

TARGET PRELIMS 2024

BOOKLET-56

CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATES

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2. S&T:

1) SPACE: CHANG'E-6: CHINA'S MISSION TO LAND ON FAR SIDE OF THE MOON AND TO COLLECT UNIQUE LUNAR SAMPLES

- In June 2024, China's Chang'e-6 mission lander made a successful soft landing on the far side of the moon and will soon begin collecting unique lunar samples.
 - The lander targeted a southern portion of Apollo crater within the South Pole – Aitken (SPA) Basin on the lunar far side.
- The landing is a critical step towards bringing unique and scientifically invaluable lunar samples to Earth for analysis.
 - The lander will collect 2 kg of samples using a scoop to grab surface regoliths and a drill for subsurface material.
- This is China's fourth successful lunar landing in four attempts. This is also China's second landing on the far side of the moon.
- This is also the third lunar landing in 2024 (Japan's SLIM, Intuitive Machine's Odysseus lander)
- **Future China Lunar Program:**
 - CHANG'E-6 will follow up with two missions to the south pole of the moon. These are Chang'e-7 in 2026 and Chang'e-8 around 2028.
 - By 2030, China wants to send first crewed mission to Moon.

2) HEALTH: SURROGACY IN INDIA

- **Definition**
 - » Surrogacy is a practice in which a woman undertakes to give birth to a child for another couple and agrees to hand over the child to them after birth.
- **Two main types of surrogacies**
 - » **Gestation surrogacy** - the pregnancy results from the transfer of an embryo created by in vitro fertilization (IVF), in a manner so the resulting child is genetically unrelated to surrogate.
 - » **Traditional Surrogacy** - the surrogate is impregnated naturally or artificially, but the resulting child is genetically related to the surrogate.
- **Surrogacy in India: A Background**
 - » In 2002, India became the first country to legalize surrogacy. Within 10 years, India had become the surrogacy capital of the world.
 - » **What made India an attractive destination – Class discussion:**
 - But, in 2008, **the Baby Manji Yamada vs. Union of India** Supreme Court highlighted the problems due to lack of proper regulation for surrogacy in India.
- **The Lack of proper regulations had resulted into:**
 - » **Exploitation of surrogate mother**
 - » **No clarity on future of child if the commissioning parents deny taking her/him.**

» **Moral issues**

- **Law Commission of India in its 228th report, 2009** dealt with Surrogacy. It's key recommendations included:
 - **Prohibition of Commercial Surrogacy**
 - **Financial Support for Surrogate child** should be provided by surrogacy arrangement.
 - **Life insurance cover for surrogate mother** should be provided in the surrogacy contract.
 - **One of the intended parents should be donor as well** , in case of intended parent is single, he or she should be a donor or else go for adoption
 - Legislation itself should **recognize a surrogate child to be the legitimate child of the commissioning parent(s)** without there being any need for adoption or even declaration of guardian. The **birth certificate** of surrogate child should contain the name(s) of commissioning parent(s) only
 - **Right to privacy** of donor as well as surrogate mothers should be protected.
 - **Sex selective** surrogacy should be prohibited
 - **Cases of abortion** should be governed by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 only.
- **Government Prohibited foreigners from a renting a Womb in India (2015)**

A) THE SURROGACY (REGULATION) ACT 2021

- It **prohibited commercial surrogacy** and allowed **only altruistic surrogacy** where no money exchanges hands and where a surrogate mother is genetically related to those seeking a child.
 - » The law also penalizes "not following altruistic surrogacy" for intending couples, intending women and other persons.
- **Who can avail surrogacy?**
 - » **A woman** who is a widow or a divorcee between age of 35 to 45 years
 - » **A couple**, defined as legally married woman and man can available surrogacy is they have a medical condition necessitating surrogacy.
 - The man shall be between ages of 26-55 years and the woman shall be between the ages of 25-50 years, and shall not have previous biological, adopted, or surrogate child.
- **Institutions:** The law authorizes Centre and State to constitute - National Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Board (NSB), and State Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Board (SSB).
 - » NSB will advise central government; lay down code of conduct for surrogacy clinics; supervise the functioning of SSBs

B) THE SURROGACY (REGULATION) AMENDMENT RULES, 2024:

- **Surrogacy Rules Changed to allow donor gamets for couples with medical conditions (Feb 2024)**
 - » The amended rule says "couple undergoing surrogacy must have both gamete from the intending couple. However, in case when the District Medical Board certifies that either husband or wife constituting the intending couple suffers from medical condition necessitating use of

donor gamete then surrogacy using donor gamete is allowed subject to the condition that the child to be born through surrogacy must have atleast one gamete from the intending couple

- **This change comes after the Supreme Court Verdict** in 2023 which allowed a woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome - a rare congenital disorder that affects the reproductive system and can cause infertility - to undergo surrogacy with a donor egg.
- The Feb 2024 amendment also overturned a previous amendment in March 2023 that banned the use of donor gametes.
- » The **rule change is not applicable to widowed or divorced women**. It reads: "Single woman (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperms to avail surrogacy procedure"

3) HEALTH: MENSTRUAL HEALTH RELATED INITIATIVES

A) DRAFT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE POLICY, 2023

- MoH&FW has formulated Draft Menstrual Hygiene Policy (MHP)
- It envisages comprehensive support through the entire menstrual journey, recognizing the needs of individuals from menarche to menopause with specific focus on prioritizing underserved and vulnerable population.
- The policy intends to serve as a catalyst to raise awareness, challenge societal norms and foster a society that embraces menstrual hygiene as a natural and normal part of life.

B) SCHEME FOR PROMOTION OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

- By MoH&FW
- It promotes Menstrual Hygiene among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years.
- The funds are sanctioned based on the proposal received from the States/Uts in their program implementation plan (PIP) under National Health Mission.
- The ASHA workers promote the scheme by distributing the sanitary napkin packs at a subsidized rate of Rs 6/- for a pack of 6 napkins and arranging monthly meetings with the adolescent girls in their area to deliberate on varied health issues including menstrual hygiene management.

C) JAN SUVIDHA SANITARY NAPKINS:

- Under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna (PMBJP), Government has launched Jan Aushadhi Suvidha Sanitary Napkins at Rs 1 /- per pad for women to ensure easy availability of the menstrual health services at affordable prices.

D) MENSTRUAL LEAVES:

- Bihar and Kerala are the only two states in India which have a menstrual leave policy as of April 2024.
- **Note:** In May 2024, the Sikkim High Court, the country's Smallest High Court, has introduced menstrual leave policy for its women employees.
 - Such leave will be granted on the prior recommendations of the medical officer of the High Court. "This leave will not be counted against the employee's overall leave count,".

4) DEFENCE: PAKISTAN'S HANGOR CLASS SUBMARINE – BUILT BY CHINA (APRIL 2024)

- **News:**
 - The first Hangor class submarine, built by China for Pakistan, was launched in April 2024 at a Wuhan shipyard.
- **THE Hangor-class**, an export variant of the Chinese Type 039A Yuan class, is a diesel electric attack submarine. It is named after the now decommissioned PNS Hangor, which famously sank India's frigate INS Khukri during the 1971 war.
 - It is equipped with an Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system, which significantly increases the submarines' endurance underwater.
 - It is an attack submarine and has torpedo tubes and capabilities to launch anti-ship missiles, as well as Babur-3 subsonic cruise missile, which has a range of 450 km.
- It is a direct rival of India's Kalavari class (Scorpene class) of diesel electric attack submarine.
 - **Note:** Hangor is significantly bigger than Kalvari class; but Kalvari is much more manoeuvrable.
 - **Note:** Kalvari class don't come with AIP but, Navy is currently in the process of installing an indigenously developed AIP system to its Kalvari class submarine.

3. ECONOMY

1) AGRICULTURE

A) NEED OF REFORMING POULTRY INDUSTRY

- **Current Context:** outbreak of H5N1
- **BirdFlu (H5N1):** First case of transmission from Chicken to Humans -> in 1997 from HongKong; first case in India was reported in Maharashtra in 2006.
 - **Pathogen** has crossed many species barrier and has even caused mortality among the polar bears in the Arctic, and seals and seagulls in Antarctic.
 - **Fatality Rate in Humans:** WHO estimate it at 52% (based on 463 deaths recorded since 2003 among the 888 people diagnosed with the virus. Human infections are linked to close contact with bird or its environment.
- **Antibiotics** are regularly given to birds as a **prophylactic** and as **growth promoters**. Many of these antibiotics are classified as critically important and highly important by the WHO and are sold to farmers for preventive use.
- **Heavily stocked animals in unsanitary conditions** -> detrimental effect on welfare of animals but also negative impact on those who consume the food derived from these animals.
 - **Violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960** – Keeping animals in intensive confinement constitutes a crime. Further, operational activities at these industrial facilities cause unnecessary pain and suffering to the animals because of mutilation, starvation, thirst, overcrowding, and other ill-treatment, which is also violation of PCA.

- **Pollution:** The impact of emissions in the atmosphere, effluents in the water system, and the solid waste in the soil is felt by humans, other animals and environment.
 - There is issue of odour pollution, particulate matter and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - **CPCB** has classified poultry units with more than 5,000 birds as a polluting industry that require compliance and regulatory consent to establish and operate.
- **Recommendations of Law Commission of India** in its 269th report:
 - Non-therapeutic antibiotic given to poultry causes antibiotic resistance. More open, cleaner, and ventilated living spaces are likely to cause less need of anti-biotics in animals. This will also make their eggs and meat safer to eat.

A. SOCIAL JUSTICE

1) WOMEN: NATIONAL COMMISSION OF WOMEN

- NCW was set up as a statutory body in **Jan 1992** under the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- It consists of a chairperson, five members and a member secretary all to be **nominated by Central government**.
- **Key Functions of the National Commission of Women (NCW)** includes:
 - » **Reviewing the existing constitutional and legal framework** related to women and recommend changes to make them more effective.
 - » Take up **violation of rights of women** with appropriate authority.
 - » **Act on complaints suo motu** in relation to issues concerning deprivation of women.
 - » **Inspect institutions** where women are kept as prisoners or otherwise and if necessary, take up with relevant authorities any remedial action.
- The commission also has **powers** that are vested in a **Civil Court**.
- It submits an annual report before the central government. Apart from this, it submits other reports which it deems to be fit.

2) SCHEDULED TRIBES: PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGs)

- **Particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG)** (earlier: Primitive tribal group) is a **government of India classification** created with the purpose of enabling improvement in the conditions of certain communities with particularly low development indices
- The **Dhebar Commission (1960-1961)** stated that within Scheduled Tribes there existed an inequality in the rate of development. In 1973, during the fourth Five Year Plan a sub-category was created within Scheduled Tribes to identify groups that considered being at a lower level of development.
- Till now, 75 tribal groups have been categorized by Ministry of Home Affairs as PVTGs. They reside in 18 states and UT of A&N Islands.
- These groups are **characterized by**
 - » A pre-agriculture level of technology
 - » Stagnant and declining population
 - » Extremely low literacy

- » Subsistence level of economy

A) PM-PVTG DEVELOPMENT MISSION

- First announced in the 2023-24 budget, the scheme was launched by PM Modi in Nov 2023 from Jharkhand's Khunti district on the occasion of tribal icon Birsa Munda's birth anniversary and the third Janjatiya Gaurav Divas.
- It has a budgetary allocation of Rs 24,000 crores and is dedicated to the holistic development of all 75 PVTGs living in 22,000+ villages of 18 states and UT.
- The **objective** of the scheme is to improve the socio-economic conditions of PVTGs by providing basic facilities like road and telecom connectivity, electricity, housing, clean water, sanitation, improved education, healthcare, nutrition, and sustainable livelihood to PVTG families and habitations.
- This is an **umbrella initiative** under which 9 ministries will implement 11 interventions, including PMGSY, PMAY(G), Jal Jeevan Yojna etc.
 - » **Note:** MoTA is the nodal ministry for overall policy planning and coordination.

B) PM JANMAN (PRADHAN MANTRI JANJATI ADIVASI NYAYA MAHA ABHIYAN) (PM-JANMAN)

- Approved by Union Cabinet in Nov 2024.
- Budget: 24,104 crore for three years.
 - » **Central share** - Rs 15,336 crores
 - » **State Share** - Rs 8,768 crores
- It is **aimed** at providing PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
 - » In addition, **saturation** will also be ensured in PMJAY, Sickle Cell Disease Elimination, TB Elimination, 100% immunization, PM Poshan, PMJDY etc.
- This initiative is part of Pradhan Mantri - PVTG Development Mission.

C) 1 WEEK INFORMATION EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN FOR THE PM-JANMAN PACKAGE (DEC 2023)

- In this campaign, the Union government has set a target of one week to achieve Aadhaar, caste certificate, and Jan Dhan account saturation across 15,000 PVTG habitations in 100 districts.
 - » It will cover 100 districts of 18 states and the UT of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Need of this IEC campaign?**
 - » After announcing the PM JANMAN package, it was understood that to proceed with any aspect of the PM-JANMAN package, they would first need to ensure intended PVTG beneficiaries are provided with documentation like Aadhaar, caste certificates and Jan Dhan Accounts - essential to sign them for benefits under the package.

D) SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PVTG

- It is a central sector scheme launched in 2008 by MoTA exclusively for PVTGs.
- **Flexibility to state:** Under the scheme, Conservation cum development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each state/UT for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal committee of the Tribal Ministry.
- Activities for development are taken in the fields of education, health, livelihood and skill development, agriculture development, housing & habitat, conservation and culture etc.

3) STs: PVTGs – CURRENT SITUATION OF PVTGS IN INDIA:

- **Report by Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) about PVTGs:** The PVTGs of India – Privileges and Predicaments
 - » **Key Findings**
 - a. **Baseline surveys** exist for only 40 groups out of 75 PVTGs -> **displays government's apathy** towards PVTGs
 - b. **Regional and state specific variations in welfare schemes for PVTGs**
 - For instance, Odisha has established exclusive micro-projects for PVTGs, there are none such in for the five PVTGs in Gujarat.
 - **Unequal treatment in same state**
 - c. **State wise distribution**
 - Among the 75 listed PVTGs the highest number are found in Odisha (13).
 - Other states
 - Bihar including Jharkhand (9), MP including Chhattisgarh (7), Tamil Nadu (6), Kerala (5), Gujarat (5), WB (3), MHA (3), Kar (2), UK (2), Rajasthan (1), Tripura (1), Manipur (1).
 - All four Tribal groups in Andaman and 1 in Nicobar Islands are recognized as PVTGs.
 - d. **Huge Variation in the number of PVTGs**
 - A few individuals as in case of Great Andamanese (57), Onge(107) and Sentinelese (around 50) to more than 4 lakh population of Sahariyas in MP and Rajasthan.
 - e. **Literacy rate going up**
 - Literacy rate has gone up significantly over the past.
 - From a single digit, the literacy rate has gone upto 30-40% in some PVTGs.
 - **Female literacy** rate is still considerably lower compared to male counterparts.
 - f. **Considerable increase in age of marriage among PVTGs**
 - The incidence of girl child being married while still being a minor, among these tribes have been decreasing.

A) PVTGs IN DIFFERENT STATES

State / UT Name	PVTGs Name
Andhra Pradesh and Telangana	1. Bodo Gadaba 2. Bondo Poroja 3. Chenchu 4. Dongria Khond 5. Gutob Gadaba 6. Khond Poroja 7. Kolam 8. Kondareddis 9. Konda Savaras 10. Kutia Khond 11. Parengi Poroja 12. Thoti
Bihar and Jharkhand	13. Asurs 14. Birhor 15. Birjia 16. Hill Kharia 17. Konvas 18. Mal Paharia 19. Parhaiyas 20. Sauda Paharia 21. Savar
Jharkhand	Same as above
Gujarat	22. Kathodi 23. Kohvalia 24. Padhar 25. Siddi 26. Kolgha
Karnataka	27. Jenu Kuruba 28. Koraga
Kerala	29. Cholanaikeyan (a section of Kattunaickans) 30. Kadar 31. Kattunayakan 32. Kurumbas 33. Koraga
Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh	34. Abujh Macias 35. Baigas 36. Bharias 37. Hill Korbas 38. Kamars 39. Saharias 40. Birhor
Chhattisgarh	Same as above
Maharashtra	41. Katkaria (Kathodia) 42. Kolam 43. Maria Gond
Manipur	44. Marram Nagas
Odisha	45. Birhor 46. Bondo 47. Didayi 48. Dongria-Khond 49. Juangs 50. Kharias 51. Kutia Kondh 52. Lanjia Sauras 53. Lodhas 54. Mankidias 55. Paudi Bhuyans 56. Soura 57. Chuktia Bhunjia
Rajasthan	58. Seharis
Tamil Nadu	59. Kattu Nayakans 60. Kotas 61. Kurumbas 62. Irulas 63. Paniyans 64. Todas
Tripura	65. Reangs
Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand	66. Buxas 67. Rajis
West Bengal	68. Birhor 69. Lodhas 70. Totos
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	71. Great Andamanese 72. Jarawas 73. Onges 74. Sentinelese 75. Shorn Pens

B) PVTGS OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS

- Great Andamanese
- Jarawas
- Onges
- Sentinelese
- Shompen

C) TRIBALS OF A&N ISLANDS

- **Four Ancient Negrito Tribe in the Andaman Islands:** The Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, and Sentinelese
- **Two Mongoloid Tribal communities in Nicobar Islands:** the Shompen and Nicobarese (not PVTGs)
 - Except Nicobarese, the population of other tribal groups in A&N islands have decreased drastically over the years

D) SHOMPEN TRIBE

In April 2024, for the first time, members of the Shompen, one of the PVTGs in the country took part in the election process by casting their votes in A&N Lok Sabha constituencies. 7 members of the tribe exercise their franchise.

- **Shompen** reside in the dense tropical rain forests of the Great Nicobar island.
- Their estimated population is **229** as per the 2011 census.



E) GREAT ANDAMANESE TRIBE

- They inhabit isolated parts of Southeast Asia and the Andaman Islands.
- At present only about 59 members of the community survive - 34 live in the Strait Island, the rest are in Port Blair.
- The language of the Great Andamanese, **Sare**, has largely been lost, with the last surviving speaker dying a few years back. The tribe now speaks mostly Hindi.
- **“Major factors contributing to the diminishing population of the Great Andamanes include environmental ‘disturbances’, contagious diseases as a result of contact with city dwellers, and a high mortality rate assisted by addictions to alcohol, tobacco and opium**

4) DISABLED:

A) RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016

- RPD Act, 2016 replaced the PwD act 1995 and is in accordance with the obligations to UNCRPD to which India is a signatory.
 - » It recognizes Disability as a fluid and shifting concept and incorporates measures towards a full acceptance of people with disabilities ensuring their full participation and inclusion in society.
- **Key Provisions**
 - » **Disability has been defined based on the evolving and dynamic concept**
 - » **Types of Disabilities have been increased**
 - 1995 act: 7 kinds of disability
 - New Act: It recognizes **21 different kinds of disabilities** including cerebral palsy, hemophilia, multiple sclerosis, autism and thalassemia, disability from acid attacks and Parkinson's disease etc. which were not recognized earlier.
 - Further, the centre will have the power to add more types of disabilities to the list.
 - » **Rights of PwD**
 - The act confers several rights and entitlements to disabled persons.
 - » **Accessibility:** Disabled friendly access to all public buildings, hospitals, modes of transports, polling stations etc.
 - » **4% reservation for disabled** in higher education, government jobs, reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc

- » **Right to Free Education:** Every child with benchmark disabilities will have right to free education between 6 and 18 years.
- » **Higher penalties for discrimination** against disabled
 - The act stipulates upto 2 years of jail term and a maximum of Rs 5 lakh for discrimination against differently abled persons.
- » **Improved Institutional framework**
 - **Central and State Advisory Boards on Disability** are to be set up to serve as apex policy making bodies at the central and state levels.
 - **Office of chief commissioner of Persons with Disabilities** has been **strengthened** who will be assisted by 2 commissioners and an advisory committee comprising of not more than 11 members drawn from experts in various disabilities.
 - Similarly, **Office of state commissioner of disabilities** has been strengthened.
 - **Regulatory Body and Grievance Redressal agencies**
 - » Chief Commissioner of PwD and the state commissioners will act as regulatory bodies and grievance redressal agencies and also monitor implementation of act.
 - Provisions for District level committees to be constituted by state governments to address local concerns.
- » **Special Courts**
 - Special courts will be designated in each district to handle cases concerning violation of rights of PwDs.
- » **Responsibilities has been caste on appropriate governments** to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others

B) SUGAMYA BHARAT CAMPAIGN (ACCESSIBLE INDIA CAMPAIGN)

- » It is a flagship campaign focused on enhancing accessibility, creating awareness and sensitization for creation of **universal barrier free** environment. This will enable persons with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunities and live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society.
- » It was launched as an AIC on 3rd Dec 2015.
- » By Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- » The campaign **targets 3 different verticals** for achieving this universal accessibility.
 1. **Built up Environment**
 2. **Transportation Ecosystem**
 3. **Information and Communication Eco-system**

C) SUGAMYA BHARAT APP

- » It is helpful in crowdsourcing grievances of accessibility being faced on ground in infrastructure and services and forwarding for redressal.
- » It also is helpful in sensitization and awareness generations.

D) SCHEME FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY ACT (SIPDA)

- It is a central sector umbrella scheme run by **DEPwD** for implementing various initiatives for socio-economic empowerment of PwDs.
- The scheme provides **financial assistance** for skill development, creation of barrier free environment, running some institutions in the field of other related activities related to implementation of the Act.
 - » For e.g. the scheme provides for ramps, rails, lift, toilets for wheelchair users etc in government buildings.

E) DEENDAYAL DISABLED REHABILITATION SCHEME (DDRS)

- It provides financial assistance to NGOs for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

F) ANGANWADI PROTOCOL FOR DIVYANG CHILDREN

- **Why in news?**
 - » MoW&CD launches 'Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children' at National Outreach Program in New Delhi (Nov 2023)
- **Details**
 - » This protocol embodies a social model for Divyangjan Inclusive Care under the POSHAN Abhiyan, with a step-by-step approach:
 1. **Step-1:** Screening for early disability signs
 2. **Step-2:** inclusion of community events and empowering families
 3. **Step-3:** Referral support via ASHA/ANM & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) teams.
 - » Through Divyang protocol, every district administration will be guided in addressing special needs for education and nutrition, providing **Swavlamban cards** for the empowerment of divyang children and their families.

G) COUNTRY'S FIRST HIGH-TECH SPORTS TRAINING CENTRE FOR DIVYANGJAN INAUGURATED

- On 2nd Oct 2023, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, PM Modi inaugurated the country's first high-tech sports training centre for Divyangjan, named after former PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **Name:** Atal Bihari Vajpayee Training Centre for Disability. Sports

GS FOUNDATION UPSC CSE 2025



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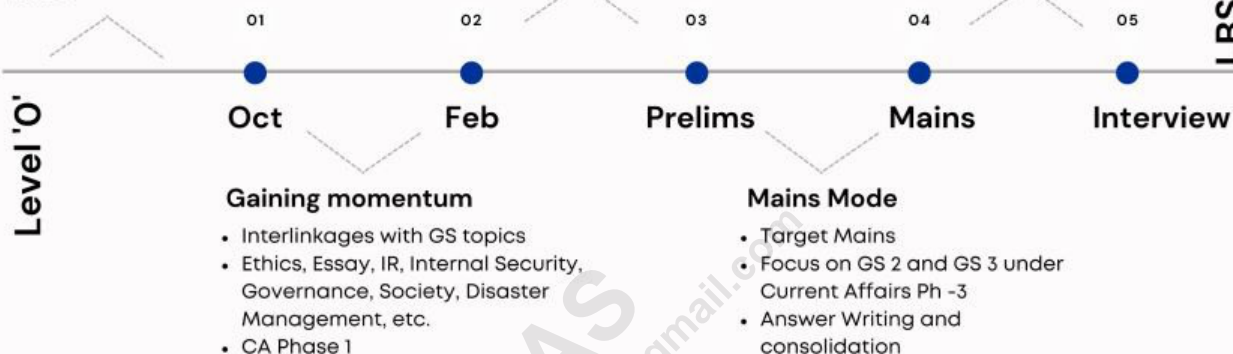
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