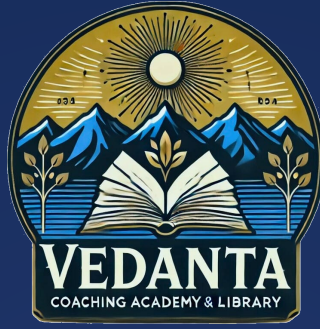




THE HINDU · CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SATURDAY

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Compiled by Sapna Chauhan

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GS 3 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY · SPACE

EOS-05: India's First 'Eye in the Sky' from Geosynchronous Orbit

WHY IN NEWS

ISRO on Friday successfully launched its advanced earth observation satellite EOS-05 aboard the GSLV-F17 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota — its first launch since two successive failures, and the heaviest satellite ever orbited by the GSLV.

- ◆ The GSLV, on its **19th flight**, placed the **2,367-kg EOS-05** into the intended sub-geosynchronous transfer orbit (Sub-GTO) about **18 minutes** after lift-off at 2.55 a.m. from the second launch pad.
- ◆ EOS-05 is India's **first imaging satellite designed to monitor the earth from geosynchronous orbit**, about **36,000 km** above the earth — allowing near-continuous observation of the same region.
- ◆ It is the **heaviest satellite launched by the GSLV**. From the first GSLV-D1 flight (1,536-kg payload), capability rose through structural-mass optimisation and propulsion improvements.
- ◆ Dubbed an **"eye in the sky"**, its near real-time imagery will aid **agriculture, environment monitoring and disaster management**, while its strategic geo-platform data will support "national activities".
- ◆ Key facts: **9-year** operational life, multi-band capability; **107th launch** from Sriharikota; 3-stage, **51.7 m** GSLV with a cryogenic upper stage and lift-off mass of **420.5 tonnes**.
- ◆ The launch ends a drought: no mission had flown since the **PSLV-C62/EOS-N1** failure (12 Jan 2026), following the earlier **PSLV-C61** failure (18 May 2025), after which ISRO paused for a cautious review.
- ◆ It also puts behind the **GSLV-F10/EOS-03 (GISAT-1)** failure of 12 Aug 2021, when the cryogenic upper stage did not ignite. EOS-05 (earlier **GISAT-1A**) effectively replaces the lost EOS-03.

VALUE ADDITION — GSLV & ORBITS

GSLV vs PSLV: GSLV (cryogenic upper stage) lifts heavier payloads to high orbits (GTO/GEO); PSLV is ISRO's reliable workhorse for LEO/SSO.

GTO / Sub-GTO: An elliptical transfer orbit; the satellite later raises itself to the final geosynchronous orbit using onboard propulsion.

Geosynchronous vs Geostationary: A geostationary orbit is a special geosynchronous orbit over the equator (0° inclination) where the satellite appears fixed in the sky.

Cryogenic engine: Uses super-cooled liquid oxygen + liquid hydrogen; higher efficiency but complex — long a strategic technology denied to India.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ EOS-05 mass: 2,367 kg — heaviest GSVL payload

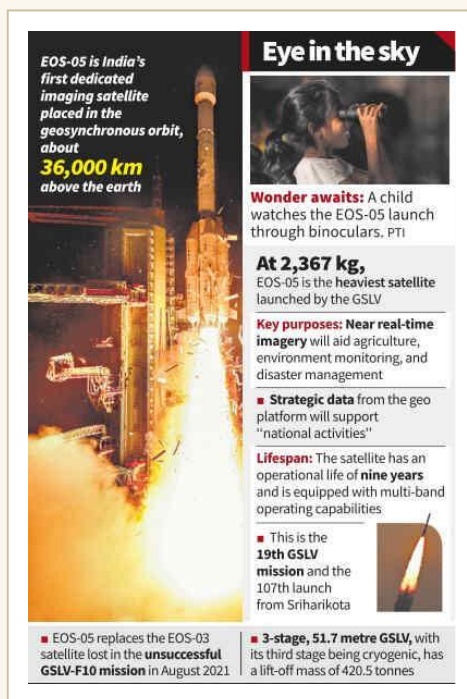
■ Launch vehicle: GSVL-F17 (19th GSVL flight)

■ Orbit: geosynchronous (~36,000 km)

■ Site: Second launch pad, SDSC-SHAR, Sriharikota (107th launch)

■ Uses: agriculture, environment, disaster management

■ Replaces EOS-03 lost in GSVL-F10 (2021)



‘Eye in the sky’: EOS-05 — India’s first dedicated imaging satellite in geosynchronous orbit. Source: The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper III — Awareness in the field of space; achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenisation of technology and developing new technology.

GS 3 ENVIRONMENT · BIODIVERSITY

Toxic Habitat: Spot-billed Pelican amid Plastic Waste at Krishnampathy Lake

WHY IN NEWS

A spot-billed pelican was photographed beside a dump of plastic waste in the polluted portion of Krishnampathy Lake, Coimbatore. Despite public campaigns, waste dumping continues unabated in the water body, which is visited by several bird species.

- ◆ The **spot-billed pelican** (*Pelecanus philippensis*), also called the **grey pelican**, is a member of the pelican family.
- ◆ It breeds in southern Asia from **southern Iran across India east to Indonesia**, and is a bird of large inland and coastal waters, especially large lakes.
- ◆ Its **breeding population is limited to India, Sri Lanka and Cambodia**. In the non-breeding season it is recorded in Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.

- ◆ Conservation: **IUCN — Near Threatened; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 — Schedule IV** (hunting prohibited, but penalties are lower than the first two schedules).
- ◆ The episode highlights how **unmanaged solid and plastic waste** degrades urban wetlands that serve as critical habitat and stop-over sites for resident and migratory birds.

VALUE ADDITION — URBAN WETLANDS

Why wetlands matter: Ecosystem services: groundwater recharge, flood buffering, carbon storage, and habitat for waterbirds.

Legal cover: Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017; Ramsar Convention (1971) — India has 90+ Ramsar sites.

Plastic threat: Entanglement, ingestion and micro-plastic accumulation up the food chain; degrades nesting and foraging grounds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Species: *Pelecanus philippensis* (grey pelican)

■ IUCN: Near Threatened

■ WPA 1972: Schedule IV

■ Breeding: India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia

■ Site: Krishnampathy Lake, Coimbatore (TN)

■ Threat: plastic / solid-waste dumping

Toxic habitat



A spot-billed pelican seen beside a dump of plastic waste in the polluted portion of Krishnampathy Lake in Coimbatore on Friday. Despite public campaigns, waste dumping continues unabated in the water body, which is visited by several types of birds. M. PERIASAMY

'Toxic habitat': a spot-billed pelican beside plastic waste at Krishnampathy Lake, Coimbatore. Photo: M. Periasamy / The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper III — Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation; biodiversity and wetland ecosystems.



GS 3 ENVIRONMENT · WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Toxic Pond in Haryana Puts Rare Turtles at Risk

WHY IN NEWS

The Shri Guru Gorakhnath Community Reserve at Kajalheri village (Fatehabad, Haryana) — a haven for hundreds of rare turtles — has allegedly turned into a toxic habitat because of untreated sewage and official neglect, forcing the turtles to flee across fields and roads.

- ◆ Notified in **2019**, the reserve hosts an estimated **150–200 Indian softshell, red-crowned roofed and Indian peacock turtles** — species protected under **Schedule I** of the WPA, on a par with tigers and rhinos, and listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List.
- ◆ Contaminated water is reportedly causing **skin lesions, fungal infections and blindness** among softshell turtles; many have been crushed by vehicles while crossing to the nearby Kishangarh canal.
- ◆ A **criminal case under the WPA** has been sought against wildlife officials and panchayat functionaries; the department's action plan (diverting sewage, fencing, raised nesting mounds) is delayed until after the monsoon and release of funds.
- ◆ Locals allege **official apathy** and diversion of earlier-allotted funds; chemical-laden village waste is said to have polluted the pond.

RED-CROWNED ROOFED TURTLE

Species: *Batagur kachuga* — one of 24 turtle species endemic to India; breeding males show bright red, yellow, white and blue on face & neck.

Range: Ganges & Brahmaputra basins; the National Chambal (Gharial) Sanctuary holds the only significant population.

Status: IUCN — Critically Endangered · WPA — Schedule I · CITES — Appendix II.

INDIAN (GANGES) SOFTSHELL TURTLE

Species: Family Trionychidae — flexible, leathery shell; carapace smooth, olive/green with a yellow border.

Range: Major rivers — Ganges, Indus, Mahanadi — plus lakes, ponds and canals.

Status: IUCN — Endangered · WPA — Schedule I.

INDIAN PEACOCK SOFTSHELL TURTLE

Range: South Asia — India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan; rivers, lakes, ponds and revered temple ponds.

Threat: Large-scale exploitation for consumption and export to East Asia for food and traditional use.

Status: IUCN — Endangered (populations declining drastically).

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Reserve: Shri Guru Gorakhnath Community Reserve (2019)

■ Location: Kajalheri, Fatehabad, Haryana

■ Batagur kachuga: Critically Endangered, Sch I

■ All three species: WPA Schedule I

■ Community Reserves: added by WLP Amendment, 2002

■ Nearby: Kishangarh canal, Chambal Sanctuary link

Toxic pond in Haryana village puts rare turtles at risk

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

For years, the pond at Kajalheri village in Haryana's Fatehabad was a safe haven for hundreds of rare turtles. Today, the same waters are forcing them to flee for their lives.

The Shri Guru Gorakhnath Community Reserve, notified by the Haryana government in 2019, is home to an estimated 150-200 Indian softshell, red-crowned roofed and Indian peacock turtles. But the sanctuary has allegedly turned into a toxic habitat because of untreated sewage and neglect by the authorities.

The species found here enjoy the highest level of statutory protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, on a par with tigers and rhinoceroses. They are also listed as



The reserve is home to an estimated 150-200 softshell, red-crowned roofed and Indian peacock turtles. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

threatened species on the IUCN Red List.

Critical issues

Environmentalists said the contaminated water is causing skin lesions, fungal infections and blindness among softshell turtles. With the pond becoming increasingly foul and polluted, the turtles have begun leaving the reserve and crossing agricultural fields and roads in search

of cleaner water. Many have allegedly been crushed by vehicles while attempting to reach the nearby Kishangarh canal.

Wildlife conservationist Vaishali Rana has sought the registration of a criminal case under the Wildlife (Protection) Act against wildlife officials, Kajalheri panchayat functionaries and members of the reserve management committee. She has accused

them of allowing deliberate sewage discharge into the turtle habitat and failing to comply with directions issued by the Gurugram Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) following an inspection in January.

The problem does not end with polluted water. In the absence of proper fencing, stray dogs reportedly enter the reserve and dig up turtle nests to eat the eggs, while cattle brought into the pond trample nesting banks and destroy eggs. The turtles are also at risk of being crushed.

A senior wildlife official acknowledged the problems but attributed the delay in remedial measures to a shortage of funds. The department's action plan includes diverting sewage away from the pond, erecting fencing and creating raised mounds where turtles can safely lay

their eggs. The official said the work would begin after the monsoon once funds are released.

Official apathy

The locals, meanwhile, allege that the crisis is the result of official apathy rather than a lack of resources.

Satpal Kajal, a resident, alleged that funds allocated earlier were diverted to other projects because of a nexus between the panchayat and wildlife officials. He said chemical-laden waste from the village had polluted the pond, forcing the turtles towards the canal. "There is enough land to create a separate pond to divert the toxic waste," he said, adding that complaints had also been made to then Wildlife Minister Kanwar Pal Gujjar during the previous government, but no action followed.

The reserve is home to an estimated 150-200 softshell, red-crowned roofed and Indian peacock turtles. Source: The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper III — Conservation of biodiversity, protected-area categories (Community Reserves) and species protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

GS 2 GOVERNANCE · SOCIAL JUSTICE

NCPCR Campaign Rescues Over 3,800 Children from Child Labour

WHY IN NEWS

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) rescued over 3,800 children from child labour under a sustained 'Pan-India Rescue and Rehabilitation' campaign; over 575 FIRs were registered.

- ◆ The special **"Pan-India Rescue and Rehabilitation"** campaign ran from **12 June to 31 August**, coordinated with State/UT administrations, district magistrates, labour departments and police.
- ◆ The NCPCR is a **statutory body** under the Ministry of Women & Child Development, established under the **Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005**.
- ◆ It inquires into complaints under the **Right to Education Act, 2009** and monitors implementation of the **POCSO Act, 2012**.

- ◆ Constitutional backing for child protection: **Art 21** (life, liberty, privacy), **Art 21A** (free & compulsory education, 6–14 yrs), **Art 14 & 15** (equality, non-discrimination), **Art 23 & 24** (against exploitation & child labour), and **Art 39(f)** (DPSP — healthy development of children).

VALUE ADDITION — CHILD PROTECTION ARCHITECTURE

NCPCR: Set up in 2007 under the CPCR Act, 2005; a statutory (not constitutional) body under MWCD.

Key law: Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 — amended 2016: bans employment of children below 14 and adolescents (14–18) in hazardous work.

Rescue link: Operation Muskaan / PENCIL portal support identification, rescue and rehabilitation of working and trafficked children.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ NCPCR: statutory body under MWCD (CPCR Act, 2005)

■ Children rescued: 3,800+ · FIRs: 575+

■ Campaign: 12 Jun – 31 Aug

■ Monitors POCSO Act, 2012

■ Art 24: no child below 14 in factories/mines

■ Art 21A: RTE for 6–14 age group

NCPCR campaign rescues over 3,800 from child labour

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has rescued over 3,800 children from child labour under a sustained campaign launched in June. Over 575 FIRs have also been registered in connection with these incidents.

The NCPCR, a statutory body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, launched a special "Pan-India Rescue and Rehabilitation" campaign on June 12, which continued until August 31, an official statement said here on Friday.

The Child Rights Commission undertook coordinated measures with the concerned State Governments/Union Territory administrations, district magistrates, labour departments, police authorities and other stakeholders to intensify the identification, rescue and rehabilitation of children engaged in child labour and those vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

Following this, it issued communications to the concerned authorities requesting intensified and targeted rescue operations at child labour and trafficking hotspots.

States and UTs were also requested to furnish regular data on rescue operations, children rescued, FIRs registered, rehabilitation, restoration, educational mainstreaming, compensation and other follow-up measures.

To monitor implementation and address field-level issues, the NCPCR held meetings with the district administrations. The meetings focused on reviewing rescue operations, addressing operational bottlenecks and strengthening coordination among the concerned departments.

NCPCR's Pan-India campaign ran from 12 June to 31 August. Source: The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper II — Statutory bodies; mechanisms, laws and institutions for the protection of vulnerable sections (children).



GS 2 POLITY · JUDICIARY

SC Pushes to Raise Retirement Age in District Judiciary as Backlog Tops 5 Crore

WHY IN NEWS

With about 5.18 crore cases pending in district courts, a Supreme Court Bench headed by CJI Surya Kant called it the “crying need of the hour” to raise the retirement age of judicial officers from 60 to 62, to stop the attrition of experienced judicial talent.

- ◆ Only **seven States** have responded positively — **Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal** — agreeing to enhance the retirement age.
- ◆ The three-judge Bench (order of **1 September**) directed these States to amend service rules within **two months**; enhancement to 62 is subject to a **suitability assessment** on the officer attaining 60.
- ◆ Other States and UTs — ranging from a direct ‘no’ to fence-sitting — were directed to decide within **two weeks**.
- ◆ Their hesitation stems from fears of a **financial burden** and **parity demands** from other services; the Bench held these apprehensions “entirely misconceived”, noting judicial officers do a specialised service.
- ◆ Citing a 1992 precedent, the Court reasoned that retaining officers till 62 avoids the “double-spend” of paying both pensions/retiral dues and fresh salaries. The case was listed again for **1 October**.

VALUE ADDITION — DISTRICT JUDICIARY

Appointment: District judges are appointed by the Governor in consultation with the High Court (Art 233); Art 233–237 govern the subordinate judiciary.

Retirement ages: Supreme Court judges — 65; High Court judges — 62; district judiciary — set by State service rules (this case seeks 60→62).

Pendency: ~5.18 crore cases pending in district courts; vacancies and delayed appointments are key drivers of backlog.

AJJS: A proposed All-India Judicial Service (Art 312) aims at a common, merit-based recruitment for the subordinate judiciary.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Backlog: ~5.18 crore in district courts

■ Proposed retirement age: 60 → 62

■ SC Bench: CJI Surya Kant (order of 1 Sept)

■ States agreeing: 7 (CG, KA, MP, MH, SK, TN, WB)

■ Art 233–237: subordinate judiciary

■ Next hearing: 1 October

SC pushes for raising retirement age in district judiciary as backlog tops 5 cr.

Top court says it is 'crying need of the hour' to stop attrition of experienced judicial talent otherwise access to justice would remain a mere chimera; only 7 States have responded positively to SC's call, while others are hesitant or plain fence-sitting

Krishnasdas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

As 5.18 crore cases lie pending in district courts across the country, the Supreme Court has sent a distress call to States to enhance the retirement age of experienced judicial officers from 60 to 62 years.

The court said the "crying need of the hour" is to stop the attrition of the experienced judicial talent lest access to justice remain a mere chimera due to unfilled posts.

Only seven States have so far responded positively to the SOS from the Supreme Court. Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have agreed to enhance the retirement age of their judicial officers.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, in a September 1 order published on Friday, directed these State governments to amend the service rules within two months. The State High Court concerned would enhance the age of superannuation to 62 years of judicial officers,

Most of the recruitment drives undertaken in the various States have not resulted in optimum recruitment or in the filling up of the sanctioned cadre strength, and a yawning gap between the sanctioned and working strength persists across the board



SUPREME COURT

subject to their suitability assessment, on their attainment of 60 years of age.

The other States and Union Territories have varied between a direct negative response to plain fence-sitting.

The court has directed them to take a decision on enhancement of retirement age of their judicial officers to 62 years in two weeks. These States include Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Jammu and Kash-

mir, and Puducherry.

Their hesitation, the court discovered, was fuelled by a sense of insecurity over the financial burden the move would entail. Plus, these States apprehend that employees in other State services would also demand parity.

The Bench said the apprehensions of these States were entirely misconceived. Judicial officers do a specialised service.

Benefit to society

"The alleged financial burden that would be thrown on the State exchequer on account of the enhancement of the superannuation age as a result of the payment of the maximum salary in the pay scale to the officers for a further

period of two or five years as the case may be, and on account of the higher outlay on their retiral benefits, is negligible considering the enormous advantage that the administration of justice and the society at large would derive from the enhancement in the age of retirement," the Bench quoted a 1992 judicial precedent.

Besides, the court said simple math showed that a State, by retaining the retirement age of 60 years, would double-spend post-retiral dues of superannuated judicial officers as well as pay the salaries of the newly-appointed ones.

On the contrary, if experienced members of the judicial cadre were permitted to continue in service till the age of 62, the additional burden of bearing such post-retiral dues would stand correspondingly postponed.

Besides, the recruitment of independent and competent judicial officers was an arduous task.

"Most of the recruitment drives undertaken in the various States have not resulted in optimum recruitment or in the filling up of the sanctioned cadre

strength, and a yawning gap between the sanctioned and working strength persists across the board," the court pointed out.

The Bench pointed out that most State High Courts have consented to the enhancement of the retirement age as they were face-to-face with the "crisis in dispensation of justice".

Some High Courts, including Madras, the court recorded has "wisely" introduced relevant riders so that the deadwood did not take advantage of the proposal to enhance superannuation age. These High Courts have recommended a thorough assessment of judicial work as a condition precedent to ensure that only competent officers of proven integrity were permitted to continue in the cadre.

"This suggestion is most welcome as it would balance the preservation of experienced judicial officers, while removing the clog of deadwood, blocking the entrance of young blood invigorating the system," the Supreme Court observed.

The court listed the case again on October 1.

The SC's 1 September order urges States to amend service rules within two months. Source: The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper II — Structure, organisation and functioning of the judiciary; issues relating to the subordinate judiciary and pendency.

GS 2 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · WEST ASIA

The Gulf is Calling: India, the Mecca Pact and a Rewired West Asia

WHY IN NEWS

In a commentary, Shashi Tharoor argues that the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement — binding Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan into a collective-defence arrangement — signals a structural rewrite of West Asia's security order, and that India must shift from 'multi-alignment' to becoming an active security guarantor.

- ◆ India's traditional doctrine treated the 'Middle East' as an **economic hinterland** — a source of crude oil, a destination for labour and a conduit for remittances — defaulting to **hedging** / '**multi-alignment**' among Riyadh, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi without security commitments.
- ◆ The **Mecca Agreement** links **Gulf capital**, **Turkish defence technology** and **Pakistani military manpower**, creating a security architecture near India's **western maritime doorstep** — often with actors whose interests run counter to India's.
- ◆ Stakes for India: its **trade routes**, **energy security** and the welfare of **millions of Indian citizens in the Gulf**; continued reliance on legacy diplomacy risks India being "marginalised".
- ◆ The prescription: evolve from a **passive beneficiary** of regional stability into an **active guarantor** — projecting hard power into the western Indian Ocean.
- ◆ Focus areas: naval patrols and maritime partnerships across key **choke points** — the Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Bab-el-Mandeb — plus minilateral defence frameworks with partners like the **UAE and Israel** as a counterweight, without rigid Cold-War-style alliances.

Strait of Hormuz: Gateway between the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman; ~a fifth of global oil passes through it.

Bab-el-Mandeb: Connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden/Indian Ocean; vital for Suez-bound trade.

Indian diaspora: ~9 million Indians in the Gulf are India's largest overseas community and a top remittance source.

Minilaterals: I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-US) and IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor) anchor India's West Asia strategy.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Mecca Pact: Saudi Arabia + Türkiye + Pakistan

■ India's old approach: 'multi-alignment'

■ Key straits: Hormuz, Oman, Aden, Bab-el-Mandeb

■ Author: Shashi Tharoor (MP, Thiruvananthapuram)

■ Shift sought: passive beneficiary → active guarantor

■ Partners cited: UAE, Israel (minilaterals)

The Gulf is calling and New Delhi must listen

For decades, India's relationship with West Asia operated under a doctrine of deliberate ambiguity and even of some strategic distance. Delhi treated the "Middle East" primarily as an economic hinterland, a critical source of crude oil, a reliable destination for outbound labour, and a vital conduit for remittances. When regional crises flared, Indian foreign policy defaulted to hedging, balancing relations between competing power centres such as Riyadh, Tehran, Tel Aviv, and Abu Dhabi without tying itself to the security obligations of any single capital. Of late, we called that approach "multi-alignment".

What worked until now

But while India was careful to be friendly to all, it was not too friendly to any, in an effort not to offend any of the various capitals in the mix. The logic was clear: there was much to be gained from all parties in what was widely seen to be a likely West Asian economic renaissance. The region was seen through a macroeconomic vision that highlighted its convenient geographic features, its immense natural resources of oil and gas, massive capital accumulation, and its receptivity to imported labour and skills, of which India has a surplus. In this framing, the global economic centre of gravity was seen as inexorably shifting away from an aging, debt-burdened West toward a highly dynamic Asia, positioning West Asia as the ultimate maritime and terrestrial bridge between a declining West and a rising East.

This defensive and essentially transactional posture served India well in an era when the United States stood as the undisputed guarantor of West Asian security, keeping sea lines of communication open and maintaining regional stability. However, the geopolitical bedrock of West Asia is undergoing a violent structural shift. As Washington recalibrates its global commitments and retreats into an unpredictable "selective engagement" posture, a profound security vacuum has emerged, sparking a scramble among regional states for durable security guarantees. Here, has India been caught napping, continuing a business-as-usual approach that risks early obsolescence?

West Asian capitals no longer view distancing, whether called non-alignment or multi-alignment, as a virtue. They are actively seeking alternative, dependable security partners who can offer more than diplomatic platitudes and routine economic cooperation. This structural reality was highlighted by the signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, bringing together Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan into a collective defence arrangement. While framed as a defensive effort to manage shared



Shashi Tharoor
Fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram, who served nearly three decades at the United Nations, where he rose to the position of Under-Secretary-General. He has also been a Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India and is the bestselling author of 29 books, including 'Pan India: India and the World of the 21st Century'. He currently chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

A changing West Asia requires a more assertive Indian role in pursuing real, hard-power security partnerships

vulnerabilities, the pact signals a broader security realignment. By linking Gulf capital with Turkish defence technology and Pakistani military manpower and skill, the agreement creates a powerful new security architecture right at India's western maritime doorstep.

A clear signal of change

For New Delhi, the Mecca Agreement is not an isolated diplomatic transaction; it is a clear structural signal that West Asia's security framework is being fundamentally rewritten, often by actors whose strategic interests directly run counter to India's own long-term objectives. While India's strategic silence on this development is understandable, it still begs the question: what next? The growing influence of external powers and hostile regional pacts directly threatens India's trade routes, energy security, and the welfare of millions of Indian citizens living in the Gulf. Is India going to build its own partnerships, or become irrelevant to the region's security?

If India continues to rely on legacy diplomatic processes and transactional commerce, its risks being marginalised in a region essential to its national survival. The challenges are formidable. The eruption of hostilities involving Iran demonstrated that modern, highly integrated economic infrastructure remains profoundly fragile when subjected to grey-zone, asymmetric warfare. State-of-the-art port facilities, energy networks, and logistics corridors proved highly vulnerable to low-cost drones, showing that capital-intensive infrastructure cannot fully compensate for localised security vacuums. Hyper-secure economic enclaves will remain perpetually exposed to the spillover effects of surrounding instability in the region. Since the modern Gulf model relies heavily on foreign corporations and expatriate labour, regional stability is intimately tied to global perception. If security risks cross a certain psychological threshold, the talent and capital that flowed in seamlessly can exit just as rapidly. And when narrow naval chokepoints or overland trade routes face active disruption, global supply chains inevitably stall, revealing that these ambitious trade corridors are only as strong as their most unstable geographic link.

Against this critical background, the assumption that trade ties and diaspora diplomacy alone can preserve Indian influence is rapidly unravelling. A region grappling with maritime threats in the Red Sea, drone strikes on critical infrastructure, involvement in conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, the Strait of Hormuz and now the Bab-el-Mandeb, requires partners capable of providing tangible security assets.

West Asian powers are hungry for hard-power options such as naval patrols, intelligence sharing, defence-industrial collaboration, and credible counter-terrorism capabilities. If India Delhi dallies over stepping into such a role, others will fill the void, as Türkiye has already demonstrated in Mecca.

The hard moves India must make

To protect its strategic space, New Delhi must contemplate a decisive doctrine change, evolving from a passive beneficiary of regional stability into an active guarantor of it. This requires moving beyond high-level bilateral visits and economic summits to actively project hard power into the western Indian Ocean and the broader West Asian region. India's immediate focus must be the rapid expansion of naval and maritime security partnerships across key choke points, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman and the Gulf of Aden, the waters off the Somali coast and the Bab-el-Mandeb. By embedding its naval footprint more deeply through joint maritime patrols, permanent logistics access arrangements, and interoperable surveillance networks with friendly Gulf states, India can establish itself as a, if not the, premier net security provider in its immediate neighbourhood.

Furthermore, India must leverage its growing defence manufacturing ecosystem to offer West Asian states a reliable alternative for hardware and technology. Collaborative defence ventures, joint military exercises with real operational teeth, and deep intelligence-sharing mechanisms must replace mere procurement discussions. Developing robust bilateral and "multilateral" security frameworks with partners such as the United Arab Emirates or Israel, and separately even with Saudi Arabia, will allow Delhi to build a counterweight against hostile axes without succumbing to rigid Cold War style alliances. The goal is not to entangle India in foreign quagmires, but to build a strategic deterrence web that safeguards Indian interests and reassures regional allies.

The era of passive presence in West Asia has reached its natural end. The Mecca Agreement serves as a stark reminder that regional security arrangements will coalesce with or without Indian participation. If Delhi wishes to secure its economic destiny, safeguard its energy arteries, and claim its rightful place as a leading global power, it must act with urgency and ambition. Moving decisively beyond routine diplomatic engagement to construct real, hard-power security partnerships in West Asia is no longer just a strategic choice for India. It is an imperative for its national security.

'The Gulf is calling and New Delhi must listen' — a changing West Asia demands an assertive Indian role. Source: The Hindu

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper II — India and its neighbourhood / West Asia; bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements affecting India's interests.

Warning on Warming: UNEP's 'Limiting Overshoot' and India's Victim Mindset

WHY IN NEWS

The UN Environment Programme's report 'Limiting Overshoot' warns that breaching the 1.5°C limit would bring irreversible losses that adaptation cannot undo — and suggests India must shed its 'victim mindset' while acting on climate change.

- ◆ Even if all countries deliver their current pledges today, the globe is poised to heat **1.8°C**; on current policies, **2.6°C**.
- ◆ The report describes an “**overshoot, peak and decline**” pathway — temperatures may cross 1.5°C, but the peak must be held as low as possible and brought back below the limit by century-end.
- ◆ New emphasis on **non-CO₂ gases**: methane, responsible for about **0.5°C** of current warming, is the most effective lever to slow near-term warming.
- ◆ Over **155 countries have joined the Global Methane Pledge** (cut anthropogenic methane at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030) — **India is not among them**.
- ◆ Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said major emitters — China, the US and India — must weigh their impact on small countries (against the backdrop of the **Bhotekoshi disaster**). A section of the world now sees India as **part of the problem**, despite its below-average per-capita emissions.
- ◆ The takeaway: India should **calibrate its messaging**, take such perceptions seriously and adapt to the reality of a 1.5°C world rather than lean only on the victim narrative.

VALUE ADDITION — CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

Global Methane Pledge: Launched at COP26 (2021); voluntary; targets a 30% cut in methane below 2020 levels by 2030.

1.5°C / overshoot: The Paris aspirational limit; 'overshoot' means crossing and later returning below it — riskier and costlier.

Methane sources: Agriculture (livestock, paddy), fossil-fuel leaks and landfills; short-lived but far more potent than CO₂.

COP31: Scheduled in Türkiye in November; adaptation finance and equity likely flashpoints.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Report: UNEP 'Limiting Overshoot'

■ Pledged path → 1.8°C; current policies → 2.6°C

■ Methane ≈ 0.5°C of current warming

■ Global Methane Pledge: 155+ countries (India not in)

■ Target: -30% methane vs 2020 by 2030

■ COP31: Türkiye, November

Warning on warming India must shed its victim mindset while acting on climate change

The United Nations Environment Programme's report, Limiting Overshoot, is a reminder that breaching the 1.5°C global warming limit would bring irreversible losses that adaptation cannot undo. Were all countries to deliver on their climate pledges today, the globe is still poised to heat 1.8°C and on current policies, 2.6°C. Given that the limit has already been breached – and, with the ongoing heating in the central equatorial Pacific expected to burgeon into one of the strongest El Niños in recent history, likely again in 2027 – the report is an acceptance of the scientific reality that we are in a 1.5°C world, while resisting the conclusion that nothing more can be done. The authors describe an “overshoot, peak and decline” pathway under which average global temperatures rise above 1.5°C but countries collectively hold the peak as low as possible and then bring them back below the limit by the end of the century. Neutralising the heating effect of even a tenth of a degree, the report argues, is far harder than preventing that rise in the first place. This in itself is nothing new. What is new is the emphasis on greenhouse gases beyond carbon dioxide. Action on methane, responsible for about 0.5°C of current warming, is considered the most effective way to slow warming in the near-term. Over 155 countries – India is not among them – have joined the Global Meth-

ane Pledge to cut anthropogenic methane at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.

That absence reflects the familiar tension between reports of this nature, which emphasise mitigation, and major developing economies such as India. They stress that they are already en route to moving away from fossil fuels and, being vulnerable to the impacts of historical stocks of carbon, deserve greater financial support and affordable technology from richer developed countries responsible for the crisis. The latest report unfortunately has little to say on adaptation finance, though there are previous assessments on the topic. With countries set to convene in Türkiye in November for COP31, familiar disagreements are likely to surface – but in the aftermath of the Bhotekoshi disaster in Nepal, India's position too has been complicated. Nepal's Foreign Affairs Minister, Shisir Khanal, has said that major industrial emitters such as China, the United States and India must consider the impact of rising temperatures on small countries such as Nepal. For India, this list means that a section of the world – despite India's position as a victim of climate change with below-world-average per capita emissions – sees it as part of the problem. India must take such perceptions seriously and, rather than ignore the reality of a 1.5°C world, should calibrate its messaging to adapt to it.

‘Warning on warming’: India must shed its victim mindset while acting on climate change. Source: The Hindu (editorial)

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper III — Conservation and climate change; international conventions, agreements and India's climate diplomacy.



GS 2 GOVERNANCE · HEALTH & WOMEN

Out of the Neglect Bin: India's First Perimenopause–Menopause Policies

WHY IN NEWS

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have announced dedicated perimenopause/menopause policies – moving women's mid-life health out of the ‘neglect bin’ and into routine government health care.

- ◆ Women's health care has focused largely on the **reproductive age group**; menopause symptoms, though often severe and debilitating, leave women to ‘just endure’ for want of access.
- ◆ On **4 August**, Karnataka (Health Minister U.T. Khader) introduced ‘**Ruthu Thare**’, described as the country's first dedicated women's health policy focused on perimenopause and menopause.
- ◆ Tamil Nadu's Health Minister announced a perimenopausal care policy (17 August) to enable early identification of health needs through **PHCs and higher centres**.
- ◆ **Menopause** is the permanent end of menstrual periods and reproductive ability (confirmed after 12 consecutive months without a cycle), driven by falling **oestrogen and progesterone**. The **perimenopausal** transition brings irregular periods and bodily changes over years.
- ◆ Common symptoms: hot flashes, sleep trouble, extreme mood changes, joint pain, debility and fatigue.
- ◆ Both States plan **outreach screening, counselling, well-women screening** and referrals to district hospitals – a progressive step whose impact depends on implementation and on greater awareness among medical professionals.

The gap: Non-communicable conditions of mid-life (menopause, osteoporosis) are under-served by systems geared to maternal & child health.

Delivery: Sub-centres, PHCs and ASHA/ANM workers are the frontline; 'well-women' clinics extend care beyond reproduction.

Why it matters: Rising life expectancy means women spend a third of life post-menopause — a public-health and productivity issue.

PRELIMS POINTERS

■ Karnataka: 'Ruthu Thare' (4 Aug) — a first

■ Tamil Nadu: perimenopausal care policy (17 Aug)

■ Menopause: 12 months without a cycle

■ Hormones: falling oestrogen & progesterone

■ Delivery: PHCs, well-women screening

■ Focus: mid-life women's health care

Out of neglect bin

The perimenopausal policy will ease access to care for women in midlife

Women's health care can be accused of being focused entirely on the reproductive age group. Menopause, for instance, is a natural transition phase, but even when its symptoms are severe and debilitating, women seldom have access to health care, and are forced to 'just endure'. Given the huge care gap that exists here, it is appreciable that Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have taken the step to move ahead with the announcement of a perimenopause/menopause policy. Both the States made the announcement within a short while of each other, in August. The primary benefit, besides relieving women's mid-life care from the neglect bin it has been languishing in so far, is that the physical and mental-health needs of women in this stage of life will become part of routine government health care, making access to care easier. Tamil Nadu Health Minister K.G. Arunraj made the announcement of a perimenopausal care policy in the Assembly on August 17. He said the aim was to facilitate early identification of physical and mental health needs of perimenopausal women, with screening, counselling and treatment services through PHCs and higher centres. On August 4, Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister U.T. Khader, introduced 'Ruthu Thare' as the country's first dedicated women's health policy with a strong focus on perimenopause and menopause, at a meeting in Bengaluru. Menopause is the permanent end of menstrual periods and reproductive ability. con-

menopause and menopause, at a meeting in Bengaluru. Menopause is the permanent end of menstrual periods and reproductive ability, confirmed after 12 consecutive months without a cycle. It happens when the ovaries naturally slow down and produce lower levels of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. The transition time, leading up to menopause, is the perimenopausal period which can bring irregular periods and bodily changes over several years. Common symptoms include hot flashes, sleep trouble, extreme mood changes, joint pain, debility and fatigue, and for many women these can be disruptive.

Both States are planning outreach screening and counselling at the community level, women's-health clinics, district-level well-women screening, and community outreach, besides referrals to district hospitals and government medical colleges. No doubt, this is a progressive measure which will also give legitimacy to the complaints of menopausal women, but the proof of any pudding is in the eating. How effective these policies are will be measured only during implementation. Among the critical points today is that the symptoms of menopause are not treated with adequate seriousness even by the medical community; so, adequate awareness generation among medical professionals and the beneficiaries and their families as well is a must.

'Out of neglect bin': the perimenopausal policy will ease access to care for women in midlife. Source: The Hindu (editorial)

SYLLABUS LINK — GS Paper II — Issues relating to the development and management of the health sector; welfare measures for women and vulnerable sections.

Practice Zone

MAINS — MODEL QUESTIONS

The signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement signals a structural rewrite of West Asia's **GS 2 · IR** security order. In this context, examine why India may need to move from a doctrine of 'multi-alignment' to that of an active security guarantor in its western maritime neighbourhood. (250 words)

मक्का संयुक्त रक्षा समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर पश्चिम एशिया की सुरक्षा व्यवस्था के संरचनात्मक पुनर्लेखन का संकेत हैं। इस संदर्भ में परीक्षण कीजिए कि भारत को 'बहु-संरेखण' की नीति से हटकर अपने पश्चिमी सामुद्रिक पड़ोस में एक सक्रिय सुरक्षा गारंटर की भूमिका क्यों अपनानी पड़ सकती है। (250 शब्द)

APPROACH / SKELETON

- Intro: define 'multi-alignment' and India's traditional economic-hinterland view of West Asia.
- Body-1: what the Mecca Pact changes — Gulf capital + Turkish tech + Pakistani manpower near India's doorstep.
- Body-2: stakes — energy, trade choke points (Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb), ~9 million diaspora, remittances.
- Body-3: the 'active guarantor' shift — naval patrols, logistics access, minilaterals (I2U2, UAE, Israel).
- Conclude: balance strategic deterrence with autonomy — no rigid Cold-War-style alliances.

"India can no longer afford a 'victim mindset' on climate change." Critically examine **GS 3 · ENVIRONMENT** this proposition in light of the UNEP 'Limiting Overshoot' report and India's position on the Global Methane Pledge. (250 words)

"भारत अब जलवायु परिवर्तन पर 'पीड़ित मानसिकता' का जोखिम नहीं उठा सकता।" UNEP की 'लिमिटिंग ओवरशूट' रिपोर्ट तथा वैश्विक मीथेन प्रतिज्ञा पर भारत के रुख के आलोक में इस कथन का आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए। (250 शब्द)

APPROACH / SKELETON

- Intro: 1.5°C limit; 'overshoot, peak and decline' pathway; pledged 1.8°C vs policy 2.6°C.
- Body-1: the victim narrative — low per-capita emissions, historical responsibility, adaptation finance.
- Body-2: why it is challenged — India as a large absolute emitter; methane (~0.5°C) and the Pledge India skips.
- Body-3: costs & opportunities — clean-energy leadership, calibrated messaging, credibility at COP31.
- Conclude: reconcile equity with responsibility — shed defensiveness without abandoning CBDR-RC.

PRELIMS — 10 MCQS

Q1. With reference to the EOS-05 mission, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched aboard the PSLV.
2. It is India's first imaging satellite designed to operate from geosynchronous orbit.
3. It is the heaviest satellite ever launched by the GSLV.

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

Q2. The cryogenic upper stage, associated with the recent GSLV launch, typically uses which propellant combination?

- A. Liquid oxygen and kerosene
- B. Solid ammonium perchlorate
- C. Liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen
- D. Unsymmetrical dimethylhydrazine and nitrogen tetroxide

Q3. The spot-billed pelican, recently in news, has which of the following conservation profiles?

- A. IUCN: Endangered; WPA Schedule I
- B. IUCN: Near Threatened; WPA Schedule IV
- C. IUCN: Vulnerable; WPA Schedule II
- D. IUCN: Least Concern; not listed under WPA

Q4. Consider the following pairs of turtle species and their IUCN status:

1. Red-crowned roofed turtle — Critically Endangered
2. Indian softshell turtle — Endangered
3. Indian peacock softshell turtle — Endangered

How many of the pairs are correctly matched?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q5. 'Community Reserves', one of which features in the Haryana turtle controversy, were introduced into Indian law by which amendment?

- A. The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 1991
- B. The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002
- C. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- D. The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 1988

Q6. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is:

- A. A constitutional body under Article 338
- B. A statutory body under the CPC Act, 2005
- C. An executive body under NITI Aayog
- D. A body created by the POCSO Act, 2012

Q7. Consider the following constitutional provisions relating to children:

1. Article 21A — free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14.
2. Article 24 — prohibition of employment of children below 14 in factories and mines.
3. Article 39(f) — a Directive Principle on the healthy development of children.

Which of the statements are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Q8. Regarding the Supreme Court's recent push on the district judiciary, which statement is correct?

- A. It seeks to raise the retirement age of district judges from 60 to 62 years.
- B. It seeks to raise the retirement age of High Court judges from 62 to 65 years.
- C. It abolishes the suitability assessment for judicial officers.
- D. It directs the Union to create an All-India Judicial Service within two months.

Q9. The 'Global Methane Pledge', referenced in the UNEP report, aims to:

- A. Cut methane emissions at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030
- B. Achieve net-zero methane by 2050
- C. Ban all agricultural methane sources by 2040
- D. Cut methane 50% below 1990 levels by 2035

Q10. 'Ruthu Thare', recently in the news, is best described as:

- A. A tribal land-rights scheme in Odisha
- B. India's first dedicated women's health policy focused on perimenopause and menopause
- C. A river-rejuvenation mission in Karnataka
- D. A Central scheme for adolescent girls

ANSWER KEY & RATIONALE

Q1 – Ans: B. EOS-05 flew on the GSLV-F17, not the PSLV (so 1 is wrong). It is India's first imaging satellite from geosynchronous orbit and, at 2,367 kg, the heaviest GSLV payload – hence 2 and 3 are correct.

Q2 – Ans: C. A cryogenic stage burns super-cooled liquid oxygen (oxidiser) with liquid hydrogen (fuel), giving high specific impulse. It powers the GSLV's upper stage.

Q3 – Ans: B. The spot-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*) is IUCN 'Near Threatened' and listed under Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Q4 – Ans: C. All three are correct: Batagur kachuga is Critically Endangered, while both the Indian softshell and the Indian peacock softshell turtles are Endangered.

Q5 – Ans: B. Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves were added as protected-area categories by the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002.

Q6 – Ans: B. The NCPCR is a statutory body set up in 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, functioning under the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Q7 – Ans: D. All three are correctly stated. Art 21A (RTE), Art 24 (against child labour in hazardous work) and Art 39(f) (DPSP) together frame child protection.

Q8 – Ans: A. The Court urged States to raise the retirement age of district-judiciary officers from 60 to 62, subject to a suitability assessment at age 60 – to curb attrition amid a 5.18-crore backlog.

Q9 – Ans: A. The Global Methane Pledge (launched at COP26) is a voluntary commitment to reduce anthropogenic methane emissions at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030. India has not joined it.

Q10 – Ans: B. 'Ruthu Thare' was introduced by Karnataka as the country's first dedicated women's health policy with a strong focus on perimenopause and menopause.

QUICK REVISION RECAP

- ◆ **EOS-05:** 2,367-kg imaging satellite in geosynchronous orbit; heaviest GSLV payload; GSLV-F17, 19th GSLV flight; ends launch drought.
- ◆ **Spot-billed pelican:** *Pelecanus philippensis*; IUCN Near Threatened; WPA Schedule IV; polluted Krishnampathy Lake, Coimbatore.
- ◆ **Haryana turtles:** Kajorli Community Reserve (2019); Batagur kachuga (Critically Endangered) + two softshell species; all WPA Schedule I.
- ◆ **NCPCR:** Statutory body (CPCR Act, 2005) under MWCD; 3,800+ children rescued; monitors POCSO & RTE.

- ◆ **District judiciary:** SC urges retirement age 60→62; 5.18-crore backlog; 7 States agree; next hearing 1 October.
- ◆ **Mecca Pact:** Saudi Arabia + Türkiye + Pakistan; India urged to become an active security guarantor across Gulf choke points.
- ◆ **UNEP report:** 'Limiting Overshoot'; methane ≈ 0.5°C; Global Methane Pledge (155+ states, India out); COP31 in Türkiye.
- ◆ **Menopause policy:** Karnataka 'Ruthu Thare' + TN policy; first dedicated mid-life women's health push via PHCs.

PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS

- △ Geosynchronous ≠ geostationary: a geostationary orbit is a geosynchronous orbit at 0° inclination over the equator.
- △ GSLV (cryogenic, heavy/high orbits) vs PSLV (workhorse, LEO/SSO) — EOS-05 flew on the GSLV, not the PSLV.
- △ Spot-billed pelican is Schedule IV (not I); the Haryana turtles are Schedule I — don't swap them.
- △ Only Batagur kachuga is Critically Endangered; the two softshell turtles are Endangered.
- △ NCPCR is statutory (CPCR Act, 2005), not constitutional — the National Commission for SCs (Art 338) is the constitutional one.
- △ India has NOT joined the Global Methane Pledge, though 155+ countries have.
- △ Retirement ages: SC judges 65, HC judges 62; the current push is to take district-judiciary officers 60→62.
- △ Community Reserves & Conservation Reserves came via the WLPA Amendment, 2002 — not the original 1972 Act.

CONNECT THE DOTS

- ⇒ Environment thread: the pelican, the Haryana turtles and the UNEP report together test wetland pollution, species protection (WPA schedules, IUCN, CITES) and climate diplomacy — a favourite prelims + mains overlap.
- ⇒ Governance thread: NCPCR (children) and the menopause policy (women) both show the State extending routine, rights-based welfare to under-served groups — link to Articles 21, 21A, 23-24, 39(f).
- ⇒ Strategic thread: EOS-05's 'strategic geo-platform data' and the Mecca-Pact commentary both point to India's push for autonomy and hard-power presence in its extended neighbourhood.

STATIC ↔ CURRENT LINKAGE

- ◆ **EOS-05 / GSLV:** Space programme — launch vehicles (PSLV/GSLV/SSLV), cryogenics, remote sensing (IRS series).
- ◆ **Spot-billed pelican:** Wetland ecosystems, Ramsar Convention, WPA schedules, urban lake pollution.
- ◆ **Haryana turtles:** Protected-area categories — Conservation & Community Reserves (WLPA 2002); CITES appendices.
- ◆ **NCPCR:** Statutory bodies for vulnerable sections; POCSO, RTE, child-labour law; Fundamental Rights & DPSP.
- ◆ **District judiciary:** Subordinate judiciary (Art 233-237); judicial reforms, pendency, AIJS (Art 312).
- ◆ **Mecca Pact / West Asia:** India-West Asia relations; maritime security, chokepoints; minilaterals (I2U2, IMEC).
- ◆ **UNEP report:** UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, CBDR-RC, COP process; SLCPs and the Global Methane Pledge.
- ◆ **Menopause policy:** Health-sector management; NCDs; women & vulnerable-group welfare; primary health care.

PRELIMS BYTES — RAPID FACTS

- ▶ SDSC-SHAR, Sriharikota is India's primary spaceport; it has two operational launch pads.
- ▶ CITES uses three Appendices; Appendix I = strictest trade ban, Appendix III = a State's own request for cooperation.
- ▶ IUCN Red List (least to most threatened): LC → NT → VU → EN → CR → EW → EX.
- ▶ Schedule I of the WPA gives the highest protection; hunting attracts the stiffest penalties.
- ▶ Methane is a Short-Lived Climate Pollutant (SLCP) — potent but shorter-lived than CO₂.
- ▶ Bab-el-Mandeb ('Gate of Grief') links the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; a key Suez-route chokepoint.
- ▶ Perimenopause is the transition phase; menopause is confirmed after 12 period-free months.
- ▶ The CPCRA Act, 2005 created both the NCPCR and the State Commissions (SCPCRs).

ETHICS & ESSAY — THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“The greatest danger of technology is not that machines may begin to think like humans, but that humans may stop thinking.”

प्रौद्योगिकी का सबसे बड़ा खतरा यह नहीं कि मशीनें मनुष्यों की तरह सोचने लगेंगी, बल्कि यह है कि मनुष्य सोचना बंद कर सकते हैं।

“Convenience makes life easier; resilience makes life possible.”

सुविधाएँ जीवन को आसान बनाती हैं, परन्तु लचीलापन जीवन को संभव बनाता है।

“The future belongs to the prepared.”

भविष्य तैयार लोगों का होता है।

◆ END OF EDITION ◆