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NAVY OPERATIONS: LEADING WITH STRENGTH AND STRATEGY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Indian Navy's contingent, led by Lieutenant Commander Sahil Ahluwalia, took centre stage with its tableau focusing on "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India). The tableau featured newly commissioned indigenous warships such as the INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vaghsheer. This presentation underscored the Navy's role in securing India's maritime borders with a focus on indigenisation in defence production.



INDIA'S RECENT OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGIONS:

Operation Name	Year	Purpose
Operation Rahat	2015	Humanitarian evacuation of Indian citizens from Yemen amid civil war.
Operation Samudra Maitri	2015	Humanitarian aid to Nepal after the earthquake; providing assistance and relief.
Operation Nisar	2016	Evacuation of Indian nationals from South Sudan during civil unrest.
Operation Sea Breeze	2017	Naval exercise to strengthen maritime cooperation with other regional powers.
Operation Sankalp	2019	Anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden to ensure maritime security.
Operation Maitri	2020	Humanitarian aid to the Maldives and other Indian Ocean nations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Operation Vanilla	2020	Humanitarian and rescue operations in Madagascar and the surrounding region after Cyclone Diane.
Operation Calm Sea	2021	Focused on maritime security, including counter-piracy operations and humanitarian assistance in the Gulf of Aden.
Operation "Sagar"	2020-on-going	Indian Navy's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief across Indian Ocean littoral states, with ongoing missions like COVID-19 aid.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN OCEAN REGIONS FOR INDIA?

- Trade and Commerce:** The Indian Ocean serves as a major conduit for India's international trade, connecting it to markets in the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia.
- Energy Security:** A large portion of India's oil imports pass through the Indian Ocean, making it crucial for the country's energy security.
- Maritime Security:** India has a long coastline and a vested interest in securing the Indian Ocean to protect trade routes and prevent threats like piracy and territorial disputes.
- Naval Power Projection:** The region allows India to project its naval power and exert influence, enhancing its strategic positioning in the Indian Ocean.
- Strategic Location:** India's geographical position in the Indian Ocean provides a strategic advantage for monitoring regional activities and responding to emerging threats.
- Fishing Industry:** The Indian Ocean is a key source of fish, supporting India's fishing industry and coastal economy.

7. **Geopolitical Influence:** Control over the Indian Ocean allows India to expand its geopolitical influence, acting as a counterbalance to other global powers in the region, such as China.
8. **Trade Routes and Global Connectivity:** The Indian Ocean is home to some of the world's busiest and most critical maritime trade routes, such as the Strait of Malacca, which are essential for global commerce.
9. **Strategic Military Alliances:** India's position in the Indian Ocean enables it to build strategic military partnerships with other maritime powers like the United States, Australia, and Japan through initiatives such as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue).
10. **Access to Strategic Islands:** India's control over key islands in the Indian Ocean, such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, strengthens its security and surveillance capabilities in the region.

WHAT MAKES INDIA THE FIRST RESPONDENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION?

1. **Anti-Piracy Operations:** India has actively contributed to global anti-piracy efforts, particularly in the Gulf of Aden, where it deployed naval forces to protect shipping lanes and safeguard international trade from piracy.
2. **Search and Rescue Missions:** India frequently leads or assists in search and rescue operations for missing ships and aircraft in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, often being the first nation to respond to such emergencies.
3. **Disaster Relief Efforts:** India has consistently been at the forefront of providing disaster relief in the region, especially during natural disasters like cyclones, tsunamis, and earthquakes. India's prompt response helps mitigate the human and economic impacts of these events.
4. **Diplomatic and Regional Leadership:** India leads in forums like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), strengthening diplomatic

ties and enabling coordinated responses to regional crises.

5. **Rapid Deployment Capabilities:** India's military has rapid deployment forces, including amphibious and airlift capabilities, allowing quick assistance in disaster relief or security situations.
6. **Multilateral Cooperation:** India collaborates with global powers (US, Japan, Australia) and regional allies to enhance security and disaster management, boosting its role as a regional security provider.
7. **Humanitarian and Civil Support:** India also provides non-military aid such as medical support, food, and rebuilding efforts, expanding its role beyond defence to humanitarian assistance.

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE TO THE FIRST RESPONDENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION?

1. **Militarization and Geopolitical Tensions:** The growing presence of powers like China and the U.S. in the region complicates India's security role, especially with China's String of Pearls strategy and increased naval activities.
2. **Non-Traditional Threats:** Issues like piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration undermine India's ability to respond effectively, especially when these threats are transnational.
3. **Debt Trap Diplomacy:** China's economic influence in the region, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), places countries like Sri Lanka and the Maldives under economic pressure, limiting India's diplomatic leverage.
4. **Regional Cooperation Challenges:** India's role as a first responder is affected by reluctance from some countries to collaborate due to ties with China, limiting joint security and humanitarian efforts.
5. **Climate Crisis:** Rising sea levels and environmental disasters put small island nations at risk, requiring India to manage both humanitarian responses and the migration crisis.

FUTURE APPROACH TO FIRST RESPONDER IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION

- 1. Enhance Multilateral Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships within regional forums like IORA and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) to ensure broader collaboration.
- 2. Build Defense and Infrastructure:** Invest in maritime surveillance, port infrastructure, and rapid-response capabilities to secure sea lanes and provide swift disaster relief.
- 3. Improve Coordination:** Foster better cooperation between India's military, coast guard, and other agencies for coordinated, efficient responses to crises.
- 4. Boost Humanitarian Capabilities:** Strengthen disaster relief infrastructure and rapid deployment to enhance India's role as the first responder in humanitarian crises.
- 5. Address Non-Traditional Threats:** Enhance maritime law enforcement and intelligence sharing with regional countries to combat piracy, human trafficking, and drug smuggling.
- 6. Promote Maritime Governance:** Advocate for stronger maritime laws and regional cooperation to ensure freedom of navigation and peaceful conflict resolution.
- 7. Focus on Climate Action:** Lead initiatives to help island nations adapt to climate change, reducing the risk of displacement and fostering sustainable development.
- 8. Counter China's Influence:** Engage in economic diplomacy and strengthen defense ties with regional partners to counterbalance China's growing presence and offer alternative development models.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is crucial for India's strategic, economic, and geopolitical interests. As a key maritime power, India plays a central role in securing trade routes, ensuring energy security, and projecting naval influence. Its active participation

in humanitarian operations and disaster relief further solidifies its position as the first responder in the region. However, India's role is challenged by increasing militarization, non-traditional threats, geopolitical tensions, and climate change risks. India must focus on enhancing multilateral cooperation, strengthening its maritime infrastructure, and addressing non-traditional security threats. Additionally, countering China's growing influence and fostering regional cooperation will be essential for maintaining stability and asserting India's leadership in the IOR.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Which of the following Indian Navy warships were featured in the Indian Navy's recent tableau focusing on "Aatmanirbhar Bharat"?

- INS Surat
- INS Nilgiri
- INS Vaghsheer
- All of the above

Answer: D

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Examine India's role as the first responder in the Indian Ocean Region. What challenges does India face in maintaining its position, and what steps should India take to strengthen its influence and capabilities in the region?

(250 words, 15 marks)

AADHAAR AUTHENTICATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Centre has notified the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Amendment Rules, 2025. The Ministry of Electronics and IT said that Aadhaar Authentication has been expanded to government

and private entities for providing various services in the public interest, boosting innovation, knowledge, and public service enhancement. The amendments will enhance the scope for residents to avail themselves of many new services seamlessly, with regard to e-commerce, travel, tourism, hospitality, and health services. The amended rules will also promote the ease of living and livelihood.



AADHAAR RULES: KEY LIGHTS

Aadhaar Card Rule	Description
Aadhaar Number	A 12-digit unique identification number issued by UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) based on biometric and demographic data.
Eligibility for Aadhaar	All Indian residents, including citizens and foreigners residing in India for more than 182 days, are eligible to get an Aadhaar number.
Aadhaar Authentication	A process where the UID number and associated biometric/demographic data are verified against the Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR).
Types of Aadhaar Authentication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic Authentication OTP Authentication Biometric Authentication Multi-factor Authentication
Biometric Data	Includes fingerprints, iris scan, and facial recognition, used for verifying identity.
Aadhaar Linking Requirement	Aadhaar needs to be linked with various services like PAN, bank accounts, mobile numbers, and government schemes for easier verification.
Voluntary Use	Aadhaar authentication is voluntary for certain services, like registering for UPSC exams, but it is mandatory for others, like filing taxes and receiving subsidies.
Aadhaar e-KYC	Aadhaar can be used for Electronic Know Your Customer (e-KYC), a paperless and digital way to verify identity.
Privacy and Security	Aadhaar data is protected by strict privacy regulations. UIDAI provides security measures to safeguard data.

Aadhaar Card Rule	Description
Aadhaar and Children	Children below 5 years are not required to provide biometric data, but they must be enrolled with demographic details.
Aadhaar-based Authentication in Exams	In exams like UPSC, Aadhaar can be used for fingerprint, facial recognition, and QR code scanning for identity verification.
Updating Aadhaar Details	Individuals can update personal details such as an address, phone number, or photograph through UIDAI's online portal or centres.
Aadhaar Card for Non-Residents	Non-residents can apply for Aadhaar if they meet the eligibility criteria of living in India for over 182 days.

BASIC ABOUT AADHAAR:

Category	Description
What is Aadhaar?	A 12-digit unique identity number is issued to all Indian residents by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
How it Works	Aadhaar is based on biometrics (fingerprints, iris, face) and demographic information.
Voluntary Service	Aadhaar is a voluntary service available to anyone, regardless of age, gender, or documentation.
Uses of Aadhaar	Verifying identity for various services (bank accounts, passport applications, government benefits, etc.).
	Can be used both online and offline for identity verification.
Benefits of Aadhaar	Eliminates the need for multiple documents to access services.
	Simplifies mobility, as identity can be verified anywhere in the country.
	Helps reduce fraud and supports social inclusion and economic security.
How to Get Aadhaar	Enrol for an Aadhaar number for free by providing demographic and biometric information.
	For more information, you can contact UIDAI's toll-free number at 1947.

AADHAAR FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE:

- 1. Expansion of Aadhaar Authentication:** Enhances the scope of Aadhaar authentication to promote good governance, social welfare, and innovation. Aims to improve service delivery in sectors like e-commerce, travel, tourism, hospitality, and health.
- 2. Inclusion of Non-Government Entities:** Allows both government and non-government entities to use Aadhaar authentication for public interest services.
- 3. Focus on Ease of Living:** Aims to improve access to services and enhance ease of living for residents by facilitating seamless service delivery.
- 4. Trusted Transactions:** Ensures secure and reliable transactions by enabling trusted identity verification for both service providers and seekers.
- 5. Streamlined Approval Process:** Entities seeking Aadhaar authentication must apply with required details to the concerned ministry or department. Applications will be reviewed by UIDAI and approved by MeitY based on recommendations.
- 6. Encouragement for Innovation:** The amendment encourages the development of digital solutions leveraging Aadhaar authentication for various services.

7. **Strengthening Partnerships:** Aims to foster stronger partnerships between government and private entities for enhanced governance solutions.
8. **Improved Access to Aadhaar-Enabled Services:** Expected to provide individuals with better access to Aadhaar-enabled services, improving efficiency and service delivery.
9. **Promoting Transparency and Inclusivity:** The amendment seeks to promote transparency and inclusivity in the decision-making process, benefiting residents and service providers.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH AADHAAR USE?

1. **Data Theft:** Criminals can potentially steal biometric data (like fingerprints or iris scans) for fraudulent activities, compromising security.
2. **Authentication Failures:** Aadhaar authentication can fail due to various reasons, which could delay the distribution of benefits and services.
3. **Security Concerns:** There are concerns about security and privacy vulnerabilities associated with the Aadhaar system.
4. **Violation of Rights:** Some argue that Aadhaar may violate people's right to privacy, especially regarding the collection and use of personal data.
5. **Ambiguity in Biometric Information:** The Supreme Court struck down certain provisions of the Aadhaar Act, including allowing private corporations to use biometric data for authentication.
6. **Inadequate Facilities:** There are concerns about inadequate facilities for Aadhaar registration, updating details, and retrieving lost Aadhaar numbers.
7. **Errors in Aadhaar Information:** Errors may occur in Aadhaar applications, such as spelling mistakes, mismatched photos, or discrepancies between Aadhaar and other documents like PAN cards.

WAY FORWARD:

1. **Strengthen Security:** Enhance security measures to protect biometric data from theft and breaches.
2. **Improve Accessibility:** Expand Aadhaar centres and improve services for data updates and retrieval, especially in remote areas.
3. **Address Privacy:** Ensure strict adherence to privacy regulations and clear consent for data use.
4. **Reduce Errors:** Streamline registration to minimize data errors and improve quality control.
5. **Enhance Authentication:** Improve authentication reliability to prevent failures that delay service delivery.
6. **Promote Awareness:** Increase public knowledge of Aadhaar's voluntary/mandatory use and transparency in data handling.
7. **Encourage Innovation:** Support digital services and solutions using Aadhaar to improve public service delivery.
8. **Foster Public-Private Partnerships:** Strengthen collaborations between government and private entities for seamless, secure services.
9. **Periodic Review:** Regularly update Aadhaar policies to address emerging tech, security, and public needs.

CONCLUSION:

The recent Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance Amendment Rules, 2025, aim to expand Aadhaar's reach, promoting better service delivery across both government and private sectors. The amendments focus on improving residents' access to services, enhancing innovation, and supporting ease of living. While Aadhaar has significant benefits, such as reducing fraud, simplifying identity verification, and promoting social inclusion, it also faces challenges, such as privacy concerns, security risks, and the potential for errors.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. With reference to the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Amendment Rules, 2025, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The amendments expand Aadhaar authentication to both government and private entities for the provision of services in the public interest.
2. The amendment allows the use of Aadhaar authentication for private corporations in all sectors, including healthcare.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Discuss both the potential benefits and challenges of expanding Aadhaar authentication for both government and private entities. How can these amendments improve service delivery and governance, and what are the major concerns that need to be addressed to ensure its effectiveness?

(250 words, 15 marks)

DRIVING INNOVATION AND GROWTH: THE NATIONAL MANUFACTURING MISSION

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The announcement of the National Manufacturing Mission by the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, in the Union Budget 2025-26, is in the news because it marks a significant step in promoting the “Make in India” initiative. The mission is aimed at supporting small, medium, and large industries with a focus on enhancing the manufacturing sector’s growth and efficiency. The mission has five main focal areas:

improving the ease and cost of doing business, creating a future-ready workforce, boosting the MSME sector, providing access to advanced technologies, and ensuring the production of high-quality products. It will also push forward Clean Tech manufacturing, supporting industries like solar energy, electric vehicle (EV) batteries, wind turbines, and other sustainable technologies.



MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN INDIA:

Aspect	Details
Growth	The manufacturing sector’s output grew by 21.5% in 2022-23. The sector is projected to grow at 12-14% annually in the next 5 years.
Employment	The sector employs around 50 million people (approx.). Major industries include automotive, engineering, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and consumer durables.
Foreign Investment	FDI equity inflows in the manufacturing sector grew by 23% in FY 2022-23, totalling \$27.2 billion. India is the 5th largest recipient of FDI in the world.
Innovation	The government is promoting AI, robotics, and IoT with initiatives like Make in India and Digital India. Approximately \$1.2 billion was invested in robotics in India in 2023 alone.

Sustainability	<p>Around 50% of manufacturers in India are adopting sustainable practices. The sector is working towards achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050 under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).</p>
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NATIONAL MANUFACTURING MISSION OBJECTIVES AND TARGET :

- 1. Enhance Manufacturing Competitiveness:** Streamline business processes and reduce regulatory burdens. Improve infrastructure to attract manufacturing investments.
- 2. Skill Development:** Focus on training and upskilling the workforce. Prepare workers for modern manufacturing technologies and emerging sectors.
- 3. MSME Promotion:** Provide dedicated support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Facilitate growth, innovation, and competitiveness of SMEs.
- 4. Technology Adoption:** Promote research, development, and technology transfer. Encourage the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies.
- 5. Quality Improvement:** Promote quality standards and certifications. Ensure global competitiveness of Indian manufactured goods.

TARGET AREAS OF FOCUS:

- 1. Clean Tech Manufacturing:** Support sustainable technologies like solar PV cells, EV batteries, and wind turbines.
- 2. Defense Manufacturing:** Increase domestic production of defence equipment for self-reliance.
- 3. Electronics Manufacturing:** Foster a robust ecosystem for electronics production.
- 4. Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices:** Enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities in the healthcare sector.
- 5. Textile Manufacturing:** Boost domestic produc-

tion of textiles and garments with a focus on innovation, sustainability, and exports.

- 6. Automobile Manufacturing:** Strengthen the automotive sector, focusing on electric vehicles (EVs), component manufacturing, and increasing production capacity.
- 7. Heavy Machinery and Equipment:** Support the growth of industries manufacturing heavy machinery, equipment, and tools for infrastructure development and industrial use.

NATIONAL MANUFACTURING MISSION SIGNIFICANCE:

- 1. Economic Growth:** By boosting the manufacturing sector's contribution to the GDP, the mission stimulates economic development, creating a more resilient economy.
- 2. Job Creation:** It generates millions of jobs, especially for skilled labour, thus addressing unemployment and promoting socio-economic stability.
- 3. Technological Innovation:** The mission fosters the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, encouraging research, development, and innovation within manufacturing.
- 4. Export Competitiveness:** The mission enhances India's export potential, helping to balance trade deficits and strengthening global economic ties.
- 5. Infrastructure Development:** Manufacturing growth requires enhanced infrastructure, such as industrial hubs, logistics networks, and transportation corridors.
- 6. Skill Development:** Focuses on upskilling and reskilling the workforce to meet the evolving demands of modern manufacturing.
- 7. Sectoral Growth:** The mission targets key sectors such as clean tech, defence, electronics, and pharmaceuticals, fostering the development of critical industries that are vital for economic self-reliance and innovation.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR ISSUES:

Issue	Description
Supply Chain Disruptions	
Natural Disasters	Events like floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes cause delays, interruptions, and damage to production.
Geopolitical Tensions	Trade conflicts, tariffs, and political shifts disrupt global supply chains and markets.
COVID-19 Pandemic	The pandemic led to widespread disruptions, causing shortages and delays in raw materials and products.
Labour Shortages	
Filling Job Openings	Difficulty in filling job vacancies and incredibly skilled roles due to a lack of workers entering the sector.
Automation and Robotics	While automation fills some gaps, human labour is still needed for maintenance and oversight.
Sustainability Pressures	
Environmental Regulations	Stricter regulations and consumer demand push manufacturers to adopt more sustainable production methods.
Consumer Expectations	Growing demand for eco-friendly and sustainably produced goods.
Cybersecurity Risks	
Cyberattacks	Cyberattacks can disrupt production, steal sensitive data, and damage equipment, causing financial and reputational harm.
Technological Adaptation	
Keeping up with Technological Advancements	Manufacturers need to adapt to AI, automation, and IoT to remain competitive.
Digital Transformation	Embracing digital tools like smart factories and data analytics to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

WAY TO MAKE NATIONAL MANUFACTURING MISSION A GAME CHANGER:

- 1. National Policy and Incentives:** Develop a National Robotics Strategy with clear goals and funding mechanisms. Offer tax benefits and subsidies for companies investing in robotics.
- 2. Research and Development:** Support research institutions and startups to develop cost-effective, tailored robotic solutions. Focus on advanced robotics like cobots and autonomous navigation.
- 3. Skill Development:** Establish training programs for robotics operation, programming, and maintenance. Partner with educational institutions to integrate robotics education into engineering curricula.

- 4. Industry-Specific Implementation:** Prioritize sectors like automotive, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and food processing.
- 5. Collaboration and Partnerships:** Encourage global partnerships for technology transfer and expertise. Facilitate collaboration among research institutions, industry players, and government agencies.
- 6. Technological Advancements:** Integrate AI and machine learning for adaptive learning and complex task execution.

CONCLUSION:

The National Manufacturing Mission announced in the Union Budget 2025-26 is a pivotal initiative aimed at transforming India's manufacturing sector. By addressing key areas such as improving ease of

doing business, fostering innovation, supporting MSMEs, and adopting advanced technologies, the mission strives to make India a global manufacturing hub. Focus on clean tech, defence, electronics, and other critical sectors aligns with the goal of enhancing economic self-reliance, job creation, technological advancement, and export competitiveness. For this mission to be a game changer, strategic integration of automation, AI, robotics, and skill development will be crucial in ensuring India's manufacturing sector is future-ready and competitive on the global stage.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Which of the following statements are correct about the National Manufacturing Mission?

1. The mission aims to promote the growth of both small and large industries in India.
2. It focuses only on the development of the clean tech sector.
3. One of its goals is to enhance the competitiveness of Indian manufactured goods in the global market.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: C

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Discuss the significance of the National Manufacturing Mission in strengthening India's manufacturing sector and its impact on the economy. How can it help India achieve self-reliance in key sectors? (250 words, 15 marks)

RAMSAR SITES

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The addition of four more wetlands to the Ramsar Convention list is a significant milestone for environmental conservation in India. This brings the total number of Ramsar sites in the country to 89, showcasing India's growing commitment to preserving its rich natural heritage. These wetlands are now officially recognized for their ecological importance and will be protected under international frameworks aimed at conservation and sustainable development. The announcement, made ahead of World Wetlands Day on February 2, further emphasizes the importance of wetland ecosystems and their role in biodiversity, climate regulation, and supporting local communities.



WHAT IS RAMSAR CONVENTION?

The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands worldwide. It was adopted in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. Hence its name, and it came into force in 1975. The Convention recognizes wetlands as vital ecosystems that provide essential services to both the environment and human societies, such as water purification, flood control, carbon sequestration, and habitat for wildlife.

DESCRIPTION OF RECENTLY ADDED WETLAND:

Wetland Name	State	River	Features	Flora	Fauna
Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Established for avifauna and wetland ecosystems conservation. – Spreads over 230.490 hectares. 	Neem, Palmyra Palm, Gloriosa superba	Lion-tailed Macaque, Giant Squirrel, Migratory Birds
Therthangal Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Established to conserve avian species and wetland habitats. – Covers 29.29 hectares. – Popular during the migratory season (Oct-Mar). 	Aponogeton nutans, Hydrilla verticillata, Tamarindus indica	Various Migratory Birds
Khecheopalri Wetland	Sikkim	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sacred lake for Buddhists and Hindus, believed to fulfil wishes. – Part of the Demazong valley and Buddhist pilgrimage. – Birds prevent leaves from floating on the lake. 	Not specified	House Swifts, Fishing Eagles, Brahminy Kites
Udhwa Lake	Jharkhand	Ganga River Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Comprises two water bodies: Pataura Jheel (155 ha) and Brahma Jamalpur Jheel (410 ha). – Rich in avian biodiversity, attracting migratory birds. 	Not specified	Migratory Birds, Resident Birds, Nesting and Roosting Birds

KEY FEATURES OF RAMSAR SITE:

- 1. International Importance:** Ramsar sites are wetlands designated for their global ecological, botanical, zoological, or hydrological importance.
- 2. Conservation Commitment:** Countries must protect and conserve these wetlands under the Ramsar Convention, ensuring sustainable management and preservation of biodiversity.
- 3. Biodiversity:** Ramsar sites are critical for supporting diverse wildlife, including rare, endangered, or migratory species of birds, fish, and other animals.
- 4. Ecosystem Services:** Wetlands provide essential services like water purification, flood control, carbon storage, and soil fertility.
- 5. Sustainable Use:** The Ramsar Convention promotes the “wise use” of wetlands, meaning

they should be used in a way that ensures their ecological functions are maintained for the benefit of current and future generations.

- 6. Special Designation Criteria:** Wetlands are designated as Ramsar sites based on specific criteria, such as their importance for biodiversity, waterfowl populations, or hydrological functions.
- 7. National and International Cooperation:** The Convention encourages collaboration between countries, particularly for transboundary wetlands and migratory species.
- 8. Protection of Waterfowl:** Ramsar sites are often vital for migratory birds and waterfowl, offering breeding, feeding, and resting grounds along migratory routes.
- 9. Global Network:** Ramsar sites form a global network of protected wetlands, with over 2,500 sites in more than 170 countries.
- 10. Monitoring and Reporting:** Countries are required to report on the condition of their Ramsar sites and take necessary action to address threats to these ecosystems.

MONTREUX RECORD AND THE RAMSAR ADVISORY MISSION:

INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE RAMSAR CONVENTIONS:

- 1. Accession:** India became a party to the Ramsar Convention on February 1, 1982.
- 2. Number of Ramsar Sites:** India has 89 Ramsar sites, ranking high in Asia.
- 3. Important Sites:** Key sites include Chilika Lake and Keoladeo National Park.
- 4. Conservation Efforts:** Active management plans ensure the ecological integrity of Ramsar sites.
- 5. Recent Developments:** India continues to add new sites, demonstrating its commitment to wetland conservation.
- 6. Regional and Global Role:** India cooperates on transboundary wetlands and migratory species protection.
- 7. Ecotourism and Livelihoods:** Ramsar sites support ecotourism and provide sustainable livelihoods to local communities.
- 8. Awareness and Education:** India promotes wetland awareness through national campaigns and community outreach.

Aspect	Details
Montreux Record	A register of Ramsar sites where ecological character changes have occurred or are likely due to human interference, pollution, or technological developments.
Established	1990 through Recommendation 4.8 of the Ramsar Conference.
Purpose	To identify sites needing priority conservation attention due to ecological changes and to facilitate national and international efforts for restoration.
Inclusion Criteria	Sites can be included if national commitment, international attention, or resources are needed to address the ecological issues.
Addition/Removal of Sites	Sites are added or removed with the approval of the Contracting Parties (countries where the sites are located).
Current Number of Sites	As of September 2007, 59 sites were listed; 23 sites were removed after successful conservation efforts.
Ramsar Advisory Mission (RAM)	A technical assistance mechanism to help countries manage Ramsar sites facing ecological threats.
Purpose of RAM	To provide expert advice and support to countries on addressing threats to wetlands, especially those on the Montreux Record.

Aspect	Details
Process	A team of experts visits the site to assess the situation and propose measures for ecological restoration. Recommendations are made to guide conservation efforts.
Post-Mission	The team's report is published, and successful interventions may lead to the removal of a site from the Montreux Record.
Collaboration	Missions often involve collaboration with organizations like the World Heritage Convention, IUCN, and others.
Number of Missions	Between 1988-2007, 58 sites received Ramsar Advisory Missions, with the growing involvement of multi-disciplinary teams.

CONCLUSION:

The addition of four new wetlands to the Ramsar Convention list marks a significant step in India's commitment to wetland conservation, bringing the total to 89 sites. This international recognition ensures these ecosystems will be protected and sustainably managed. India's engagement with the Ramsar Convention, through initiatives like the Montreux Record and Ramsar Advisory Missions, helps address ecological threats and improve conservation efforts. These efforts highlight India's role in balancing development and ecological preservation, contributing to global environmental health, biodiversity, and the well-being of local communities.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

S.NO	Ramsar site	State
1	Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
2	Khecheopalri Wetland	Jharkhand
3	Udhwa Lake	Sikkim

Q. Consider the following Pairs:

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Answer: A

Mains Questions:

Q. Discuss the significance of India's recent addition of four wetlands to the Ramsar Convention List. How do these efforts reflect India's commitment to environmental conservation?

(250 words, 15 marks)

NUCLEAR ENERGY MISSION FOR VIKSHIT BHARAT

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Union Budget 2025-26 outlines a significant push towards nuclear energy as part of India's long-term energy transition strategy. The government has set an ambitious target of 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047, positioning nuclear energy as a major pillar in India's energy mix. This development aligns with the broader objectives of Viksit Bharat, ensuring energy reliability and reducing dependency on fossil fuels. To achieve this goal, strategic policy interventions and infrastructure investments are being undertaken, with an emphasis on indigenous nuclear technology and public-private collaborations.

NUCLEAR ENERGY MISSION COMPONENT:

- 1. Research and Development of SMRs:** Focus on developing Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) to offer scalable, cost-effective energy solutions. SMRs are essential for addressing land constraints, stabilizing the grid, and complementing renewable energy sources.

- 2. Indigenous Technology:** The mission emphasizes the development of domestic technologies like Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs) and SMRs, leveraging India's expertise in Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) for energy independence.
- 3. Private Sector Participation:** Encouraging private sector involvement in land acquisition, capital, and funding for nuclear plants, with NPCIL managing reactor operations. This speeds up nuclear energy deployment.
- 4. Legal Amendments:** Changes to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act will attract private investments and promote innovation in the sector.

- 2. Decarbonization:** BSRs play a vital role in reducing emissions, supporting India's goal of generating 500 GW from non-fossil fuels by 2030.
- 3. Safety and Flexibility:** BSRs are designed for safety and can be deployed in industrial areas, acting as captive power plants and aiding in industrial decarbonization.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUCLEAR ENERGY MISSION:

- 1. Energy Security:** Diversifies India's energy mix, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and enhancing long-term energy stability.
- 2. Sustainability:** Supports climate goals by reducing carbon emissions, aiding in achieving India's Paris Agreement commitments.
- 3. Technological Leadership:** Positions India as a global leader in nuclear energy through indigenous advancements like Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
- 4. Economic Growth:** Drives job creation, innovation, and investment in energy infrastructure, boosting related industries.
- 5. Remote Area Power:** SMRs provide reliable energy to off-grid regions, ensuring energy access in underserved areas.
- 6. Public-Private Collaboration:** Encourages private sector partnerships, speeding up nuclear energy deployment and innovation.
- 7. Energy Independence:** Reduces dependence on imported energy, strengthening national security and protecting against global price fluctuations.



BHARAT SMALL REACTORS (BSRS) AND THEIR PARTNERSHIP:

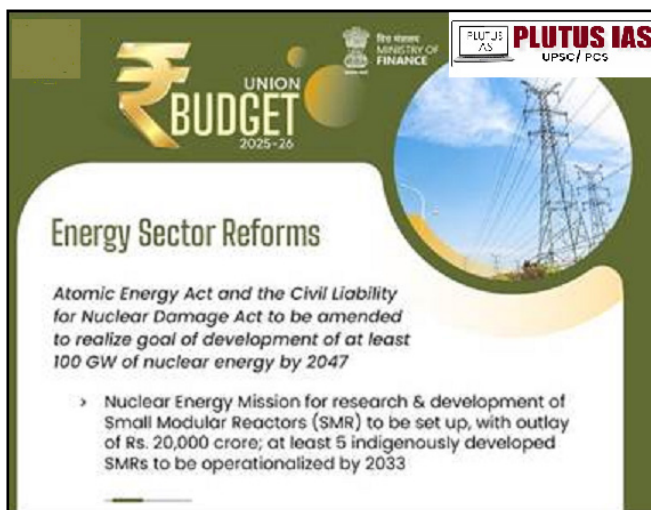
Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs) are 220 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) designed for energy demands in industrial zones.

- 1. Private Sector Partnership:** The private sector will provide land, cooling water, and capital, while NPCIL handles design, quality assurance, and operations. This accelerates project timelines and attracts investment.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY MISSION:

- 1. Nuclear Capacity Expansion:** The government aims to increase nuclear power capacity from 8,180 MW to 22,480 MW by 2031-32, with the construction of ten reactors totalling 8,000 MW across multiple states (Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh).

2. **Approval for New Plants:** In-principle approval has been granted for a 6 x 1208 MW nuclear power plant at Kovvada, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, in collaboration with the USA.
3. **Rajasthan Atomic Power Project Milestone:** The Unit-7 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (RAPP-7) reached criticality on September 19, 2024, marking a significant milestone in building and operating indigenous reactors.
4. **Commitment to Clean Energy:** These initiatives align with India's strategy to provide clean, reliable energy, contributing to energy security and environmental sustainability.
5. **Focus on Safety:** India's nuclear power plants adhere to strict safety protocols, with radiation levels consistently below global standards, ensuring secure and sustainable operations.



WHAT ARE THE ISSUES IN NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT?

1. **Safety Concerns:** Accidents like Chernobyl and Fukushima highlight the risks of nuclear plants, making robust safety measures and public trust crucial.
2. **High Initial Costs:** Building nuclear plants requires substantial investment in infrastructure, research, and development, which can be a barrier, especially for developing countries.
3. **Long Development Timelines:** Nuclear projects take years to complete due to complex regulations and technical challenges, making it difficult to quickly meet energy demands.
4. **Nuclear Waste Management:** Safe, long-term storage of radioactive waste remains a challenge with environmental risks.
5. **Public Opposition:** Concerns about safety, waste, and environmental impact often lead to protests and project delays.
6. **Geopolitical Risks:** Nuclear technology can be misused for weapons, raising international security concerns.
7. **Regulatory Hurdles:** Complex regulations can delay projects and increase costs.
8. **High Operational Costs:** Skilled labour, maintenance, and plant decommissioning contribute to high operational costs.
9. **Environmental Impact:** While low-carbon, uranium mining, plant construction, and reactor emissions can harm ecosystems.

WAY FORWARD

1. **Enhance Safety Protocols:** Adopt advanced safety technologies and international best practices to build public trust and ensure safe operations.
2. **Reduce Costs:** Streamline regulatory processes, innovate with reactor designs like SMRs, and leverage public-private partnerships to lower investment costs.
3. **Accelerate Timelines:** Fast-track approvals and reduce delays through improved project management and international collaboration.
4. **Improve Waste Management:** Invest in advanced solutions for reprocessing, recycling, and safe long-term storage of radioactive waste.
5. **Engage the Public:** Raise awareness and involve local communities to address concerns and reduce opposition to nuclear projects.
6. **Ensure Geopolitical Stability:** Strengthen global agreements and frameworks for responsible nuclear technology use and non-proliferation.

7. **Streamline Regulations:** Simplify regulatory frameworks to speed up plant construction while maintaining safety and environmental standards.
8. **Explore Sustainable Fuels:** Invest in alternative nuclear fuels like thorium to reduce dependence on uranium and enhance long-term sustainability.
9. **Minimize Environmental Impact:** Focus on eco-friendly mining practices and designs with minimal environmental impact.

CONCLUSION:

The provisions for nuclear power in the Union Budget 2025-26 mark a transformative shift in India's energy landscape. By promoting nuclear energy as a sustainable, scalable, and secure power source, the government aims to bolster energy security and meet the nation's long-term economic and environmental goals. The Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat is poised to accelerate nuclear power development, positioning India as a global leader in advanced nuclear technology by 2047.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Union Budget 2025-26 aims to increase India's nuclear power capacity to 100 GW by 2047.
2. Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs) are designed for urban areas to support energy demands.
3. The government has approved the construction of a 6 x 1208 MW nuclear plant in Gujarat as part of the nuclear energy mission.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Answer: A

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. What are the challenges associated with the development of nuclear energy in India, and what measures can be taken to address them? Discuss in the context of the Union Budget 2025-26. (250 words, 15 marks)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI KARAMCHARIS (NCSK): UPHOLDING THE SPIRIT OF ARTICLE 17 OF THE CONSTITUTION

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for three more years, up to March 31, 2028. The current tenure of the Commission was set to expire on March 31, 2025, but has now been extended. Originally established as a statutory body under the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act 1993, the Commission became a non-statutory body after the Act lapsed in 2004. Its role expanded after the enactment of The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, focusing on the elimination of manual scavenging and the rehabilitation of affected workers.



WHAT IS NCSK?

The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) was constituted on 12 August 1994 as a statutory body under the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act 1993. It was initially established for three years, up to 31 March 1997. Through amendments in 1997 and 2001, the Act's validity was extended to March 2002 and then to February 2004. After the Act lapsed on 29th February 2004, NCSK has been functioning as a non-statutory body under the Ministry of Social

Justice and Empowerment. Its tenure is extended periodically through Government Resolutions.



THE MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI KARAMCHARIS (NCSK)

1. **Recommendations for Upliftment:** Advise the Central Government on specific programs for eliminating inequalities in status, facilities, and opportunities for Safai Karamcharis. Recommend measures for the social and economic upliftment of Safai Karamcharis.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Study and evaluate the implementation of programs and schemes related to the social and economic rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis and scavengers. Investigate specific grievances and take suo-motu notice regarding non-implementation of: Programs or schemes for Safai Karamcharis. Decisions, guidelines, or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships. Legal provisions concerning Safai Karamcharis. Could you report these matters to the concerned authorities, as well as the central or state governments? Working of the Commission:
3. **Working Conditions Assessment:** Study and monitor working conditions, including health, safety, and wages of Safai Karamcharis employed under various agencies (Government, Municipalities, Panchayats, etc.). Make recommendations to improve these conditions.
4. **Reporting to Governments:** Submit reports to central or State Governments on issues concerning Safai Karamcharis, highlighting their difficulties and disabilities. Address any other matter referred by the Central Government.

5. Implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:

- Monitor the implementation of the Act.
- Enquire into complaints regarding contraventions of the Act and provide findings to relevant authorities with recommendations for further action.
- Advise Central and State Governments for the effective execution of the Act.
- Take suo-motu notice of any non-implementation of the Act.
- Possess authority to call for information from any Government or local authority regarding the above matters.

6. **Monitoring Supreme Court Judgment (W.P. (C) No. 324 of 2020 – Dr Balram Singh & Others Vs. Union of India):** Compensation for sewer deaths: The revised compensation amount is Rs. 30 lakhs, payable by the concerned agency (Union, Union Territory, or State Government). If the dependents of any victim have not received this amount, it shall be paid accordingly.

Compensation for sewer victims with disabilities:

Compensation shall depend on the severity of a disability. Minimum salary: Rs. 10 lakhs. If the permanent disability renders the victim economically helpless, the compensation shall not be less than Rs. 20 lakhs.

- **Field Visits:** The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Members conduct extensive tours to assess the socio-economic conditions of Safai Karamcharis.
- **Interaction & Grievance Redressal:** Engage with Safai Karamcharis individually and through associations; take up grievances with local authorities.

- **Complaints Handling:** Receive and address complaints/petitions from Safai Karamcharis nationwide by seeking reports from concerned authorities.
- **Proactive Measures:** Take suo-motu cognizance of issues based on media reports and intervene proactively. Investigations & Inquiries: Conduct sittings across the country to investigate grievances, evaluate scheme progress, and ensure the implementation of laws.
- **Review & Monitoring:** Regular meetings and video conferences with State/Local authorities to review the problems of Safai Karamcharis. Status of compensation payments to sewer death victims' legal heirs.
- **Policy Recommendations:** Provide recommendations to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for rehabilitation and eradication of manual scavenging, both periodically and in Annual Reports.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF NCSK

1. **Regularly review** sewer death cases and compensation payments with States/UTs through official communication with Chief Secretaries and other authorities.
2. **Disposal of 51 cases** where state authorities faced challenges in locating legal heirs after the Commission's intervention.
3. **Ensuring compensation payments** in 20 sewer death cases, with amounts ranging from Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. 30 lakhs, paid promptly within one month of death.
4. **Securing compassionate** appointments for dependents of deceased Safai Karamcharis.
5. **Inspection of Safai Karamcharis** Neem Chowki Harizon Basti in Sawai Madhopur District, Rajasthan (March 2024) and directing the district administration to renovate the community centre.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI KARAMCHARIS (NCSK) FACES SEVERAL CHALLENGES:

1. **Non-Statutory Status:** Since the lapse of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

Act, 1993, in 2004, the Commission has been functioning as a non-statutory body. This limits its authority in enforcing decisions and recommendations.

2. **Inadequate Implementation of Laws:** Despite The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, manual scavenging persists in many parts of India. The lack of strict enforcement mechanisms leads to the continued exploitation of workers.
3. **Delayed Compensation for Sewer Deaths:** Many state governments delay or fail to provide compensation as mandated by the Supreme Court. Bureaucratic hurdles and difficulties in identifying legal heirs further slow down the process.
4. **Lack of Awareness and Reporting Mechanisms:** Many Safai Karamcharis are unaware of their rights and the legal provisions available to them. Fear of job loss prevents them from reporting unsafe working conditions and wage disparities.
5. **Poor Working Conditions:** Safai Karamcharis continues to face hazardous working environments, including exposure to toxic gases, lack of protective gear, and unsafe sanitation infrastructure. Employers often ignore health and safety regulations.
6. **Limited Employment Alternatives:** Rehabilitation efforts for manual scavengers are often ineffective, and there are limited opportunities for alternative livelihoods. Skill development programs and financial assistance schemes do not reach all beneficiaries.
7. **Inefficient Coordination Between Agencies:** Multiple agencies, including municipalities, state governments, and the central government, handle different aspects of Safai Karamcharis' welfare, leading to poor coordination. Delays in policy implementation and execution of schemes.
8. **Inadequate Funding and Resources:** The Commission lacks adequate financial and administrative resources to function effectively.

Insufficient staff and infrastructure hinder field visits, grievance redressal, and monitoring.

- 9. Non-recognition of Contractual and Informal Workers:** Many Safai Karamcharis work on a contractual basis and are not covered under various welfare schemes. Private agencies employing sanitation workers often evade accountability.
- 10. Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Safai Karamcharis continues to face caste-based discrimination and exclusion from mainstream society. The stigma attached to sanitation work affects their access to education, housing, and other social services.

WAY FORWARD FOR NCSK

- **Follow-up Mechanism** – Though NCSK's recommendations are not binding, a structured follow-up system should be established to ensure effective implementation, with regular monitoring by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Increased Resource Allocation**—The government should enhance NCSK's financial and human resources to strengthen its functioning, outreach, and implementation of such as the Supreme Court-mandated ₹30 lakh compensation for sewer deaths and other relief schemes.
- **Alternative Employment Opportunities**—The Government should ensure the effective implementation of the Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS), skill development initiatives under the Skill India Mission, and NSKFDC loans for business startups.
- **Reducing Social Stigma**—To improve their socio-economic conditions, Public awareness campaigns under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the inclusion of Safai Karamcharis in social welfare schemes like PM Awas Yojana and Ayushman Bharat should be promoted.

welfare schemes.

- **Curbing Corruption** – Strict monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be implemented to prevent misuse of funds meant for Safai Karamcharis' welfare under schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).
- **Financial Compensation Authority**—The Commission should be empowered to recommend and directly facilitate financial compensation under government provisions,
- **Technology Integration** – Adopting advanced mechanized cleaning technologies under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban & Rural) should be prioritised to eliminate manual scavenging and ensure worker safety. The government should encourage states to procure robotic scavenging machines under the NAMASTE scheme for sewer and septic tank cleaning.

CONCLUSION

The NCSK plays a vital role in safeguarding Safai Karamcharis but faces challenges like lack of enforcement power, resource constraints, and ineffective implementation. Strengthening it with greater authority, financial autonomy, technological adoption, and government support is essential. A holistic approach involving policy reforms, skill development, and alternative employment will help eradicate manual scavenging and ensure dignity for Safai Karamcharis. Collaborative efforts are key to creating a safer and more inclusive environment.

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. With reference to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), consider the following statement:

1. The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) is a statutory body.
2. The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) is mandated to take suo motto action.
3. The NCSK can Study and monitor working con-

ditions, including health, safety, and wages of Safai Karamcharis employed under various agencies.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

ANSWER: B

Mains question:

Q. Despite various legal safeguards and government initiatives, Safai Karamcharis continue to face social and economic challenges. Critically analyse the role of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) in addressing these issues. Suggest measures to enhance its effectiveness.

(Answer in 250 word)

UNIQUE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN BORDER AREAS

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, chaired a high-level review meeting in New Delhi on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting, attended by key officials including Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha and top officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Jammu and Kashmir administration, discussed strategies to combat terrorism in the region. Shri Amit Shah emphasized the government's commitment, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, to completely eradicate terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He directed security agencies to intensify efforts and set a "zero infiltration" goal while focusing on a ruthless approach towards terrorism and infiltration.



CHALLENGES AND FUNDS STRETCH BORDER SECURITY FORCES THIN.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO INTERNAL SECURITY IN JAMMU KASHMIR:

1. **Cross-border Terrorism:** Militant groups, especially from Pakistan, infiltrate the region to carry out attacks, creating ongoing security threats.
2. **Separatist Sentiment:** A significant portion of the Kashmiri population desires an independent Kashmir, fueling protests and unrest.
3. **Social Media Manipulation:** Misinformation spreads on social media, exacerbating tensions and inciting violence.
4. **Narco-terrorism:** Drug trafficking funds terrorist activities, complicating the security environment.
5. **Difficult Terrain:** The region's mountainous geography makes surveillance and security operations difficult.
6. **Human Rights Concerns:** Allegations of human rights abuses by security forces alienate the local population.
7. **Political Instability:** Shifting government policies regarding Kashmir creates confusion and uncertainty among the people.

INDIA BORDER AND SECURITY:

Force	Established	Mandate
Border Security Force (BSF)	1965	Guards India's land borders prevents unauthorized entry, combats smuggling, ensures peace in border areas, and supports the Army during wartime.
Assam Rifles (AR)	1835	Secures northeastern borders, conducts counterinsurgency operations, and supports internal security with dual control (MHA & MoD).
Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)	1962	Guards the Indo-Tibetan border, prevents border violations and participates in disaster relief, rescue operations, and peacekeeping missions globally.
Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)	1963	Secures India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders focus on border security, counter-smuggling, unauthorized immigration, community policing, and disaster relief.
National Security Guard (NSG)	1984	Elite counter-terrorism force handling bomb disposal, hostage rescue, and counter-hijacking operations. Played a key role in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.
Indian Coast Guard (ICG)	1978	Secures maritime borders, conducts anti-smuggling and anti-piracy operations, and handles disaster management along the coast.
Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)	1969	Secures critical infrastructure like airports, nuclear plants, and government buildings, provides fire safety, and VIP security, and protects heritage monuments.
Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)	1939	Maintains internal security, conducts counterinsurgency operations, and provides law enforcement support in conflict zones, elections, and during disasters.
Special Protection Group (SPG)	1985	Provides proximate security to the Prime Minister, former Prime Ministers, and their families, with a focus on close protection and intelligence collaboration.

CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN BORDER AREAS:

- 1. Cross-Border Terrorism:** Infiltration by terrorist groups, especially from Pakistan and Bangladesh, remains a major threat.
- 2. Smuggling & Illegal Immigration:** Porous borders facilitate arms, drugs, and human trafficking, threatening security.
- 3. Border Disputes:** Ongoing territorial disputes, particularly with China and Pakistan, create tensions.
- 4. Infiltration & Espionage:** Cross-border espionage and intelligence gathering pose serious risks.
- 5. Ethnic & Political Instability:** Insurgencies and separatist movements complicate security in border regions.
- 6. Technological & Cyber Threats:** Advanced technology like drones and cyberattacks challenge border defence systems.
- 7. Lack of Infrastructure:** Remote areas lack roads, surveillance, and communication, hindering security efforts.
- 8. Climate & Natural Disasters:** Harsh climates and disasters like floods complicate border management.
- 9. International Relations:** Diplomatic tensions with neighbouring countries affect border

security cooperation.

10. Resource Constraints: Limited manpower and funds stretch border security forces thin.

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WAY TO IMPROVE BORDER SECURITY:

1. Increase Cooperation:

Coordinate Agencies: Enhance communication between local authorities and border agencies.

Build Capacity: Train officials to handle common border security challenges.

Facilitate Cooperation: Promote collaboration at interagency, intra-service, and international levels.

2. Improve Technology:

- **Biometric Identification:** Use fingerprint, iris

scanners, and facial recognition for border identification.

- **Surveillance Systems:** Deploy telecom fiber for monitoring and detecting unauthorized activities.
- Floodlighting:** Illuminate border areas for improved visibility and security.

3. Raise Awareness:

Reduce False Documents: Enhance technology and public awareness to limit counterfeit documents.

4. Economic and Social Development:

- **Trade and Relations:** Foster border community involvement in trade and diplomatic relations.
- **Border Area Development:** Focus on infrastructure and social development in border regions.

CONCLUSION:

Border security is crucial for maintaining national sovereignty and stability. Challenges such as cross-border terrorism, smuggling, territorial disputes, and technological threats demand a multi-pronged approach. Increased cooperation between agencies, advanced technologies like biometric identification and surveillance systems, and raising public awareness can help mitigate these challenges. Additionally, economic development and infrastructure improvements in border areas are essential for enhancing security and fostering positive relations with neighbouring countries. Strategic, coordinated efforts are needed to ensure India's borders remain secure and protected.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. With reference to the Border Security Forces in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Border Security Force (BSF) was established in 1965 to protect India's land borders.
2. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is respon-

sible for securing India's borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

3. The National Security Guard (NSG) specializes in counter-terrorism operations and has a significant role in bomb disposal and hostage rescue.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Answer: B

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Discuss the importance of inter-agency co-ordination and technological advancements in strengthening border security in India.

(250 words, 15 marks)