

## Today's Prelims Topics

### PSLV Rockets

#### Context

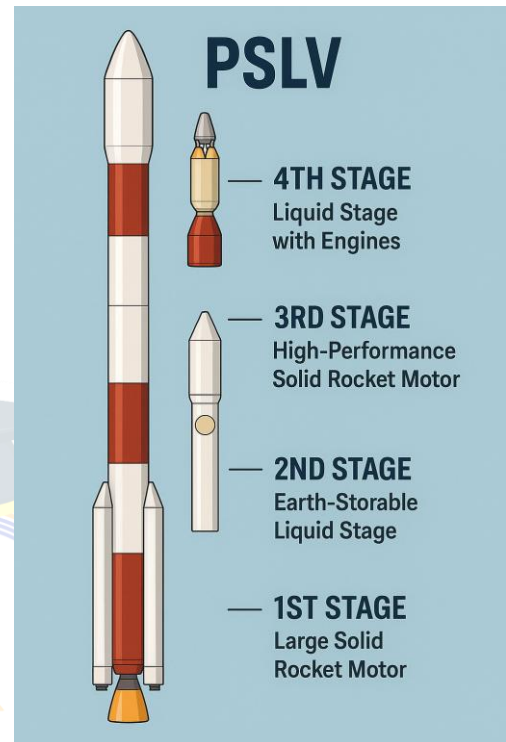
ISRO set to launch earth observation satellite using PSLV rockets.

#### About PSLV Rockets

- **Stands For:** Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.
- **Generation:** 3rd
- **Title Given:** Workhorse of ISRO (due to highest success rate).
- **Variants:** 4 (CA,DL,QL,XL)
- **First Flight:** September 20, 1993
- **Significance:**
  - **1st Indian launch vehicle** to be equipped with **liquid stages**.
  - Successfully launched two spacecraft – **Chandrayaan-1** in 2008 and **Mars Orbiter Spacecraft** in 2013.
  - Launch various satellites into **Geosynchronous and Geostationary orbits**, like satellites from the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) Constellation

#### Applications of IRNSS

- Terrestrial, Aerial and Marine Navigation
- Disaster Management
- Vehicle tracking and fleet management
- Integration with mobile phones
- Visual and voice navigation for drivers
- Precise Timing
- Mapping and Geodetic data capture



Source: [The Hindu: ISRO set to launch earth observation satellite using PSLV rockets on Sunday](#)

## State of Unemployment: PLFS Report

### Context

The first monthly bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Union Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

### Key Employment and Unemployment Indicators

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** Refers to the proportion of people in the population who are either employed, actively seeking work, or available for work.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** Indicates the percentage of people who are employed out of the total population.
- **Unemployment Rate (UR):** Represents the share of unemployed individuals among the total labour force (i.e., those working or seeking work).
- **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** Denotes a person's employment status based on their activity during the 7-day period prior to the date of the survey.

### What are the Key Findings

#### 1. Labour Force Participation Rate (in per cent) in CWS for persons of age 15 years and above during April 2025

sector	age group	male	female	person
rural	15-29 years	63.5	23.8	43.4
	15 years and above	79.0	38.2	58.0
	all ages	57.5	28.8	42.9
urban	15-29 years	59.1	21.5	41.2
	15 years and above	75.3	25.7	50.7
	all ages	58.5	20.5	39.9
rural + urban	15-29 years	62.0	23.1	42.7
	15 years and above	77.7	34.2	55.6
	all ages	57.8	26.2	42.0

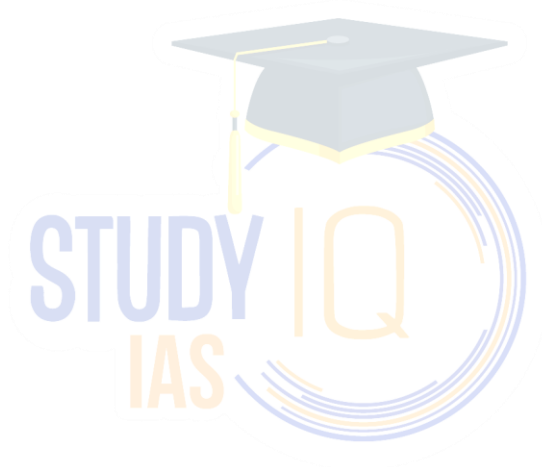
#### 2. Worker Population Ratio (in per cent) in CWS for persons of age 15 years and above during April 2025

sector	age group	male	female	person
rural	15-29 years	55.3	21.2	38.0
	15 years and above	75.1	36.8	55.4
	all ages	54.7	27.7	41.0
urban	15-29 years	50.2	16.4	34.1
	15 years and above	71.0	23.5	47.4
	all ages	55.1	18.7	37.3
rural + urban	15-29 years	53.6	19.8	36.8
	15 years and above	73.7	32.5	52.8
	all ages	54.8	24.9	39.8

**3.Unemployment Rate (in per cent) in CWS for persons of age 15 years and above during April 2025**

sector	age group	male	female	person
rural	15-29 years	13.0	10.7	12.3
	15 years and above	4.9	3.9	4.5
	all ages	4.9	3.8	4.5
urban	15-29 years	15.0	23.7	17.2
	15 years and above	5.8	8.7	6.5
	all ages	5.8	8.7	6.5
rural + urban	15-29 years	13.6	14.4	13.8
	15 years and above	5.2	5.0	5.1
	all ages	5.2	5.0	5.1

Source: [PIB: Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\) – Monthly Bulletin \[April 2025\]](#)



## Mukurthi National Park

### Context

An expert panel of MoFCC has granted permission to carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for the proposed Upper Bhavani pumped hydropower project to a location in Nilgiri hills which is 1 km away from Mukurthi National Park.

### About Mukurthi National Park



- **Location:** Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, within Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage Site).
- **Reason For Creation:** The National Park was created to protect the **Nilgiri tahr**.
- **Vegetation:** Montane grasslands and shrublands interspersed with sholas.
- **Fauna:** Nilgiri tahr, Indian elephant, Bengal tiger, Nilgiri marten, Nilgiri langur.
- **River:** River Pykara (Originates from Mukurthi peak).
  - The river is sacred to the **Toda tribe (which live inside the park)**.

- **Conservation Status of Nilgiri Tahr:**
  - IUCN - Endangered
  - WPA, 1972 - Schedule 1
  - CITES - Appendix 1
- **Eravikulam National Park (Kerala)** has the **highest density and largest surviving population** of Nilgiri tahr.



Source: [Indian Express: Pumped Hydropower Project in Nilgiri gets preliminary approval](#)

## Mahadayi River

### Context

A new scientific paper by CSIR-NIO and INCOIS claims that Karnataka's diversion of Mahadayi River will have limited ecological impact on Goa, sparking protests by local groups in Goa.

### About Mahadayi River

- **Type:** Rain-fed river.
- **Origin:** Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, Belagavi district, Karnataka.
- **Flows Through:** Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Goa.
- **Mouth:** Arabian Sea near Panaji, Goa.
- **Major tributaries:** Kalasa, Banduri, Mapusa, Ragada, Nanuz, Valvoti, Nerul, St. Inez Creek, Dudhsagar.
- **Significance:**
  - Lifeline of Goa.
  - Known for Dudhsagar Falls, Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary on Chorão Island.



### Dispute:

- **Core Issue:** Karnataka's plan to divert water from Mahadayi's tributaries (Kalasa and Banduri) to the Malaprabha basin.
- **Goa's Concern:** The diversion would reduce river flow, affecting ecology, drinking water supply, and biodiversity in Goa.

**Source:** [The Hindu: Mahadayi river diversion: protests over study claiming its limited impact on Goa](#)

## Haze

### Context

Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) faced thick, dusty haze, with visibility sharply reduced across the city.

### What is Haze?

- Haze is an atmospheric phenomenon where **fine dust, smoke, and other dry particles** become suspended in the air.
- **Causes of Haze:**
  - **Natural Sources:**
    - **Windblown dust:** Fine soil particles carried by the wind.
    - **Smoke from wildfires:** Combustion products released during forest and land fires.
    - **Volcanic ash:** Fine particles ejected during volcanic eruptions.
    - **Sea salt:** Tiny salt crystals that become airborne from ocean spray.
  - **Man-made Sources (Air Pollution):**
    - **Combustion of fossil fuels:** Emissions from vehicles, power plants, and industrial facilities release particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides, which can form haze.
    - **Industrial processes:** Manufacturing operations can release dust, smoke, and chemical aerosols.
    - **Agricultural activities:** Activities like stubble burning and plowing in dry conditions can generate dust and smoke.
- **Smog is similar to haze but with condensation**, which is absent in haze.



Source: [India Today: Delhi-NCR covered in gloomy dusty haze](#)



## IAEA

### Context

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has said that there has been “no radiation leak” from any nuclear facility in Pakistan after the escalated military engagement with India.

### About International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- **About:** Intergovernmental forum
  - Also known as the “**Atoms for Peace and Development**” agency within the UN system.
- **Created In:** 1957 for response to the deep fears and expectations generated by the discoveries and diverse uses of nuclear technology.
  - IAEA was initially set up as the world’s “**Atoms for Peace**” organization within the United Nations family.
- **Aim:** It works for the **safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science** and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Functions:** The IAEA, although it submits reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), **reports** primarily to the **General Assembly directly**, and may also report to the UN **Security Council whenever necessary**.
- **Governance:** The policy making bodies include the **General Conference of all Member States** and the 35-member **Board of Governors**.
- **Total Membership:** 178 countries including India.
- **Headquarters:** Vienna.



Source: [The Hindu: Pakistan’s nukes should come under IAEA watch](#)

## None of the Above (NOTA)

### Context

Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking to make the NOTA (None of the Above) option compulsory in all elections, even if there is only one candidate.

### What is NOTA?

- It is an option on electronic voting machines (EVMs) that allows voters to **reject all candidates** contesting in an election.
- **Origin:**
  - Introduced in India in **2013**.
  - Implemented following the **Supreme Court judgment** in the case of **People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs. Union of India (2013)**.
  - The Court ruled that the **right to secrecy in voting** is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression), and hence NOTA should be included as an option to ensure free and fair elections.
- **First Usage**
  - **First implemented:** Chhattisgarh Assembly Elections, November 2013.
  - Later used in Lok Sabha elections (2014 onward) and in state assembly elections.
- **Impact:**
  - Even if **NOTA gets the highest number of votes**, the **candidate with the next highest number of votes is declared elected**.
  - **NOTA does not lead to re-elections** or rejection of candidates.
  - Its impact is **symbolic**, not decisive.

Source: [The Hindu: Should NOTA be included in all elections compulsorily?](#)



## News in Shorts

### Saraswati Pushkaralu

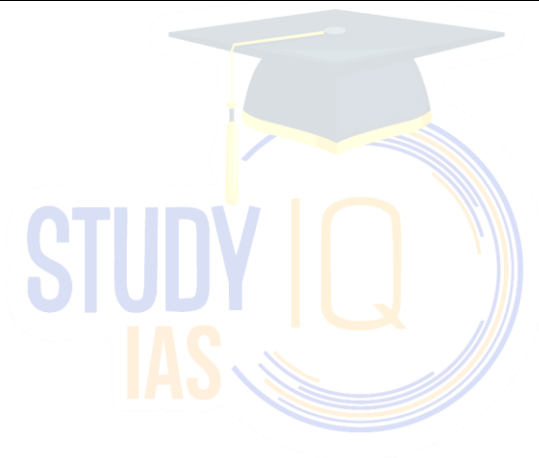
**News?** The 12-day Saraswati Pushkaralu have begun in Kaleshwaram (Telangana).

#### About Saraswati Pushkaralu

- **Duration:** It is celebrated for **12 days**.
- **Frequency:** The festival occurs **once every 12 years**.
- **Celestial Timing:** It is observed when **Jupiter enters the zodiac sign Gemini** (*Mithuna Rasi*).
- **River Worship:** Dedicated to **River Saraswati**, regarded as an **invisible and subterranean** river in Hindu belief.
- **Key Location:** The festival holds special significance at **Triveni Sangamam in Kaleshwaram**, where the **Saraswati, Godavari, and Pranahita** rivers are believed to meet.

#### Related Fact

- According to legend, a devotee named **Pushkara** performed intense penance and was blessed by **Lord Shiva** with the power to **reside in water and purify rivers**. On **Jupiter's request**, Pushkara agreed to enter and sanctify one sacred river at a time.



## Places in News

### Belgium



**News?** Belgium officials abandoned plans to phase down nuclear power.

#### About Belgium

- **Location:** Northwestern Europe.
- **Bordered by:** Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, France, and the North Sea.
- **Capital:** Brussels
  - Brussels is de facto capital of EU.
  - Also it hosts the headquarters of many major international organizations such as NATO.
- Belgium is a founding member of the **Eurozone, NATO, OECD, and WTO.**

## Editorial Summary

### Is Bihar's high replacement rate a consequence of poverty?

#### Context

According to the Sample Registration System report for 2021 released by the Registrar General of India Bihar reported the highest TFR at 3.0.

#### Is Bihar's High Replacement Rate a Consequence of Poverty?

While poverty plays a significant role, **cultural, social, and structural factors** are equally influential in maintaining Bihar's high Total Fertility Rate (TFR).

#### Reasons for High TFR in Bihar

- **Cultural Preferences:** Only **49.6% of Bihari women** think two children is ideal (vs 67% nationally).
  - Strong **son preference** persists; families often desire at least **two sons**.
- **Economic and Social Factors:** **Poverty** and reliance on children for **economic security**.
  - **Agrarian economy** and **lack of industrialisation** lead to high dependency on family labour.
  - **Low female literacy and employability** (53% female literacy as per 2011 Census).
- **Urban-Rural Paradox:** Even in urban Bihar, TFR is **above replacement level** (2.3), unlike the **national urban average** of 1.6.
  - Suggests **fertility is a conscious cultural choice**, not just economic compulsion.
- **Weak Health Infrastructure:** **Limited autonomy** of women in reproductive decisions; **mother-in-laws mediate** between ASHA workers and young women.

#### Implications

- **Demographic and Development Challenges:** High TFR can strain public services, education, health, and employment sectors.
  - Despite declining **infant mortality** (27 per 1000), fertility remains high.
- **Political Impact – Delimitation Debate:** **Northern States (high TFR)** like Bihar may gain more seats in Parliament post-delimitation.
  - **Southern States (low TFR)** may get penalised for population control, raising issues of **federal fairness** and **representational equity**.
- **Policy Implications:** Need for **comprehensive female education, women empowerment, and reproductive autonomy**.
  - Fertility transition must be aligned with **employment opportunities, urbanisation, and social reform**.

#### Conclusion

Bihar's high TFR is a multi-dimensional issue involving **culture, economics, education, and governance**. Without proactive intervention, the **demographic divergence** between north and south India could pose serious **socio-political and federal challenges** in the coming decades.

Source: [The Hindu: Is Bihar's high replacement rate a consequence of poverty?](#)

## Digital Exclusion for PwDs

### Context

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) directed revisions to Know-Your-Customer (KYC) digital norms to ensure accessibility for 'persons with disabilities' (PwD), reinterpreting Article 21 of the Constitution to encompass the 'right to digital access'.

### What approach does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 take?

The **RPwD Act, 2016** adopts a **social-barrier model** of disability. This model shifts the focus from the individual's impairments to the **environmental, attitudinal, and systemic barriers** that hinder their full and effective participation in society.

#### Key Features:

- **Disability is not just medical** but includes psycho-social and societal factors.
- Emphasizes **equal participation** in all spheres — civil, political, economic, cultural.
- Aligns with the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**.
- **Section 42** mandates accessible digital, print, and electronic media using:
  - Audio descriptions
  - Sign language interpretation
  - Captions
  - Universal design standards
- Enshrines **substantive equality** and **non-discrimination** under the law.

### Why do banks and other financial and government institutions mandate collecting KYC details?

KYC (Know Your Customer) is a **mandatory regulatory mechanism** under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002**, aimed at:

- **Preventing money laundering**, terrorism financing, identity fraud, and tax evasion.
- Ensuring **identity verification** of individuals accessing banking, telecom, insurance, pension, and other services.
- Facilitating **government benefit delivery** such as:
  - Aadhaar-linked Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)
  - Scholarships
  - Pensions and subsidies
- **Regulatory Framework**
- RBI's **Master Directions on KYC (2016)** introduced:
  - **Customer Due Diligence (CDD)** frameworks
  - **Video-based Customer Identification Process (V-CIP)**
- SEBI, IRDAI, and DoT also mandate digital KYC for investor and telecom services.

### How does the current digital KYC framework exclude visually impaired individuals and acid attack survivors?

The **present KYC systems are not inclusive** and often violate accessibility mandates, effectively **excluding PwDs** from remote identity verification.

- **Exclusionary Aspects:**
  - **Visual-based prompts:**
    - Eye-blinking
    - Reading on-screen flashing codes
    - Aligning faces or ID cards on camera — not screen-reader or audio-friendly
  - **Signature requirements:**
    - PAN applications don't accept **thumb impressions**.
    - Digital forms often **reject assistive devices** or alternate methods.
  - **Biometric challenges:**

- Aadhaar biometric scanners **lack accessibility features** like audio feedback.
- Devices are rarely designed to accommodate people with facial disfigurement.
- **Website and app issues:**
  - Violate ICT Accessibility Standards (2021, 2022)
  - No **screen-reader compatibility, audio cues, or clear form navigation**
- **Regulatory rigidity:**
  - RBI directions prohibit **prompting**, even though many PwDs require assistance.
  - Lack of uniformity: each institution designs its own tests without PwD inputs.

#### Legal Backing for Intervention

- **Supreme Court rulings** (e.g., *Rajive Raturi v. Union of India*, 2024) have affirmed that:
  - Accessibility is central to **Article 21** (Right to Life and Dignity).
  - Digital access must be **inclusive by design**, not as an afterthought.
  - Exclusion of PwDs from digital services **violates Articles 14, 15, 21, and 38**.

#### Conclusion

The current digital KYC framework, while crucial for national security and governance, **structurally excludes** many disabled citizens. A **universal design approach**, informed by the RPwD Act, 2016 and Supreme Court directives, is needed to ensure **equitable digital inclusion** for all.

Source: [The Hindu: Does Article 21 include right to digital access?](#)

