

Today's Prelims Topics

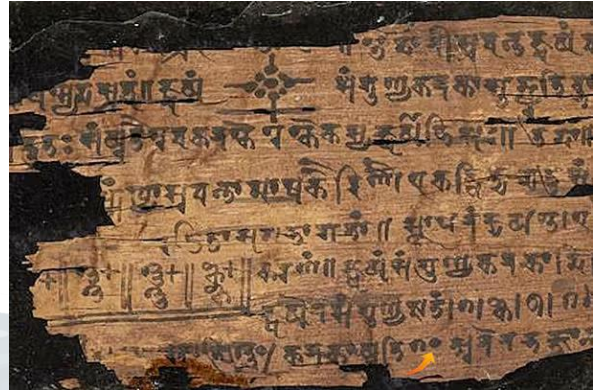
Gyan Bharatam Mission

Context

The Union Budget 2025-26 announced a special mission for the survey, documentation and conservation of India's manuscript heritage.

About Gyan Bharatam Mission

- It is a **special mission for the survey, documentation, and conservation of India's manuscript heritage** lying with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors.
- **Coverage:** To cover more than one crore manuscripts.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Culture
- A **National Digital Repository of Indian knowledge systems** for knowledge sharing will be set up.
- The mission will be executed under **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)**.
- **Budget Allocation:** To accommodate the new mission, budget allocation for National Manuscripts Mission (NMM) has been hiked from **3.5 crore to 60 crore**.



What is a Manuscript ?

- It is a handwritten composition on **paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf** or any other material dating back at least **75 years** that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value.
- **Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts.**
 - A lithograph is a print made using the **lithography printing process**, which involves drawing an image onto a stone or metal plate and then transferring it to paper.

About National Mission for Manuscript (NMM)

- It was established in **2003**, by the **Ministry of Tourism and Culture (GOI)**.
- **Objectives:**
 - Locate manuscripts through a national-level survey and post-survey.
 - Document each and every manuscript and manuscript repository, for a **National Electronic Database**.
 - It currently contains information on **4 million** manuscripts making this the largest database on Indian manuscripts in the world.
 - Conserve manuscripts incorporating both modern and indigenous methods of conservation and training a new generation of manuscript conservators.
 - To train the next generation of scholars in various aspects of Manuscript Studies.
- To achieve this mandate, the mission has established more than **100 Manuscripts Resource Centres and Manuscripts Conservation Centres** all over India.

Source:

- [The Hindu - GBM](#)

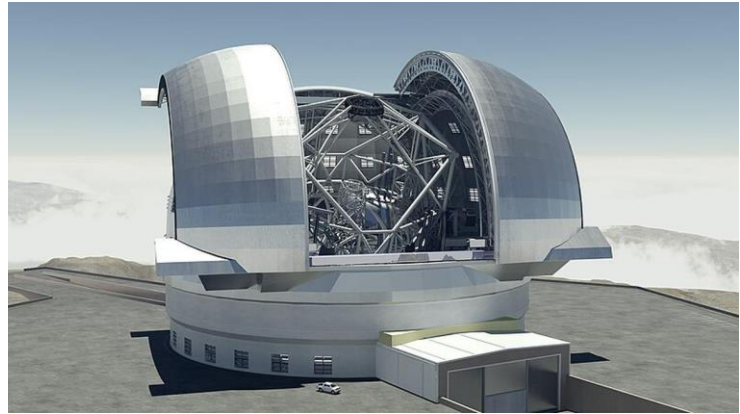
Extremely Large Telescope

Context

60% Construction of the Extremely Large Telescope is completed. It is expected to make its **first scientific observations by the end of 2028**.

About Extremely Large Telescope (ELT)

- **ELT** is an advanced ground-based astronomical observatory under construction in **northern Chile**.
- It is designed to be the **largest optical and infrared telescope in the world**, enabling deep-space exploration.
- **Project Cost: \$1.51 billion**, funded by the **European Southern Observatory (ESO)**.
- It will be the **largest optical-infrared facility** for several decades.



Scientific Objectives of ELT

- **Exoplanet Exploration:**
 - Direct imaging of **Earth-like exoplanets** in habitable zones.
 - Analysis of **exoplanet atmospheres** to detect signs of **life (biosignatures)** like oxygen, water vapor and methane.
- **Understanding the Early Universe:**
 - Observing **the first stars and galaxies** formed after the Big Bang.
 - Investigating **dark matter and dark energy**, which drive cosmic expansion.
- **Detailed Study of Stars & Galaxies:**
 - Identifying **individual stars** in distant galaxies.
- **Black Holes & Cosmic Structures:**
 - Examining **supermassive black holes** at the centers of galaxies.
 - Understanding **galaxy formation and evolution** over billions of years.

Reason behind location at Chile's Atacama Desert

- **Dry Climate:** Minimal cloud cover and humidity for clear observations.
- **High Altitude:** At **3,046 meters above sea level** (Armazones Hill), reducing atmospheric interference.
- **Minimal Light Pollution:** Remote location ensures **dark skies** optimal for deep-space imaging.

Source:

- [The Hindu - ELT](#)

Supreme Court Questions Assam on Delay in Deporting Declared Foreigners

Context

While hearing a petition on illegal immigrants, SC has questioned Assam on **indefinite detention** of declared foreigners instead of deporting them.

Directives issued by Supreme Court

- The **Supreme Court emphasized that once a person is declared a foreigner, they must be deported immediately** and cannot be detained indefinitely.
- It cited **Article 21 of the Constitution (Right to Life and Liberty)**, reinforcing that indefinite detention is unconstitutional.
- The **Union Government** has been directed to provide:
 - **Total number of declared foreigners** in Assam.
 - **Details of how many have been deported so far.**
 - **The procedure being followed** for individuals whose nationality is unknown

About Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)

- Established by the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964 under Section 3 of the Foreigners' Act of 1946.
- **Purpose:** To enable local authorities to refer suspected foreigners to tribunals.
- **Exclusivity to Assam:** Currently, FTs operate only in Assam, while other states handle illegal immigrant cases under the Foreigners' Act.
- **Composition:** Each FT is led by a member from the judiciary, advocacy, or civil service with judicial experience.
- **Case Disposal:** FTs must conclude cases within 60 days. Failure to prove citizenship can result in detention and eventual deportation.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Deport Foreigners](#)

Places in News

Santorini Island

- Thousands of residents have fled Santorini after earthquakes were recorded near the Greek island for a fourth consecutive day.

About Aegean Sea

- It is an arm of the **Mediterranean Sea**.
- It is located in the East Mediterranean Basin with the Greek peninsula to its west and Anatolia to its east.
- It is connected to the **Marmara Sea and the Black Sea** by the straits of the **Dardanelles and the Bosphorus**.



- Location:** It is a Greek Island in the **South Aegean Sea**.
- It is the southernmost island of the Cyclades group of islands.
- It is home to the Santorini Caldera, one of the most active volcanic centers in the **South Aegean Volcanic Arc**.
- It is historically known for the **Minoan eruption (around 3,600 years ago)**, one of the largest volcanic eruptions in recorded history.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Santorini Island](#)

Darien Gap



- The **Darien Gap** is a dense, lawless region located between **Panama and Colombia**.
- It is situated in the **narrowest part of the Isthmus of Panama**.
- It is approximately **160 km long and 50 km wide**.
- It is characterized by **thick rainforests, swamps, rivers and rugged mountains**.
- It is a major route for migrants from **South America, Africa and Asia** heading toward the U.S.
- It's one of the most **dangerous migration routes in the world**.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Darien Gap](#)

El Salvador

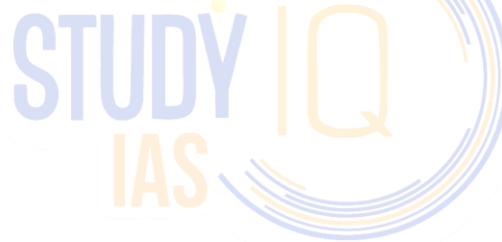
- Recently USA and El Salvador signed an agreement regarding deportation of criminals.
- Under this deal, **El Salvador will accept deportees from the U.S., regardless of nationality.**
- This includes **violent criminals currently imprisoned in the United States.**



- **Location:** Central America
- **Bordering Countries:** Honduras & Guatemala.
- It is the **smallest and most densely populated** of the **seven** Central American countries.
- It was the First country to **adopt Bitcoin as legal tender (2021).**

Source:

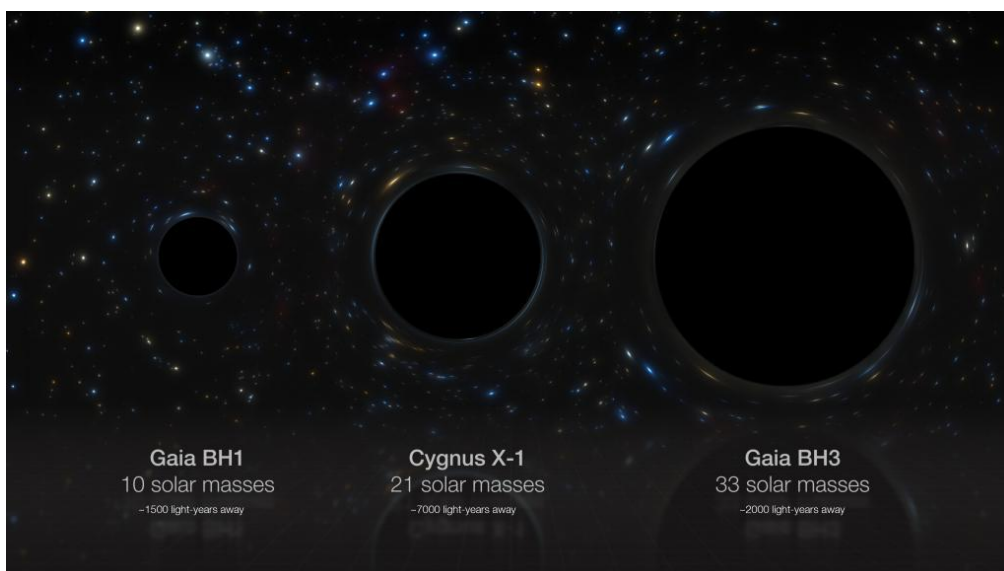
- [The Hindu - El Salvador to accept deportees from U.S.](#)



News in Short

Gaia BH3

- Gaia BH3 is the **third black hole** discovered by the **European Space Agency's Gaia telescope**.
- It is the **largest stellar-mass black hole** in the Milky Way galaxy.
- It is located in the **constellation Aquila**, approximately **2,000 light years** away from Earth.



Difference between Stellar black hole & Supermassive black hole

- **Stellar-mass black holes** originate from the gravitational collapse of a single star or the combination of two neutron stars.
 - These black holes generally have mass that range from approximately **three to fifty times that of the sun**.
- **Supermassive black holes** are **immensely larger**, with masses starting at around 50,000 times the mass of the sun and can reach up to millions or even billions of times greater.
 - Supermassive black holes are **always found at the center of a galaxy** and almost all galaxies have a supermassive black hole at its center.
 - **However, scientists do not currently know how supermassive black holes form.**

Source:

- [The Hindu - Gaia BH3](#)

Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)

- It is a multi-disciplinary organization that investigates corporate fraud in India.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- It was established in 2003 in response to major failures in the financial sector, the stock market scam, and the phenomenon of vanishing companies.
- SFIO is headed by a **Director** who is a Joint Secretary to the Government of India
- It has regional offices in **Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata**.
- **Functions:**
 - Detects and prosecutes white-collar crimes and frauds
 - Investigates complex cases with multi-disciplinary ramifications
 - Investigates cases involving public interest
 - Investigates cases that could improve systems, laws, or procedures

Source:

- [The Hindu - Investigation reports submitted by SFIO](#)

Beggar-thy-neighbour policies

- Beggar-thy-neighbour policies are **protectionist economic strategies** that aim to **benefit a country's economy at the expense of others**.
- **Common examples:**
 - **Trade wars** – Imposing **heavy tariffs** and **strict import quotas** to protect domestic industries.
 - **Currency wars** – Central banks **depreciating domestic currency** to boost exports and reduce imports.
- **Origin:** It was **first coined by Adam Smith** in 1776, in his book **The Wealth of Nations**.

Arguments in Favor of Beggar-Thy-Neighbour Policies

- **Protection of Domestic Industries** ► Helps **infant industries** grow without foreign competition.
- **Boosts Exports & Reduces Imports** ► **Currency depreciation** makes exports cheaper & imports costlier.
- **Leads to Trade Surplus** ► Higher exports and reduced imports create a **trade surplus**.

Criticism

- **Triggers Retaliatory Actions** ► Trade wars with tit-for-tat tariffs and currency devaluations hurt global trade.
- **Harmful to Consumers** ► **Higher tariffs** → **Increased prices** for imported goods → Consumers pay more.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Begger-thy-neighbour policies](#)

GARBHINI-DRISHTI

- It is a **data dashboard** that provides a comprehensive overview with focus on **maternal and neonatal health outcomes**.
- It offers access to **clinical data, medical images and biospecimens**.
- It is **One of South Asia's largest maternal health databases**. It Includes **data from over 12,000 pregnant women, newborns and postpartum mothers**.
- This platform developed under the **GARBH-INi program**.
 - It is a flagship programme supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
 - **Aim:** To reduce adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Source:

- [PIB - India's First Ferret Research Facility](#)

Editorial Summary

Why the tax cuts are a one way gamble

Context

The government has introduced **significant income tax cuts** in the **Union Budget 2025**.

Key Highlights Include

- **Complete tax rebate** for individuals earning between ₹7-₹12 lakh per year (earlier applicable only for those below ₹7 lakh).
- **Increase in the basic exemption limit** from ₹3 lakh to ₹4 lakh for those earning above ₹12 lakh per year.
- **Reduction in marginal tax rates** across multiple tax slabs.
- **Estimated revenue loss of ₹1 lakh crore**, approximately **8% of total direct income tax collections** in the current fiscal year.

Why the Tax Cuts Are a One-Way Gamble

- **Overestimation of Tax Revenue Growth:** Despite an **8% fall in the effective tax rate**, the government projects a **14% increase in direct tax collections**.
 - This requires **24% income growth**, which is highly optimistic given that **nominal GDP growth is projected at just 10.1%**.
 - If income growth doesn't meet expectations, tax revenues will **fall short**, affecting government spending.
- **Risk of Widening Income Inequality (K-Shaped Growth):** If the tax revenue growth comes from **higher earnings among existing taxpayers**, it would lead to a further **concentration of wealth among upper-income groups**.
 - This would **exacerbate the K-shaped recovery**, where high-income earners thrive while lower-income groups struggle.
- **Fiscal Constraints and Spending Cuts:** If tax revenue falls short, the government will have to **cut expenditures**, especially on welfare schemes.
 - With **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act** in place, the government **cannot exceed the fiscal deficit limit**, making it harder to increase spending during slowdowns.

Chart 1: Delivery versus promises in fiscal expenditure

(in ₹ crore)

| | RE 2024 minus BE 2024 | BE 2025 minus RE 2024 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total expenditure | -1,04,025 | 3,48,858 |
| Capital expenditure | -92,682 | 1,02,661 |
| Rural development | -75,133 | 76,142 |
| Urban development | -18,907 | 33,107 |
| Education | -11,584 | 14,596 |
| Agriculture | -10,992 | 30,578 |
| Food subsidy | -7,830 | 6,000 |
| Health | -1,255 | 10,279 |

RE: Revised Estimate; BE: Budget Estimate

Chart 2: Cut in expenditure of some flagship schemes

Difference between Revised Estimate and Budget Estimate of 2024-25 (in ₹ crore)

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Jal Jeevan Mission | -47,469 |
| PM Awas (Grameen) | -22,074 |
| PM Awas (Urban) | -16,501 |
| PM Garib Kalyan | -8,250 |
| Swachh Bharat Mission | -2,841 |
| PM-Poshan | -2,467 |
| Rashtriya Krishi Vikas | -1,553 |
| PM Anusuchit Jati Abhudaya | -1,340 |
| PM Vanbadhu Kalyan | -670 |

- **Shift to Pro-Cyclical Fiscal Policy:** The government is **reducing its fiscal deficit target from 4.8% (2024 RE) to 4.4% (2025 BE)**, signaling **fiscal contraction** instead of expansion.
 - This is problematic because fiscal policy is meant to be **counter-cyclical** (increase spending in slowdowns), but instead, it is **moving with the economic cycle**, potentially **deepening the slowdown**.

- **Dependence on Private Investment and Exports:** With **government expenditure constrained**, the government is **banking on corporate investment and exports** to drive growth.
 - However, private investment has **not increased significantly despite past tax cuts and capital expenditure efforts**.
 - The **2025 Economic Survey indicates weak global demand**, making exports an unreliable growth driver.
- **Uncertain Consumption Boost from Tax Cuts:** The government expects that **lower taxes will increase disposable income, boosting consumption, and in turn, investment and growth**.
 - However, if **people choose to save instead of spending**, the intended economic stimulus may not materialize.

Conclusion

The tax cuts are a **one-way gamble** because the government is **placing all bets on income growth and tax buoyancy**, with little room for alternative fiscal measures. If revenue projections fall short, **expenditure cuts will hurt economic growth and social spending**, making the economy more vulnerable.

Source: [The Hindu: Why the tax cuts are a one way gamble](#)



AI in School Education

Context

- The **World Economic Forum 2024 in Davos** focused on the theme “**Collaboration for the Intelligent Age**”, emphasizing the integration of **humanity, nature, and AI**.
- In the **context of education**, this theme presents **transformative opportunities** to reshape learning by combining intelligence with consciousness.

AI's Impact on Education in Current Times

- **Enhanced Learning Personalization:** AI tools adapt to **individual student learning speeds** and preferences.
 - Platforms like **ChatGPT, Khan Academy AI, and Duolingo AI** provide tailored learning experiences.
- **Automated Administrative Tasks:** AI reduces the **workload of teachers** by automating:
 - Grading
 - Attendance tracking
 - Administrative documentation
 - **Virtual Tutoring and Smart Classrooms**
 - AI-driven **chatbots** and **virtual assistants** help students with doubts in real-time.
 - **Smart classrooms** with AI enable interactive learning experiences.
- **Early Detection of Learning Gaps:** AI identifies **student weaknesses** through data analytics.
 - Allows for **targeted interventions** to improve performance.
- **Increased Engagement through AI-powered Content:** AI-generated **quizzes, simulations, and interactive lessons** make learning engaging.
 - Platforms like **Google's Socratic AI and Microsoft Reading Coach** enhance digital learning.

Key Challenges of Introducing AI in Education

- **Lack of AI Literacy Among Educators:** Many teachers are **not trained** to integrate AI tools effectively.
 - Concerns over **AI-generated misinformation** (AI hallucinations).
- **Ethical and Privacy Concerns:** Risk of **data breaches** and **misuse of student information**.
 - Lack of **clear policies** on AI ethics in schools.
- **Over-Reliance on AI by Students:** Students using AI for **homework and assignments** without understanding concepts.
 - Potential decline in **critical thinking and creativity**.
- **Equity and Accessibility Issues:** Unequal access to AI tools due to **economic disparities**.
 - Rural and underprivileged students may **lack digital infrastructure**.
- **Standardization vs. Personalization:** AI-driven learning models may **lack adaptability** to different student needs.
 - Risk of **bias in AI algorithms**, leading to disparities in education quality.

Solutions to Overcome AI Challenges in Education

- **AI Training for Educators:** **Regular workshops and certifications** on AI integration in teaching.
 - Collaboration with **EdTech companies** to upskill teachers.
- **Implementing AI Ethics and Data Privacy Policies:** Strong **regulatory frameworks** to prevent misuse of student data.
 - **Transparency in AI algorithms** to eliminate bias.
- **Encouraging AI-Assisted Learning, Not AI-Dependent Learning:** Schools must **balance AI use** with traditional teaching methods.
 - Develop **AI literacy programs** to guide students on responsible AI usage.

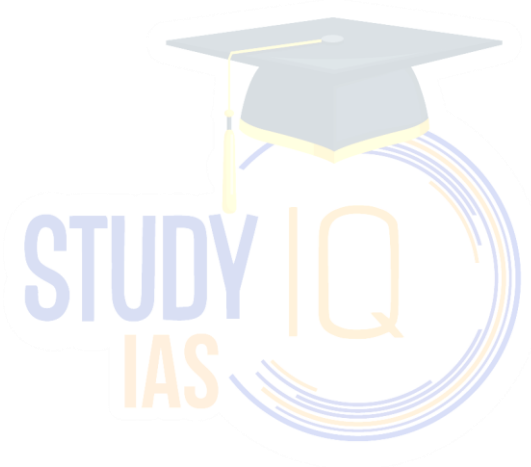
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Government and private sector must **increase AI access in rural areas.**
 - Affordable AI-driven **learning tools for economically weaker students.**
- **Improving AI Adaptability in Education:** AI systems should be **customized for diverse learning needs.**
 - Developers should **eliminate biases in AI algorithms** to ensure fair learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Education must evolve by refining its vision to match a **constantly changing reality.**

Schools should **enhance natural learning processes** through **collaborative intelligence**, rather than replacing them with technology.

Source: [Indian Express: Learning With AI](#)



Detailed Coverage

Disaster Management in India

Context

Over **2,900 people** lost their lives due to **hydro-meteorological disasters in 2024-25**, as reported by the Union Home Ministry.

More in News

- 408 died in Himachal Pradesh, 373 in Madhya Pradesh, 355 in Kerala, 230 in Gujarat, and 206 in Maharashtra.
- 185 people lost their lives in Karnataka, 131 in Rajasthan, 128 in Assam, and 125 in Chhattisgarh.

What is a Disaster?

- **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, defines a disaster as a "**catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence**" arising from **natural or man-made causes** that results in substantial loss of life, destruction of property, or damage to the environment.

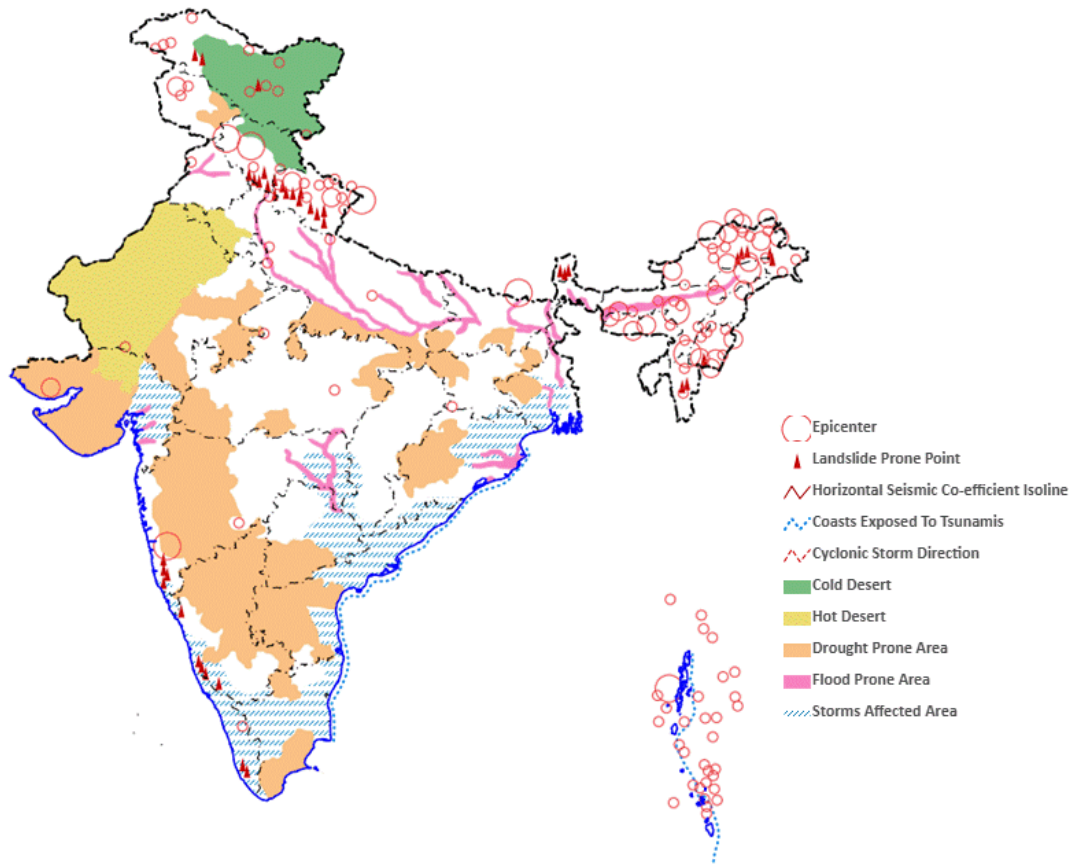
Classification of Disasters

| Disaster type | Subdisaster | Name of disaster | |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| Natural | Natural phenomenon beneath the earth's surface | Tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruption | |
| | Topographical phenomenon | Avalanches, landslides | |
| | Metrological/hydrological phenomenon | Tornadoes, hailstorm and snowstorms, floods, sea surges, windstorms (hurricanes typhoons), cyclones, droughts, cold waves/ heat waves | |
| | Biological phenomenon | Infestations (locust swarms), epidemics (cholera, dengue, Ebola, malaria, measles, meningitis, yellow fever, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis) | |
| Man-made | Sociotechnical | Technological disasters | Leakages, fire, explosions, toxic release, pollutions |
| | | Transportation disasters | Land disasters, air disasters, Sea disasters |
| | | Stadia or other public space failure | Fire, crowd stampede, structure collapse |
| | | Production failure | Computer system breakdown, distribution of defective products |
| | Warfare | National | The civil war between armed groups from the same country, civil strikes, civil disorder, bomb threats/terrorist attacks |
| | | International | Wars |
| | | Conventional war | War between two armies from different countries, sieges, blockades |
| Nonconventional | Nuclear, chemical, biological | | |
| Hybrid | Natural and man-made events | Floods ravage community built on a known floodplain, location of residential premises, factories, etc. at the foot of an active volcano or in an avalanche area landslide | |

Facts

- Currently **12 disasters** are classified as **Notified Disaster**: Cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloud burst, pest attack and frost and cold wave.

Vulnerability of India to Natural Disaster



According to UNICEF, 27 out of 29 states and seven union territories are exposed to recurrent natural hazards such as cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, floods, and droughts.

- **Earthquakes:** Approximately 58.6% of India's landmass is prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity.
- **Floods:** Over 40 million hectares (12% of the land) are susceptible to flooding.
- **Cyclones:** The country's extensive coastline is vulnerable to cyclones, particularly affecting the eastern coast.
- **Droughts:** Around 68% of India's cultivable area is prone to droughts.
- **Landslides:** Regions, especially in the Himalayan and Western Ghats, are susceptible to landslides, exacerbated by heavy rainfall and deforestation.

These vulnerabilities are compounded by factors such as high population density, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and climate change, which increase the frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

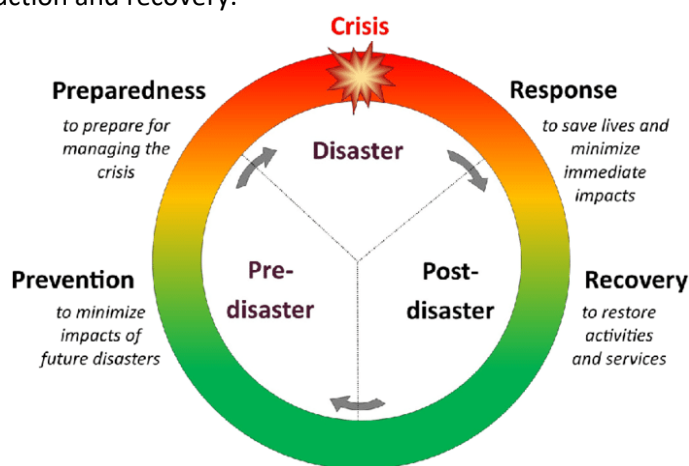
Natural Disaster Events in India in 2024

- **Cyclone Remal:** This severe cyclonic storm impacted the eastern coast, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and agriculture.
- **Wayanad Landslides:** Triggered by heavy rainfall, multiple landslides occurred in Kerala's Wayanad district, resulting in significant loss of life and property.

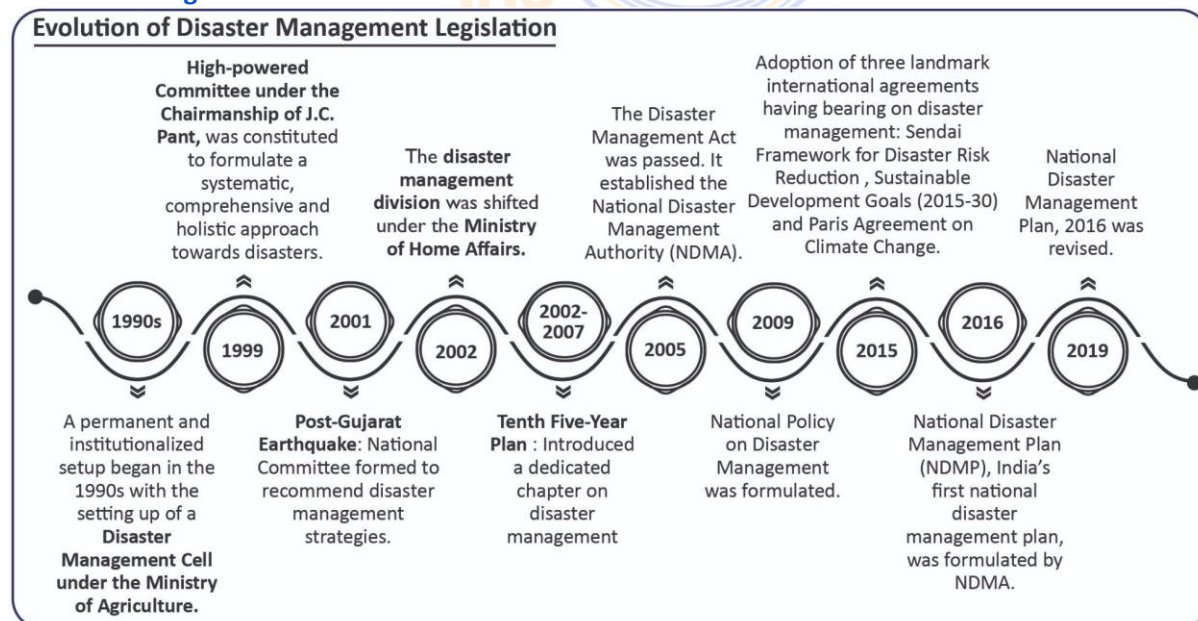
- **Assam Floods:** Intense monsoon rains led to severe flooding in Assam, affecting over 400,000 people and displacing thousands.
- **Himachal Pradesh Cloudbursts:** Sudden cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh caused flash floods and landslides, leading to numerous fatalities and infrastructural damage.
- **Gujarat Floods:** Heavy monsoon rains resulted in severe flooding in Gujarat, leading to significant displacement and damage.

What is Disaster Management?

- **Systematic approach of planning, organizing, coordinating,** and implementing measures to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.
- It includes **the sum total of all activities, and measures** which can be taken up **before, during and after** a disaster.
- A typical disaster management continuum consists of:
 - **A pre-disaster Risk Management Phase:** Which includes prevention, mitigation and preparedness.
 - **Post-disaster Crisis Management Phase:** Which includes relief, response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery.



Disaster Management in India



Institutional

- **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA):** It coordinates with disaster affected

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>framework at the National Level</p> | <p>states, line ministries, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Home Guards and Civil Defence, and Armed Forces etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA): It is the apex body for disaster management, constituted under the DM Act, 2005 and headed by the Prime Minister of India. ● National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR): It is a multi-stakeholder and multi- decision making body on disaster management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is chaired by the Union Home Minister with other ministers as its members. ● National Executive Committee: Constituted under the DM Act, 2005 and chaired by the Union Home Secretary it acts as the coordinating and monitoring body for disaster management in India. ● The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS): It is involved in decision making if the disaster has serious security implications. ● National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM): It is the nodal agency responsible for human resource development, capacity building, training, research, documentation and policy advocacy in the field of disaster management. ● National Disaster Response Force (NDRF): The NDRF is a specialist response force that can be deployed in a threatening disaster situation or disaster. |
| <p>Institutional Framework at State Level</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State Disaster Management Authority: The DM Act, 2005 mandates the creation of a State Disaster Management Authority with Chief Minister as the ex-officio Chairperson. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is responsible for laying down the State Disaster Management Policy and approving the State DM Plans in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Union. ● State Executive Committee: It is responsible for coordinating and monitoring DM related activities in the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chief Secretary of the state is its ex-officio chairperson. ○ It lays down the guidelines for preparation and implementation of national and state DM plans. |
| <p>Institutional Framework at the District Level</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At the district level, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), headed by the District Collector/District Magistrate, is responsible for overall coordination of the disaster management efforts and planning. |
| <p>Local Authorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), Municipalities, District and Cantonment Boards, and Town Planning Authorities, which control and manage civic services, ensure capacity building of their employees for managing disasters, carrying out relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the affected areas. ● They also prepare their disaster management plans as per the national and state guidelines. |

The Disaster Management Amendment Bill 2024

- **Urban Disaster Management Authority (UDMA):** The Bill proposes establishing an Urban Disaster Management Authority for state capitals and large cities with Municipal Corporations, excluding Delhi and Chandigarh.
- **Expanded NDMA Responsibilities:** The NDMA's role is set to expand significantly including periodic assessments of all disaster risks including emerging threats.
- **Disaster Database:** It aims to create a comprehensive disaster database at both national and state levels which will include disaster assessments, fund allocation details, preparedness and mitigation plans & risk registers as defined by the Central government.
- **Decentralized Disaster Plans:** The Bill empowers the NDMA and SDMA to develop disaster plans at the national and state levels, respectively.
 - Previously, these plans were managed by the National Executive Committee and State Executive Committees.
- **Legal Status to bodies:** Certain pre-existing organizations such as the National Crisis Management Committee and the High-Level Committee will be granted statutory status.
- **State Disaster Response Force:** The Bill seeks to require every state to establish and maintain an SDRF.
- **Section 60A:** This section authorises the Central and State governments to direct individuals to take or avoid actions to mitigate disaster impacts and impose penalties up to ₹10,000 for non-compliance.
- **Man-Made Disasters:** The Bill clarifies that "man-made causes" in the disaster definition exclude law-and-order situations.
 - Therefore, events like riots causing loss, suffering or damage will not activate the law's provisions.

Concerns related with the proposed amendments

- **Constitutional Scrutiny:** The Bill falls under Entry 23 of the Concurrent List in the Seventh Schedule which covers "social security and social insurance, employment and unemployment" rather than "Disaster Management" which is not listed in the Seventh Schedule.
- **Overlapping Authorities:** The Bill introduces additional authorities, which could create confusion and bureaucratic delays that might impede effective rescue and relief operations.
 - E.g., the Kerala Chief Minister and Home Minister have clashed over early warning systems related to the Wayanad tragedy due to overlapping authorities.
- **Violation of State Jurisdiction:** The Bill grants excessive rulemaking powers to the Central government through delegated legislation, potentially infringing on the legislative powers reserved for States and overlapping with State jurisdiction.

Way Forward

- **Updating Key Definitions:** Section 2 of the Act should be revised to explicitly define terms like 'hazards,' 'prevention,' and 'mitigation,' ensuring clarity and consistency across the Act.
- **Increasing Autonomy and Authority:** Enhancing the NDMA's efficiency requires granting it greater financial and administrative powers. Elevating NDMA to a government department or ministry could significantly boost its effectiveness.
- **Include Disaster Management in Concurrent List:** The Administrative Reforms Commission's 3rd Report- "Crisis Management: From Despair to Hope" suggested adding a new entry "Management of Disasters and Emergencies, natural or man-made" to List III (Concurrent List) of the Seventh Schedule.
- **Capacity Building:** This should include:
 - **Developing a Comprehensive Training and Capacity-Building Program**
 - **Developing Human Resources to boost Operational Capacity**
 - **Building Local Capacity** with regular training and adequate resource allocation

- **Advancing Disaster Management Research:** Invest in research for disaster risk management, emphasizing cutting-edge technologies like AI, remote sensing, and big data analytics.
- **Develop National Rapid Response Frameworks:** To ensure swift and coordinated action during crises, with a well-defined command structure and effective resource allocation.
 - **E.g.,** Adopt a 72-hour critical response plan inspired by Japan's model to ensure prompt rescue operations and effective coordination.

Source: [The Hindu: Over 2900 killed in Natural disasters in 2024: Centre](#)

