



ONLYIAS
BY PHYSICS WALLAH

MONTHLY CURRENT WALLAH

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

SEPTEMBER 2025

 **ESSAY CONTEST**

- Ethics Lead
- Practice Questions
- Data Points



• SCHEMES IN NEWS • PLACES IN NEWS • GUIDING ILLUSTRATIVE

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12. TEST YOURSELF

PRELIMS

1.1 Mahabodhi Temple

Context: Recently, Prime Minister of Bhutan, **Tshering Tobgay**, visited the Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya in Bihar.

About Mahabodhi Temple:

- The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is **one of the four holy sites** related to the **life of the Lord Buddha**, and particularly to the **attainment of Enlightenment**.
 - The other three sites: **Lumbini** (Nepal): Birthplace of Buddha, **Sarnath** (Uttar Pradesh): Site of the first sermon (Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana), **Kushinagar** (Uttar Pradesh): Place of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana (death).
- Construction:** It was Built originally by **Emperor Ashoka (3rd century BCE)**, an Ashokan pillar still present.
 - The present brick temple dates back to **5th–6th century CE**, one of the **oldest brick structures in India**
- Location:** It is located in **Bodhgaya, Gaya district, Bihar** and Situated on the banks of the **Niranjana (Phalgu) River**.
- Historical & Spiritual Significance:** Lord Buddha attained **Bodhi (enlightenment)** under the **Bodhi Tree** here (**~531 BCE**).
 - Bodhi Tree:** The sacred Bodhi Tree here is believed to be a direct descendant of the original tree.
- UNESCO Recognition:** Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002**.



Architectural Features:

- Style:** **Nagara style of temple architecture**, among the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely with brick.
 - Surrounded by smaller stupas and shrines, many from the **Pala period (8th–12th centuries CE)**.
- Main Shikhara:** A 50-meter-high pyramidal tower, adorned with niches, arch motifs, and intricate carvings.
- Corner Towers:** Four identical smaller towers at the corners, each crowned with an umbrella-shaped dome.
- Vajrasana (Diamond Throne):** Stone platform marking the exact site of Buddha's meditation.

1.2 100th year of the Self-Respect Movement

Context: 2025 marks the centenary of the **Self-Respect Movement (1925–2025)**.

About Self Respect Movement:

- Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, a social reformer and later founder of Dravidar Kazhagam, launched the **Tamil weekly Kudi Arasu (Republic) in 1925** in Tamil Nadu, which paved the way for the formal beginning of the Self-Respect Movement.
- It was a **radical social reform initiative** that **redefined political and social discourse in Tamil Nadu**, focusing on **caste, gender, and rationalist critique** of Hindu orthodoxy.

Ideological Foundations:

- The core ideals were **self-respect, social equality, and rationalism**. Periyar rejected caste hierarchy and Brahminical dominance.
- He opposed religious superstitions, rituals, and any claim of scriptural authority that reinforced social inequality.



Key Features of Movement:

- Radical Social Reform:** Promoted self-respect marriages, widow and inter-caste marriages, divorce rights, and women's equality in property and reproductive choices.
- Rationalism & Anti-Brahminism:** Challenged religious dogmas, caste rituals, and scriptural authority.
- Mass Mobilisation:** Reached peasants, workers, and marginalized groups, giving non-Brahmins a distinct social identity.
- Journalism as Tool:** Used Kudi Arasu to spread reformist ideas and counter Brahmin-dominated narratives.
- Contributions & Legacy:**
 - Periyar's Role:** Instilled self-respect, dignity, and awareness of rights among **non-Brahmins**; spread **rationalist thinking that influenced Dravidian politics**.
 - Impact on Tamil Nadu:** Shifted politics **from pure nationalism to social justice**; laid the groundwork for **Dravidian parties like DMK and AIADMK**.
 - Legal & Social Recognition:** Self-respect marriages gained legal status in Tamil Nadu and were upheld by courts, cementing their social legitimacy.

1.3 Guru Tegh Bahadur

Context: Indian Railways is to commemorate the **350th Martyrdom Day of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji**.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

- **Ninth Sikh Guru:** Served as Guru from 1664–1675, remembered for his spiritual depth and defense of justice.
- **Birth:** Born on **April 1, 1621**, in **Amritsar, Punjab**; youngest son of **Guru Hargobind (6th Guru)** and Mata Nanaki.
- **Early Name & Training:** Born as Tyag Mal; trained in **martial arts, archery, horsemanship, and spiritual learning** under Guru Hargobind.
- **‘Tegh Bahadur’:** Earned after his valor in battle against Mughal forces (Tegh = sword).
- **Son:** Gobind Rai, who later became **Guru Gobind Singh**, the 10th Sikh Guru.
- **Teachings & Contributions**
 - Advocated **truthful living, humility, high moral conduct, and human rights**.
 - Urged detachment from materialism and devotion to **One God**.
 - Composed **115 hymns**, enshrined in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
 - Emphasized values of **Nirbhau (fearlessness)** and **Nirvair (without enmity)**.
- **Martyrdom (Shaheedi Diwas)**
 - **Cause:** He opposed **Aurangzeb’s policy of forced conversion** of Kashmiri Pandits to Islam.
 - **Execution:** He was publicly executed in **Delhi in November, 1675** (at Chandni Chowk, present site of Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib).
 - November 24 is commemorated as the **Shaheedi Divas**.



1.4 Kolhan’s Manki-Munda System

Context: Recently, **Ho tribe in Jharkhand’s West Singhbhum** protested against the interference in their **traditional Manki-Munda system**.

About the Manki-Munda System:

- A **traditional, decentralised self-governance model** followed by the **Ho tribe of Jharkhand’s Kolhan region**.
- **Leadership Structure:**
 - **Munda:** **Hereditary village head**; Resolve disputes at the **village level**.
 - **Manki:** Head of a pidh (cluster of **8–15 villages**); Handled **appeals beyond the Munda’s authority**.

About Ho Tribe:

- **Ethnic Group:** The Ho (also called Kolha, Hodoko, Horo) are an **Austroasiatic Munda ethnic group of India**.
 - Ho means “**Human**” in their own language.
- **Distribution:** Concentrated in the **Kolhan region of Jharkhand**, also found in **Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar**.
- **Language:** They speak the Ho language
- **Livelihood:** Predominantly **agricultural community** engaged as **landowners, cultivators, and labourers**; some also **work in mining**.
- **Religious Functionaries:** A deuri (**village priest**) performs rituals, while a deowa (**spirit doctor**) conducts **sacrifices to deities and spirits**.

1.5 UNESCO’s Tentative List of Natural Heritage Sites.

Context: Seven sites from India have recently been added to UNESCO’s Tentative List of Natural Heritage Sites.

- As of August 2025, a total of 14 new sites have been added this year, bringing the current number of Indian sites on the tentative list to 69.

About UNESCO’s Tentative List of Natural Heritage Sites

- The Tentative List is the first step in the process of gaining full World Heritage Site status.
- It serves as an inventory of natural and cultural heritage sites that a State Party considers to have potential Outstanding Universal Value to humanity.

List of New Entrants:

- **Deccan Traps at Panchgani & Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra**
- **St. Mary’s Island Cluster, Karnataka**
- **Meghalayan Age Caves, Meghalaya**
- **Naga Hill Ophiolite, Nagaland**
- **Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red Sand Hills), Andhra Pradesh**
- **Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills, Andhra Pradesh**
- **Varkala Cliffs, Kerala**

1.6 Chhath Puja

Context: India has initiated a multinational nomination of Chhath festival for inscription on **UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage**.

About Chhath Puja:

- Chhath is one of India’s oldest festivals, **dedicated to the Sun God and Goddess Chhathi Maiya**.
- Predominantly celebrated in **Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal**, and among diaspora communities in Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, UAE, and the Netherlands.
- **Cultural Significance**
 - Known for its **ecological ethos**, promoting reverence for **nature, water bodies, and sustainability**.

- Strongly **egalitarian** as it transcends caste, creed, and religion.
- Rituals emphasize **simplicity, self-discipline, devotion, and community spirit**.

About UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List:

- UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003
- AIM:** It is an **international treaty** aimed at protecting and promoting intangible cultural heritage worldwide.
- UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages of India: (15 as of September 2025)**
 - Nawrouz** (Persian New Year), **Garba** of Gujarat, **Durga Puja** in Kolkata, **Kumbh Mela**, **Yoga**, **Traditional brass and copper craft** of utensil making among (Punjab), **Sankirtana** of Manipur, **Buddhist chanting** of Ladakh, **Chhau dance**, **Kalbelia folk songs** and dances of Rajasthan, **Mudi yettu** of Kerala, **Ramman festival** and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, **Kutiyattam Sanskrit theatre**, Tradition of **Vedic chanting**, and **Ramlila** (traditional performance of the Ramayana).
- Significance:** Recognition helps preserve living traditions, promotes cultural diversity, and enhances global awareness of community practices.

1.7 Mohenjodaro 'Dancing Girl'

Context: A replica of the Mohenjodaro 'Dancing Girl' was recently reported stolen from the National Museum, New Delhi.

About the 'Dancing Girl'

- The Dancing Girl is a **bronze figurine measuring 10.5 cm in height**, discovered at Mohenjodaro, one of the major **urban centers of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**.
- Technique:**
 - Created using the lost-wax casting method, it reflects the advanced metallurgical skills of the Harappans.
 - This method involves coating a wax model with clay, melting out the wax, and then replacing it with molten metal to create intricate designs.



Physical Features and Artistic Expression

- The figure depicts a **young nude female, adorned with a necklace**.
- She wears **numerous bangles on one arm**, while the other rests confidently on her hip, **symbolizing poise and self-assurance**.

Cultural and Historical Significance

- The figurine is regarded as a **secular artistic creation**, unlike religious or ritual artifacts common in many ancient cultures.

- It demonstrates the Harappan community's **aesthetic sensibility, artistic innovation**, and emphasis on realism in sculpture.

About Mohenjodaro

- Mohenjodaro was one of the principal urban centers of the Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2500 BCE), located in present-day **Sindh province, Pakistan, near the Indus River**.
- It is renowned for advanced **urban planning, featuring grid-pattern streets**, covered drainage systems, standardized fired bricks, and monumental structures such as the **Great Bath**.
- Artifacts recovered, including seals, pottery, and figurines like the Dancing Girl, provide evidence of a highly organized, prosperous, and technologically advanced civilization.

1.8 Gyan Bharatam

Prime Minister inaugurated the **International Conference on Gyan Bharatam** and launched the **Gyan Bharatam Portal**.

About Gyan Bharatam Conference & Gyan Bharatam Portal

- Gyan Bharatam Conference: The First international platform** that has invited **stakeholders** from across the **country** to discuss, deliberate, and chart the way forward for preserving and digitising India's manuscript heritage.
- Gyan Bharatam Portal:** A dedicated **digital platform** to accelerate **manuscript digitisation, preservation, and public access**

About Gyan Bharatam Mission

- It's a national initiative to **preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage**, integrating **tradition with technology for future generations**.
- Announced in:** Union Budget 2025-26
- Aim:** To **survey, document, and conserve India's vast manuscript heritage**.
- Focus Areas:** This mission primarily targets manuscripts held by academic institutions, museums, libraries, and private collectors to ensure their systematic preservation.
- Objective:** To cover over **one crore manuscripts**, guaranteeing their **long-term preservation and accessibility for future generations**.
- Revival of NMM:** Through this initiative, the government is making a significant effort to revive the **National Manuscripts Mission (NMM)**, which was **launched in 2003** but remained largely inactive.
- Budget Allocation:** The financial allocation for the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)** has seen a significant increase from ₹3.5 crore to ₹60 crore in the **Union Budget 2025-26** to accommodate the **Gyan Bharatam Mission**.
- Implementing Ministry:** The Ministry of Culture

PRELIMS + MAINS

2.1 Supreme Court Questions Allocation of Disability Quotas

Context: Recently, the Supreme Court asked the Centre why PwD candidates qualifying on general merit are not counted in the unreserved list, thereby blocking reserved seats for others.

Supreme Court's Observations:

- **Upward Mobility Principle:** The Bench noted that denying such upward mobility defeats the purpose of reservation under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.
- **Hostile Discrimination:** The Court noted that OBC/SC/ST candidates are granted upward movement on merit, but PwDs are not, creating "hostile discrimination".
- **Purpose of Reservation:** Reservation is meant to mainstream PwDs, not to restrict them to fixed seats.
- **Lens of Diversity:** Disability must be seen not as a deficit, but as a test of inclusivity of legal and institutional frameworks.
- **Project Ability Empowerment:** The SC also initiated "Project Ability Empowerment", entrusting eight National Law Universities (NLUs) to conduct a nationwide monitoring of care institutions housing persons with cognitive disabilities.

Legal Framework in India:

- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016:** The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 was enacted to align India's disability laws with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD).
 - ◆ India ratified UNCPRD in 2007.
 - RPwD Act aims to ensure the rights, equality, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.
 - The 2016 Act replaced the earlier Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

Significance of Upward Mobility:

- **Judicial Concern on Discrimination:** The Supreme Court flagged the absence of parity with other reserved categories.
 - OBC, SC, and ST candidates who qualify on merit are shifted to the general category, but PwDs are denied this upward movement, amounting to what the Court called "hostile discrimination."
- **Constitutional Equality:** Denying upward mobility undermines Articles 14, 15, and 16, which guarantee equality and equal opportunity, as well as Article 21, which safeguards dignity.
- **Quota Effectiveness:** Without upward mobility, the increased quota under RPwD Act remains underutilised.
 - Despite raising reservation from 3% to 4% in 2016, actual representation has stagnated at around 1%, showing that policy intent is not translating into outcomes.

DATA POINT**Current Status of Disability Representation in India**

- 🎯 **Legal Mandate vs Reality:** 4% quota under RPwD Act, 2016, but only **~1.1% in jobs**.
- 🎯 **Employment (2022):** 21,874 PwDs in Central Ministries (**1.15%**).
- 🎯 **By Groups:**
 - Group A – 1%
 - Group B – 1.53%
 - Group C (non-Safai Karmachari) – 1.1%
 - Group C (Safai Karmachari) – 1.93% (highest)
- 🎯 **Slow Growth:** From 2011 to 2022, PwD employee strength rose marginally from **15,747 to 22,000**, remaining well below the mandated **4% quota**.

CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S DISABILITY INITIATIVES**1995 – Persons with Disabilities Act**

- First comprehensive law: 3% reservation in jobs & education; ensured equal opportunities.

2015 – Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

- Launched by DEPwD to make public spaces, ICT & transport accessible.

2016 – Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act

- Expanded disabilities from 7 → 21 categories; raised job reservation from 3% → 4%.

2016 – Unique Disability ID (UDID) Project

- National database & single ID card for PwDs to access benefits.

2022 – Supreme Court Judgment

- Upheld reservation in promotions for PwDs in government jobs.

- **Social Justice Mandate:** Upward mobility advances social justice as mandated by the Directive Principles.
 - **Articles 38 and 41** require the State to secure a **just social order and assistance for disabled persons**. Ensuring upward mobility makes reservation a **tool for empowerment rather than tokenism**.
- **Global Commitments:** India's obligations under international conventions require it to adopt inclusive policies.
 - As a signatory to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** since **2007**, India must guarantee **equal opportunity and non-discrimination**, making upward mobility a compliance requirement.
- **Persistent Underrepresentation:** PwDs remain grossly underrepresented in Central government employment despite legal provisions.
- **Skewed Representation in Higher Positions:** PwDs are concentrated in lower categories with negligible presence in senior roles.

About Disability-Based Discrimination:

- Disability-based discrimination refers to **unfair treatment, exclusion, or denial of rights** and opportunities to individuals based on their physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disabilities.
- It occurs when a person with a disability is **treated differently or unfavorably** compared to others in similar situations
- It may lead to **inequality in access to education, employment, healthcare, public services**, and other aspects of life.

Challenges in Implementation:

- **Policy Ambiguity:** The rules on upward movement remain unclear in practice despite DoPT clarifications.
 - The **DoPT FAQ (2018)** allows PwDs to be treated as unreserved if they qualify without relaxed standards, but **ministries often fail to apply this consistently**.
- **Incomplete Data and Monitoring:** Lack of comprehensive disability employment data reduces accountability.
 - After **2018**, DoPT's annual reports excluded several ministries, leading to a reported fall in total government staff from **30 lakh to 20 lakh**, making PwD representation data unreliable.
- **Institutional Bias in Recruitment:** PwDs are disproportionately placed in low-skill posts.
 - The **highest concentration of PwDs** in the Central government is among **Group C sanitation workers**, showing lack of inclusion in higher administrative and technical posts.
- **Certification and Awareness Deficits:** A large section of PwDs is excluded from benefits due to low ID coverage and lack of awareness.
 - With **less than 40% of PwDs holding valid IDs**, many remain outside the quota system and **do not demand their right to upward mobility**.

Way Forward:

- **Policy Notification for Mobility:** The Union Government should issue a binding directive on upward movement in recruitment and promotions.
 - Joint action by the **DoPT and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJE)** can ensure that all ministries adopt the **Supreme Court's mandate**.
- **Rule Harmonisation Across Services:** Central and State service rules should be revised to align with RPwD Act provisions.
 - Amendments should ensure **PwDs receive parity with OBC/SC/ST upward mobility practices**, leaving reserved seats for others.
- **Data Transparency and Audits:** Disability representation data must be regularly published and verified.
 - The **DoPT Annual Report** should resume **full coverage across ministries**, with **independent audits** for compliance.
- **Universal Disability ID Coverage:** The UDID project must be accelerated to ensure all eligible PwDs get IDs.
 - Full-scale implementation of the **Unique Disability ID (UDID) scheme** can provide **100% certification**, enabling equal access to reservation benefits.

Global Initiatives on Disability Inclusion



United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):

Provides a global legal framework for ensuring **non-discrimination, accessibility**, and equal participation of PwDs.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):

Monitors states for compliance with human rights obligations of PwDs.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Disability Inclusion Framework:

Encourages governments to integrate PwDs into labour markets by reducing structural barriers.

- **Capacity Building and Sensitisation:** Training institutions must integrate disability rights in their curriculum.
- **Independent Oversight Mechanism:** Create a central body for monitoring PwD employment and mobility.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court reaffirmed that **reservation is a ladder, not a cage**. With PwDs forming only **1% of the workforce against a mandated 4%**, ensuring upward mobility is vital for converting **formal equality into substantive empowerment**.

- **“The true measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members” — this judgment anchors India’s constitutional vision of equality, dignity, and justice for PwDs.**

2.2 Protecting India’s Geriatric Population

Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that **heat-related mortality** among the elderly has increased by **85 per cent globally since the 1990s**.

More on News:

- In India, deaths among people over **65 due to extreme heat rose by 55 per cent between 2000–2004 and 2017–2021**. In **10 Indian cities**, daily mortality among the **elderly rose by 14.7 percent**, attributed to extreme heat events.
 - **Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan** recorded the highest number of heatwave-related deaths in the country.
- The rising burden of extreme heat, compounded by the rapidly growing geriatric population, poses a serious challenge to human survival and well-being.

Who is Elderly?

- **National Policy on Older Persons, 1999, and the National Policy for Senior Citizens, 2011**, designate **persons aged 60 years and above** as elderly, focusing on their welfare, healthcare, financial security, and social inclusion.

Challenges Faced by the Elderly in India

- **Health-Related Challenges**
 - **Rising Burden of Diseases:** **75%** of elderly suffer from one or more **chronic diseases**, and **23.3%** suffer from **multi-morbidity** (multiple co-existing conditions).
 - ◆ **Common illnesses:** Diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, dementia, cancer.
 - **Limited Access to Healthcare:** Only **18%** of the elderly have health insurance; majority incur **high out-of-pocket expenses (OOPE)**.
 - ◆ Geriatric care is largely confined to urban tertiary centers; rural access remains weak.
 - **Limited Trained Workforce:** **Shortage of geriatricians**, geriatric-trained nurses, and physiotherapists.
- **Social Challenges**
 - **Isolation and Abandonment:** Rise of **nuclear families** and **youth**
 - **Elder Abuse:** At least **5%** of elderly have experienced **physical, emotional, or financial abuse**.
 - **Poor Awareness of Rights and Schemes:** Only **12%** aware of the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007)**.
 - ◆ **28%** aware of any senior citizen concession.
- **Economic Challenges**
 - **Lack of Financial Security:** **78%** of elderly have **no pension coverage**.
 - ◆ Many continue unpaid work, especially in agriculture—**65% of elderly in rural areas** still work post-retirement.
 - **High Healthcare Costs:** Mean OOPE for inpatient care: **₹31,933**—major reason for indebtedness (26% in urban India).

DATA POINT

Status of the Elderly Population in India
(NITI Aayog Report, 2024)

- 📊 12% of the total population consists of elderly people and is projected to reach **319 million** by 2050, growing at a rate of around **3% per year**.
- 📊 The overall **sex ratio** in the elderly population is **1065**.
- 📊 **58% of the total number** elderly are **women**, out of which **54% are widows**
- 📊 The overall **dependency ratio** is **62 per 100 working-age population**
- 📊 **7 out of 10** elderly persons reside in rural areas.

Geriatric Care

EXTRA EDGE

- ✔ **Geriatric Care** refers to the specialised medical and non-medical care provided to meet the health, functional, psychological, and social needs of older adults, typically those **aged 60 years and above**.

- **Highest CDR:** Odisha (8.3).
- **Lowest CDR:** Delhi (4.1).
- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR):** National IMR stands at **25 per 1,000 live births**, a one-point decline from 2022 and a 7-point fall over the last five years.
- **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB):** Stood at **917 females per 1,000 males** in 2023, improving by three points over the previous year.
 - **SRB:** Highest in Chhattisgarh (974) and Kerala (971); lowest in Uttarakhand (868). Bihar's SRB declined from 964 (2020) to 897 (2023).

KEY TERMS



- **CBR:** The number of live births per **1,000 people** in a given year. It reflects the **overall fertility level** of a population.
- **TFR:** The **average number of children a woman is expected to have** during her reproductive years (15–49), assuming current fertility patterns continue.
- **CDR:** The number of deaths per **1,000 people** in a given year. It indicates **mortality trends** in a population.
- **IMR:** The number of infants dying **before reaching one year of age per 1,000 live births**. It is a sensitive indicator of healthcare quality and socio-economic development.
- **SRB:** The number of **female births per 1,000 male births** in a population. A low SRB often reflects **gender bias and sex-selective practices**.
- **Elderly Population Share:** The proportion of people aged **60 years and above** in the total population. It highlights the **ageing trend** and the need for senior welfare measures.

2.5 Himachal Pradesh Declared Fully Literate

Context: Ministry of Education declared Himachal Pradesh the **fifth State/UT** to achieve **full functional literacy** with **99.30%** literacy, after Tripura, Mizoram, Goa, and Ladakh.

About the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT):

- It is a **nationwide test** to assess the **foundational literacy and numeracy skills** of registered **non-literate learners** aged 15 and above.
- **Test Language:** Administered in the learners' **regional language**, supporting **multilingualism** as emphasised by NEP 2020.
- **Assessment Coverage:** Evaluates **Reading, Writing, and Numeracy**, with each section carrying **50 marks**, totalling **150 marks**.

About New India Literacy Programme (NILP)

- **Overview:** NILP, also known as **ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society)**, is a **centrally sponsored scheme** Implemented during **FY 2022–27 (5 years)** by **Ministry of Education (MoE)**

- **Volunteer-driven:** It will leverage the support of student volunteers and community participation for teaching and learning.
- **Objective**
 - Target all **non-literate adults (15+ years)**, with emphasis on **women** and **educationally backward states**.
 - Educate **5 crore learners (1 crore per year)** through the **Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)**, developed with NIC, NCERT, and NIOS.
- **Five Components of NILP**
 - **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** – Basic reading, writing, and arithmetic.
 - **Critical Life Skills** – Digital literacy, financial literacy, health awareness, and legal literacy.
 - **Basic Education** – Equivalent to Classes 3, 5, and 8.
 - **Vocational Skills Development** – Skill-building to enhance employability.
 - **Continuing Education** – Lifelong learning opportunities and community libraries.

DEFINITION OF LITERACY AND FULL LITERACY



(As per the Ministry of Education (MoE))

01

Literacy: Ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension; includes digital literacy, financial literacy, and critical life skills.

02

Full Literacy: Achieving **95% literacy** in a State/UT (considered equivalent to 100%).

03

Assessment: Under **NILP**, a non-literate person is officially recognised as literate upon clearing the **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT)**.

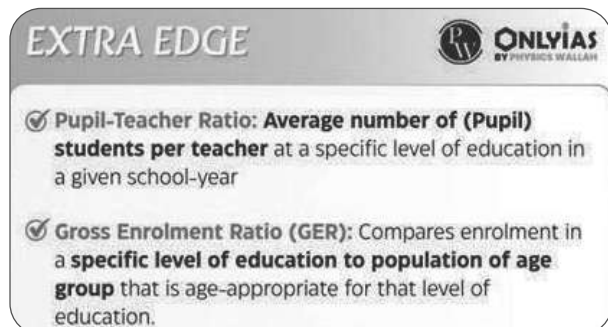
2.6 UDISE+ 2024-25 Report

Context: Recently, The **Ministry of Education** released the **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2024–25** report.

About UDISE+

- It is a **digital application** with the mandate of collecting information from all recognized schools imparting formal education from **Pre-primary to XII**.
- **Launch :** It was launched in **2018-2019** to speed up data entry, reduce errors, improve data quality and ease its verification.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education



Major Highlights of the UDISE+ Report

- **Dropout Rates Declined Across Levels:** Preparatory (from 3.7% to 2.3%), Middle (5.2% to 3.5%), and Secondary (10.9% to 8.2%).
- **Improved Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR):** For the first time, the total number of teachers has crossed 1 crore, marking a 6.7% rise since 2022–23.
- **Pupil-Teacher Ratio :** PTR has significantly improved at all levels: Foundational (10), Preparatory (13), Middle (17), and Secondary (21), well within NEP's recommended ratio of 1:30.
- **Retention Rates Improved:** Foundational (98.9%), Preparatory (92.4%), Middle (82.8%), and Secondary (47.2%).
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio:** GER rose at Middle (from 89.5% to 90.3%) and Secondary (from 66.5% to 68.5%) levels; Reflects improved access and participation at higher grades.
- **Transition rates improved:** Foundational to Preparatory (98.6%), Preparatory to Middle (92.2%), and Middle to Secondary (86.6%), reflecting smoother student progression.
- **School Infrastructure Upgrades:**
 - **Schools with computers** rose to 64.7% from 57.2% last year.
 - **Internet connectivity** reached 63.5%, up from 53.9%.
 - **Electricity access** is available in 93.6% of schools; safe drinking water in 99.3%.
 - **Sanitation facilities** are nearly universal: girls' toilets (97.3%), boys' toilets (96.2%), handwashing stations (95.9%).
- **Inclusivity:** Schools with **ramps** and **handrails** increased to **54.9%**, enhancing accessibility for children with disabilities.

NEWS IN SHORT

Moran Community	<p>The Moran community in Assam demanded Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.</p> <p>About Moran Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Morans are an indigenous Assamese community, historically agrarian and concentrated in Upper Assam, especially Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts. • Ethnicity: Early settlers of the Brahmaputra Valley trace their ancestry to Assamese tribal groups. • Language: Assamese (with Tai-Ahom linguistic influences). • Religious Affiliation: In the 17th century, Aniruddhadeva converted them to Vaishnavism, sparking cultural and social regeneration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They belong to the Moamoria sect of Vaishnavism and have a small population in Arunachal Pradesh's Namsai district.
Maternal Mortality Ratio	<p>Puducherry has become the first Union Territory in India to achieve zero maternal mortality during 2024–25, earning a Platinum Certificate from the Union government.</p> <p>What is the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal mortality refers to the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, due to pregnancy-related causes, excluding accidental or incidental causes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ MMR is the number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births • SDG Target: Under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1, India has committed to reduce MMR to 70 per 1,00,000 live births by 2030.

Adi Sanskriti	<p>The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched world's first Digital Tribal University- Adi Sanskriti.</p> <p>About Adi Sanskriti</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of Platform: A digital academy and e-learning platform integrating an online marketplace for tribal arts, crafts, culture, and knowledge systems. • Ministry: Ministry of Tribal Affairs. • Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To preserve and promote India's tribal heritage. ◦ To create sustainable livelihood opportunities for tribal communities. ◦ To integrate tribal culture with modern digital education and commerce. • Implementation: Built in collaboration with State Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) and implemented in phased stages. 												
Adi Vaani	<p>The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the beta version of its Adi Vaani Adivasi language translation application.</p> <p>About Adi Vaani:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's first AI-powered translator for tribal languages. • It is designed to bridge communication gaps between tribal and non-tribal communities and also safeguard endangered tribal languages using advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI). • Developed under: Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh • Translates between Hindi, English, and various tribal languages • Developed by: A team led by IIT Delhi with BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Nava Raipur, and Tribal Research Institutes. 												
National Annual Report and Index on Women's Safety (NARI)	<p>The National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025, released by the National Commission for Women (NCW).</p> <p>About National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a survey-based national safety index that documents lived experiences, unreported harassment, and perceptions of safety beyond official crime data. • Benchmark: With a national safety score set at 65 per cent, cities were rated as performing 'much above', 'above', 'below', or 'much below' this benchmark. <p>Key Findings of the Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safest cities: Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, Mumbai. • Least safe cities: Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, Ranchi. • Vulnerability : 7% of women reported harassment, with younger women (under 24) nearly twice as affected at 14%. • Most reported hotspots of harassment for women: Neighbourhoods (38 per cent) and public transport (29 per cent) • Reporting rate: Only 1 in 3 women report harassment 												
NIRF India Rankings 2025	<p>The Ministry of Education released the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) India Rankings 2025.</p> <p>About National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an initiative by the Indian government to assess and rank higher education institutions in the country <table border="1" data-bbox="807 1733 1489 1980"> <thead> <tr> <th>Parameter</th><th>Weightage (in %)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Teaching, Learning & Resources</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr> <td>Research & Professional Practice</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr> <td>Graduation Outcome</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr> <td>Outreach & Inclusivity</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>Perception</td><td>10</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Parameter	Weightage (in %)	Teaching, Learning & Resources	30	Research & Professional Practice	30	Graduation Outcome	20	Outreach & Inclusivity	10	Perception	10
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1. The Mohenjodaro 'Dancing Girl' is significant in the history of Indian art because:

- (a) It is the earliest known stone carving depicting ritualistic dance.
- (b) It provides evidence of advanced bronze casting techniques in Harappan culture.
- (c) It is one of the first terracotta figurines produced in the Indus valley Civilisation.
- (d) It represents a ritual idol of the Mother Goddess worshipped in Harappan religious practices.

2. Consider the following statements regarding the Tripura Sundari Temple:

- 1. The temple is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas.
- 2. The temple was built by the rulers of Ahom Kingdom in the 16th century .
- 3. The Matabari Peda, offered as prasad at the temple, has been accorded a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

3. Recently seen in the news, Tylenol refers to which of the following?

- (a) A preventive vaccine developed to reduce the risk of autism in newborn children.
- (b) A widely used over-the-counter medicine prescribed for relief from fever and pain.
- (c) An environmental pollutant recently linked in studies to increased incidence of autism among infants.
- (d) A category of microplastics suspected of adversely affecting embryonic development during pregnancy.

4. Consider the following statements regarding the Dadasaheb Phalke Award:

- 1. It is India's highest award in cinema, instituted in 1969.
- 2. It is named after Dadasaheb Phalke, who is regarded as the "Father of Indian Cinema."
- 3. The award consists of a Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus), a cash prize, and a shawl.
- 4. Shri Kamala Hasan , a leading actor of Tamil cinema, has been conferred this award in 2025.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

5. Consider the following statements in respect of the World Archery Championships 2025:

- I. The event was held in Gwangju, South Korea.
- II. India won its maiden gold medal in the men's compound team event by defeating France in the final.

- III. The Indian mixed team pair of Rishabh Yadav and Jyothi Surekha Vennam won gold by defeating the Netherlands in the final.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

6. Consider the following uranium mining/exploration sites with the respective States:

List I (Site)

- 1. Jaduguda
- 2. Tummalapalle
- 3. Domiasiat (Wahkaji)
- 4. Lambapur-Peddagattu

List II (State)

- A. Meghalaya
- B. Jharkhand
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Telangana

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
- (c) Only three (d) All four

7. With reference to the H-1B visa, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a non-immigrant visa category for highly skilled workers.
- 2. The annual quota for H-1B visas has remained fixed since 2004.
- 3. Indian nationals account for more than two-thirds of H-1B recipients.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
- (c) All three (d) None

8. With reference to Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), consider the following statements:

- 1. MMR is the number of maternal deaths during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination, due to pregnancy-related causes, per 10,000 live births.
- 2. Under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1, India has committed to reducing its MMR to 70 per 1,00,000 live births by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

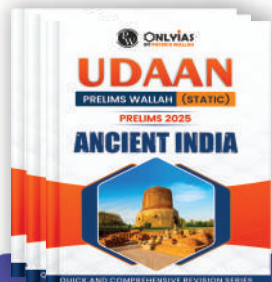
9. With reference to the Bima Sugam Portal, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a unified digital marketplace launched by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- 2. It is the world's first platform integrating life, health, general, and commercial insurance products under one digital public infrastructure model.



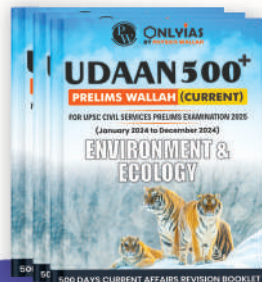
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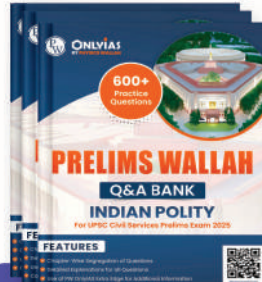
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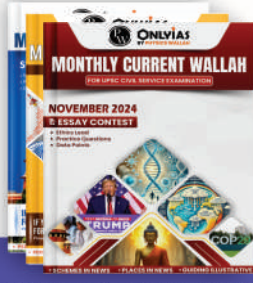
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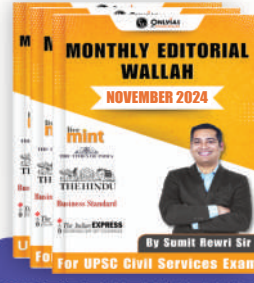
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