*** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, spices.

### National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)

- **Set up in** - 2000.
- **Nodal ministry** - Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Homoeopathy).
- **Aim** - To promote coordination between various ministries, departments and different organizations.
- To enhance overall conservation, cultivation, trade and export growth of medicinal plants sector both at the Central, State & International level.

### References

1. [PIB| Conservation of Medicinal Plants](#)
2. [NMBP| National Medical Plants Board](#)

### BHU-NEER Portal

*Prelims - Current events of national and international importance | Government policies and interventions.*

### Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Jalshakti includes some of the latest and user-friendly features to the BHU-NEER portal.

- Bhu-Neer portal is designed to serve as a one-stop platform for **managing and regulating ground water resources** in 2024.
- **Launched by** - Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA).
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- **Coverage** - Project supports in 19 States/UTs.
- **Aim** - To control indiscriminate groundwater extraction and promote sustainable management.
- **Features**
  - **Centralized Database** - It maintains a centralized database containing crucial information on groundwater compliance, policies, and sustainable practices.
  - **Target Users** - It caters to industries, infrastructure projects, and mining projects that require groundwater extraction permits.
  - **No Objection Certificate (NOC) Applications** - It provides a quick and easy platform for filing online applications for No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for groundwater abstraction.
  - **Compliance and Water Conservation** - It emphasizes compliance such as the

construction of rooftop rainwater harvesting structures and installation of sewage treatment plants.

- Pan based single id system provides ease of access and integration
- Query module for one-to-one interaction with CGWA
- Real time Sms & Email alerts.
- **Significance** - Promotes transparency, efficiency, and ease of doing business in groundwater governance.
- The portal also aims to ensure building rooftop rainwater harvesting systems and setting up sewage treatment plants.

## Reference

[PIB| Bhu-Neer portal](#)

## Telecom Industry Expansion in Rural Areas

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development highlighted the infrastructural expansion of the telecom industry in rural areas.

- The approved projects have been funded through **Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)**, which inter alia, includes the following: -
  - Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for mobile connectivity in the North Eastern Region, Andaman & Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep islands.
  - Scheme for providing mobile services in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas and Aspirational Districts.
  - 4G Saturation Project for providing 4G mobile services in uncovered villages.
  - Amended BharatNet project to provide broadband connectivity to the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and villages.

***BharatNet project*** aimed at providing broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country. It is one of the biggest rural telecom projects in the world.

- **Policy initiatives for expanding of 5G services** -These initiatives include to make available affordable services to users.
- Auction of spectrum for 5G mobile services.
- Financial reforms to rationalize Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), Bank Guarantees (BGs) and interest rates.
- Removal of Spectrum Usage Charges for spectrum acquired in auction of 2022 and

thereafter.

- Simplification of procedure for SACFA (Standing Advisory Committee on Radio Frequency Allocations) clearance.
- Launch of GatiShakti Sanchar portal to enable fast-track growth of digital communications infrastructure.
- RoW(Right of Way) Rules to streamline RoW permissions for installation of telecom infrastructure.
- Time-bound permission for use of street furniture for installation of small cells and telecommunication line.
- **Benefits** - With the availability of high-speed mobile network, there has been increased adoption of online banking services, e-commerce.
- Improved online education as well as online government services among the users across all sections of society including those in rural and semi-urban areas.

### Digital Bharat Nidhi

- **Established** - Under the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003
- **Telecommunications Act, 2023** - The Universal Service Obligation Fund, has become the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN).
- **Mandate** - To support universal service through promoting access and delivery of telecommunication service in underserved rural, remote and urban areas.

**Related links** [Digital Bharat Nidhi](#)

### Reference

[PIB| Telecom Industry Expansion in Rural areas](#)

## India's Deep Ocean Exploration

***Prelims:** Current events of national and international importance*

### Why in News?

*Recently, the Union Minister of State for Earth Sciences noted India's deep ocean exploration activities in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.*

- **Ministry** - Ministry of Earth Science.
- Indias exploration activities conducted under the [Deep Ocean Mission](#).
- **Allocation for exploration** - As a part of ISA, India has been allotted a 75,000 square km area in the Central Indian Ocean Basin.
- 10,000 square km area in the Central Indian Ridge and Southwest Indian Ridge of the Southern Indian Ocean.
- **Exploration activities** - Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (Kochi), attached to Ministry of Earth Sciences, has conducted biodiversity surveys across 19 seamounts in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal,

- From the survey, *1300 deep-sea organisms have been collected*, studied and vouchered, *including genomic analysis* for select organisms and the discovery of nearly 23 species that are new to science.
- **Collaborative research** - Projects are undertaken and funded to various government and private laboratories, universities and institutions.
- **Data dissemination** - The Marine biodiversity data is collected through research publications and shared with the [UN Ocean Biodiversity Information System](#).
- The [Marine Microbial Information Portal](#), developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (Chennai), provides genomic sequence data of deep-sea microbes collected in the public domain.
- India is a member of the ***International Seabed Authority***.

### Quick Facts

#### International Seabed Authority (ISA)

- It is an intergovernmental organization established under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- Its primary role is *to organize, regulate, and control all mineral-related activities* in the international seabed area, which lies beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, for the benefit of humankind.

### Reference

[PIB| India's Deep Ocean Exploration](#)

#### One Liners 11-08-2025

#### History, Art and Culture

##### **Bhasha Samman**

- **Instituted in** - 1996, by *Sahitya Akademi*.
- **Awarded to** - *Writers, scholars, editors, collectors, performers or translators* who have made considerable contribution to the propagation, modernization or enrichment of the languages concerned.
- **Price** - Rs.1 lakh.
- **Annual award** - Given for *3-4 persons* in different languages on the basis of recommendation of experts' committees.

##### **Sahitya Akademi**

- It is an autonomous body under *Ministry of Culture*.
- **Established in** - 1954.
- **Registered under** - Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- **Objectives** - To promote of *Indian literature in 24 languages*.
- To encourage the preservation and promotion of languages, not only the recognized languages but specially the *unrecognized and tribal language* of India.

#### Environment

### **Sustainable Alternative to Plastics**

IIT-Madras have developed an agriculture waste-based packaging material using 2 fungal mushrooms.

- **Two strains -**

- Ganoderma lucidum, known for its medicinal properties.
- Pleurotus ostreatus, recognized for its edibility, nutritional value, and medicinal properties.

- **Production** - These strains were allowed to grow on 5 different substrates such as cardboard, sawdust, paper, coco pith, and hay.

- **Alternative material** - Ganoderma on cardboard achieved a compressive strength greater than expanded polystyrene (EPS).

- **Significance** - Reduce the 4 million-odd tonnes of plastic waste.

### **Science**

#### **Criteria for Setting up Nuclear Plant**

- **Geography** - Topography & accessibility.
- **Infrastructure** - For transportation & construction facilities.
- **Resources** - Township for staff, and availability of power,
- Feasibility of power evacuation and availability of cooling water.
- **Safety aspects related to** - Geology, seismology (not falling in seismic zone V) and meteorology.

#### **Steps to Enhance Gestation Period for Nuclear Plant**

- **Tech-Driven Design** - Use of extensive application of computers in speeding design process.
- **Workflow Optimization** - To provide sophisticated tools for project management.
- **Construction Innovation** - Enhance advancement in civil construction methodology and mechanization.
- **Concurrent Construction** - To build a parallel civil and mechanical erection & open top construction.

#### **Computer & Information Security Advisory Group (CISAG)**

- It is a specialist groups under Department of Atomic energy (DAE).
- **Aim** - To focus on the cyber security and information security of DAE units, including nuclear facilities.
- To regulate cyber security audit of Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited.

#### **Seismic Microzonation Data**

Total 3032 earthquakes were recorded within India including Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea during last 5 years.

- **Seismic microzonation** - It is a process of classifying a region into zones of relatively similar exposure to various earthquake-related effects.
- **Released by** - National Centre for Seismology, Ministry of Earth Science.
- **Seismic observatories** - 168 stations across India.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **Field Marshal Manekshaw**

Recently, Field marshal Manekshaw has been included in class 8<sup>th</sup> Urdu NCERT curricula.

- **Birth** - 1914, Amritsar.
- **Recognition** - 1<sup>st</sup> Indian military officer to be promoted to the rank of field marshal, the highest rank in the Indian Army.
- **Participated in** - World War II, India-Pakistan War in 1947 & 1965.
- **Awarded** - Padma Bhushan in 1968 and Padma Vibhushan in 1972.

### **Brigadier Mohammad Usman**

Recently, Brigadier Mohammad Usman has been included in class 7<sup>th</sup> Urdu NCERT curricula.

- He famously known as the "Lion of Nowshera".
- **Birth** - 1912, in Azamgarh, UP.
- **Participated** - Battle of Nowshera, Indo-Pak war of 1947-48.
- He was commanding the 50 (Independent) Parachute Brigade in Jammu and Kashmir.
- He was the highest-ranking officer of the Indian Army to be killed in action during the 1947-48 war.
- **Awarded posthumously** - Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), India's second-highest wartime gallantry award.

### **Major Mohit Sharma**

Recently, Major Mohit Sharma has been included in class 8<sup>th</sup> English NCERT curricula.

- His code name was "Iftikhar Bhatt".
- **Birth** - 1978 in Rohtak, Haryana.
- **Participated in** - Covert operation, died while leading Bravo Assault team and saved 2 soldiers.
- **Awarded** - 1<sup>st</sup> medal for gallantry COASM (Chief of Army Staff Commendation Medal) in the year 2002.
- "Sena Medal" gallantry for his act of bravery.
- Ashoka Chakra (posthumously) which is highest peacetime gallantry award.