
Prelims Exam Topics

BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY

Context

The Prime Minister of India paid tribute to **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** on his Jayanti.

- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was a Bengali novelist, poet, essayist and journalist.
- **Civil Service:** Served as **Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector** for over 30 years.
- **Major Works:**
 - **Durgeshnandini (1865):** First major Bengali novel.
 - **Anandamath (1882):** Historical novel based on the **Sannyasi Rebellion**; his most influential political work.
 - **Devi Chaudhurani:** Highlighted women's leadership and resistance to colonial oppression.
 - **Bangadarshan (1872):** Literary magazine that advanced the **Bengal Renaissance**.
- **Vande Mataram:** Introduced the patriotic hymn in **Anandamath**, portraying India as the Motherland.

GITCHAK NAKANA

Context

Researchers discovered a new blind subterranean fish species, **Gitchak nakana**, in Assam.

About Gitchak nakana

- **Blind Fish:** Completely blind and lacks body pigmentation.
- **Unique Skull:** Skull roof is absent; the brain is covered only by skin.
- **Navigation:** Uses long sensory barbels to move in complete darkness.
- **Habitat:** Found only in a groundwater-fed open well in **Goalpara, Assam**.
- **Rare Species:** Lives in underground aquifers (groundwater), making it a rare **phreatobitic** fish.



RANI DURGA VATI

Context

The Union Home Minister paid tribute to **Rani Durgavati** on her martyrdom day (24 June).

About Rani Durgavati

- **Birth:** Born at **Kalinjar Fort (Uttar Pradesh)**; belonged to the **Chandela dynasty**.
- **Martyrdom:** Died by suicide during **Asaf Khan's** Mughal invasion in **1564**.
- **Prosperous Rule:** Her kingdom was so prosperous that taxes were collected in **gold coins and elephants**.
- **Water Conservation:** Built reservoirs such as **Ranital, Cherital, and Adhartal**.
- **Patron of Learning:** Supported education and allowed **Acharya Vitthalnath** to establish a **Pushtimarg** centre at Garha.
- **Military Success:** Defeated **Baz Bahadur of Malwa** during his invasion (1555–1560).

OMEGA BLOCK

Context

Western Europe is experiencing a severe heatwave due to an **Omega Block**.

About Omega Block

- A weather pattern shaped like the Greek letter **Ω (Omega)**.
- **Formation:** A strong **high-pressure system** gets trapped between two **low-pressure systems**. Warm air remains trapped near the surface under high pressure, leading to compressional heating.
- **Impact:** Widespread sinking air keeps skies clear, leading to intense and long-lasting sunshine.



POLITICAL DECLARATION ON HIV/AIDS

Context

The UN General Assembly adopted a **Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS** to end AIDS as a public health threat by **2030**.

About the declaration on HIV/AIDS:

- **95-95-95 Targets:** By 2030, 95% of people should know their HIV status, 95% should receive treatment, and 95% should achieve viral suppression.
- **Health Integration:** Integrates HIV services into **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and primary healthcare.
- **Key Priorities:** End mother-to-child transmission, eliminate pediatric AIDS, and reduce stigma, discrimination, and inequalities.
- **About HIV/AIDS:** HIV targets CD4 (T) cells, the white blood cells that protect the body from infections. If Untreated, HIV can progress to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

E-ZERO FIR (OR ZERO E-FIR)

Context

The Prime Minister, during the **52nd PRAGATI** meeting, urged states to implement **e-Zero FIRs** for cybercrime cases.

About e-Zero FIR (or Zero e-FIR)

- **e-Zero FIR:** An **I4C (Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre)** initiative that automatically converts verified cyber financial fraud complaints into **Zero FIRs**.
- **Zero FIR:** Under the **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, only cognizable offences can be reported at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction.
- **e-Filing:** Filing information electronically is **optional**, not mandatory.
- **Preliminary Enquiry:** The officer-in-charge may conduct a preliminary enquiry or start an investigation with prior approval from an officer of **DSP rank or above**.
- **About PRAGATI:** An ICT-based platform connecting the **PMO, Union Secretaries, and State Chief Secretaries** for grievance redressal, project monitoring, and cooperative federalism.

MUZHIYAN KULAM

Context

The Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister inaugurated the restored Muzhiyan Kulam.

About Muzhiyan Kulam

- A **400-year-old historic pond** located at **Pooranankuppam, Puducherry**.

- **History:** Believed to date back to the **Pallava period**.
- **Features:** Spans **2 acres** and contains **four natural spring-fed wells**.
- **Restoration:** Revived through a community-led effort coordinated by the **Dhanasundarambal Charitable Trust** with active participation of local residents.

HARGILA BIRD

Context

The Prime Minister praised the efforts of Assam's 'Hargila Army'—a women-led movement of thousands of rural women dedicated to conserving the Hargila (Greater Adjutant Stork).

About Hargila (Greater Adjutant Stork)

- **Habitat:** Found in **wetlands, shallow lakes, drying lake beds, and flooded forests**.
- **Distribution:** Occurs only in **Assam and Bihar (India) and Cambodia**.
- **Behaviour:** Usually seen **alone or in small groups**; breeds in **winter** in colonies with other waterbirds.
- **Diet:** An **omnivore** that feeds on **carrion, frogs, insects, birds, reptiles, and rodents**.
- **Threats:** **Wetland loss, habitat degradation, and pollution**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN:** Near Threatened
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule IV

Places in news

MONGLA PORT

Context

Bangladesh PM met the Chinese President, during which the two sides formalised a deal to develop an economic zone near Mongla port, replacing a previously proposed Indianbacked venture.

About Mongla Port:

Bangladesh's second-largest seaport after Chittagong, located **188 km from Kolkata** and near the **strategically important Sundarbans**.



ALBANIA

Context:

Thousands of Albanians protested in **Tirana**, demanding the cancellation of a luxury **resort project** planned on the country's **Adriatic coast** over environmental concerns. The protests, being called the “**Flamingo Revolution**”, began over environmental concerns but now have turned into anti-corruption rallies

About Albania

- **Location:** Situated in **Southeastern Europe**.
- **Borders:** Shares borders with **Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Greece**.
- **Highest Peak:** **Mount Korab**
- **Strait:** The **Strait of Otranto** connects the **Adriatic Sea** with the **Ionian Sea**.
- **Natural Resources:** Rich in **petroleum, natural gas, coal, and chromite**, along with other minerals.



Mains Exam Topics

INDIA-SEYCHELLES RELATIONS

Context

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Independence of Seychelles as the Guest of Honour.

Why is Seychelles Strategically Important for India?

- **Net Security Provider in the IOR:** Seychelles strengthens India's role as a net security provider by facilitating sustained maritime engagement in the Indian Ocean Region.
 - E.g., The two countries institutionalised defence ties through the 2003 MoU on Defence Cooperation and conduct the biennial *LAMITYE* military exercise since 2001.
- **Countering China's Strategic Expansion:** Seychelles is central to India's efforts to balance China's growing influence across the Indian Ocean.
 - E.g., India's SAGAR doctrine, the proposed Assumption Island Agreement (2015), and the \$100 million Line of Credit for maritime security reflect this strategic priority.
- **Blue Economy Partnership:** Seychelles is a key partner in India's vision for sustainable ocean governance and maritime resource development.
 - E.g., The 2015 Blue Economy Protocol and cooperation in hydrography, fisheries, marine research, and renewable energy have expanded bilateral engagement.
- **Diaspora and Cultural Linkages:** A vibrant Indian-origin community reinforces India's cultural influence and people-to-people ties.
 - E.g., Nearly 10,000 Persons of Indian Origin—around 11% of Seychelles' population—play a dominant role in trade, construction, and retail, supported by regular Cultural Exchange Programmes.
- **Economic and Connectivity Hub:** Seychelles serves as India's gateway for trade, investment, and connectivity with the western Indian Ocean.
 - E.g., Air Seychelles-Air India code-sharing, Bank of Baroda's presence since 1978, and investments by Airtel and Tata have strengthened economic ties.

What Factors Limit the Full Potential of India–Seychelles Relations?

- **China's Expanding Strategic Footprint:** Growing Chinese investments and diplomatic engagement in Seychelles create strategic competition for India in the western Indian Ocean.
 - E.g., China's broader Maritime Silk Road strategy and expanding presence across the Indian Ocean have intensified India's security concerns.
- **Trade Imbalance:** Bilateral trade remains heavily skewed in India's favour, limiting the economic depth of the partnership.
 - E.g., India's exports to Seychelles consistently exceed imports by nearly 8–10 times, with exports reaching \$76.19 million against imports of just \$8.69 million in 2023–24.
- **Implementation Delays in Development Projects:** Bureaucratic procedures, capacity constraints, and political changes can slow the execution of Indian-assisted projects.
 - E.g., Several infrastructure and development initiatives funded like assumption Island Joint Naval Base Project have witnessed delays in implementation.
- **Climate Change Vulnerability:** Climate-induced risks demand greater financial and technological cooperation, stretching the capacities of both partners. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Seychelles faces rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events.
- **Maritime Security Challenges:** Persistent non-traditional security threats require sustained operational coordination and resource commitment. Piracy, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing continue to threaten maritime security in the western Indian Ocean.

What Measures Can Deepen India–Seychelles Strategic Partnership?

- **Deepen Maritime Security Cooperation:** Strengthen joint surveillance, capacity building, and operational coordination to secure the western Indian Ocean.
 - E.g., Leverage Seychelles' membership in the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), expand integration with the Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), and conduct regular hydrographic surveys and EEZ patrols.
- **Strengthen Climate and Blue Economy Cooperation:** Make climate resilience and sustainable ocean governance the cornerstone of bilateral engagement.
 - E.g., Implement the Blue Economy Protocol through joint fisheries management, marine conservation, blue carbon projects, and renewable energy initiatives under the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

- **Export Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Position India as Seychelles' trusted digital transformation partner.
 - E.g., **Extend India Stack solutions, digital payments (UPI), e-governance platforms, and cybersecurity cooperation to enhance digital resilience.**
- **Diversify Trade and Investment:** Broaden economic engagement beyond traditional sectors to create balanced and sustainable growth. **Promote partnerships in pharmaceuticals, tourism, fintech, fisheries, renewable energy, and MSMEs while improving air connectivity and business linkages.**
- **Enhance People-to-People Relations:** Strengthen long-term goodwill through education, healthcare, and cultural exchanges. **Expand ITEC and ICCR scholarships, promote medical tourism, and deepen collaboration in marine sciences, tourism management, and emerging technologies.**

