

Preliminary Examination

Paper-I: Current Events of National and International Importance

SARTHAK PDS Scheme Approved to Strengthen Food Security

Why in News?

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved the **SARTHAK Public Distribution System (PDS) Scheme** for five years to improve the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of India's food distribution system.

Key Facts

Aspect	Details
Scheme	SARTHAK Public Distribution System (PDS) Scheme
Approved by	Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
Duration	Five years
Outlay	₹25,530 crore
Objective	Strengthening food security through technology-enabled PDS operations
Coverage	Across India

Major Focus Areas

- Use of **advanced technologies** in PDS operations.
- Improved identification and selection of eligible beneficiaries.
- Technology-enabled tracking of the **movement of foodgrains**.
- Reduction in transportation distance and logistical inefficiencies.
- Collection of proactive citizen feedback.
- Greater transparency and reduced leakages in foodgrain delivery.

Significance

- Strengthens the delivery of subsidised foodgrains to beneficiaries.
- Improves supply-chain efficiency from storage to distribution.
- Helps minimise diversion, duplication and exclusion errors.
- Promotes a more citizen-responsive food security system.

Static Linkage: Public Distribution System

Feature

Details

Feature	Details
Purpose	Distribution of subsidised foodgrains to eligible households
Key legislation	National Food Security Act, 2013
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Implementing mechanism	Targeted Public Distribution System through Fair Price Shops

Paper-II: Current Events of State Importance and Important Government Schemes and Programs

Main Examination

Paper-I: Essays

Essay – 1: Topic of International/National Importance

Essay-2: Topic of State importance/Local Importance

Paper-II: General Studies 1

Paper-III: General Studies 2

Aadhaar Is Not Proof of Citizenship: Supreme Court

Why in News?

The Supreme Court has upheld the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls** conducted by the Election Commission (EC), holding that the EC can verify citizenship for deciding a person's inclusion or exclusion from the voter list.

The Court also clarified that **Aadhaar cannot be treated as proof of citizenship or as the primary document for voter eligibility verification.**

Key Points

- **Aadhaar is an identity document**, not proof of Indian citizenship.
- The **Election Commission has the constitutional authority** to revise electoral rolls and verify voter eligibility.
- Citizenship is a **precondition for enrolment as a voter**.
- The EC may examine citizenship issues only for the limited purpose of inclusion or exclusion from electoral rolls.
- The Court held that SIR supports the constitutional objective of **free and fair elections** by ensuring accurate and clean electoral rolls.
- The power of the EC flows from **Article 324 of the Constitution**.
- Names removed from Bihar's voter list on the ground of non-citizenship must be referred to the Centre for adjudication under the **Citizenship Act**.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
SIR	Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls
Article 324	Powers of the Election Commission to supervise and conduct elections
Aadhaar	Proof of identity; not proof of citizenship
Electoral Roll	Official list of eligible voters

SC Collegium Recommends Five Names for Appointment as Supreme Court Judges

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court Collegium**, headed by **Chief Justice of India Surya Kant**, has recommended the appointment of **four High Court Chief Justices and one woman senior advocate** as judges of the Supreme Court.

Names Recommended

Recommended Candidate	Present Position
V. Mohana	Senior Advocate, Supreme Court
Justice Sheel Nagu	Chief Justice, Punjab and Haryana High Court
Justice Shree Chandrashekhar	Chief Justice, Bombay High Court
Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva	Chief Justice, Madhya Pradesh High Court
Justice Arun Palli	Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh

Key Highlights

- **V. Mohana**, if appointed, would strengthen women's representation in the Supreme Court.
- She has appeared in important cases relating to **career equality for women officers in the armed forces**.
- At present, the Supreme Court has only **one woman judge** — **Justice B.V. Nagarathna**.
- The recommendations indicate attention to both **gender representation** and **regional diversity** in the apex court.
- The recommendations were made ahead of upcoming vacancies due to the retirement of judges in June.

Constitutional Framework

Aspect	Provision
Appointment of Supreme Court Judges	Article 124(2)
Appointing Authority	President of India
Recommendation Process	Supreme Court Collegium system
Collegium for SC appointments	Chief Justice of India and four senior-most SC judges

What is the Collegium System?

The **Collegium System** is the mechanism through which judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are recommended for appointment and transfer. For appointment to the Supreme Court, the Collegium consists of the **Chief Justice of India and four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court**.

Significance

- Promotes **gender diversity** in the higher judiciary.
- Enhances **regional representation** in the Supreme Court.
- Reignites debate on the need for greater transparency and diversity in judicial appointments.

Assam Assembly Passes Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026

Why in News?

The **Assam Legislative Assembly** has passed the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026**, proposing a common civil framework for matters such as **marriage, divorce, inheritance and live-in relationships** in the State.

Key Facts

Aspect	Details
State	Assam
Bill	Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026
Passed by	126-member Assam Assembly
Areas covered	Marriage, divorce, inheritance and live-in relationships
Exemption	Scheduled Tribes (STs)
ST population in Assam	12.45%
Similar laws mentioned	Uttarakhand and Gujarat

What is a Uniform Civil Code?

A **Uniform Civil Code** seeks to replace religion-based personal laws with a common set of civil rules for all citizens in matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, succession and inheritance.

Constitutional Linkage

Provision	Relevance
Article 44	Directs the State to endeavour to secure a UCC for citizens
Part IV of Constitution	UCC is a Directive Principle of State Policy
Entry 5, Concurrent List	Marriage, divorce, succession and related matters can be legislated upon by both Parliament and States

Key Issues Raised

- **Uniformity vs. Diversity:** Excluding Scheduled Tribes raises the question of whether the law can truly be called “uniform”.
- **Protection of Tribal Customs:** Exemption may be intended to safeguard distinctive customary practices of tribal communities.
- **Minority Concerns:** Opposition members alleged inadequate consultation with minority organisations.
- **Gender Justice:** Supporters of UCC generally view it as a step towards equal civil rights, particularly for women.

Significance

- Assam becomes the **third State mentioned in the report** to enact a UCC-type legislation after Uttarakhand and Gujarat.
- The Bill brings the debate on **personal law reform, tribal autonomy, minority rights and gender equality** into focus.
- It may also trigger legal and constitutional scrutiny over exemptions and consultation procedures.

Paper-IV: General Studies 3

New Evergreen Tree Species Discovered in Kerala: *Humboldtia nairiana*

Why in News?

Scientists from the **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI)**, Kerala, have identified a new evergreen tree species in the **Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary** of the southern Western Ghats.

Key Facts

Aspect	Details
Scientific name	<i>Humboldtia nairiana</i>
Plant type	Evergreen tree species
Genus	<i>Humboldtia</i>
Discovered in	Riparian forests of Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala
Biogeographic region	Southern Western Ghats
Known distribution	Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve, Kerala
Conservation status	Data Deficient under IUCN Red List criteria
Institution involved	JNTBGRI, Palode, Kerala



Humboldtia nairiana has been named in honour of G.M. Nair, a distinguished plant biotechnologist. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Naming of the Species

The species has been named *Humboldtia nairiana* in honour of **G.M. Nair**, noted plant biotechnologist and former Director of JNTBGRI.

Discovery Timeline

- **2010:** An unusual specimen was collected during a floristic exploration in Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Healthy seedlings were brought to the **JNTBGRI Arboretum** for ex-situ conservation and observation.
- **2022:** The cultivated trees began flowering and fruiting.
- Detailed study of vegetative and reproductive features confirmed it as a **new species to science**.

Ecological Significance

- The species is **strictly endemic to Kerala**.
- It is currently known only from the **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve**, a biodiversity-rich region of the Western Ghats.
- Its wild population is considered fragile, highlighting the need for habitat protection and further field surveys.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Riparian Forest	Vegetation occurring along rivers, streams or water bodies
Endemic Species	A species naturally restricted to a particular geographical region
Ex-situ Conservation	Protection of a species outside its natural habitat, such as in arboreta or botanical gardens
Data Deficient	Category used when adequate information is unavailable to assess extinction risk

Enforcement Directorate to Be Restructured; Cadre Strength Boosted

Why in News?

The **Union Finance Ministry** has sanctioned a major **cadre restructuring of the Enforcement Directorate (ED)**, increasing its total sanctioned strength by nearly **60%**.

Key Facts

Aspect	Details
Agency	Enforcement Directorate (ED)
Ministry concerned	Union Ministry of Finance
Existing sanctioned strength	2,029 posts
Revised sanctioned strength	3,256 posts
Increase	Nearly 60%
Executive cadre strength	Increased from 1,229 to 2,288 posts

Changes in Executive Cadre

Post	Earlier Strength	Revised Strength
Special Directors	7	7
Additional Directors	10	24
Joint Directors	28	49
Deputy Directors	148	267
Assistant Directors	255	531
Enforcement Officers	355	606
Assistant Enforcement Officers	425	803

Significance

- The **executive cadre**, which forms the operational backbone of the ED, will nearly double in size.

- The increase in **Assistant Directors, Enforcement Officers and Assistant Enforcement Officers** is important as these positions are directly linked to investigations.
- The restructuring is expected to strengthen the agency's capacity to investigate:
 - Money laundering
 - Foreign exchange violations
 - Fugitive economic offender cases

About Enforcement Directorate

Aspect	Details
Administrative control	Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance
Nature	Financial investigation agency
Key laws enforced	Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002; Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999; Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018

Critical Sectors Must Shift to Quantum-Safe Encryption: Task Force

Why in News?

A **Department of Science & Technology (DST) task force** has recommended a phased transition to **Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC)** in India's critical sectors to protect sensitive data from future quantum-computer-based cyberattacks.

Key Facts

Aspect	Details
Recommendation	Phased shift to quantum-safe encryption
Recommended by	DST-constituted task force
Report prepared under	National Quantum Mission (NQM)
Task force Chair	Rajkumar Upadhyay, CEO, C-DOT
Co-Chair	Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur
Priority sectors	Government, defence, power, telecom, transport, banking and finance

What is Post-Quantum Cryptography?

- **PQC** refers to encryption algorithms designed to resist attacks from future quantum computers.
- It can run on **ordinary computers** and does not require quantum hardware.
- It seeks to protect sensitive digital communication, banking transactions and government data from future decryption threats.

Why is PQC Needed?

Quantum computers may eventually be capable of breaking existing **public-key cryptography**, which secures much of today's digital ecosystem.

Failure to prepare may lead to:

- Exposure of confidential government and defence data.
- Vulnerability of banking and financial systems.

- Loss of trust in digital governance.
- Emergency migration to new encryption systems during a crisis.

Proposed Migration Timeline for Critical Information Infrastructure

Timeline	Proposed Action
By 2027	Build foundations for PQC migration
By 2028	Migrate high-priority systems
By 2029	Achieve full PQC adoption in critical sectors

National Quantum Mission

Aspect	Details
Approved in	April 2023
Outlay	₹6,003.65 crore
Duration	Up to 2030–31
Focus areas	Quantum computing, communication, sensing and materials
Institutional mechanism	Four thematic hubs at IISc and IITs

Significance for India

- Strengthens **cybersecurity and data sovereignty**.
- Protects **Critical Information Infrastructure (CII)**.
- Prepares India against future “harvest now, decrypt later” threats, where encrypted data stolen today may be decrypted in the future.
- Supports secure digital governance, defence communication and financial stability.

Organised Online Gaming with Money Stakes Comes under GST: Supreme Court

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court** has upheld the constitutional validity of imposing **GST on actionable claims arising from organised online gaming and fantasy sports involving money stakes**, treating such activities under the category of **betting and gambling** for the GST framework.

Key Points

Aspect	Details
Decision by	Supreme Court
Bench	Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan
Activities covered	Online gaming and fantasy sports involving money stakes
GST treatment	Actionable claims under betting and gambling
State appeals allowed	Tamil Nadu and Karnataka
Laws upheld	Statutory bans on online Rummy and Poker played for wager, bet or money stakes

What Did the Court Hold?

- Online games played for money, where outcomes remain uncertain, can be treated as **betting and gambling for GST purposes**.
- A game involving skill does not automatically protect **money-based wagering** on that game from taxation or regulation.
- Betting on online games of skill may still fall within the legislative competence of States.
- The Court upheld restrictions on online Rummy and Poker played for stakes, citing concerns relating to **addiction, financial losses and public health**.

Skill Game vs. Betting on a Skill Game

Concept	Court's View
Game of skill	May not by itself amount to gambling
Betting on a game of skill	Can be regulated and taxed where money is staked on uncertain outcomes
Online gaming platforms	Pose distinct regulatory and public welfare concerns

Why Was Horse Racing Comparison Rejected?

Online gaming companies argued that horse racing had earlier been treated as a game of skill. The Court rejected this comparison, observing that:

- Horse racing and wagering are **heavily regulated**.
- Online gaming involves greater anonymity and uncertainty.
- Online betting may create serious risks of addiction and financial harm.

Constitutional Linkage

Provision	Relevance
Article 246A	Special power of Parliament and State Legislatures to make laws on GST
Entry 34, State List	Betting and gambling
Public Order and Public Health	Grounds for States to regulate harmful online wagering activities

Significance

- Strengthens the taxation and regulation of **real-money online gaming**.
- Supports State laws aimed at preventing online gambling-related social harm.
- Clarifies that the label of “skill game” does not grant immunity to wagering activities.
- Brings focus to consumer protection, addiction and digital financial risks.

Health Expenses Decline as Government Spending Rises: NHA 2022–23

Why in News?

The **National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates for India 2022–23** show that **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE)** on health has declined significantly, while government spending on healthcare has increased.

Key Data

Indicator	2013–14	2022–23
OOPE as share of Total Health Expenditure	64.2%	43.4%
Government Health Expenditure as % of GDP	1.15%	1.43%
Health share in General Government Expenditure	3.78%	4.89%
Per Capita Government Health Expenditure	₹1,042	₹2,786
Social Security Expenditure share	6%	9.9%
Private Health Insurance share	3.4%	9.2%

Key Highlights

- Household health burden declined by **20.8 percentage points** between 2013–14 and 2022–23.
- Government health expenditure per person increased nearly **2.7 times** during the period.
- More than **1.8 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** have contributed to improved access to preventive and curative healthcare.
- These centres provide services such as:
 - Maternal and child healthcare
 - Communicable and non-communicable disease care
 - Free drugs and diagnostics
 - Teleconsultation
 - Preventive wellness services
- Purchase of **pharmaceuticals and health supplements** remains a major driver of household medical spending.
- During the COVID-19 period, government health expenditure rose to **1.84% of GDP in 2021–22**, while OOPE declined to **39.4%**.

Important Terms

Term	Meaning
Out-of-Pocket Expenditure	Health spending directly paid by households from their own income or savings
Total Health Expenditure	Total spending on healthcare by government, households, insurance and other sources
National Health Accounts	Estimates tracking health expenditure flows in India
Ayushman Arogya Mandir	Comprehensive primary healthcare facility providing expanded health services closer to communities

Significance

- Lower OOPE reduces the risk of households falling into poverty due to medical expenses.
- Rising public expenditure indicates stronger government involvement in healthcare delivery.
- Expansion of primary healthcare can reduce avoidable hospitalisation and costly treatment.
- Increased private insurance coverage reflects growing financial protection, though affordability and access remain important concerns.

Paper-V: General Studies 4

-----Best Wishes-----