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CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

3rd November 2026



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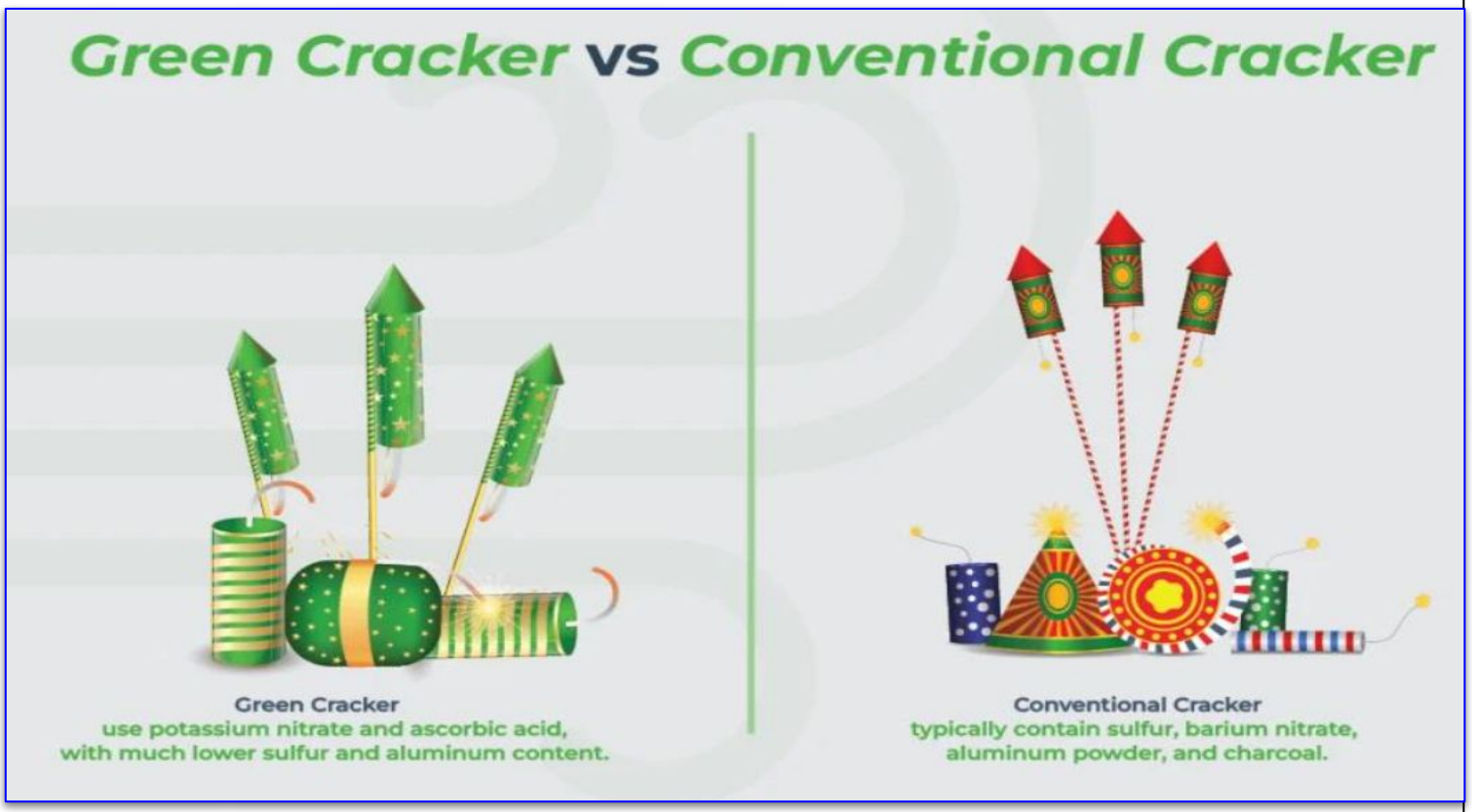
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Green Crackers: Balancing Religious Freedom, Environmental Protection and Public Health

CONTEXT: A critical examination of the Supreme Court's approach towards regulating firecrackers in the light of environmental sustainability and constitutional rights.

Context: Supreme Court's conditional relaxation on green crackers :

- Supreme Court's decision permitting certified green crackers in Delhi-NCR for two days.
- Specified bursting hours and restrictions.
- Prohibition around hospitals, educational institutions, nursing homes and notified silence zones.
- Background: Severe air pollution and recurring restrictions on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR.
- Why the issue has resurfaced: Balancing environmental concerns with religious and cultural sentiments.



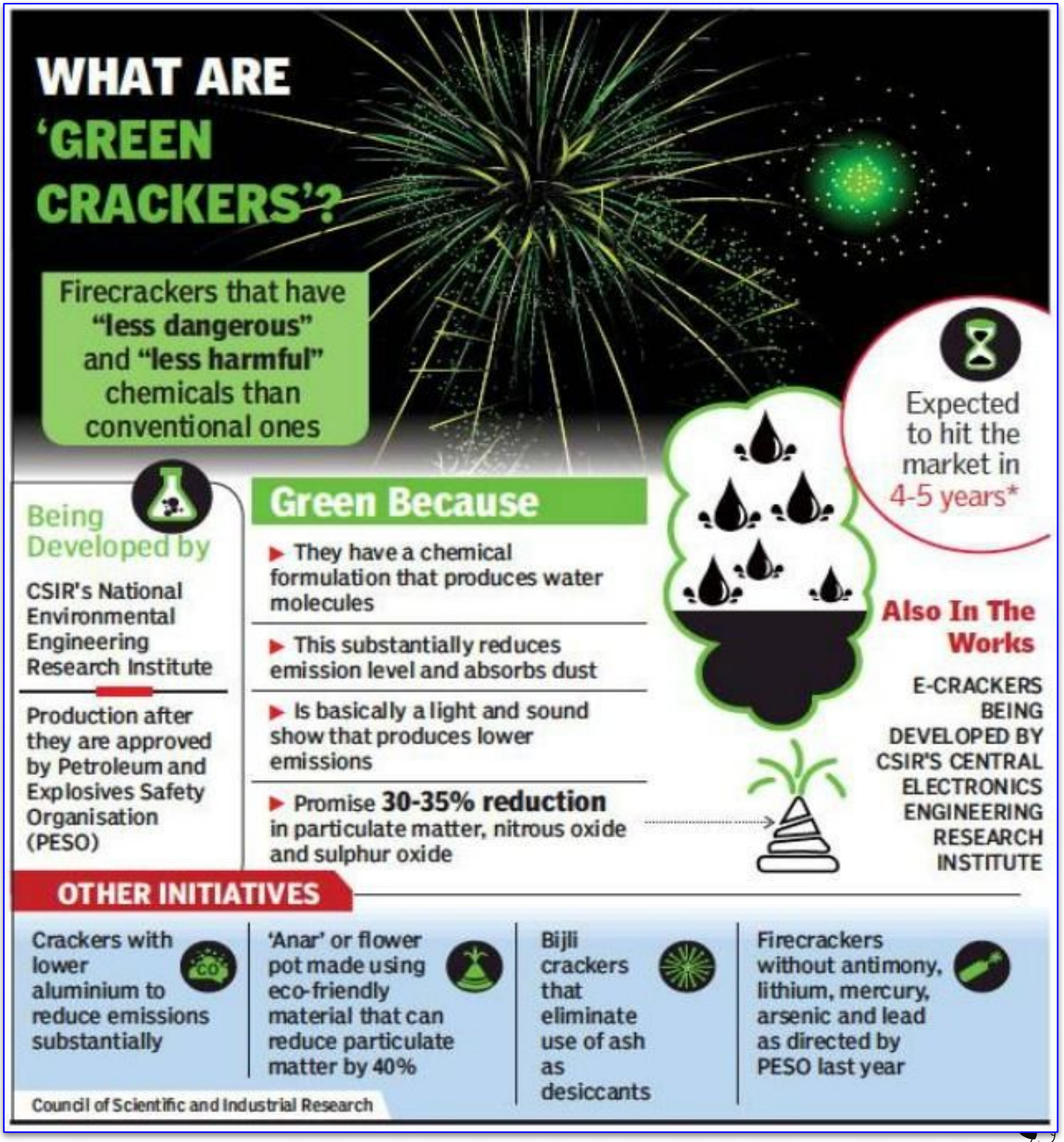
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CONTEXT: A critical examination of the Supreme Court's approach towards regulating firecrackers in the light of environmental sustainability and constitutional rights.

Understanding green crackers: Science and technology behind the concept



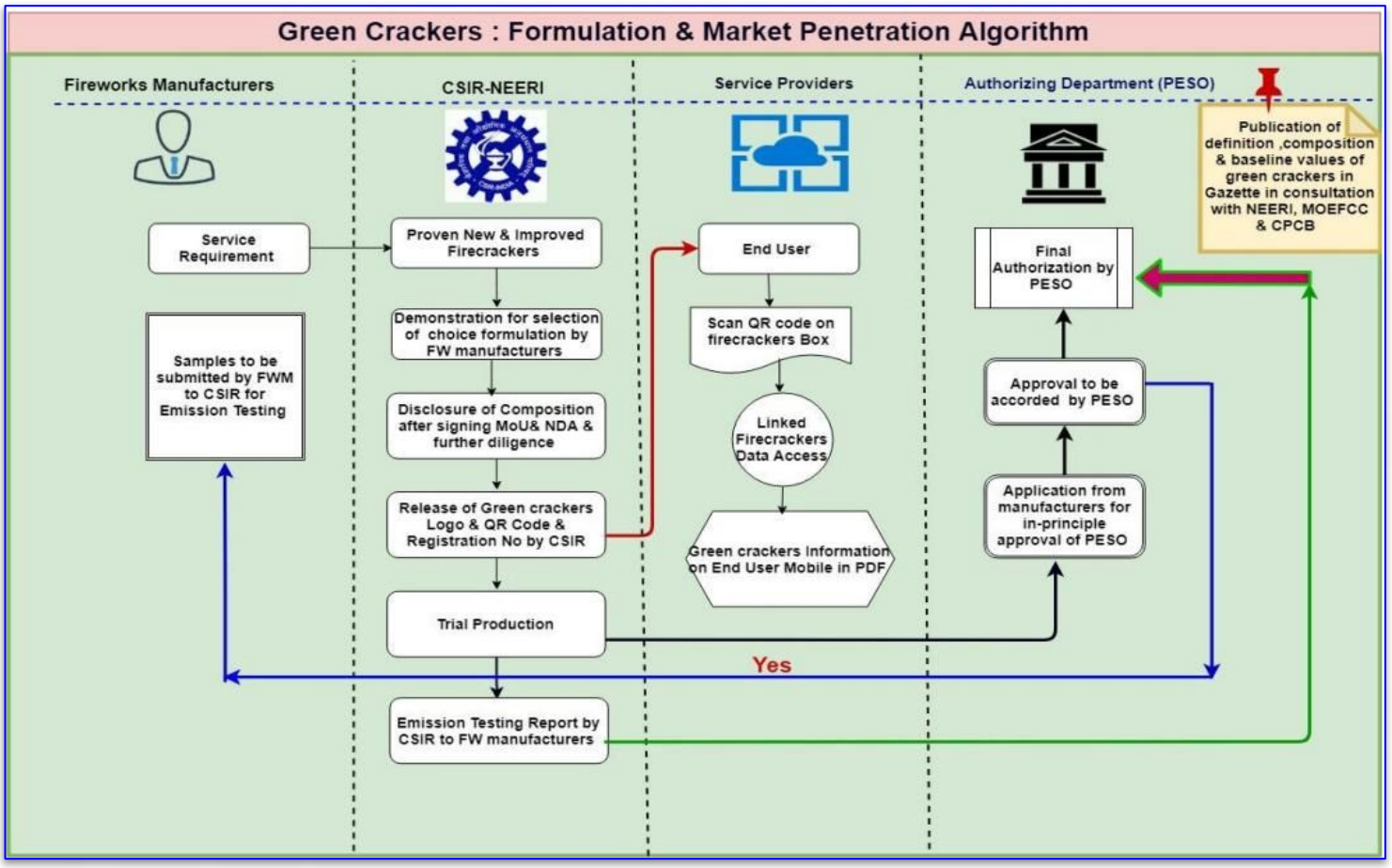
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Constitutional dimensions

Constitutional Provision	Relevance to the Issue
Article 21 (Right to Life)	Right to life includes the right to a **clean and healthy environment.**
Article 25 (Freedom of Religion)	Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to **reasonable restrictions.**
Article 48A (DPSP)	Directs the State to **protect and improve the environment** and safeguard forests and wildlife.
Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty)	Enjoins every citizen to **protect and improve** the natural environment.
Article 19(1)(a) (Freedom of Expression)	Relevant to individual liberty and cultural expression, but subject to reasonable restrictions in the interest of **public health and order.**



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Environmental and public health implications of firecrackers

- Reduced **particulate emissions** compared to conventional crackers.
- Reduced use of certain **harmful chemicals and additives.**
- Limitations: Green crackers are **not pollution-free**; their emissions and noise still pose environmental and health concerns.
- Issues of **certification, labelling and counterfeit products**.
- **Air pollution:** PM2.5, PM10 and toxic gaseous emissions.
- **Noise pollution:** Impact on humans and animals.
- **Solid waste:** Chemical residues, paper and plastic waste.
- **Public health:** Respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular stress and aggravation of existing conditions.
- **Ecological impact:** Disturbance to urban biodiversity, birds and other animals.
- **Environmental justice:** Disproportionate impact on children, elderly persons, outdoor workers and economically vulnerable populations.

Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence on firecrackers and environmental protection

- Judicial recognition of the **right to a pollution-free environment** under Article 21.
- Regulation rather than necessarily imposing a blanket prohibition.
- Conditional permissions and time restrictions.
- The **precautionary principle**.
- **Polluter-pays principle**.
- Sustainable development.

- **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India** (Delhi vehicular pollution and environmental protection).
- **Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (2017)** – restrictions on firecrackers in Delhi-NCR.
- **Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India (1996)** – precautionary principle and polluter-pays principle.



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Green Crackers: Balancing Religious Freedom, Environmental Protection and Public Health

CONTEXT: A critical examination of the Supreme Court's approach towards regulating firecrackers in the light of environmental sustainability and constitutional rights.

Governance and implementation challenge

A. **Weak enforcement of restrictions** on manufacturing, storage and sale.

B. **Difficulty in identifying** conventional crackers sold as green crackers.

C. **Interstate movement** and illegal supply chains.

D. Fragmented institutional responsibilities.

E. **Coordination challenges** between Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and other NCR authorities.

F. Limited **public awareness and behavioural compliance.**

G. Monitoring difficulties during peak pollution episodes

International practices: How do other countries regulate fireworks?



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Green Crackers: Balancing Religious Freedom, Environmental Protection and Public Health

CONTEXT: *A critical examination of the Supreme Court's approach towards regulating firecrackers in the light of environmental sustainability and constitutional rights.*

Way forward

A. **Scientific:** Promote research and development of genuinely low-emission alternatives.
B. **Regulatory:** Strict certification, traceability, quality checks and action against counterfeit products.
C. **Institutional:** Strengthen CAQM coordination, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
D. **Behavioural:** Public awareness, community celebrations and voluntary restraint.
E. **Technological:** Promote laser shows, light displays and other low-pollution alternatives.

Mains Practise Question

Question : "Green crackers represent an attempt to reconcile environmental sustainability with cultural practices. However, technological interventions alone cannot address the problem of air pollution." Discuss.
(150 words, 10 marks)



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The Challenge of Productive and Decent Employment in India

CONTEXT: Recent World Bank poverty estimates and new research on India's Decent Work Index have brought the quality of employment into focus .

Employment Paradox: More Jobs, But Are They Decent?

59.3% Labour Force Participation Rate Age 15+, 2025	**57.4%** Worker Population Ratio Age 15+, 2025
3.1% Unemployment Rate Age 15+, usual status, 2025	**23.6%** Regular wage employment Share of workers, 2025



- **Declining unemployment versus inadequate employment quality.**
- **Rising Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), particularly female participation.**
- **Underemployment, disguised unemployment and working poverty.**
- **Distinction between employment generation and productive employment.**



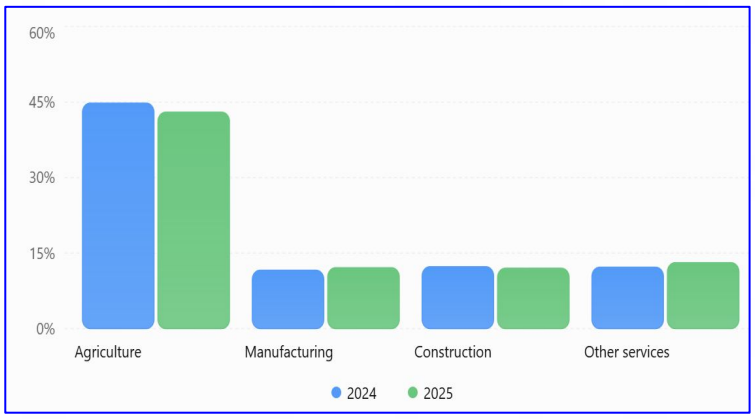
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Structural Transformation: The Productivity Challenge

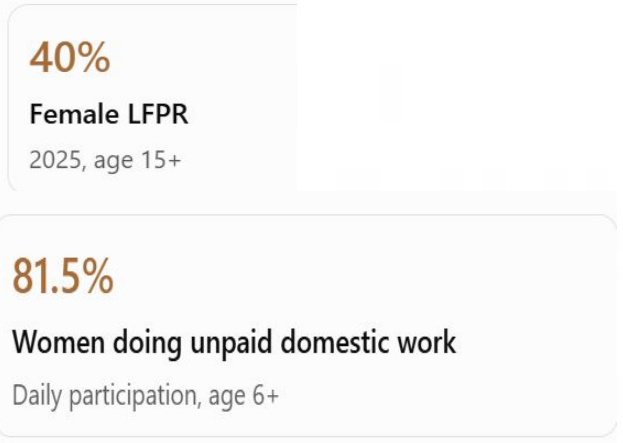
- High **dependence on agriculture** despite its relatively low productivity.
- Limited absorption of labour by the manufacturing sector.
- Expansion of **low-productivity services** and informal enterprises.
- Need for **labour-intensive manufacturing** and movement towards higher-value economic activities.



Informalisation of Employment

- Dominance of **informal employment** and self-employment.
- **Lack of written contracts, paid leave,** insurance and social security.
- **Gig economy, platform workers** and emerging forms of employment.
- Difference between **formalisation of enterprises and formalisation of jobs**
- Nearly **90% of India's workforce** is in informal employment, as highlighted in the employment analysis in your supplied article.
- **e-Shram** had registered over **31.82 crore unorganised workers** by August 2026.
- The Economic Survey 2025–26 reports that **women constitute 54%** of e-Shram registrants.

Gender and Social Inequalities in the Labour Market



- **Increasing female workforce participation** but concerns regarding the quality of employment.
- **Gender wage gap** and occupational segregation.
- **Intersectionality of caste, gender and economic** vulnerability.
- **Unpaid care work** and inadequate workplace infrastructure.



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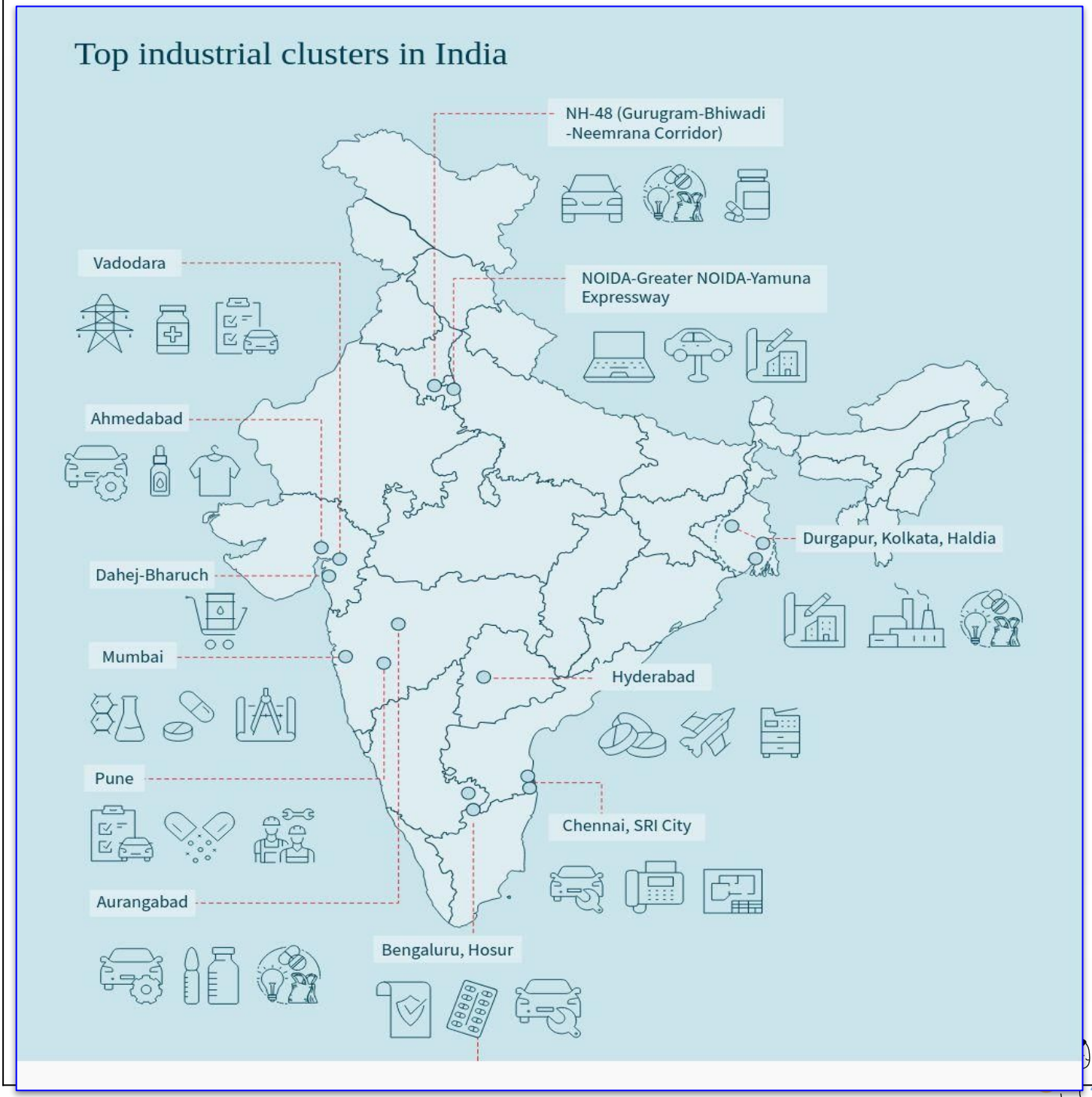
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The Challenge of Productive and Decent Employment in India

CONTEXT: Recent World Bank poverty estimates and new research on India's Decent Work Index have brought the quality of employment into focus .

Regional Disparities and Unequal Employment Opportunities

- Concentration of poverty and limited employment opportunities in **northern and eastern India**.
- Regional differences in industrialisation and labour productivity.
- **Distress migration** versus aspirational migration.
- Need for **regionally balanced industrial development.**



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The Challenge of Productive and Decent Employment in India

CONTEXT: Recent World Bank poverty estimates and new research on India's Decent Work Index have brought the quality of employment into focus .

Human Capital, Skill Development and the Employability Gap

- **Skill mismatch** between educational qualifications and industry requirements.
- **Limited vocational training** and apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Technological disruptions, automation** and AI-led changes in employment.
- **Industry-academia collaboration** and demand-driven skilling.

Policy and Institutional Framework: Towards Productive and Decent Work

- **Four Labour Codes** and their implementation challenges.
- **e-Shram** and social security portability.
- **MGNREGA** and employment security in rural areas.
- **Make in India, PLI, PM Vishwakarma and Skill India.**
- Strengthening **MSMEs, labour-intensive** sectors and employment-linked incentives.
- Transition from a job-counting approach to a job-quality approach.

Mains Practise Question

Question : "India's employment challenge is no longer merely about generating jobs, but ensuring productive, remunerative and decent employment." Discuss the structural challenges facing India's labour market and suggest measures to address them.
(150 words, 10 marks)



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Mains Value Addition

Newspaper : Indian Express **Page Number : 14**

• WILDLIFE

Why collared Kuno cheetahs cannot be live-tracked

Satellite collars

GPS-enabled collars that periodically transmit their geographical location to monitoring stations

A. Technical limitations of satellite tracking

- Satellite collars provide geographical coordinates at specific intervals rather than continuous live tracking.
- every six hours.
- If one transmission is missed, the gap increases to 12 hours; missing the next update can increase it to 18 hours.
- Dense forest canopy
- Rocky terrain, caves and deep valleys

B. Limitations of wildlife monitoring

- Cheetahs are highly mobile animals, covering an average of **6–8 km daily.**
- They may cover **12–15 km** or more on certain occasions.
- Their movements are particularly concentrated during **early morning and late evening.**
- The actual distance covered by a monitoring vehicle can be several times the straight-line distance between two locations.
- Following a cheetah on foot is difficult because of its **speed and mobility.**

C. Satellite collars versus VHF radio receivers

Kuno employs a combination of satellite collars and Very High Frequency (VHF) radio receivers.

- Satellite collars provide geographical location information over large and inaccessible areas.
- **VHF equipment** helps field teams locate animals **more precisely** on the ground.
- The two technologies complement each other rather than being interchangeable.

D. Economic and operational constraints

- Satellite collars cost approximately **₹4–5 lakh each.**
- Transmission frequency involves **balancing monitoring requirements, battery life** and expected collar lifespan.
- **Missed transmissions and temporary signal loss** can complicate field monitoring.



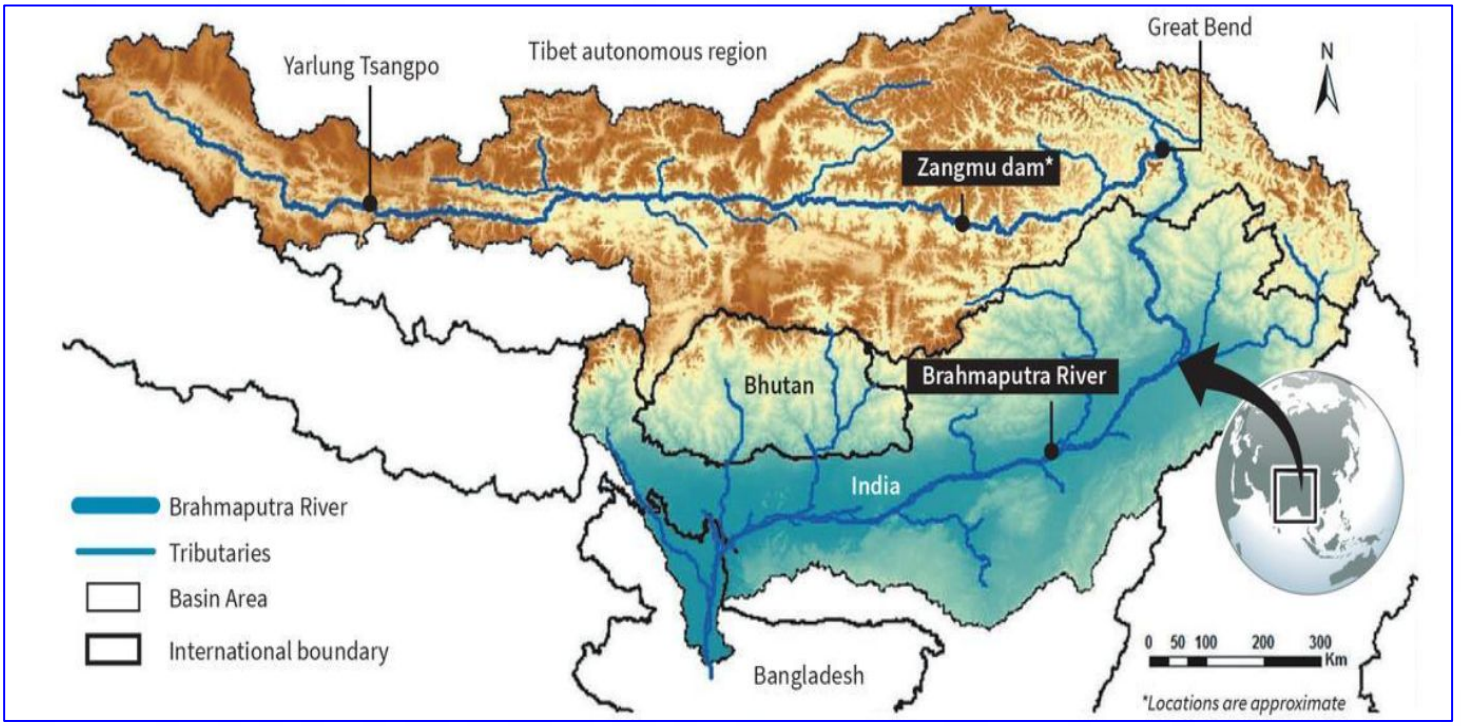
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Siang Upper Multipurpose Project

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : ***Current events***
Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number : 12**

Location: Siang River basin, Arunachal Pradesh.
Proposed capacity: 11,200 MW (11.2 GW).
Project type: Large multipurpose storage-cum-hydropower project.
Implementing agency: NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation).
Purpose:

- **Hydroelectricity generation.**
- **Storage and regulation of river flows.**
- **Flood moderation and water security.**
- **Strategic response to China's upstream dam infrastructure.**



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Prelims Pointers

1. **Tibet (China): Yarlung Tsangpo.**
2. **Arunachal Pradesh: Siang (also called Dihang).**
3. **Assam: Brahmaputra.**
4. **Bangladesh: Jamuna.**

What is a cascading hydropower project?

- **A series of hydropower stations constructed sequentially along the same river.**
- **Water released from an upstream station is utilised by downstream stations.**
- **This enables multiple stages of electricity generation from the river's elevation drop.**

- **NHPC:** Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power.
- **Adi community:** One of the major indigenous communities of Arunachal Pradesh, with strong cultural and livelihood connections to the Siang.
- **Brahmaputra Board:** Statutory body established under the **Brahmaputra Board Act, 1980**, for planning and coordinating flood-control and related measures in the Brahmaputra Valley.



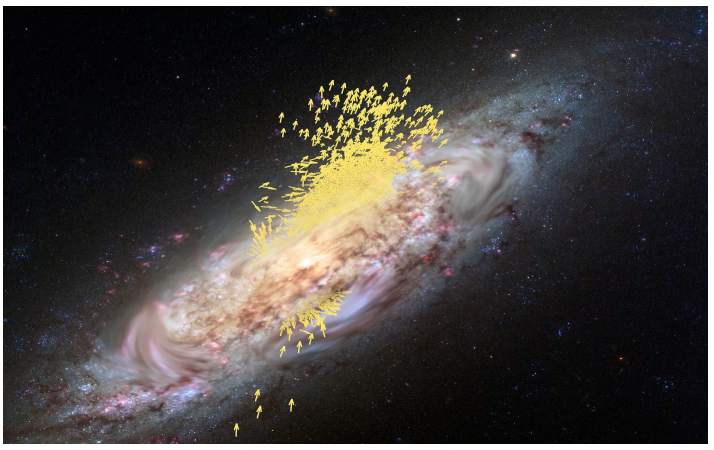
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Ghost Stars

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : *Science & Technology*
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number : 18**

Prelims Pointers

- **Ghost stars refer to stars that originally belonged to smaller galaxies which were later absorbed by larger galaxies.**
- **Galactic cannibalism:** Larger galaxies grow by absorbing smaller galaxies under the influence of gravity.
- During such mergers, **the smaller galaxy may lose its original identity,** while its stars become part of the larger galaxy.
- These surviving stars act as **clues to the history of galaxy formation.**



- The Milky Way did not acquire its present size in a single event. It evolved over billions of years through star formation and mergers with smaller galaxies.
- In August 2026, NASA reported evidence that the young **Milky Way absorbed a dwarf galaxy called Low-energy-Kraken-Heracles (LKH) approximately 11.8 billion years ago**.
- Another major merger involved **Gaia-Sausage-Enceladus, approximately 10 billion years ago**.
- Such mergers contributed to the growth and changing structure of the Milky Way.
- The process of galactic mergers is not necessarily over; **the Milky Way is still interacting with smaller neighbouring galaxies.**



Two important space missions:

1. Hubble Space Telescope

- **Joint NASA–ESA space telescope.**
- Observations of ancient star clusters helped provide evidence of the LKH merger.

2. Gaia Mission

- **European Space Agency (ESA) mission.**
- Created a highly detailed 3D map of the Milky Way.
- Helped scientists identify stars originating from earlier galactic mergers.



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Next Generation Corvettes (NGCs)

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : *Science & Technology*
Newspaper : The Indian Express **Page Number : 8**

Prelims Pointers

Corvette: A relatively small, manoeuvrable surface combatant, generally smaller than frigates and destroyers.

- Primarily designed for coastal defence, maritime surveillance and operations in littoral waters.
- Can be equipped with missiles, guns, torpedoes and advanced sensor systems.

Modern corvettes can perform multiple roles:

- **Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW)**
- **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)**
- **Anti-Air Warfare (AAW)**

Littoral waters: Coastal waters and areas close to the shoreline, where naval operations can be particularly complex.

- **India's Next Generation Corvette Project**
- **Total vessels: 8 Next Generation Corvettes.**
- **Contract value: ₹53,866.50 crore.**
- **Contract signed: 2 November 2026.**
- **Ministry: Ministry of Defence.**
- **Shipyards involved:**
- **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) – 5 corvettes.**
- **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) – 3 corvettes.**
- **Design:** Indigenous design by the Indian Navy.
- **Construction:** By Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) selected through a competitive process.
- **Acceptance of Necessity (AoN):** Granted by Defence Acquisition Council in June 2022, at an approximate cost of ₹36,000 crore.



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Role of Legislative Councils

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : *Polity*
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number : 8**

Legislative Councils

- Parliament can create or abolish a Council by law.
- Requires a resolution by the **State Legislative Assembly** passed by:
- Majority of the total membership; AND
- **2/3rd of members present and voting**.
- Parliament's law under **Article 169** is not deemed a Constitutional Amendment under **Article 368.**
- Legislative Councils are permanent bodies and cannot be dissolved.

Legislative Councils – Constitutional Provisions

Article	Provision
Article 168	Provides for the State Legislature, including bicameral legislatures.
Article 169	Creation or abolition of Legislative Councils.
Article 171	Composition of Legislative Councils.
Article 172	Duration and continuity of Legislative Councils.

Article 171 – Composition

- **Maximum strength: One-third of the total strength of the State Legislative Assembly.**
- **Minimum strength: 40 members (subject to constitutional provisions).**

I. Governor nominates members with special knowledge or practical experience in **literature, science, art, cooperative movement and social service.**
II. Members elected by proportional representation through the single transferable vote.
III. Minimum age: **30 years.**
IV. One-third of members retire every two years.
V. Normal term of an individual member: **Six years.**



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Category (Mode of Election/Nomination)	Share
Elected by local authorities	1/3
Elected by graduates	1/12
Elected by teachers	1/12
Elected by MLAs (members of the Legislative Assembly)	1/3
Nominated by the Governor	1/6

Dimension	Legislative Council	Legislative Assembly
Ordinary Bill	Can delay for a maximum of 4 months.	Final authority to pass the bill.
Money Bill	Cannot introduce or reject; can only recommend amendments within 14 days.	Exclusive power to introduce and decide on a Money Bill.
No-confidence motion	Cannot move it.	Can move it.
Council of Ministers	Cannot remove the government.	Council is collectively responsible to it.
Constitutional Amendment Bill	No special state-level role.	No special state-level role.



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Daily Quiz

Q1. With reference to Green Crackers, consider the following statements:

1. They release water vapour upon detonation to suppress dust and particulate emissions.
2. They eliminate the use of potassium nitrate and sulfur.
3. CSIR-NEERI conducts emission testing, while PESO grants market authorisation.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) All Three
d) None

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to the Upper Siang Hydropower Project, consider the following statements:

1. It is being implemented by NHPC in Arunachal Pradesh with an 11,200 MW capacity.
2. It aims to moderate floods and counter upstream Chinese dam infrastructure.
3. It is designed strictly as a run-of-the-river project without storage facilities.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q3. With reference to astronomy, consider the following statements:

1. "Ghost stars" originated in smaller galaxies absorbed by larger ones.
2. "Galactic cannibalism" occurs when larger galaxies grow by gravitationally absorbing smaller ones.
3. Stars absorbed during galactic mergers immediately collapse and cease to exist.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 1, 2 and 3
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1 and 2 only

Answer: d

Q4. With reference to Legislative Councils, consider the following statements:

1. Parliament creates or abolishes a Council after a resolution passed by a special majority in the State Assembly.
2. Parliamentary law enacted under Article 169 is deemed a Constitutional Amendment under Article 368.
3. Legislative Councils are permanent bodies not subject to dissolution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c

Q5. With reference to state legislative powers, consider the following statements:

1. A Legislative Council can delay an Ordinary Bill for a maximum of four months.
2. The Legislative Council cannot reject a Money Bill; it can only give recommendations within 14 days.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c





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