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	
Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)	Provide *financial assistance for area expansion* of short duration medicinal plants.
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	It supports *value addition, processing and marketing* of forest and agricultural produce gathered by tribal communities under • PM Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) • PM- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) scheme

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 8th Urdu NCERT curricula.

• **Birth –** 1914, Amritsar.

• **Recognition –** 1st 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 7th 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 8th 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 –** 1st 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*.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering