



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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CONTEXT: The prospects of deep-sea and high-seas fisheries are huge.

Why Fisheries Matter for India?

- 2nd Largest - Fish Producing Country; 8%
- 141.64 lakh tonnes in 2019-20 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25
- ~ 3 crore fishers/fish farmers
- WIDE CONTRIBUTION -

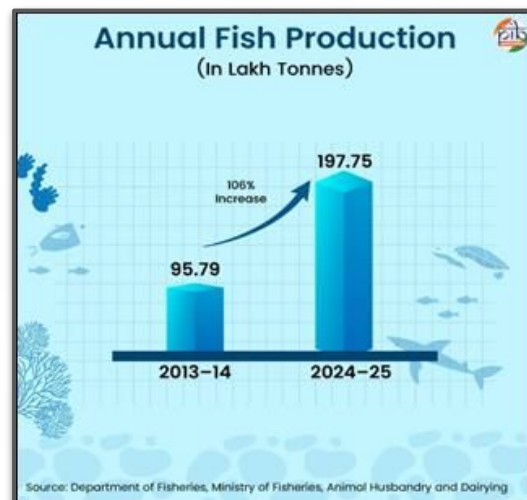
No Longer A Subsistence Activity -

India's Untapped Marine Potential -

- Coastline: 11,098.81 km
- EEZ: about 2.02 million sq km
- Continental shelf: about 0.53 million sq km
- Marine Fisheries Potential: about 5.31 million tonnes

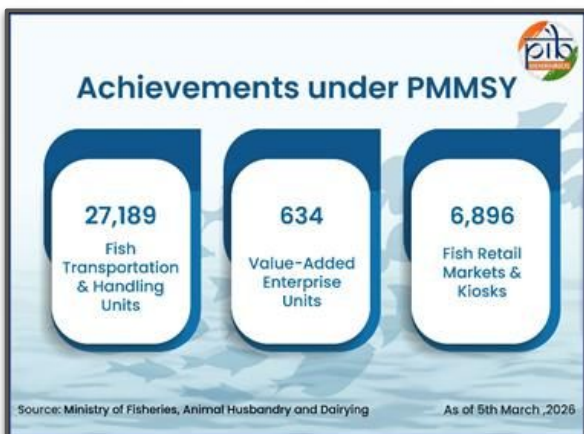
India's Growth - Inland Aquaculture

- Deep-Sea/High-Seas Potential?



The "Blue Revolution": Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

Production + Productivity + Processing + Technology + Exports + Sustainability



Evolution of Fisheries Sector



CONTEXT: The prospects of deep-sea and high-seas fisheries are huge.

PMMSY: Major Features

- Infrastructure Creation
- Tec. Integration - Bio-Floc & RAS -
- FFPOs Supported
- Deep-sea & Mariculture -

New Focus: Deep-Sea Fishing

India should move beyond heavily exploited near-shore waters towards sustainable deep-sea resources.

Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the EEZ Rules, 2025.

- Features & Restrictions -
- As of March 2026, 707 vessels - EEZ Operations

Why Lakshadweep & Andaman and Nicobar Matter?

- Strategic Significance -
- Large Potential -

Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep - 49% of India's EEZ Area

Fisheries as an Employment Generator: Value Chain

Fishing → **Cold Chain** → **Processing** → **Packaging** → **Transportation** → **Logistics** → **Branding** → **Exports**

Major Challenges

A. Overfishing & Declining Fish Stocks

- Excessive Fishing
- Near-Shore - Pressures
- Unsustainable Practices - Bottom Trawling

B. Small Fisher vs Large/Mechanised Fishing

- Disproportionately benefit - Larger Operators

C. Climate Change

- Sea Temp.
- Coral Reefs
- Cyclones
- Fisher Safety

D. Weak Post-Harvest Infrastructure

- Cold-Chain Gaps
- Poor Storage
- Limited Storage
- Low VA

E. Technology & Skill Gap

- Deep-sea fishing requires: Modern Vessels -
- Safety Equipments
- Skilled Crews
- Processing -

Way Forward

- Shift - *production-centric to value-chain-centric development.*
- Promote sustainable deep-sea fishing
- Empower small-scale fishers -
- Build climate resilience - EWS, etc.
- Strengthen fisheries governance
- Promote blue circular economy -

Mains Practise Question

"India's fisheries sector represents an important pillar of the Blue Economy, but its expansion must be reconciled with ecological sustainability and the livelihood security of small-scale fishers. Discuss."

(10 Marks, 150 words)



Mining & Federal Concerns



CONTEXT: States must retain a meaningful stake in the economic value generated from its natural resources

Context

- India's mineral resources – **geographically concentrated** – Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.
- Mining – **industrialisation, employment and investment** ~ disproportionate costs on mineral-rich States.
- The **MMDR Amendment, 2026** – **Section 9D ~ fiscal federalism and States' taxation powers.**

Section 9D

- Restricts State Governments – **taxes, cesses or other levies on mineral rights or mineral-bearing land**, except according to *conditions prescribed by the Central Government*.
- Centre's rationale:
 - predictable taxation regime.**
 - Prevent excessive/unpredictable levies.
 - Encourage **long-term mining investment.**
 - Provide greater certainty

Constitutional Dimension

Supreme Court – Mineral Area

Development Authority v. SAIL (2024)

- Held that **royalty is not a tax**
- Recognised States' legislative competence to **tax mineral rights**
- Also recognised – **mineral-bearing land can fall within the States' taxation power over land.**

The 2026 amendment raises the question of whether Parliament can use its power??

Core Federalism Debate

Centre's Perspective

Investment → Predictability → Lower uncertainty → Mining development → Industrial growth

States' perspective

Mineral extraction → Local environmental/social/infrastructure costs → Greater expenditure → Need for greater fiscal resources

Entry 50, State List

State power to tax mineral rights, subject to limitations imposed by Parliament relating to mineral development

Entry 49, State List

State power to tax lands and buildings

Article 246

Distribution of legislative powers between Union and States

Seventh Schedule

Constitutional basis of Union-State legislative fields



Mining & Federal Concerns



CONTEXT: States must retain a meaningful stake in the economic value generated from its natural resources

Way Forward

- Maintain **Consultative Federalism** -
- Transparent criteria - Central limitations on State levies.
- Adequate compensation/revenue-sharing mechanisms
- Strengthen **DMF**; benefits - mining-affected communities.
- Integrate **environmental externalities** into mining economics.

Mains Practise Question

"What are the major federal concerns associated with the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026? Also suggest a comprehensive way forward."

(10 Marks, 150 words)



Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 08

E20 Ethanol Blending

Key Facts

- **E20:** 20% ethanol + 80% petrol.
- E20 rollout began in **2023**.
- MoRTH: **2–6% reduction in fuel economy**, depending on vehicle category/vintage.

Key Issues / Trade-offs

1. Energy Security

- ↓ Crude oil requirement → ↓ import dependence → potential **forex savings**.
- But ↓ mileage → higher fuel consumption → **partly offsets crude/forex gains**.

2. Consumer Burden

- Lower ethanol cost ≠ lower **cost per km**.
- Mileage loss can increase effective expenditure of vehicle owners.

3. Environmental Paradox

- Ethanol has lower carbon content per litre.
- But higher fuel consumption can offset emission gains.
- **Lesson:** Assess emissions **per kilometre/lifecycle**, not merely per litre.

4. Food vs Fuel

- Major feedstocks: **sugarcane + maize**.
- Diversion towards ethanol → pressure on food/feed availability and agricultural prices.
- Creates **energy security–food security trade-off**.

5. Forex Paradox

- ↓ crude imports → forex saving.
- But ethanol-driven diversion of crops → ↓ **agricultural exports / ↑ imports** → forex gains may be diluted.

6. Equity Concern

- E20-compatible newer vehicles benefit more.
- Older/non-compatible vehicles may face greater **mileage and compatibility costs**.
- Hence, transition has a **distributional impact**.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Awards

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 03

About Dada Saheb Phalke Award

- It is given by the Indian government for **lifetime contribution to Indian cinema**.
- It was **instituted in 1969** the birth centenary year of Dadasaheb Phalke.
- It is the **highest award** in the field of cinema in India.
- It was introduced by the Government of India to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema.
- The award's inaugural recipient was **Devika Rani**, aptly titled "**the first lady of Indian cinema**".
- The recipients are recognized for their '**outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema**'.
- **Award includes:** The award comprises a **Swarna Kamal** (Golden Lotus) medallion, a shawl, and a **cash prize of ₹10 lakh**.
- It is presented by the **President of India**.

Key Facts about Dhundiraj Govind Phalke

- He was born on April 30, 1870, in **Trimbak, Maharashtra**.
- Phalke was a **multifaceted genius** — a painter, photographer, stage playwright, and a magician — before venturing into filmmaking.
- He was a film director who is considered the **father of Indian cinema**.
- He directed India's first full-length **feature film, Raja Harishchandra** in 1913.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Environment

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 06

About Pygmy Hog

- It is the **smallest and rarest species of wild pig**.
- It is one of the very few **mammals that build its own home**, or nest, complete with a 'roof'.
- It is an **indicator species** as its presence reflects the health of its primary habitat.
- **Habitat:** It prefers **undisturbed patches of grassland** dominated by early succession riverine communities, typically comprising dense tall grass intermixed with a wide variety of herbs, shrubs and young trees.
- **Distribution:** Currently, they survive only in the grasslands of **Assam's Manas and Orang national parks**.
- **Diet:** They **feed on roots, tubers, shoots** and ground vegetation, along with worms and other invertebrates.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Environment

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 06

Ecological Role of Pygmy Hog

- **Enhances Soil Quality:** It digs for roots, tubers, wild fruits, termites, earthworms, eggs and other food sources found in grasslands which **aerates the soil and enhances its quality.**
- **Disperses Seeds:** It also helps dispersing seeds through its dietary and foraging habits.

Conservation Status of Pygmy Hog

- **IUCN:** Critically Endangered
- **The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I.

Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Scheme

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme that provides financial assistance to states to protect certain species or wildlife areas** through its recovery programme for critically endangered species and habitats.
- **Components of the scheme**
 - Support to Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves)
 - Protection of Wildlife Outside Protected Areas
 - Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitat



'Census Town' Definition



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Polity

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 12

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Current Census Town criteria (since 1981):**
 - Population $\geq$ **5,000**
 - $\geq$ **75% male main working population** in non-agricultural activities
 - Density $\geq$ **400 persons/sq. km**
- **Problem:** A rigid rural-urban binary fails to capture India's evolving **peri-urban areas, growth corridors and urbanising villages**.
- **Gender bias:** Only male workforce participation is considered; Ministry favours inclusion of **female workforce participation**.
- **Spatial limitation:** Density based on **administrative boundaries**, rather than actual built-up areas, can cause misclassification.
- **Regional concern:** Uniform thresholds may disadvantage **hilly and Northeastern States**.
- **Technology gap:** Greater use of **satellite imagery** has been proposed.
- **New category:** Ministry suggested "**transitional areas**" between rural and urban.
- **Urbanisation measurement gap:** EAC-PM estimated India's urbanisation could have been **63% in 2015** using satellite-based assessment, compared with **31.2% according to Census 2011**.

- **Institutional constraint:** RGI has retained the existing framework for Census 2027, citing the need to finalise enumeration blocks, boundaries and field arrangements in advance.

VALUE ADDITION

- **Census 2011:** India had **37.7 crore urban residents (31.2%)**.
- **Statutory Town vs Census Town:** Statutory towns are governed by an urban local body; Census towns satisfy demographic/economic criteria despite remaining administratively rural.
- **Peri-urbanisation:** Expansion of cities into surrounding rural areas creates **functional urban regions** that conventional administrative classifications may miss.
- **SDG 11:** Calls for **inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities**.
- **74th Constitutional Amendment:** Provides constitutional recognition to **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** and envisages decentralised urban governance.
- **Mains linkage:** Better urban classification is essential for **planning, infrastructure allocation, transport, housing, sanitation and municipal finance**.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Institutions

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 10

The National Investigation Agency is the **federal counter-terrorism law enforcement agency** of India. It is a thoroughly professional investigative agency that matches the best international standards. It has extensive powers to investigate terror activities in any part of India, register a case, and arrest people **without the permission of the state** government.

The NIA is a **statutory body** established under the **NIA Act 2008** and functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**. It was established in the aftermath of the **26/11 Mumbai terror attack** which exposed the limitations of existing intelligence agencies to prevent and fight such attacks.

Functioning of the National Investigation Agency

The major objectives of the NIA are the in-depth professional investigation of scheduled offences using the latest scientific methods, building a database of all terrorist-related information and assisting states and other investigating agencies in the investigation of terrorist cases.

Statutory Provisions

It was established under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.

- **Investigation of Scheduled Offences:**

- On receipt of a report from the State Government, if the Central Government thinks that the offence is a fit case to be investigated by the Agency, it shall direct the Agency to investigate the offence.
- The Central Government may (without any report from the State), **suo motu**, direct the agency to investigate the said offence.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Institutions

Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 10

- **Power to investigate connected offences:** While investigating any Scheduled Offence, the Agency may also investigate any other connected offence which the accused has committed.
- **State Government to extend assistance to National Investigation Agency:** The State Government shall extend all assistance and cooperation to the Agency for investigation of the Scheduled Offences.
- **Investigation of offences under other acts:** For prosecuting under the UAPA and certain other offences, the NIA has to take the sanction of the Central government.
- **Prosecution of Offences:** When the investigation is complete, the cases are placed before the **NIA Special Court**.
- **The Schedule:** The schedule of the NIA Act lists several acts such as:
 - The Atomic Energy Act, 1962
 - The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967
 - The Anti-Hijacking Act, 1982, etc.

Institutional Framework

- **National Investigation Agency:** The NIA Act provides for the creation of the National Investigation Agency to investigate and prosecute offences specified in the schedule.
 - The NIA officers have the same powers as other police officers concerning the investigation.
 - The NIA comes under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- **Special Courts:** The Act empowers the central and state governments to establish Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences.
 - The appeal lies to the High Court of the concerned state.



SYLLABUS : Prelims : Institutions

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National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019

The NIA Act of 2008 was amended in 2019 to **enlarge the mandate** of the agency and empower it to wage an effective war against terrorism and other serious crimes. The following changes were made to the act.

- **Inclusion of scheduled offences:** The amendment added the following types of offences under the Schedule of the Act:
 - Human trafficking,
 - Offences related to counterfeit currency or bank notes,
 - Manufacture or sale of prohibited arms,
 - Cyber-terrorism,
 - Offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.
- **Expansion of Jurisdiction:** The Act empowers NIA to investigate scheduled offences committed **outside India**, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.
 - The central government can order the NIA to investigate such cases as if the offence is committed in India.
- **Special Courts:** The Act empowers the central government to **designate Sessions Courts** as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences.
 - Further, now the **state governments** may also designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts.



Q1. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched in 2020 to usher in the "Blue Revolution" in India's fisheries sector.
2. The scheme covers only marine fisheries.
3. It is an umbrella scheme comprising both Central Sector Scheme and Centrally Sponsored Scheme components.

Which one of the following conclusions is/are correct?

- a) Only one statement is correct.
- b) Only two statements are correct, and one of them is Statement 2.
- c) Only two statements are correct, and one of them is Statement 1.
- d) All three statements are correct.

Answer: c

Q2. With reference to the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, consider the following statements:

1. The award was instituted in 1969 to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema.
2. Dadasaheb Phalke directed Raja Harishchandra, India's first full-length feature film, in 1913.

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

Q3. With reference to the Pygmy Hog, consider the following statements:

1. It is the smallest and rarest species of wild pig and builds its own nest with a roof.
2. It is classified as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List and is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
3. In India, it is currently found in the grasslands of Manas and Orang National Parks in Assam.

Which one of the following conclusions is/are correct?

- a) Only one statement is correct.
- b) Only two statements are correct, and one of them is Statement 1.
- c) Only two statements are correct, and one of them is Statement 2.
- d) All three statements are correct.

Answer: b

Q4. With reference to the criteria for classifying a settlement as a Census Town in India, consider the following statements:

1. A settlement must have a population of at least 5,000.
2. At least 75% of the total working population must be engaged in non-agricultural activities.
3. The settlement must have a population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q5. With reference to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), consider the following statements:

1. The NIA was established under the NIA Act, 2008 to investigate and prosecute specified offences affecting national security.
2. The NIA requires the consent of the concerned State Government before investigating a scheduled offence within that State.
3. The NIA functions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b





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