

Today's Prelims Topics

Lesser Flamingo

Context

Flamingos have arrived in large numbers at the Chhaya Pond in Porbandar town of Gujarat.

About Lesser Flamingo

- **Scientific Name:** *Phoeniconaias minor*
- **Features:** It is the **smallest of all flamingos** but has the largest population.
 - It possesses the "**hallux**" or **hind toe** that some other flamingos do not have.
 - Males are a little taller than females.
 - It is serially monogamous, meaning they form pairs that remain together while they are raising the young.
- **Geographical distribution:** Africa, Asia continents and in that especially Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, North Africa
 - They mostly eat **blue-green algae** but **occasionally** will **take crustaceans and small insects**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **CMS (Convention on Migratory Species):** Included in Appendix II.
 - **Conservation Status (IUCN):** Near Threatened (NT).



Fact

- **Rann of Kutch** is declared as the "**Flamingo City**".

Source: [The Hindu: Pink Squad](#)

Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

Context

In the NH-66 collapse case, PAC asked the CAG to audit construction quality and review the road design and contract terms.

About PAC

- **Origin:**
 - It was established in **1921** on the basis of the **Government of India Act, 1919. (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms)**.
 - It is one of the **oldest Parliamentary Committees** in India.
- **Composition:** 22 members (15 from Lok Sabha + 7 from Rajya Sabha).
- **Election method:** Members of the committee are elected through a system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote.
- **Chairman: Appointed by the Speaker** from amongst members of the committee.
 - Since 1967, it has been a Parliamentary **tradition** to appoint the **Chairman from the Opposition party**.
- **Tenure:** 1 Year (Chairman & Members)
- **Significance:** Essential for ensuring **executive accountability** to the people and enforcing **parliamentary oversight** over the government's actions.

What are the roles of PAC?

- **Examine the audit reports** submitted by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and present its findings to Parliament.
- Acts as a **watchdog over public finances** by reviewing the audit reports on appropriation accounts and finance accounts.
- **Scrutinises the appropriation accounts** to ensure:
 - Funds were legally available.
 - A competent authority sanctioned their use.
 - Procedures and rules were properly followed.

Note:

- PAC is **one of the three financial committees** of selected Members of Parliament.
 - The other two are the **Estimates Committee** and the **Committee on Public Undertakings (CoPU)**.
- PAC does not examine reports of those public undertakings which are allotted to the **Committee on Public Undertakings**.

Source: [The Hindu: NH-66 Collapse, PAC Directs CAG to do performance audit](#)

Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act 2023

Context

The government has recently notified the rules under the **Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control & Discipline) Act, 2023**.

Rules under Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control & Discipline) Act, 2023

- **Empowered Command Structure:** Commanders-in-Chief and Officers-in-Command of Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs) now have **full administrative and disciplinary authority** over Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel under their command.
- **Legal Framework:** Rules notified under **Section 11** provide a structured legal and operational mechanism for uniform implementation across all inter-service formations.
- **Faster Disciplinary Action:** Enables **quicker resolution** of disciplinary cases and avoids **overlapping jurisdiction** across services.
- **Preservation of Service Identity:** Ensures **command integration** without affecting the **distinct service conditions** of each military branch.

Implications for Indian Military Structure

- **Enhanced Operational Synergy:** Fosters joint functioning in both existing and future ISOs by eliminating administrative fragmentation.
- **Support for Theatre Commands:** Strengthens the foundation for **integrated theatre commands** by enabling unified command and control.
- **Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness:** Reduces duplication, optimizes resources, and improves coordination across services through centralized administrative control.

Source: [The Hindu: Government notifies rules enabling greater 'jointness', command efficiency in armed forces](#)

What are Inter-Service Organisations (ISOs)?

Definition: Military bodies comprising personnel from two or more services (Army, Navy, Air Force) to promote jointness and integration.

Example: *Andaman and Nicobar Command* – India's first tri-service command.

Purpose: Enhance synergy in logistics, training, and support; support joint operations.

Legal Backing: Established under the **Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control & Discipline) Act, 2023**.

Authority: Led by an Officer-in-Command with disciplinary and administrative control over all service members in the ISO.

Vision: Advance **theaterisation**, boost **interoperability, cost-efficiency**, and create a **"One Nation, One Military Approach"** for future-ready armed forces.

Cholera

Context

Sudan is facing a cholera outbreak.

About Cholera

- **Causative Agent:** Cholera is a water-borne disease caused by the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae*, mainly strains **O1** and **O139**.
- **Strain Distribution:** The **O1 strain** is responsible for most outbreaks globally, while the **O139 strain** is rare and largely limited to **Asia**.
- **Nature of Illness:** It is an **acute intestinal infection** leading to diarrheal illness.
- **Severity:** The infection can range from **asymptomatic or mild** to **severe and life-threatening** in some cases.
- **Symptoms:** Profuse watery diarrhoea, vomiting, muscle cramps (especially in the legs.)
- **Transmission:** through **contaminated food and water**.
 - It thrives in areas lacking **proper sewage disposal and clean drinking water**, enabling rapid transmission during outbreaks.
- **Vaccine Availability:** The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has pre-qualified **three oral cholera vaccines (OCVs)** ⇒ Dukoral, Shanchol, Euvichol-Plus.

Source: [Aljazeera: Sudan reports 70 cholera deaths in Khartoum in two days](#)



Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan

Context

The **Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan** is running from **29th May to 12th June 2025**.

Overview of Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan

- **Conducted:** By the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**, in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, **State Agriculture Departments**, **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**, and **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)**.
- **Started:** **2024** as part of the roadmap to **Viksit Bharat @2047**
- **Coverage:** over 65,000 villages across 723 districts, directly engaging with **more than 1.3 crore farmers**.
- **Focus:** Spreading awareness and implementation of **flagship agricultural schemes** among farmers
- **Mechanism:**
 - **Doubling Farmers' Income:** Promoting practices that help boost productivity and profitability.
 - India is promoting **technology-driven agriculture** through initiatives like the **Digital Agriculture Mission**, **AgriStack (Farmer ID)**, and **Namo Drone Didi**.
 - Apps like **Kisan Suvidha** and AI-based irrigation advisories under **Per Drop More Crop** are being used to enhance **water-use efficiency** in agriculture.
 - **Public Participation (Jan Bhagidari):** Involving farmers, stakeholders, local bodies, and youth in agricultural transformation.
 - **Drone demonstrations, AI-based soil testing, and climate-smart farming** techniques were among the highlights.
 - The initiative was linked to the **Digital India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** missions.

Source: [PIB](#)

News in Short

Birch Glacier

News? A massive landslide occurred in Switzerland after the collapse of Birch glacier.

About Birch Glacier

- **Situated:** Swiss Alps, Switzerland.
- The collapse was linked to **melting permafrost** and accelerated **glacial retreat**, both driven by rising temperatures due to climate change.

Global Glacier Retreat

- **Nepal's Yala Glacier:** This glacier has **lost 66% of its surface area since 1974** and is retreating by over a meter annually. It is projected to disappear within the next few decades.
- **Indonesia's Carstensz Glacier:** Once the largest tropical glacier, it has shrunk from **1.4 km in length in 2002 to just 470 meters by late 2023**, indicating a near-total collapse is imminent.
- **Himalayan Ice Loss:** Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya melted 65% faster between 2011 and 2020 compared to the previous decade.
- **Global Projections:** A recent study indicates that **nearly 40% of the world's glaciers are already committed to melting** due to current greenhouse gas levels.
 - If global temperatures rise by 2.7°C, the loss could reach 75%, threatening sea levels and freshwater supplies for billions.



Source: [The Hindu](#)

Exercise Nomadic Elephant

News? The 17th edition of the **India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise Nomadic Elephant** will be conducted in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Defence Cooperation Between India and Mongolia

- **India-Mongolia Joint Working Group for Defense Cooperation:** Facilitates an annual meeting of the Joint Working Group.
- **'Nomadic Elephant' Joint Exercise:** Enhance bilateral defence relations.
- **Participation in 'Khan Quest':** Observers from the Indian Armed Forces participate each year in the 'Khan Quest,' a **multilateral peacekeeping exercise hosted by Mongolia**.
- **Emergency Management Collaboration:** Recent years have seen accelerated cooperation between Mongolia's **National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)** and India's **National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA)** in disaster management initiatives.

Source: [PIB](#)

Cobalt

News? The prices of Cobalt have fallen over the last few years.

About Cobalt

- **Chemical Symbol:** Co

- **Atomic Number:** 27
- **Category:** Transition Metal
- **Color:** Lustrous, silver-gray
- **Occurrence:** Typically found in mineral ores such as **cobaltite, erythrite, and skutterudite**.
 - Often a **byproduct of copper and nickel mining**.
- **Uses of Cobalt:**
 - **Rechargeable Batteries:** **Lithium-ion batteries** (used in smartphones, laptops, electric vehicles).
 - **Superalloys:** Used in **jet engines**, turbines, and aerospace applications for high-temperature resistance.
 - **Magnets and Hard Metals:** For **permanent magnets**, cutting tools, and wear-resistant alloys.
 - **Medical Uses:** **Cobalt-60** (radioactive isotope) used in **radiotherapy** and sterilization.
 - **Ceramics and Pigments:** Historically used for **blue coloring in glass and ceramics**.
- **Distribution:**
 - **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):** World's largest producer (~70%).
 - **Other Countries:** Indonesia, Russia, Australia & Canada.
- **In India:**

State	District
Jharkhand	Singhbhum
Odisha	Kendujhar
	Jajpur
Rajasthan	Jhunjhunu
Nagaland	Tuensang
Madhya Pradesh	Jhabua
	Hoshangabad

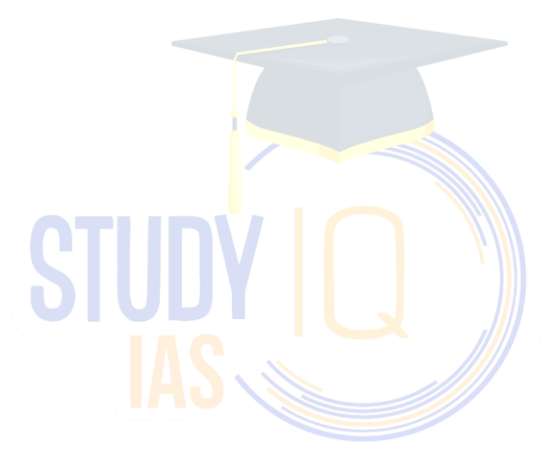
Source: [The Hindu](#)

Bandung Conference

- **Date:** 18–24 April 1955
- **Venue:** **Bandung**, Indonesia
- **Hosted by:** Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and Burma (Myanmar)
- **Objectives:**
 - Promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation
 - Oppose colonialism, racism, and neocolonialism
 - Foster peaceful coexistence and global peace
 - Stay non-aligned amidst the Cold War (neither pro-US nor pro-USSR)
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - Adoption of a **10-point declaration** on:
 - Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity

- Non-intervention in internal affairs
- Peaceful resolution of conflicts
- Promotion of human rights and the UN Charter
- Laid the **groundwork** for the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** (officially formed in 1961).

Source: [Indian Express](#)



Editorial Summary

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Context

Quote

“Some kids win the lottery at birth; far too many don’t — and most people struggle to catch up,”
– Nobel Laureate Prof. James Heckman.

Significance of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- **Highest Return on Investment:** The **Heckman Curve** shows that investing in ECE yields **returns between \$7 to \$12 per \$1 spent**, making it the most cost-effective stage for human capital investment.
- **Foundation for Future Learning & Earnings:** Children with quality ECE are **4 times more likely to have higher earnings** and **3 times more likely to own a home** later in life.
- **Reduces Inequality:** ECE can mitigate the disadvantages stemming from the “**lottery of birth**”, i.e., being born into poverty.
- **Early Skill Development:** Critical cognitive and behavioral skills are formed by age 5; gaps in **motivation, language, and numeracy** become evident by then.
- **Better School Readiness:** Prepares children for formal education, reducing future learning gaps and dropout rates.

Current Challenges in India’s ECE System

- **Insufficient Instructional Time:** Anganwadi workers spend **only 38 minutes/day** on preschool instruction vs. the recommended 2 hours.
 - Only **9% of pre-primary schools** have dedicated ECE teachers.
- **Weak Learning Outcomes:** Only **15%** of children can match basic objects, and **30%** can compare numbers — essential pre-Class 1 skills.
- **Low Enrollment in ECE:** Many children skip pre-primary education:
 - Only **2% of 3-year-olds**,
 - **5.1% of 4-year-olds**,
 - Nearly **25% of 5-year-olds** directly enroll in Class 1.
- **Inadequate Resources & Oversight:** Only **₹1,263 per child/year** is spent on ECE vs. **₹37,000** on school education.
 - **1 supervisor per 282 Anganwadis**, making quality control difficult.
- **Limited Parental Engagement:** Many parents care, but **lack guidance** on how to support ECE at home.
 - Underuse of smartphones or EdTech platforms for parent training.

Government & State Initiatives

State/Entity	Initiative	Description
Uttar Pradesh	Hiring 11,000 ECE educators	Across districts; plus 6-day residential training for Master Trainers.
Odisha	Shishu Vatikas & Jaduipedi Kits	To enhance school readiness for ages 5–6 through play-based learning.

Madhya Pradesh	Bal Choupal	Monthly parent engagement sessions focused on play-based learning.
Union Government	ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme)	Core national scheme for nutrition, health, and preschool education via Anganwadis.
NEP 2020	Emphasis on Foundational Literacy & Numeracy	Targets universal ECE access for ages 3–6; introduces Balavatika at preparatory stage.

What Can Be Done

- **Hiring Dedicated ECE Teachers:** Ensure every Anganwadi and pre-primary school has trained educators focused solely on ECE.
- **Increase Funding & Monitoring:** Allocate more funds to ECE (including for learning materials, infrastructure, and supervisors).
 - Hire more **supervisors** for quality assurance.
- **Strengthen Parental Involvement:** Conduct community-based programs (like **Bal Choupal** in MP).
 - Leverage **EdTech and WhatsApp** to guide parents in home-based learning.
- **Improve Instruction Time & Pedagogy:** Standardize **2 hours of play-based, age-appropriate learning** daily.
 - Train educators in **early childhood pedagogy**.
- **Promote Awareness & Enrolment:** Run awareness drives to increase **ECE enrolment**, especially for ages 3–5.
 - Integrate **Shishu Vatikas and Balavatikas** in schools and Anganwadis.

Source: [The Hindu: Rewriting the script of early childhood education](#)