
Prelims Exam Topics

BUDDHA RELICS

Context:

- The recent exposition of sacred relics of Gautama Buddha took place in Ladakh during Buddha Purnima .

About Buddha Relics

- **Nature and Types of Relics:** Buddha relics are sacred remains or associated objects linked to Buddha, classified as:
 - **Saririka:** Physical remains (bones, ashes)
 - **Paribhogika:** Objects used by Buddha (robes, bowl)
 - **Uddesika:** Symbolic representations (stupas, images)
- **History of Lord Buddha's Relics**
 - At age 80, Buddha attained salvation (Mahaparinirvana) in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh.
 - The **Mallas of Kushinagar** conducted his cremation with ceremonies reserved for a universal king.
 - The sacred relics were divided into eight shares for the Ajathsatrus of Magadha, Licchavis of Vaishali, Sakyas of Kapilavastu, Mallas of Kushinagar, Bullies of Allakappa, Mallas of Pava, Koliyas of Ramagrama, and a Brahmana of Vethadipa.
 - Stupas were erected over these eight shares, along with two additional stupas built over the urn and the embers.
 - **Saririka Stupas:** These structures built over bodily relics represent the earliest surviving Buddhist shrines.
 - Emperor Ashoka opened seven of the original eight stupas to redistribute the relics into 84,000 stupas across his empire to popularize Buddhism.
- **Major Sites:** Important relics are found in places like Piprahwa (India),, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and other Buddhist countries.
- **Significance**
 - **Spiritual Significance:** considered **sacred embodiments of Buddha's presence**, inspiring devotion.

- **Diplomatic Role:** Relic exhibitions in countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Mongolia strengthen **cultural diplomacy**
- **Ladakh's Role:** Ladakh historically served as a **gateway for the spread of Buddhism via the Silk Route**, making it a key centre for preserving Buddhist traditions.

About Piprahwa Relics

- Discovered in 1898 at Piprahwa (Uttar Pradesh) by **William Claxton Peppé**
- Include **bone fragments, caskets, ornaments and inscriptions** linking them to Buddha's Sakya clan
- Believed to be among the **earliest and most authentic relics of Buddha**
- **Repatriation**
 - Relics taken abroad during colonial period were **brought back to India after 127 years**
 - Government intervened to **stop auction in Hong Kong (2025)** and secure their return

KOMAGATA MARU INCIDENT (1914)

Context:

The Komagata Maru incident renewed attention to colonial discrimination.

About the Incident

- **The Voyage (1914):** Gurdit Singh chartered the Japanese steamship *Komagata Maru* to carry 376 Indian passengers to Vancouver to challenge Canada's exclusionary "Continuous Journey Regulation."
- **The Vancouver Standoff:** Upon arrival, the ship was denied entry; passengers remained stranded for two months with dwindling food and water while the "Shore Committee" fought an unsuccessful legal battle for their right to land.
- **Forced Departure:** After a tense standoff and clashes with local authorities, the ship was forcibly expelled from Canadian waters in July 1914 and denied docking at multiple Asian ports under British pressure.
- **Budge Budge Massacre:** When the ship reached Calcutta in September 1914, British authorities attempted to arrest the passengers, leading to a riot and police firing that killed approximately 20 people.
- **Significance**

- **Colonial Racism Exposed:** Showed inequality within the British Empire despite “equal subject” claims.
- **Boost to Freedom Struggle:** Strengthened revolutionary movements like Ghadar.

TECHNOLOGIES TO ADDRESS POTHoles IN DELHI

Context:

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is adopting new technologies developed by CSIR-Central Road Research Institute to tackle recurring potholes.

Ecofix (Steel Slag-Based Mix)

- **Quick & All-Weather Repair:** Ready-to-use material applied even in wet potholes without drying or tack coat, allowing roads to reopen within minutes.
- **Sustainable Material:** Uses processed steel slag, reducing dependence on natural aggregates and promoting waste recycling.

Rejupave Rejuvenator

- **Enhanced Recycling:** Improves reuse of old road material (RAP) from ~25% to 60–70%, reducing need for fresh inputs.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Lowers dependence on bitumen, making resurfacing cheaper and more durable.

MSS+ (Modified Mix Seal Surfacing)

- **Low-Temperature Technology:** Cold-mix method requiring lower temperatures, reducing energy use.
- **Eco-Friendly & Efficient:** Cuts greenhouse emissions and speeds up road construction, suitable for urban areas.

SANTA MARTA TAFF CONFERENCE

Context

The first global conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels (TAFF) co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands was held in Santa Marta, Columbia.

Key takeaways from Santa Marta TAFF conference

- **Institutional Continuity:** Nations committed to a second conference in 2027, to be co-hosted by Ireland and Tuvalu.
- **New Coordination Architecture:** A fresh framework will align diverse transition stakeholders and link efforts directly to the COP30 processes.

- **Workstreams Launched:** Three specific tracks were established to focus on transition roadmaps, producer–consumer coordination, and finance reforms.
- **Climate Integration:** Outcomes will be integrated into the COP30 Presidency roadmap and the Paris Agreement’s second Global Stocktake.
- **Science Panel:** A new Science Panel for the Global Energy Transition was launched to provide evidence-based pathways for the 1.5°C target.

TAFF (Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels)

- **Definition:** The term gained formal international recognition during **COP28** (the first Global Stocktake), where countries collectively agreed on the objective to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems".
- **The TAFF Roadmap:** A specific "TAFF Roadmap" was proposed by **Brazil** (as the COP30 Presidency) to translate this goal into concrete, differentiated implementation options for countries.
- **The TAFF Activation Group:** A coordination group within the COP Action Agenda tasked with shaping international collaboration and helping countries develop national roadmaps.

INS MAHENDRAGIRI

Context

The Indian Navy has inducted INS Mahendragiri.

About the INS Mahendragiri.

- **Class & Project:** Belongs to **Nilgiri-class (Project 17A)**—next-generation stealth guided-missile frigates.
- **Builder:** Constructed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (Mumbai)**; designed by **Warship Design Bureau**.
- **Combat Capabilities:** Equipped for **anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare** (triple-role capability).
- **Indigenisation:** Around **75% indigenous content**, involving **200+ MSMEs**.
- **Strategic Role:** Enhances India’s **blue-water navy capability** and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

Mains Exam Topics

RBI'S EXPECTED CREDIT LOSS (ECL) NORMS

Context

The Reserve Bank of India's new ECL framework is projected to cause a net capital impact of up to **120 basis points** on banks' Common Equity Tier-1 (CET-1) ratios.

Shift in Provisioning Methodology

- **Incurred Loss vs. ECL:** Banks currently use an "incurred loss" model, recognizing provisions only after a loan turns bad; the ECL model is "forward-looking," requiring provisions based on expected future credit risk.
- **Assessment Factors:** Banks must now assess the probability of default, potential loss if default occurs, and exposure at the time of default.
- **Global Standards:** These norms, effective **April 1, 2027**, align India with global practices like **IFRS 9** to enhance banking resilience.

Three-Stage Asset Classification

Loans will be categorized by credit risk levels to determine provisioning depth:

- **Stage I:** Assets with low or no significant increase in risk; provisions are based on **12-month** expected losses.
- **Stage II:** Assets where risk has increased significantly but are not yet NPAs; provisions are based on **lifetime** expected losses.
- **Stage III:** Credit-impaired assets or NPAs; these also require **lifetime** expected loss recognition.

Revised NPA Classification Rules

- **Borrower-Level Classification:** If one loan of a borrower turns bad, **all loans** of that same borrower at that bank are treated as NPAs.
- **Upgrade Restrictions:** Once classified as an NPA, a borrower must clear **all liabilities** before being upgraded back to standard asset status.
- **90-Day Threshold:** The duration for NPA classification remains 90 days overdue, but the borrower-level rule ensures stricter credit disciplines

Capital and Credit Impact

- **CET-1 Impact:** The transition may have a gross impact of 170 basis points, though existing buffers reduce the net impact to 120 basis points.

- Indian banks are currently well-capitalized with a CET-1 ratio of 14% as of March 2026, making the impact absorbable.
- The RBI will allow banks to spread the capital impact over **four financial years**.
- **Increased Cost:** The norms cover off-balance-sheet exposures and undisbursed credit limits, likely increasing costs for riskier segments like microfinance and unsecured retail loans.

Common Equity Tier-1 (CET-1) Ratio

- **Definition:** CET-1 is the highest quality of regulatory capital held by a bank, consisting primarily of common stock and retained earnings.
- **Purpose:** It acts as a financial cushion during periods of stress, providing a buffer to absorb losses while allowing the bank to continue operations.
- **Regulatory Importance:** It is a key measure of a bank's financial strength and solvency; a fall in this ratio indicates the bank may have less capital available for lending or for absorbing unexpected shocks.

Significance for Financial Stability

- **Early Detection:** The framework identifies financial stress earlier, reducing the under-reporting of potential risks.
- **Fortifying Buffers:** With current net NPA ratios below 1%, banks are transitioning during a period of high asset quality, allowing them to build robust buffers in advance of future shocks.