Today's Prelims Topics

International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS).

Context

India won the IIAS Presidency for 2025-2028.

About IIAS

- **Establishment:** Founded in 1930.
- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium.
- **Objective:** Promotes scientific research and collaboration in public administration globally.
- **Membership:**
    - 31 member countries (including India, Japan, China, Germany, etc.).
    - 20 national sections.
    - 15 academic research centres.
- **India's Association:**
    - Member since 1998.
    - Represented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

Recent Context (2025-2028 Term):

- India won the IIAS Presidency for 2025-2028.
- **Candidate:** V. Srinivas (Secretary, DARPG), nominated by PM Narendra Modi.
- **Election Process:**
    - Held on June 3, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
    - Competed with Austria, South Africa, and Bahrain; India won in the final round against Austria.

Source: TheHindu

UMEED Portal

Context

AIMPLB criticized the **UMEED portal**, calling it **"contempt of court"** as the SC is yet to rule on the Waqf Act amendments.

About it

- **Full Form**: **UMEED** - Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Portal.
- **Purpose**: To **digitize the registration and management of Waqf properties** across India.
- **Launched by**: **Union Government** (Ministry of Minority Affairs).
- **Objective**:
    - Bring transparency in Waqf property records.
    - Prevent encroachments and illegal sales.
    - Streamline administration of Waqf lands (estimated over 8 lakh properties in India).

Waqf Act, 2025 Amendment

- **The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** seeks to give more powers to the Central Waqf Council for supervision.
- **Controversy:**
    - **Muslim bodies,** including the **All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), oppose it,** calling it an interference in religious endowments.
    - Petitions pending in Supreme Court challenging the amendment.

Source: TheHindu

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

Context

NCLAT refused relief to Gensol Engineering Ltd. against an asset freeze order by NCLT (Ahmedabad).

About NCLAT

- **Establishment:**
  - It is a **quasi-judicial body** under the **Companies Act, 2013.**
  - Constituted under **Section 410** of the Companies Act, 2013.
  - Became operational on **1 June 2016.**
- **Purpose:**
  - Appellate tribunal for appeals against orders of:
    - National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) - **[Adjudicates company law disputes (original jurisdiction)]**
    - Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).
    - Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- **Composition:**
  - **Chairperson:** Retired Judge of the Supreme Court or Chief Justice of a High Court.
  - **Members:** Judicial and technical experts.
- **Jurisdiction:**
  - Adjudicates matters related to company law, insolvency, and competition law.
  - Final appellate authority under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016.

Gensol Engineering Case

- **Issue:** NCLAT refused relief to Gensol Engineering Ltd. against an asset freeze order by NCLT (Ahmedabad).
- **Entities Involved:**
  - Matrix Gas and Renewable Ltd.
  - Blu Smart Fleet Private Ltd. (linked to Gensol).
- **Key Observation:** NCLAT directed the matter back to NCLT for reconsideration.

Source: TheHindu

G7 Summit

Context

India has not yet received an invitation to the G7 Summit scheduled for June 15-17, 2025, in Kananaskis, Alberta.

About G7

- **Full Form**: **Group of Seven (G7)**.
- **Members**:
  - **Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA** (7 nations).
  - **European Union (EU)** participates as a non-enumerated member.
- **Type**: **Informal forum** of advanced economies (no permanent secretariat).
- **Origin**: Formed in **1975** as G6 (Canada joined in 1976 → G7).
- **Purpose**: Discuss global issues like **economy, security, climate, and technology**.

Key Highlight of 2024 Summit

- **Host**: **Italy (Puglia region, 13-15 June 2024)**.
- **Key Agenda**:
  - **Ukraine War**: Military aid and sanctions on Russia.
  - **China's trade practices**: Addressing "market distortions."
  - **AI regulation**: Promoting ethical AI development.
  - **Global South outreach**: Focus on Africa and food security.
- **India's Role**:
  - Invited as a **guest country** (along with UAE, Türkiye, others).
  - Highlighted issues: **Climate finance, multilateral reforms**.
- **Controversy (India-Canada Tensions)**
  - **Canada's PM Trudeau** accused India of involvement in a Khalistani separatist's killing (2023).
  - **India's Response**: Denied allegations; diplomatic ties strained.
  - **G7 Impact**: Canada pushed to exclude India, but Italy invited India as a partner.

Source: IndianExpress

First Polar Research Vehicle (PRV)

Context

India will design and build first-ever **indigenously** PRV by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)** with **Norwegian collaboration**.

What is a Polar Research Vehicle (PRV)?

- A **Polar Research Vehicle (PRV)** is a specially designed ship built to carry out scientific research in extreme polar environments — both the **Arctic** and **Antarctic** regions.
- These ships are engineered to:
  - **Navigate through sea ice** and withstand harsh polar conditions.
  - Serve as a **mobile research platform** equipped with advanced laboratories and scientific instruments.
  - Enable **multi-disciplinary studies** like glaciology, oceanography, meteorology, marine biology, and climate science.

Significance of the New PRV for India

- Strengthens India's shipbuilding ecosystem and aligns with the **'Make in India'** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiatives.
- A dedicated PRV allows India **self-reliant access** to these stations, reducing dependence on chartered foreign vessels.
- Polar regions are **climate-sensitive hotspots**. The PRV will help:
  - Monitor climate change impacts
  - Study polar biodiversity and marine ecosystems
  - Enhance oceanographic research and global climate models
- Positions India as a responsible global stakeholder in **Arctic and Antarctic governance**.
- Will catalyze investment, innovation, and employment in India's **maritime and shipbuilding sector** under **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** and **MAHASAGAR** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Region).

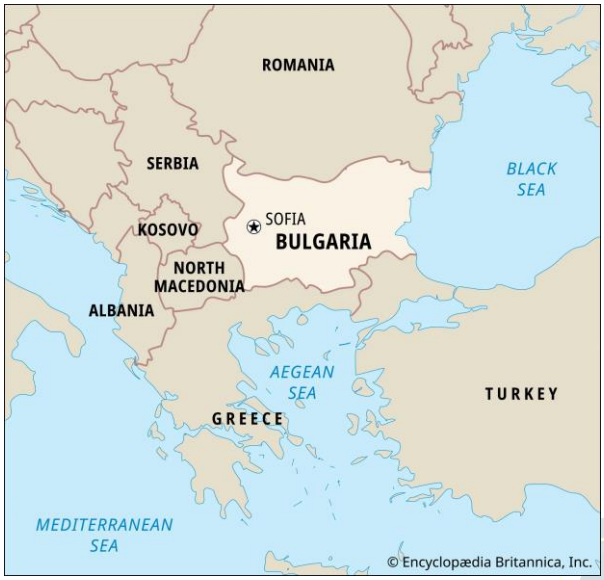
Facts

- **Current Ships**: **MV Vasiliy Golovnin** (chartered from Russia for Antarctic missions).
- India operates **three research stations in Polar Regions**:
  - ***Bharati*** and ***Maitri*** in Antarctica
  - ***Himadri*** in the Arctic

Source: IndianExpress

Places in News

BULGARIA



News? European Council formally approved Bulgaria's entry into the **Eurozone – 21st country to join the single currency bloc.**

About it

- **Location:** Southeast Europe (Balkan Peninsula).
- **Capital:** Sofia.
- **EU Membership:** Joined the European Union (EU) in 2007.
- **Currency:** Currently uses the **Bulgarian Lev** (BGN); set to **adopt the Euro** (€) on 1 January 2026.
- **Significance:**
  - **Will become the 21st member of the Eurozone** (*Group of EU countries using the Euro as their official currency*).
  - **First country to join the Eurozone since Croatia (2023).**

Source: TheHindu

Editorial Summary

Exposomics for better environmental health

Context

World Environment Day 2025 focuses on ending plastic pollution. In India, environmental exposures are rising due to rapid development, demanding integrated health strategies like exposomics to reduce the environmental disease burden effectively.

Environmental Disease Burden

- **Major Contributor to Global Mortality:** In 2021, environmental and occupational risks caused **12.8 million global deaths** (18.9%) and accounted for **14.4% of all DALYs**.
- **Leading Risk Factors Globally:**
  - **Ambient PM2.5 air pollution**: 4.7 million deaths
  - **Household air pollution (solid fuels)**: 3.1 million deaths
- **India's High Burden: ~3 million deaths** and **100 million DALYs** in India due to OEH risks.
  - Contributes to over **50%** of the burden of non-communicable diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disorders.
  - **Lead exposure** alone caused up to **154 million IQ points lost** globally among children under 5, with India contributing 20%.
- **Gaps in Current Estimates:** Covers only 11 categories of risks.
  - Excludes emerging threats like **microplastics**, **chemical mixtures**, **noise**, and **climate change impacts**.
  - Fails to capture complex interactions among multiple risk factors over a lifetime.

- India follows globally accepted scientific frameworks, primarily the **Global Burden of Disease (GBD) methodology – Developed by WHO** in 2000, to estimate its **disease burden**.

GBD Methodology

- It is a **comprehensive worldwide research program** led by the **Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)** that systematically measures:
  - **Mortality and morbidity** from major diseases, injuries, and risk factors.
  - Across **age groups**, **sex**, **countries**, and **time**.

Key Features

- Uses **DALY** (Disability-Adjusted Life Year) = **YLL (Years of Life Lost)** + **YLD (Years Lived with Disability)**
- Identifies **top causes of death and disability** globally and nationally.
- Helps **governments and organizations** prioritize health policies and interventions.

How Exposomics Is a Solution for Environmental Disease Burden

- **Captures Lifetime and Cumulative Exposures:** Traditional studies focus on single or limited exposures.
  - **Exposomics maps all exposures** — chemical, physical, biological, and psychosocial — **across the entire lifespan**, offering a more complete health risk profile.

What is the Exposome?

The **exposome** refers to the **total lifetime environmental exposures** an individual experiences — including **chemical, physical, biological, psychosocial, and dietary factors** — and their interactions with internal biology (genes, metabolism, epigenetics) that influence disease development.

- **Reveals Complex Interactions:** Many environmental factors act synergistically (e.g., air pollution + poor diet + stress),
    - Exposomics helps detect how these exposures interact with genetics, lifestyle, and metabolism, leading to diseases like asthma, cancer, and diabetes.
- **Enables Precision Prevention:** By identifying personal exposure signatures, it allows for tailored public health interventions and early disease prediction, especially for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
- **Incorporates Emerging Hazards:** Current Global Burden of Disease (GBD) estimates exclude microplastics, endocrine disruptors, noise pollution, etc.
    - Exposomics includes novel and combined exposures to better estimate actual risks.
- **Drives Innovation in Surveillance:** Uses **wearables**, **biosensors**, and **AI-based data integration** to monitor real-time exposure.
    - Helps build **long-term environmental health surveillance systems** for policymaking.
- **Fosters Data-Driven Policy:** Generates high-resolution exposure data that supports **evidence-based environmental regulations**, **urban planning**, and **public health strategies**.

Source: The Hindu

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

Context

India's tribal and rural food systems hold immense untapped biodiversity, offering nutritional and ecological value. However, agrobiodiversity is rapidly declining, risking cultural knowledge loss, health outcomes, and food security.

India's Biodiversity

- India is one of the most **biodiversity-rich nations** in the world.
- Despite occupying only **2.4% of the world's land area**, it accounts for **nearly 8% of the global biodiversity**, making it a **megadiverse country**.
- **Global Standing:**
    - **One of 17 megadiverse countries**: Recognised by Conservation International for housing a large number of endemic species.
    - **Four biodiversity hotspots –** Himalayas, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats, Sundaland (includes Nicobar Islands)
- **Richness in Species: Over 47,000 plant species** and **over 100,000 animal species** recorded.
    - High levels of **endemism**: Many species of flowering plants, reptiles, amphibians, and fish are found **only in India**.
- **Agrobiodiversity: One of the eight global centres** of **origin of cultivated plants**.
    - Rich in indigenous crop varieties, including millets, pulses, oilseeds, legumes, and medicinal plants.
- **Ecosystem Diversity:** India's biodiversity spans– **Forests** (tropical, temperate, mangroves), **Grasslands and deserts, Wetlands and coastal ecosystems, Glaciers and river systems.**

Significance of Agrobiodiversity & Neglected Crops:

- **Nutritional Security:** Indigenous crops like millets, legumes, and tubers are rich in micronutrients, fibre, and protein, addressing undernutrition and rising non-communicable diseases.
- **Climate Resilience:** Many neglected crops are drought-resistant and adapted to local agro-ecologies, providing resilience against climate shocks.
- **Cultural Identity:** Traditional food practices preserve culinary heritage, tribal wisdom, and ecological knowledge systems passed down generations.
- **Livelihood Security:** Reviving local crops boosts rural incomes through value addition, local processing, and niche markets.
- **Ecological Sustainability:** Diverse cropping systems promote soil health, reduce chemical dependency, and conserve local ecosystems.

What Are the Key Concerns?

- **Rapid Loss of Agrobiodiversity:** Shift to cash crops and monocultures is leading to decline in native crop varieties and ecosystems.
- **Erosion of Traditional Knowledge:** Medicinal and nutritional knowledge among tribal communities is fading due to modernisation and lack of documentation.
- **Policy & Market Gaps:** Orphan crops remain excluded from mainstream policy support, subsidies, and public distribution systems (PDS).
- **Nutritional Inequality:** Despite being a megadiverse country, India faces high levels of malnutrition, obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies.
- **Neglect of Minor Millets:** While focus is on major millets (ragi, jowar, bajra), minor millets are still underrepresented in millet missions.

Way Forward

- Strengthen the **People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)** and **Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)**.
- Mainstream biodiversity in **education, agriculture, and economic planning**.
- Incentivize **community-led conservation** and **traditional ecological knowledge**.
- Leverage India's strength in **biodiversity science and bio-economy** to generate **"biohappiness"** (term by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan).
- Expand **Millet Missions** and include minor millets and legumes in **PDS, ICDS, and midday meals**.
- Promote **participatory, agroecological R&D i**n collaboration with local communities (e.g. MSSRF model).
- Invest in processing units, branding, and market linkages for indigenous crops to improve farmer income.

Source: **The Hindu: Aiming for an era of 'biohappiness' in India**

Has the Environmental Crisis in India Excerbated?

Context

World Environment Day (June 5) urges reflection on worsening ecological issues. Over the past decade, global and Indian environmental crises—carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, and pollution—have escalated despite growing awareness.

What are the Environmental Crises in India?

- **Rising Carbon Emissions:** India's CO_2 emissions rose from 2.33 billion tonnes (2015) to 3.12 billion tonnes (2024).
    - Coal still powers nearly 70% of electricity generation.
- **Severe Air Pollution:** India ranks among the world's most polluted countries.
    - Delhi consistently tops global air pollution charts.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Deforestation, wetland loss, and monoculture agriculture threaten India's status as a megadiverse nation.
    - Habitat fragmentation is accelerating species extinction.
- **Water and Soil Pollution:** Rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna are heavily contaminated by industrial effluents and sewage.
    - Soil health is declining due to overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- **Waste Mismanagement:** India generates 62 million tonnes of solid waste yearly; only 20% is scientifically treated.
- **Climate Extremes:** Increasing frequency of heatwaves, erratic monsoons, floods, and droughts exacerbates social and economic vulnerabilities.

Root Causes of Environmental Crises

- **Fossil Fuel Dependence:** Coal, oil, and gas dominate energy and transport sectors.
- **Deforestation and Land Use Change:** Forest clearances for infrastructure and mining threaten critical ecosystems like the Western Ghats and northeast.
- **Unsustainable Agriculture:** High-input, monoculture farming leads to habitat destruction and chemical pollution.
- **Urbanisation and Waste:** Rapid, unregulated urban growth results in untreated sewage, plastic accumulation, and growing landfill sites.
- **Industrialisation and Overconsumption:** High consumption patterns in developed countries externalise environmental costs to developing nations like India.

Solutions and Way Forward

- **Global North Responsibility:** Rich nations must cut emissions, fund climate resilience, and reduce carbon outsourcing to the Global South.
- **Corporate Accountability:** Enforce green compliance, carbon taxes, and penalise polluters.
- **Sustainable Development Pathways:** Promote low-carbon jobs, circular economy models, and green infrastructure.
- **Ecological Agriculture:** Encourage biodiversity-based farming systems and reduce agrochemical dependency.
- **Community-led Conservation:** Empower local communities, especially tribal and rural populations, in protecting forests, water bodies, and biodiversity.
- **Policy Integration:** Embed ecological criteria in trade, investment, and industrial planning.

Source: The Hindu

Judge Joining Politics

Context

Chief Justice of India B R Gavai has said that judges taking up government appointments "immediately after retirement" or resigning to contest elections "raises significant ethical concerns and invites public scrutiny".

Examples of Judges Entering Politics

- **Justice Fazl Ali (1952):** Appointed Governor of Odisha soon after SC retirement.
- **Justice M.C. Chagla (1958):** Resigned as CJ of Bombay HC to become Ambassador to the U.S.
- **Justice K. Subba Rao (1967):** Resigned as CJI to contest Presidential elections.
- **Justice Baharul Islam (1983):** Resigned from SC to contest Lok Sabha elections.
- **T.N. Chaturvedi (2002):** Appointed Governor of Karnataka after serving as CAG.
- **M.S. Gill (2004):** Former CEC nominated to Rajya Sabha and made Union Minister.
- **Ranjan Gogoi (2020):** Nominated to Rajya Sabha within four months of retirement as CJI.

Constitutional Restrictions on Post-Retirement Benefits

- **Article 124(7):** Retired Supreme Court judges are barred from practicing law before any court or authority in India.
- **Article 220:** Retired High Court judges cannot appear before any court or authority except the Supreme Court or other High Courts.
- **Article 148(4):** The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) is ineligible for any future office under the Central or State government after retirement.
- **Article 319:** UPSC Chairman and Members are barred from taking up further government employment after demitting office.

Concerns With Judges Joining Politics

- **Violation of Oath:** Constitutional functionaries swear to act without fear or favour. Political affiliations post-retirement raise doubts about their impartiality during service.
- **Threat to Institutional Independence:** Risk of judgments or decisions being influenced to gain future political rewards undermines the integrity of constitutional offices.
- **Inconsistent Cooling-Off Period Norms:** Civil Services Rules mandate a cooling-off period before joining private jobs, but there's no such rule for political roles.
- **Breach of Bangalore Principles (2002):** Values such as impartiality, integrity, and propriety are compromised when judges enter political life soon after retirement.
- **Loss of Public Trust:** Judicial pronouncements (e.g., *All India Judges' Association v. Union of India*, 1991) highlight how post-retirement roles may lead to erosion of public confidence in constitutional authorities.

Recommendations & Judicial Opinions

- **Election Commission (2012):** Suggested a post-retirement cooling-off period before bureaucrats can enter politics.
- **Attorney General's View:** Supported cooling-off for private jobs due to conflict of interest but opposed restrictions on political entry citing democratic rights.
- **Supreme Court (2022):** Rejected a plea for imposing cooling-off periods, stating it's a legislative matter.

Way Forward

- **Legislate a Cooling-Off Period:** Parliament should enact a law mandating a minimum two-year cooling-off period before retired officials take up political roles.

- **Raise Judicial Retirement Age:** Increasing retirement age to 70 can reduce incentives for post-retirement appointments.
- **Criteria-Based Tribunal Appointments:** Appointments should consider factors like nature of cases handled, judicial experience, and domain expertise.
- **Promote Self-Regulation:** Ethical restraint by individuals in high offices, as exemplified by Justices Chelameswar, Kurian Joseph, and former CJIs Kapadia, Lodha, and Thakur, should be the norm.

Source: Indian Express