

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. [GS1 Related](#)

Geography

1. [Geological stresses seen in Indian Ocean](#)

B. [GS2 Related](#)

Polity

1. [Justice Dipak Misra takes oath as the 45th Chief Justice of India](#)
2. [Over the years, major questions on institutions of minority education](#)
3. [Centre set to roll out new treatment for encephalitis](#)

International Relations

1. [Doklam standoff ends as India, China step back](#)
2. [Agreeing to disagree](#)
3. [Trump's Pakistan test](#)

C. [GS3 Related](#)

Economics

1. ["Reform labour laws to ease compliance"](#)
2. [Under-employment severe in India: NITI](#)
3. [New norms for solar power bids to enhance transparency: MNRE](#)
4. [Forex reserves: The problem of plenty](#)

Science and Technology

1. [Ocean forecasting system for Madagascar and Mozambique](#)

D. [GS4 Related](#)

E. [Prelims Fact](#)

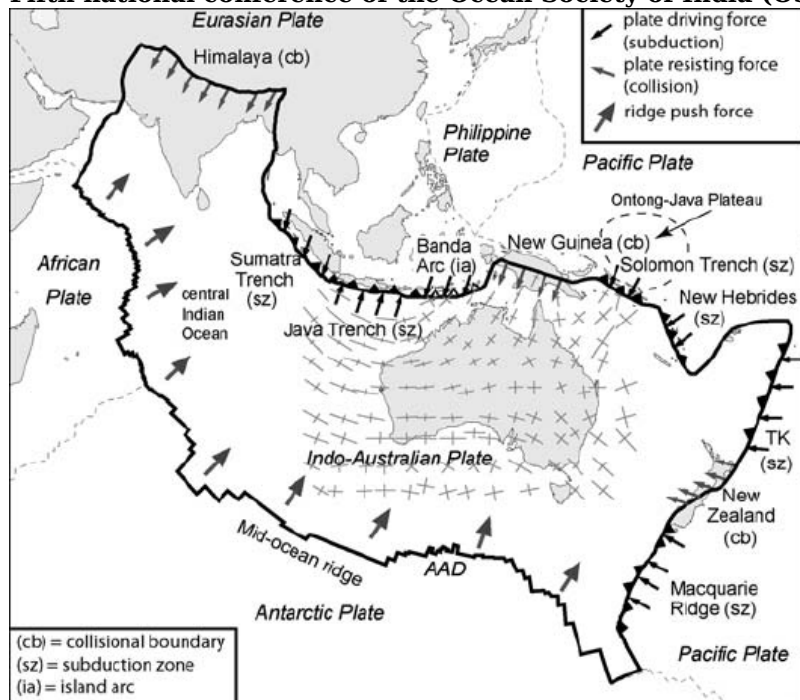
F. [UPSC Prelims Practice Questions](#)

G. [UPSC Mains Practice Questions](#)

Category: GEOGRAPHY

1. [Geological stresses seen in Indian Ocean](#)

Fifth national conference of the Ocean Society of India (OSI)



- Purnachandra Rao, Director, National Centre for Earth Science Studies in his speech said, geological stresses building along the Indo-Australian tectonic plate boundary in the Southern Indian Ocean have the potential to cause a powerful earthquake up to a magnitude of 8, triggering a tsunami across much of South India.
- The largest **strike-slip earthquake** on record had happened along the **Indo-Australian plate boundary** in 2012. The phenomenon occurred when tectonic plates slipped horizontally along a fault line, unlike most large earthquakes which were caused when two plates collided at their boundaries and one plate slid beneath the other.

Key Facts

- **Burmese Arc** , north of the **Andaman islands** , had been identified as another region with the potential to generate a quake triggered tsunami that could affect Bangladesh and devastate the northern Bay of Bengal.
- The **Andaman subduction zone** in the **Bay of Bengal** and the **Makran subduction zone** in the **Arabian Sea** were the other tsunamigeic zones in the Indian plate region.

Category:Â POLITY

1. [Justice Dipak Misra takes oath as the 45th Chief Justice of India](#)



In news

- **Justice Dipak Misra** took oath as the **45th Chief Justice of India** , succeeding Chief Justice J S Khehar in Indiaâ€™s top court.

Basic Information

Appointment

Article 124 of the Constitution of India provides for the manner of appointing judges to the Supreme Court. Though **no specific provision exists in the Constitution** for appointing the Chief Justice, who, as a result, is appointed like the other judges conventionally, the outgoing CJI recommends the name of the senior-most judge (i.e. by date of appointment to the Supreme Court) for appointment by the President of India, as his successor.

Seniority at the apex court is determined not by age, but by:

1. The date a judge was appointed to the Supreme Court.
2. If two judges are elevated to the Supreme Court on the same day,
 1. The one who was sworn in first as a judge would trump another;
 2. If both were sworn in as judges on the same day, the one with more years of high court service would â€˜winâ€™ in the seniority stakes;
 3. An appointment from the bench would â€˜trumpâ€™ in seniority an appointee from the bar.

Removal

- **Article 124(4)** of Constitution of India lays down the procedure for removal of a Judge of Supreme Court which is applicable to Chief Justice as well. Once appointed, the Chief Justice remains in office until the age of 65 years. He can be removed only through a process of **impeachment by Parliament** as follows:
- A Judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed after an address by each House of Parliament supported by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting has been presented to the President in the same session for such removal on the ground of proved **misbehavior or incapacity**.

2. [Over the years, major questions on institutions of minority education](#)

Context

- Government decided that it does not agree Jamia as a â€˜minorityâ€™ institution.
- Center replied Delhi High Court that it does not back an order by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) that had declared Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) as a religious minority institution (six years ago).

Background

- â€œJamia was established by the Muslims for the advantage of Muslims and it never lost its identity as a Muslim minority educational institutionâ€ says NCMEI.
- An order in the past led JMI to scrap reservations for SC/ST and OBC students and set aside half the seats in each course for Muslims.
- After the order was challenged in court, the previous UPA government submitted an affidavit saying it â€œrespects the declaration made by NCMEIâ€.
- On the advise of then Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, the NDA government, under HRD Ministry under Smriti Irani entitled to change the governmentâ€™s view and took a stance that JMI is not a minority institution.

What is a minority educational institution?

- A minority educational institution is one that has been set up by either a linguistic or a religious minority group.
- Objective: To keep alive and foster what it considers its unique and special features.

Does the Constitution provide for minority educational institutions?

- Fundamental Rights, Part III, openly provides for the right.
- Article 30, titled “Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions”, says:
 - “(1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice
 - (1A) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause
 - (2) The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.”
- Article 29, “Protection of interests of minorities”, says:
 - “(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.”
 - But isn’t there a conflict between the fundamental principle of equality and the special rights conferred on these groups by the Constitution?
- Article 30(1) could seem to be in contradiction to Article 29(2), which says, “No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.”
- Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), also has been in the courts for decades over the same issue.
- The university contends that it was set up by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan principally for minority uplift, and therefore, it has to be seen to have a minority personality.
- JMI, ironically, was created almost as the anti-thesis to Aligarh, when a group of scholars “walked out” of the AMU campus to set up Jamia in Delhi in the nationalist tradition, under Mahatma Gandhi’s influence and patronage.

3. [Centre set to roll out new treatment for encephalitis](#)

Shot in the arm for AES treatment

A look at the new drug minocycline, commonly used for acne treatment, which has been cleared by the Health Ministry to treat Acute Encephalitis Syndrome



Cure on the way: Inside a ward of the encephalitis centre at the B.R.D Medical College Hospital in Gorakhpur • V.V.KRISHNAN

- Researchers in 2008 showed that minocycline, an inexpensive antibiotic used to treat acne, was able to cure rats infected with the Japanese encephalitis virus

- It is lipophilic in nature and has better ability to penetrate the blood brain barrier

- It reduces neuroinflammation and has a markedly protective effect on not only JE but other ailments that cause brain inflammation

- However, the medicine's effect is pronounced on only those who survived the first day of hospitalisation

- Since 2010, India has had 6,359 cases of AES, with 439 deaths. About 959 of all cases were confirmed to be of Japanese Encephalitis

Context

- **Gorakhpur incident:** several children died of encephalitis-related complications at the Baba Raghav Das (BRD) Medical College.

In news

- The Centre is looking to introduce a new drug, traditionally used for acne, to deal with the seasonal outbreaks of acute encephalitis.
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recommended the drug as a standard treatment for treating patients afflicted with the Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus.
- In 2008, researchers at the National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), Manesar found that **Minocycline “an antibiotic typically used to treat severe acne” surprisingly seemed to cure rats infected with the JE virus.**
- Drawback: medicine use reduced hospital stay but didn’t significantly improve overall mortality.

Basic Information

What is encephalitis?

- Encephalitis is a potentially life-threatening but rare disease causing "acute inflammation" of the brain.
- Meaning of Acute: when a disease appears abruptly and grows at a fast pace.
- A person afflicted with encephalitis requires serious medical attention.

What are the causes of encephalitis?

- The disease can occur in people of all ages, but children and the elderly are more at risk of being afflicted with the disease.
- The usual cause of the rare disease is either a viral infection.
- Sometimes it is caused when the brain's own immune system mistakenly attacks brain tissue.
- In rare cases, encephalitis is caused due to bacterial infection, parasites, or may be prompted from other infectious diseases.
- It is a non-communicable disease.

What is Japanese encephalitis?

- One of the most common form of viral encephalitis in Asia is the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV), caused by mosquito-borne flavivirus.
- The disease belongs to the same genus as dengue, yellow and West Nile viruses.
- JEV primarily affects children as most adults tend to attain natural immunity from the disease, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

How can the disease be prevented?


- There are several vaccinations that are effective in preventing the disease, including vaccines for measles, mumps, and rubella.
- People should also use proper clothing to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes in mosquito-infested areas.

Is the disease prevalent in India? How severe is it?

- Japanese Encephalitis is recognised as the leading cause of the disease in India.
- Region affected: West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Pondicherry and Karnataka.
- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are two states, which have seen the most number of encephalitis cases in recent years.
- The Uttar Pradesh government in May this year launched a vaccination campaign in 38 sensitive districts of the state to combat the JE virus.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Doklam standoff ends as India, China step back](#)

CONFRONTATION TO COMPROMISE IN 70 DAYS			
1 WHAT CAUSED THE STAND-OFF? China's road building in Doklam, Bhutan, violated pact between India and China; posed threat to India's strategic interests	2 WHAT'S THE AGREEMENT? ➤ "Mutual disengagement of troops" to restore status quo	➤ Indian troops withdraw to post at Doka La. They continue to occupy vantage point on top of ridge and can keep an eye on the Doklam bowl, less than 500 metres away	➤ China will not renew road building that led to the confrontation. MEA says both sides had moved out "under verification"
3 WHAT DID CHINA SAY? Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said India had "pulled back all the trespassing personnel and equipment to the Indian side of the boundary...Chinese troops continue to exercise sovereignty and territorial integrity" She also said, "China will make adjustments with the situation on the ground" and "will continue to develop friendly relations with India "			
4 WHAT LED TO THE RESOLUTION? ➤ Despite its war talk, China was disadvantaged on lower ground. Would have found ground harder to hold once it began to snow in Sept-end ➤ Though China's infrastructure is better, India has closed the gap with its	troops closer to the border ➤ Armed conflict could have resulted in high casualties without clear winners ➤ Chinese leadership keen to resolve row ahead of crucial party conference later this year, where Xi Jinping is expected to get another 5 years as China's leader. ➤ China was keen on a	smooth BRICS summit and India also keen to iron out glitches before Modi visits Beijing early next month ➤ The wording of the Chinese statement appears to be a bid to placate hawks within China , who were insistent that nothing short of an Indian withdrawal would be acceptable to Beijing	

Context

- India- China-Bhutan Doklam Plateau standoff.

Inn News

- After prolonged diplomatic negotiations, India and China finally agreed to disengage from the standoff on the Doklam

- plateau.
- Indian government sources confirmed that India had agreed to withdraw troops first as a “goodwill gesture”
- China promised to make “necessary adjustments” to their troop deployments, after Indian troops withdrew back to their posts in Sikkim.

Way forward

- More robust border management mechanism is put in place.
- Expanding the confidence-building measures.
- Add more border personal meeting points beyond the six.
- DGMO- level hotline should be in place.
- More visits from both the sides and tactical-level exchanges
- Political establishment needs to wake up to engage in a more intense bilateral exchange with China.

2. [Agreeing to disagree](#)

Context

- The pronouncements by India and China that the Doklam military stand-off has come to an end signifies a comfortable sign over the diplomacy that prevailed over the harsh rhetoric of the past.

Key Points

- The “expeditious disengagement of border personnel” shows the India’s policy of pursuing diplomatic measures in the face of China’s heated rhetoric was prudent.
- Both New Delhi and Beijing have appreciated the aspirations of the Bhutanese government, which sought an immediate end to the crisis before the bitter winter set in.
- Chinese proclamations during the stand-off signify that it no longer appreciates the advances made in the Special Representative talks in 2012.
- China does not respect the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction near Batang-La to have been stable.
- India also made it clear that it does not believe that the Sikkim boundary is settled either.
- Both the countries should take a step back to the essence of the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement of 2013 and the specific guidelines laid down on handling any future developments along the 3,488-km boundary the two countries.

3. [Trump’s Pakistan test](#)

Context

- As the Iraqi war of 1991 began to descend, the spirit of history positioned the son of a small village near Azamgarh at the helm of the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.
- The big new idea was called “strategic defiance”. When the United States turn inevitable, Pakistan would lead a battle on mid-sized powers like Iraq and Iran, helped by China.
- Presently President Donald Trump’s new South Asia doctrine is frightening Pakistan with severe effects. Henceforth should it fail to turn on its jihadist proxies, has made strategic defiance relevant again.
- The pillars of the new South Asia strategy:
 - Open-ended guarantee to the Afghan war with the use of all the instruments of American power,
 - A greater role for New Delhi and strategic partnership with India
 - Annihilating terror safe-havens in Pakistan to destroy jihadism, and with it, growing Iranian, Chinese and Russian influence.
- General Pervez Musharraf was communicated that Pakistan would be bombed “back into the stone age” if the country did not desert its al Qaeda and Taliban proxies.
- Past records depict that each time the United States has slashed aid to Pakistan, geopolitical coincidence compelled it to reverse course.
- Aid dropped to near-zero levels after Pakistan’s nuclear-weapons programme in 1980.
- The 1990s saw a sharp reduction in aid after the anti-Soviet jihad ended and President George Bush refused to certify Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons. Then, it surged after 9/11, rising to historic levels of \$4.5 billion in 2010.
- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimates that over 68 per cent of Pakistan’s arms imports in 2012-2016 came from China.
- The United States has the capacity to target jihadist infrastructure and individuals deep inside Pakistan to unleash its Afghan allies’ covert assets to execute retaliatory terrorism in Pakistan.
- The end state of the Afghan war involves degrading the jihadist movement, not just a defined group of terrorists, thus denying space for great-power competitors to assert influence in a strategically-important region.
- Strategic defiance shows the defensive game well.
- Trump must beware the fact that a foul or two can go a long way in leveling the odds against superior opposition.

Category: ECONOMICS

1. [Reform labour laws to ease compliance](#)

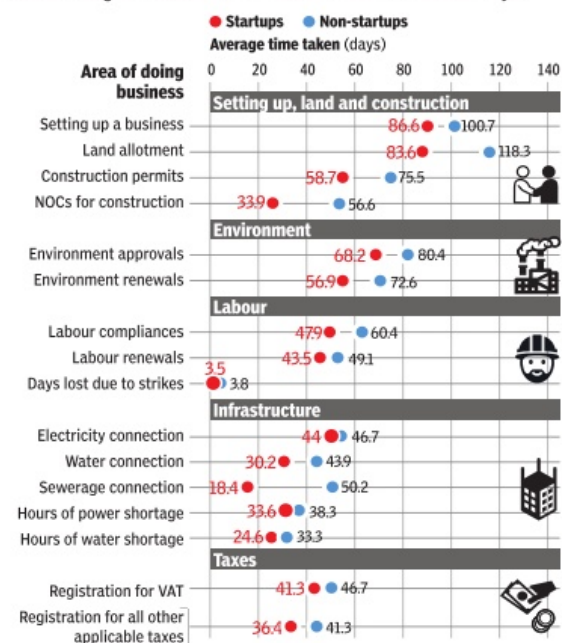
NITI Aayog: Ease of Doing Business report.

It Takes 100 Days To Start A Business

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS
The fine print

AVERAGE TIME TAKEN FOR ALL APPROVALS

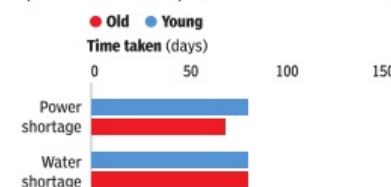
Survey of 3,276 manufacturing firms reveals the changes taking place in ease of doing business and reforms needed to accelerate activity...



Source: NITI Aayog-IDFC Institute's survey

HOURS OF POWER AND WATER SHORTAGE

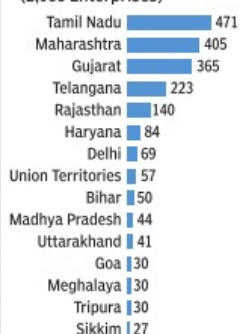
... Young firms faced 7 more hours of power shortage.
Top 25% of old firms spent more time for water supply...



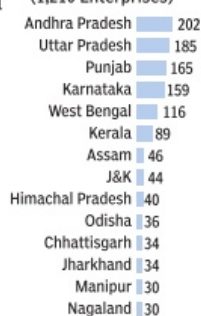
HIGH-GROWTH AND LOW-GROWTH STATES

Companies in high growth states report fewer regulatory hurdles, establishing link between superior regulation, higher growth

High-Growth states (2,066 Enterprises)



Low-Growth states (1,210 Enterprises)



Highlights

- The government should reform labour laws and make them more flexible to make it easier to do business in the country.
- More enterprises in labour-intensive sectors reported that finding skilled workers, hiring contract labour and terminating employees was a major or a severe obstacle.
- Pitched for accelerating power sector reforms to ensure that power-intensive enterprises have access to steady and uninterrupted power without undue delays or regulatory burden.
- Half of the enterprises do not borrow from financial institutions and about a third consider lack of access to finance as a major source of obstacles for business in the country

Recommendation

- More flexible labour laws will allow enterprises to grow larger and reap economies of scale, generating productivity improvements, jobs creation and higher growth.
- If India is to enter the "double digit" economic growth club, it will need to continually streamline and improve the business environment.

2. Under-employment severe in India: NITI

In news:

- NITI Aayog : not unemployment but a "severe under-employment" is the main problem facing the country
- NITI Aayog's goal: promoting highly productive and well-paid jobs.

NITI Aayog's recommendations:

- Creation of a handful of **Coastal Employment Zones**, which may attract multinational firms in labour-intensive sectors from China to India

Basic Information

What is Underemployment?

- Underemployment, or disguised unemployment, refers to a job that is insufficient in some important way for a worker, relative to a standard, which results in the under-utilization of the worker.
- Examples include holding a part-time job despite desiring full-time work, and overqualification, where the employee has education, experience, or skills beyond the requirements of the job.

3. New norms for solar power bids to enhance transparency: MNRE

In news:

- The Ministry of **New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** had issued the new guidelines for tariff based competitive bidding process for procuring solar power
- The guidelines have been issued under the provisions of Section 63 of the Electricity Act, 2003 for long term procurement from grid-connected Solar PV Power Projects of 5 MW and above, through competitive bidding.

Salient features of the guidelines issued

- Generation compensation for offtake constraints for reducing offtake risks
- The “must-run” status for solar projects has been stressed upon.
- Besides, to ensure lower tariffs, minimum PPA (power purchase agreement) tenure has been kept at 25 years. Moreover unilateral termination or amendment of PPA is not allowed.
- Provides for termination compensation to increase bankability of projects by securing the investment by the generator and the lenders against any arbitrary termination of PPA.
- The risk of generator’s revenue getting blocked due to delayed payment/non-payment by the procurers has been addressed through provision of Payment Security Mechanism through instruments like Letter of Credit (LC), Payment Security Fund and State Guarantee.
- It also provides for change in law provision to provide clarity and certainty to generators, procurers, and investors/lenders.
- The penalties have been rationalised so as to reduce the overall cost to the generator, while at the same time, ensuring compliance with the Commissioning Schedule/Scheme Guidelines.
- The norms provide that generators are free to repower their plants.

Significance of this move

- New Guidelines for Tariff Based Competitive Bidding Process to reduce risk, enhance transparency and increase affordability of Solar Power
- It will also provide standardisation and uniformity in processes and a risk-sharing framework between various stakeholders involved in the solar PV power procurement
- This will also help reduce off-taker risk and encourage investments, enhance bankability of the Projects and improve profitability for the investors.
- The guidelines also streamline the provision for project preparedness to expedite and facilitate the setting up of projects.

4. Forex reserves: The problem of plenty

Context:

- India’s forex reserve is reaching the \$400 billion mark on the back of a stronger rupee against the US dollar.

Key points:

- In 2013, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was struggling to save the rupee from a free fall and was compelled to raise emergency foreign currency deposits from non-resident Indians.
- Today’s concerns are with respect to appreciating currency and the problems the central bank is facing in managing the strong rupee.
- Strong foreign inflows contributed to a rise by over \$23 billion so far in the current financial year.
- A recent report by Edelweiss Securities Ltd stated that continuous interference by the RBI brought India close to getting in the currency maneuvering watch list of the US.
- The accommodative monetary policy in the developed world and the global financial system is flush with cheap money and investors are in a desperate search for yield.
- For example, \$1 billion worth of bonds issued by the government of Iraq were oversubscribed and sold at a lower than expected yield.
- Rupee has been appreciated by about 6% since the beginning of this year, despite persistent intervention by the RBI
- Non-intervention or insufficient intervention would result in further appreciation of the rupee and affect India’s competitiveness.
- The external competitiveness is not exclusively dependent on the exchange rate. Therefore, there is no harm in suppressing volatility if possible, and giving businesses a more stable economic environment.
- The present liquidity situation is making things more difficult for the RBI.
- The banking system has excess liquidity of around Rs3 trillion and currency market intervention will increase this.
- Even though there is no imminent threat of high inflation, persistent surplus liquidity can affect monetary policy operations.
- The yields on foreign assets are much lower than government bonds and sterilized intervention is in effect a switch in central bank holdings from rupee to dollar securities.

So how can the central bank deal with this problem of plenty?

- Work on government instrument like market stabilization scheme bonds and continue to build reserves.
- But, the cost would keep rising, as higher reserves would attract more flows, which will reduce the currency risk for foreign investors.
- The other option is to reassess the kind of foreign funds it wants.
- India’s external debt is at about 20% of gross domestic product, and about 37% of this is commercial borrowing.
- Policy rationalization on this front can ease the pressure on both the RBI and the rupee.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Ocean forecasting system for Madagascar and Mozambique

In news:

- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** has inaugurated the **Ocean Forecasting System** for **Comoros, Madagascar, and Mozambique**
- It was done at the third Ministerial Meeting of Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Asia and Africa (RIMES)
- The meeting was held at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
- The Ministerial council and the WMO lauded and placed on record the initiatives of INCOIS/India in providing the ocean forecast and early warning services to the Indian Ocean countries

Sharing the benefits:

- The ocean forecast and early warming information on high wave, currents, winds, tides, sub-surface ocean conditions cater to users like
 - Fishermen,
 - Coastal population,
 - Tourism sector,
 - Coastal defense officials,
 - Marine police,
 - Port authorities,
 - Research institutions and offshore industries of these countries

The system would offer **oil spill advisory services** , **high wave alerts**, **port warnings**, **forecast** along **the ship routes** in addition to **tsunami** and **storm surge** warnings and help in search and rescue operations.

Nothing here for Today!!!

NATIONAL PARKS/SANCTURIES/BIOSPHERE RESERVES:

1. Jim Corbett National Park

Location: Nainital district of Uttarakhand

Key features:

- Jim Corbett National Park is the oldest national park in India and was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger
- The park was the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.

2. Gangotri National Park

Location: Uttarkashi District, Uttarakhand

Key features: It was third largest National park of India. The park provides majestic beauty of coniferous forests and grandeur of glacial world combined with lush green meadows.

IUCN Red List:



1. Bengal Florican

- **Scientific Name:** **Houbaropsis bengalensis**
- **Habitation:** The Bengal florican, also called Bengal bustard, is a bustard species native to the Indian subcontinent, Cambodia and Vietnam.
- **IUCN Classification:** Critically Endangered.

2. Pink-headed Duck



- **Scientific Name:** **Rhodonessa caryophyllacea**
- **Habitation:** Gangetic plains of India, Bangladesh and in the riverine swamps of Myanmar

- **IUCN Classification:** Critically Endangered.

F. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

G. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

GS Paper I

1. “Geological stresses building along **the Indo-Australian tectonic** plate boundary in the Southern Indian Ocean have the potential to cause a powerful earthquake, triggering a tsunami across much of South India” Explain?

GS Paper II

1. The recent decision with respect to the Doklam stand-off is taking the bilateral relationship to new heights. Examine.

GS Paper III

1. Given the vulnerability of Indian agriculture to vagaries of nature, discuss the need for crop insurance and bring out the salient features of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).

GS Paper IV

Topic: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Question 1.

Prime Minister of a country “A” have border dispute with country “B” and also have infrastructural problem within the country.

Country B is called for resolving both border issue and invest in infrastructural development.

But a day before meeting Country B attacks A at border and kills 20 soldiers. What is the dilemma in this situation? What is your future course of action?

Answer

Neighbours are not chosen; friendly relationship among them is of prime importance. PM has the responsibility to defend his/her country’s all round interests.

The conflict is about the democratic opinion and national interest in long run.

Positives to invite the PM of country B

- Provides a platform a scope for talks on both issues.
- Persuade for investment in infrastructure.
- Could stress on accountability of soldier killing

Negatives to avoid the PM of country B

- It can hurt the democratic sentiments of the citizens.
- Could act as a strong message to the condemnation of the act.