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Guiding Dreams, Empowering Future
By DR. V. RAM PRASATH MANOHAR, IAS

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EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS BULLETIN

NCRB's CRIME in India 2024 Report



Why in News?

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the 'Crime in India 2024' report highlighting major crime trends across India.
- The report provides detailed statistics on crimes against women, children, senior citizens, cybercrime, economic offences, suicides, and law and order trends.
- The data is important for policy formulation, policing reforms, and internal security management.

About NCRB

- National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) was established in 1986.
- It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- NCRB collects, analyses, and publishes crime statistics in India.
- It maintains databases related to crime and criminals.
- NCRB also manages Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)

and NAFIS.

Major Highlights of NCRB Crime in India 2024 Report

- Overall cognizable crimes declined by around 6% compared to 2023.
- Murder cases declined by approximately 2.4% in 2024.
- Crimes against women showed a slight decline of about 1.5%.
- Cybercrime and economic offences continued to rise significantly.
- Daily wage workers formed nearly 31% of total suicide victims.
- Farmer and agricultural labourer suicides remained a serious concern despite marginal decline.

Crimes Against Women

- Crimes against women remained among the most reported social crimes.
- Domestic violence, assault, rape, cyber harassment, and dowry-related offences remained major categories.

- Many offences are committed by persons known to the victims.
- Low conviction rates and high pendency continue to weaken justice delivery.
- Need for gender-sensitive policing and fast-track courts remains important.

Crimes Against Children

- POCSO-related offences remain a major concern.
- Online exploitation and cyber grooming of children are increasing.
- Child trafficking and missing children cases require stronger monitoring mechanisms.
- Need for better implementation of child protection systems.

Cybercrime Trends

- Cybercrime cases continued to rise rapidly in 2024.
- Financial frauds formed the largest category of cyber offences.
- UPI frauds, phishing scams, OTP frauds, and digital impersonation increased.
- National Cyber Crime Helpline 1930 and Cyber Crime Reporting Portal play an important role.
- Digital literacy and cyber awareness remain inadequate.

Economic Offences

- Economic offences increased significantly in urban areas.
- Fraud, cheating, forgery, and online scams accounted for nearly 90% of economic crimes.
- Rising digitisation and online transactions created new vulnerabilities.
- Financial frauds impact both citizens and economic confidence.

Suicides in India

- India recorded more than 1.7 lakh suicide cases in 2024.
- Daily wage labourers accounted for the highest proportion of suicides.

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(A FREE Mentorship & Guidance Program for IAS , IPS aspirants)



INDIA-VIETNAM RELATIONS



Why in News?

- The President of Vietnam visited India in 2026, marking the 10th anniversary of the India–Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership established in 2016.
- Both countries upgraded bilateral ties to an ‘Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership’.
- The visit strengthened cooperation in defence, trade, maritime security, digital payments, critical minerals, and Indo-Pacific strategy.

Historical Background of India–Vietnam Relations

- India and Vietnam share historically warm relations based on anti-colonial struggle and mutual trust.

- India supported Vietnam during its freedom struggle and reunification process.
- Diplomatic relations were established in 1972.
- India’s ‘Look East Policy’ and later ‘Act East Policy’ significantly strengthened ties.
- Vietnam is one of India’s most trusted partners in Southeast Asia.

Evolution of Bilateral Relations

- 2007: Strategic Partnership established.
- 2016: Relations upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- 2026: Relations elevated to Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- The relationship has gradually evolved from symbolic friendship to strategic and security-oriented cooperation.

►► From P1

- Economic distress, unemployment, debt, family problems, and mental health issues were major causes.
- Farm sector suicides remained high though slightly lower than previous year.
- Mental healthcare accessibility remains inadequate in many regions.

Farm Sector Suicides

- Over 10,500 people associated with the farming sector died by suicide in 2024.
- Agricultural labourers formed a large share of these deaths.
- Debt burden, crop failure, climate uncertainty, and low income remain major factors.
- Need for agricultural insurance, irrigation, and institutional credit support.

Crimes Against Senior Citizens

- Crimes against senior citizens increased significantly.
- Elderly people increasingly became victims of fraud, abuse, and cybercrime.
- Many offenders were known persons or relatives.
- Growing urban isolation and weak social support systems contributed to vulnerability.

Animal Cruelty Data

- NCRB tracked cruelty against animals separately for the first time.
- Thousands of animal cruelty cases were registered in 2024.
- The move reflects increasing focus on

animal welfare and environmental ethics.

Issues Identified in Criminal Justice System

- High pendency of cases in courts.
- Low conviction rates in many serious crimes.
- Police vacancies and inadequate forensic infrastructure.
- Delay in investigation and filing of charge sheets.
- Need for better coordination among police, judiciary, and forensic agencies.

Government Initiatives

- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).
- National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS).
- Cyber Crime Reporting Portal.
- Emergency Response Support System (112).
- Fast-track courts for crimes against women and children.

Way Forward

- Strengthen police modernization and forensic capabilities.
- Increase cybercrime awareness and digital literacy.
- Improve mental healthcare and suicide prevention systems.
- Enhance gender-sensitive policing and victim support.
- Promote judicial reforms to reduce pendency.
- Use AI and data analytics for predictive

policing and crime monitoring.

Conclusion

The NCRB’s Crime in India 2024 report highlights both progress and emerging challenges in India’s law and order situation. While certain traditional crimes such as murders showed decline, cybercrime, economic offences, crimes against vulnerable groups, and suicides continue to pose serious concerns. The report underlines the need for stronger policing reforms, faster justice delivery, improved mental health systems, technological preparedness, and greater public awareness to ensure a safer and more inclusive society.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), consider the following statements:

1. NCRB functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. NCRB publishes the annual ‘Crime in India’ report.
3. NCRB is responsible for the implementation of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Importance of Vietnam for India

- Vietnam is strategically located near the South China Sea.
- More than 50% of India's trade passes through the South China Sea region.
- Vietnam is a crucial pillar of India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision.
- Vietnam supports a rules-based international order and freedom of navigation.
- Both countries support multipolarity and strategic autonomy.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

- Bilateral trade crossed USD 16 billion in 2025–26.
- Both countries have set a target of USD 25 billion trade by 2030.
- India exports engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and agricultural products.
- India imports electronics, machinery, and mobile components from Vietnam.
- Both countries agreed to accelerate the review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

Defence and Security Cooperation

- Defence cooperation is one of the strongest pillars of bilateral ties.
- India has provided defence Lines of Credit to Vietnam.
- India gifted INS Kirpan missile corvette to Vietnam.
- Regular naval exercises and military exchanges are conducted.
- VINBAX bilateral military exercise focuses on UN Peacekeeping operations.
- India provides training support for Vietnamese armed forces.
- Discussions regarding BrahMos missile exports reflect deeper defence cooperation.

Maritime and Indo-Pacific Cooperation

- Both nations support a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- Vietnam joined India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- Both countries emphasize peaceful resolution of disputes under UNCLOS 1982.
- They support freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.
- The partnership acts as a balancing factor in the Indo-Pacific region.

Rare Earths and Critical Minerals

- India and Vietnam signed agreements on rare earth mineral cooperation.
- Vietnam possesses significant rare earth reserves.
- Cooperation aims to reduce overdependence on limited global suppliers.
- Critical minerals are important for clean energy, defence electronics, semiconductors, and electric vehicles.

Digital and Financial Cooperation

- NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Vietnam's NAPAS signed an agreement for cross-border QR payment interoperability.
- The RBI and State Bank of Vietnam agreed to cooperate in digital financial innovation.
- Digital connectivity will promote tourism, trade, and fintech collaboration.

Cultural and Educational Relations

- Civilizational links are rooted in Buddhism and historical maritime exchanges.
- India promotes cultural diplomacy through ICCR Chairs in Vietnamese universities.
- A Cultural Exchange Programme for 2026–2030 was signed.
- ASI restoration projects at My Son UNESCO World Heritage Site strengthen heritage cooperation.

Development & Humanitarian Cooperation

- India supports Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) under Mekong-Ganga Cooperation.
- India launched Operation Sadbhav to provide relief after Typhoon Yagi in Vietnam.
- India supports capacity building and infrastructure development in Vietnam.

Challenges in India–Vietnam Relations

- Vietnam follows the 'Four No's' defence policy, limiting military alliances.
- Trade imbalance exists in favour of Vietnam.
- Connectivity projects face delays due to instability in Myanmar.
- Slow implementation of defence Lines of Credit projects.
- Differences within ASEAN regarding

Indo-Pacific strategy sometimes reduce regional coordination.

Strategic Importance for India

- Vietnam strengthens India's engagement with ASEAN.
- The partnership counters unilateral dominance in the Indo-Pacific.
- Enhances India's maritime security and energy interests.
- Supports India's role as a net security provider in the region.
- Helps diversify supply chains under the China Plus One strategy.

Way Forward

- Expand defence co-production and defence exports.
- Improve direct shipping and connectivity infrastructure.
- Increase cooperation in semiconductors, renewable energy, and digital economy.
- Strengthen rare earth and critical mineral supply chains.
- Promote tourism, educational exchange, and people-to-people ties.

Conclusion

India–Vietnam relations have evolved into a strong strategic partnership based on mutual trust, maritime cooperation, economic engagement, and shared Indo-Pacific interests. The elevation of ties to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership reflects growing convergence in defence, trade, critical minerals, and regional security. As both nations support a rules-based international order and strategic autonomy, the partnership is expected to play a major role in maintaining stability and balance in the Indo-Pacific region.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, an initiative involving six countries, includes which of the following members?

1. India
2. Myanmar
3. Thailand
4. Cambodia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

National Panchayat Awards 2025

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj announced the National Panchayat Awards 2025 to recognise outstanding Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across India.
- A total of 42 Panchayats from different States and Union Territories were selected under multiple categories.
- Karnataka secured the highest number of awards, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- The awards promote inclusive governance, sustainable rural development, and localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

About National Panchayat Awards

- National Panchayat Awards are annual awards conferred by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- The awards recognise best-performing Panchayats for effective local governance and rural development.
- The awards encourage healthy competition among Panchayats.
- The awards strengthen grassroots democracy and participatory governance.

Implementation Framework

- The awards are implemented under the Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP) Scheme.
- The IoP scheme is a component of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA).
- Winning Panchayats receive financial incentives ranging from ₹50 lakh to ₹5 crore depending on category and tier.

Major Categories of Awards

- Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP).
- Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP).
- Climate Action Special Panchayat Award (CASPA).
- Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award (ANPSA).
- Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar (PKNSSP).

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar

- Recognises Gram Panchayats performing exceptionally in Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs).
- Awards are given across 9 LSDG themes.
- Selection is based on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 scores.
- 34 Gram Panchayats from 17 States and UTs were



selected in 2025.

Nine Themes of Localisation of SDGs (LSDGs)

- Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods Panchayat.
- Healthy Panchayat.
- Child-Friendly Panchayat.
- Water-Sufficient Panchayat.
- Clean and Green Panchayat.
- Self-Sufficient Infrastructure Panchayat.
- Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat.
- Panchayat with Good Governance.
- Women-Friendly Panchayat.

Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar

- Recognises overall best-performing Panchayats at Gram, Block and District levels.
- Awards are given based on combined performance across all development themes.
- 8 Panchayats were selected under this category in 2025.
- Tripura's Sepahijala district won the Best District Panchayat award.

Special Awards

- Climate Action Special Panchayat Award promotes climate-responsive governance and renewable energy adoption.
- Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award promotes own source revenue generation and self-reliance.
- Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar recognises institutions supporting Panchayat capacity building.

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0

- PAI 2.0 is a data-driven framework for assessing Panchayat performance.

Governor's Power in Post-Election

Why in News?

- Following the West Bengal Assembly election results, a constitutional debate emerged regarding the Governor's power when a Chief Minister refuses to resign despite losing majority support in the Assembly.
- The issue is linked with constitutional morality, federalism, democratic mandate, and discretionary powers of the Governor.

Constitutional Background

- **Article 154:** Executive power of the State is vested in the Governor.
- **Article 163:** Governor acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers



except in matters requiring discretion.

- **Article 164(1):** Chief Minister holds office 'during the pleasure of the Governor'.
- **Article 172:** State Legislative Assembly normally has a tenure of five years.

- **Article 174:** Governor can summon, prorogue, and dissolve the State Legislature.
- **Article 356:** President's Rule can be imposed in case of failure of constitutional machinery.

Meaning of 'Pleasure of the Governor'

- The phrase does not mean arbitrary or personal power of the Governor.
- The Supreme Court clarified that the Council of Ministers remains in office only while enjoying majority support in the Legislative Assembly.
- If the ruling party loses majority, the moral and constitutional authority of the Chief Minister weakens. ➔ **Continued on P6**

- Measures progress across social, economic, environmental and governance indicators.
- Promotes transparency, accountability, and evidence-based governance.
- Supports localisation of Sustainable Development Goals.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

- RGSA is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Focuses on capacity building, training, and institutional development.
- Aims to improve governance quality and rural service delivery.
- Supports democratic decentralisation and participatory planning.

Constitutional Background of Panchayati Raj

- Panchayati Raj Institutions received constitutional status through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.
- Part IX of the Constitution deals with Panchayats.
- Article 40 directs the State to organise village Panchayats.
- The Eleventh Schedule contains 29 subjects related to Panchayat administration.

Importance of Panchayati Raj Institutions

- Strengthen grassroots democracy.
- Improve local participation in governance.

- Promote rural development and inclusive growth.
- Improve implementation of welfare schemes.
- Enable decentralised planning and accountability.

Challenges Faced by Panchayats

- Insufficient financial autonomy.
- Limited administrative and technical capacity.
- Dependence on higher levels of government.
- Lack of trained personnel and digital infrastructure.
- Gender and social inequalities in participation.

Significance of National Panchayat Awards

- Encourages innovation and best practices in rural governance.
- Promotes achievement of Sustainable Development Goals at local level.
- Improves transparency and accountability.
- Strengthens cooperative federalism and decentralised governance.
- Supports the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Way Forward

- Increase financial devolution to Panchayats.
- Strengthen digital governance and e-Panchayat systems.
- Improve training and capacity building.
- Promote women and marginalised

- community participation.
- Enhance local planning and social audit mechanisms.

Conclusion

The National Panchayat Awards 2025 highlight the growing importance of Panchayati Raj Institutions in achieving inclusive and sustainable rural development. By rewarding innovation, transparency, climate action, and good governance, the awards strengthen grassroots democracy and encourage localisation of Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening Panchayats through financial empowerment, digital governance, and institutional capacity building is essential for achieving balanced and participatory development in India.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Panchayati Raj Institutions in India:

1. Panchayats were given constitutional status through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
2. Part IX of the Constitution deals with Panchayats.
3. The Eleventh Schedule contains subjects related to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

► From P5

What Happens if a Chief Minister Refuses to Resign?

- The Governor may formally ask the Chief Minister to resign.
- The Governor may invite the leader of the majority party or coalition to form the government.
- If majority is disputed, the Governor can order a Floor Test in the Assembly.
- The Chief Minister must prove majority support through voting in the House.
- If the Chief Minister fails to prove majority, resignation becomes necessary.

Importance of Floor Test

- Floor Test is considered the only constitutionally valid method to determine majority support.
- The Governor cannot decide majority based on letters or media reports alone.
- The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasized the importance of Floor Test in maintaining democratic legitimacy.

Important Supreme Court Judgments

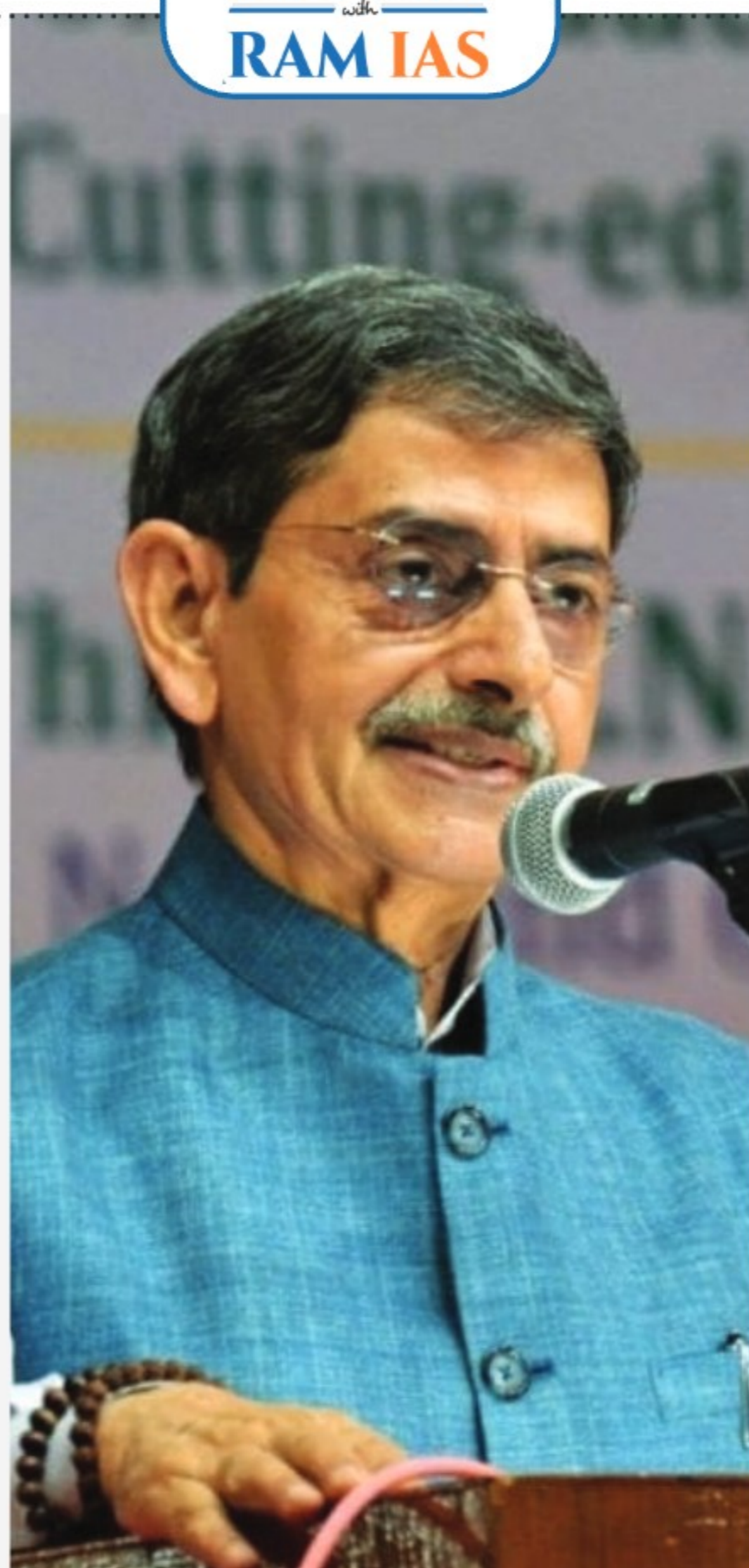
- S.R. Bommai Case (1994): Supreme Court held that majority must be tested on the floor of the House.
- Shivraj Singh Chouhan vs Speaker (2020/2023 developments): Court reiterated that Floor Test is essential when majority is doubtful.
- A.G. Perarivalan Case (2022): Clarified that gubernatorial powers cannot be exercised arbitrarily.

Automatic Dissolution of Assembly

- Under Article 172, once the Assembly tenure ends, the Assembly automatically stands dissolved.
- After dissolution, the outgoing government technically loses its legal basis to continue indefinitely.
- The Governor has the constitutional duty to facilitate formation of a new government.

Governor's Powers During Political Stalemate

- Can seek resignation of the Chief Minister.
- Can call for an immediate Floor Test.
- Can invite another leader with majori-



ty support.

- Can dismiss the Council of Ministers if majority is lost and refusal to resign continues.
- Can recommend President's Rule under Article 356 if no stable government can be formed.

President's Rule and Constitutional Machinery

- President's Rule is imposed when governance cannot continue according to constitutional provisions.
- The Governor sends a report to the President citing breakdown of constitutional machinery.
- The misuse of Article 356 has been criticized in many instances.

Legal Remedies Available to Defeated Candidates

- Under Section 100 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, election results can be challenged through an Election Petition.
- The petition must be filed before the High Court within 45 days.
- Grounds include corrupt practices, electoral malpractice, or violation of legal provisions.

Issues and Concerns

- Possibility of political misuse of Governor's discretionary powers.

- Accusations that Governors sometimes act as agents of the Union Government.
- Frequent tensions between State governments and Governors weaken cooperative federalism.
- Delay in inviting majority parties or recommending President's Rule can create constitutional crises.

Recommendations for Reform

- Sarkaria Commission recommended that Governors should act impartially and avoid political bias.
- Punchhi Commission emphasized fixed guidelines for inviting parties to form government.
- Need for codified conventions regarding post-election government formation.
- Greater judicial oversight can prevent arbitrary constitutional actions.

Conclusion

The Governor plays a crucial constitutional role during post-election political stalemates, but this power is not absolute or arbitrary. The essence of parliamentary democracy requires that the real test of majority must occur on the floor of the House. Judicial pronouncements have consistently emphasized constitutional morality, democratic legitimacy, and federal balance. To preserve cooperative federalism and public trust, Governors must act impartially, transparently, and strictly within constitutional limits.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to the Indian polity, consider the following statements:

1. The Governor of a State is not answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of powers of office.
 2. No criminal proceedings shall be instituted or continued against the Governor during the term of office.
 3. Members of a State Legislature are not liable to court proceedings for anything said within the House.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?**

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

SUGARCANE FRP HIKE

Why in News?

- The Union Government increased the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for the 2026–27 sugar season.
- FRP was increased by ₹10 per quintal to ₹365 per quintal.
- The decision aims to support sugarcane farmers, improve rural income, and maintain sugar sector stability.

What is Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)?

- FRP is the minimum price that sugar mills must pay sugarcane farmers.
- It is announced by the Central Government under the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966.
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommends FRP.
- FRP is legally binding on sugar mills.
- It is different from Minimum Support Price (MSP) because the government itself does not procure sugarcane.

Current FRP Details

- FRP for 2026–27 sugar season: ₹365 per quintal.
- Previous FRP: ₹355 per quintal.
- Applicable at a basic sugar recovery rate of 10.25%.
- Farmers receive additional payment if sugar recovery exceeds the basic recovery level.
- Price deduction applies if recovery falls below the prescribed benchmark.

Meaning of Sugar Recovery Rate

- Recovery rate means the amount of sugar extracted from sugarcane.
- Higher recovery rate increases sugar production efficiency.
- Recovery rate varies across states due to climate, irrigation, and crop variety.
- Maharashtra and Karnataka generally have higher recovery rates than many northern states.

Factors Considered While Fixing FRP

- Cost of sugarcane production.
- Return to farmers from alternative crops.
- Availability of sugar to consumers at reasonable prices.
- Price trends of sugar in domestic and international markets.



- Recovery rate of sugar from cane.
- Overall balance between farmers and sugar industry sustainability.

Difference Between FRP and SAP

- FRP is fixed by the Central Government.
- State Advised Price (SAP) is fixed by some state governments.
- SAP is usually higher than FRP.
- States like Uttar Pradesh announce SAP.
- Higher SAP often increases financial burden on sugar mills.

Importance of Sugar Sector in India

- India is one of the world's largest sugar producers.
- Sugar industry is the second-largest agro-based industry after textiles.
- Millions of farmers depend on sugarcane cultivation.
- The sector generates large rural employment.
- Sugarcane is also important for ethanol production and energy security.

Benefits of FRP Hike

- Improves income security for sugarcane farmers.
- Supports rural purchasing power and consumption.
- Encourages continued sugarcane cultivation.
- Provides price assurance during market fluctuations.

- Supports government's objective of doubling farmers' income.

Challenges Associated with FRP Hike

- Higher FRP increases operational costs for sugar mills.
- Many mills already face delayed payment issues.
- Stagnant sugar prices reduce profit margins of mills.
- Unchanged ethanol procurement prices create additional pressure.
- Excessive sugarcane cultivation may worsen groundwater depletion.

Issue of Cane Arrears

- Cane arrears refer to delayed payments made by sugar mills to farmers.
- Financial stress on mills often leads to pending dues.
- Delayed payments affect farmers' livelihood and debt repayment capacity.
- The government periodically intervenes through subsidies and policy support.

Ethanol Blending & Sugar Sector

- Sugarcane and molasses are major raw materials for ethanol production.
- Ethanol blending helps reduce crude oil imports.
- Government targets 20% ethanol blending in petrol.
- Diversion of sugar towards ethanol reduces excess sugar stock.

- Ethanol policy improves financial stability of sugar mills.

Environmental Concerns

- Sugarcane is a water-intensive crop.
- Over-cultivation can lead to groundwater depletion.
- Large-scale cultivation affects sustainable water management.
- Crop diversification is needed in water-stressed regions.
- Use of drip irrigation and efficient farming practices should be promoted.

Government Initiatives Related to Sugar Sector

- Ethanol Blending Programme.
- Financial assistance for sugar mills.
- Export subsidies and buffer stock support in earlier years.
- Promotion of drip irrigation under PMKSY.
- Digital monitoring of cane payments.

Important Constitutional and Economic Dimensions

- Sugar industry falls under the Concurrent List.
- Both Centre and States influence sugar pricing policies.
- The issue involves agricultural economics, rural welfare, and cooperative federalism.
- FRP policy directly impacts inflation, rural economy, and agro-industries.

Conclusion

The hike in sugarcane FRP reflects the government's effort to balance farmer welfare with the sustainability of the sugar industry. While the increase provides income support to millions of sugarcane farmers, concerns regarding cane arrears, water-intensive cultivation, and financial stress on sugar mills continue to remain significant. Long-term reforms focusing on ethanol expansion, crop diversification,

efficient irrigation, and balanced pricing mechanisms are essential for creating a sustainable and resilient sugar economy in India.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to 'Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)' of sugarcane in India, consider the following statements:

1. FRP is fixed by the Union Government.
2. The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices recommends FRP.
3. Sugar mills are legally bound to pay FRP to farmers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3



India's 1st Indigenous Glide Weapon TARA

Why in News?

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted the maiden flight trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon system off the Odisha coast in May 2026.
- TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system designed to convert conventional unguided bombs into precision-guided glide weapons.
- The successful trial marks a major mile-

stone in India's defence indigenisation and precision-strike capability.

What is TARA?

- TARA stands for Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation.
- It is a modular range extension kit fitted onto existing gravity bombs.
- The system converts 'dumb bombs' into smart precision-guided glide weapons.
- It significantly increases strike range, accuracy, lethality, and operational flexibility.
- The glide weapon can be launched

from multiple fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

How Glide Weapons Work

- Glide weapons are air-launched bombs fitted with guidance systems and aerodynamic wings.
- After release from an aircraft, the weapon glides towards the target using navigation systems.
- Unlike missiles, glide weapons do not continuously use rocket propulsion after launch.
- The system improves stand-off attack

capability by allowing aircraft to strike from safer distances.

Features of TARA

- Uses low-cost precision guidance technology.
- Provides long-range precision strike capability.
- Enhances accuracy of conventional munitions.
- Can engage targets with reduced exposure of fighter aircraft to enemy air defence systems.
- Compatible with multiple aircraft platforms.
- Supports high operational flexibility and rapid deployment.

Developmental Agencies

- Developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad.
- Other DRDO laboratories also contributed to development.
- Indian private industries and Development-cum-Production Partners (DcPP) participated in manufacturing.
- Production activities have already commenced.

Strategic Importance

- Strengthens India's indigenous precision-guided munition capability.
- Reduces dependence on imported glide bombs and smart weapons.
- Enhances India's strategic autonomy in defence technology.
- Improves stand-off strike capability during modern warfare.
- Supports self-reliance under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Importance of Precision-Guided Munitions (PGMs)

- Precision-guided munitions improve target accuracy.
- Reduce collateral damage during operations.
- Increase mission effectiveness with lower ammunition usage.
- Essential in modern network-centric warfare.
- Widely used in air-to-ground precision strike missions.

Difference Between Glide Bombs and Missiles

- Glide bombs primarily rely on aerodynamic glide after release, while missiles use propulsion systems.
- Glide weapons are generally more cost-effective.



- Missiles may have longer ranges and continuous propulsion.
- Glide bombs are suitable for precision attacks at lower operational costs.

Comparison with Other Indigenous Systems

- Gaurav is India's long-range glide bomb system with larger payload capability.
- Sudarshan is India's indigenous laser-guided bomb kit.
- Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) is designed for anti-runway and airfield strikes.
- TARA focuses on modular low-cost precision enhancement for conventional bombs.

Importance for Indian Air Force

- Allows fighter aircraft to attack from beyond enemy air defence range.
- Enhances survivability of aircraft and pilots.
- Increases operational flexibility in conventional warfare.
- Supports precision targeting during high-intensity conflict scenarios.

Defence Indigenisation in India

- India aims to reduce defence imports and strengthen domestic manufacturing.
- The government promotes indigenous defence production through Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.
- Private sector participation in defence manufacturing has increased significantly.
- Indigenous weapons improve strategic independence and supply chain security.

Challenges in Indigenous

Defence Development

- High research and development costs.
- Need for advanced semiconductor and navigation technologies.
- Dependence on imported components in some defence systems.
- Requirement of faster testing and production cycles.
- Need for strong industry-academia collaboration.

Way Forward

- Expand indigenous precision-guided weapon programs.
- Strengthen defence-industrial ecosystem and private sector participation.
- Improve domestic electronics and sensor manufacturing.
- Increase investment in artificial intelligence and autonomous warfare systems.
- Promote exports of indigenous defence systems.

Conclusion

The successful testing of TARA marks a major advancement in India's indigenous defence technology capabilities. By transforming conventional bombs into precision-guided glide weapons, TARA strengthens the Indian Air Force's stand-off strike capability while reducing operational costs and import dependence. The system reflects India's growing focus on strategic autonomy, modern warfare preparedness, and defence indigenisation under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

UPSC Civil Services

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), consider the following statements:

1. DRDO functions under the Ministry of Defence.
2. Research Centre Imarat (RCI) is associated with missile and avionics technologies.
3. DRDO has developed indigenous precision-guided weapon systems for the Indian Armed Forces.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Rusty-Spotted Cat Sighting in the Aravallis

Why in News?

- Researchers documented the first photographic evidence of a rusty-spotted cat breeding in the Aravalli landscape of Delhi-NCR and Haryana.
- The sighting confirms active reproduction of the species outside protected forest areas.
- The discovery highlights the ecological importance of the Aravalli ecosystem.

About the Rusty-Spotted Cat

- Scientific Name: *Prionailurus rubiginosus*.
- It is one of the world's smallest wild cat species.
- Often called the 'hummingbird of the cat family'.
- Average weight ranges from 1 to 1.5 kg.
- Characterized by reddish-grey fur with rust-coloured spots.
- It is nocturnal, elusive, and rarely sighted in the wild.

Distribution

- Endemic to the Indian subcontinent.
- Found mainly in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.
- India hosts nearly 80% of the global population.
- Distributed in deciduous forests, scrublands, grasslands, and rocky habitats.
- Recent sightings indicate adaptation to human-dominated landscapes.

Habitat Characteristics

- Prefers dense vegetation and dry deciduous forests.
- Can survive in scrub forests and rocky terrain.
- Usually found in low-density populations.
- Aravalli scrublands provide suitable ecological conditions.

Ecological Importance

- Controls rodent populations and maintains ecological balance.
- Acts as an indicator species for ecosystem health.
- Its presence reflects biodiversity richness of the Aravalli region.
- Shows ecological resilience of fragmented landscapes near urban areas.

Conservation Status

- IUCN Red List Status: Near Threatened.
- Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Listed under CITES Appendix I for Indian population.

- Receives the highest degree of legal protection in India.

Major Threats

- Habitat destruction due to urbanisation and infrastructure development.
- Agricultural expansion and land-use change.
- Mining and deforestation in the Aravalli region.
- Habitat fragmentation reducing breeding connectivity.
- Road accidents and human-wildlife conflict.

Importance of the Aravalli Range

- One of the oldest fold mountain ranges in the world.
- Extends across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi.
- Acts as a natural barrier against desertification from the Thar Desert.
- Supports biodiversity corridors and wildlife movement.
- Helps regulate regional climate and air quality.

Environmental Challenges in the Aravallis

- Illegal mining activities causing ecological degradation.
- Rapid urban expansion around Delhi-NCR.
- Loss of forest cover and shrinking wildlife habitats.
- Pollution and encroachment affecting biodiversity.

Other Important Small Wild Cats of India

- Fishing Cat – Endangered; adapted to wetland ecosystems.
- Caracal – rare wild cat mainly found in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- Asiatic Wildcat – adapted to arid landscapes like the Thar Desert.
- Leopard Cat – found in forest ecosystems of Northeast India.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- Launched by India in 2023.
- Aims to strengthen global conservation of big cat species.
- Promotes collaboration among range countries, researchers, and conservation organizations.
- Reflects India's leadership in wildlife conservation.

Government & Conservation Efforts

- Wildlife Protection Act provides legal safeguards.
- Use of camera traps and biodiversity monitoring.
- Community participation in conservation activities.
- Need for ecological restoration of degraded Aravalli landscapes.
- Promotion of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity.

Conclusion

The sighting of the rusty-spotted cat in the Aravallis is a significant reminder of the ecological value of fragile and degraded landscapes near urban regions. It highlights the urgent need for habitat conservation, restoration of biodiversity corridors, and stricter protection of the Aravalli ecosystem. Protecting lesser-known species like the rusty-spotted cat is essential for maintaining ecological balance and strengthening India's biodiversity conservation efforts.

PYQ (Prelims)

Question: With reference to Indian wildlife, consider the following statements:

1. The rusty-spotted cat is listed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List.
2. It is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
3. The species is endemic only to India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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



Andaman & Nicobar Islands Set Guinness World Records



Why in News?

- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands created Guinness World Records through major underwater events at Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island).
- The Union Territory administration unfurled the world's largest underwater national flag.
- Another record was created through the tallest underwater human stack.
- The events aimed to promote adventure tourism, scuba diving, marine conservation awareness, and India's maritime identity.

Details of the Guinness World Records

- The underwater Indian national flag measured approximately 60 × 40 metres.
- The record event involved expert scuba divers and coordinated marine operations.
- The underwater human stack was conducted at Swaraj Dweep.
- The achievement received official recognition from Guinness World Records.
- The initiative highlighted the growing global tourism potential of the islands.

Importance of Andaman & Nicobar Islands

- The islands are a strategically important Union Territory of India.
- Located in the Bay of Bengal near the Malacca Strait.
- Serve as India's maritime gateway to Southeast Asia.
- Important for India's Indo-Pacific strategy and maritime security.
- Host India's only Tri-Service Command – Andaman and Nicobar Command.

Geographical Features

- The archipelago consists of more than 500 islands and islets.
- Divided into Andaman Islands and Nicobar Islands.
- Ten Degree Channel separates the Andaman and Nicobar groups.
- Duncan Passage separates South Andaman and Little Andaman.

- Barren Island is India's only active volcano.
- Saddle Peak is the highest point in the Andaman Islands.

Biodiversity Significance

- The islands are part of a global biodiversity hotspot.
- Rich in coral reefs, mangroves, tropical forests, and marine biodiversity.
- Home to many endemic species of flora and fauna.
- Coral ecosystems support marine tourism and fisheries.
- Sensitive ecological zones require sustainable tourism practices.

Adventure Tourism Potential

- The islands are globally known for scuba diving and snorkeling.
- Popular tourism destinations include Swaraj Dweep, Neil Island, and Port Blair.
- Adventure tourism creates employment and boosts the local economy.
- Marine sports attract both domestic and international tourists.
- Guinness World Record events improve global visibility of the islands.

Blue Economy and Maritime Development

- The event supports India's Blue Economy vision.
- Blue Economy promotes sustainable use of ocean resources.
- Marine tourism is an important component of coastal economic development.
- The islands have potential for eco-tourism, fisheries, renewable energy, and maritime trade.

Environmental Concerns

- Excessive tourism can damage fragile coral reef ecosystems.
- Climate change and rising sea temperatures threaten coral bleaching.
- Plastic pollution and waste management remain major concerns.
- Unregulated infrastructure development can affect tribal and ecological zones.
- Need for sustainable and eco-sensitive tourism

management.

Tribal Communities of the Islands

- The islands are home to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- Major tribes include Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelese, and Shompen.
- Protection of tribal culture and habitat is a constitutional responsibility.
- Restricted access policies are followed to protect indigenous communities.

Strategic Importance for India

- Located close to major international shipping routes.
- Important for monitoring the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Strengthens India's maritime dominance and naval outreach.
- Supports India's SAGAR doctrine – Security and Growth for All in the Region.
- Important for disaster management and humanitarian assistance operations.

Government Initiatives

- Promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable island development.
- Development projects under NITI Aayog's Island Development Programme.
- Expansion of maritime connectivity and digital infrastructure.
- Focus on renewable energy and tourism-based employment generation.

Challenges Facing the Islands

- Ecological fragility and disaster vulnerability.
- Cyclones, tsunamis, and coastal erosion.
- Balancing strategic development with environmental conservation.
- Need for improved connectivity and disaster-resilient infrastructure.

Conclusion

The Guinness World Records achieved by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands highlight India's growing focus on marine tourism, adventure sports, and maritime identity. At the same time, the islands remain ecologically fragile and strategically significant. Sustainable tourism, biodiversity conservation, tribal protection, and responsible maritime development are essential to ensure balanced growth of this strategically important island region.

UPSC Civil Services PYQ (Prelims)

Question: Which one of the following islands of India is an active volcano?

- (a) Car Nicobar
- (b) Barren Island
- (c) Minicoy Island
- (d) Majuli Island

Answer: (b) Barren Island