

DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY

Daily News Feed

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Bracing for downpour: Chennai received light rain on Friday when the sky was overcast for most part of the day. R. RAGU

Low pressure area off T.N. coast may turn into cyclone

The Hindu Bureau

CHENNAI

The well-marked low pressure area over the Bay of Bengal, which is expected to become a cyclonic storm by Monday morning, is likely to cause heavy rain, especially in north Tamil Nadu, from Saturday.

Intense rainfall may start in the northern districts from Sunday. According to the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), the system is likely to become a depression over the southeast and adjoining central Bay of Bengal by Saturday, further concentrating into a deep depression by Sunday.

‘Cyclone Montha’

It is likely to gather strength as a cyclonic storm over the southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal by Monday morning. The potential cyclonic storm is likely to be called ‘Cyclone Montha’, a name suggested by Thailand for tropical cyclones

in the north Indian Ocean.

The RMC has forecast that the prevailing weather conditions will sustain wet conditions in the State until the month-end.

While Cuddalore, Villupuram and Chengalpattu districts may receive heavy rainfall on Saturday, intense rainfall is likely to lash six northern districts – Chennai and its neighbouring districts, Ranipet and Villupuram – on Sunday.

Excess rainfall

B. Amudha, Head (Additional in-charge), RMC, said there would be more clarity on the landfall of the cyclonic storm in a couple of days once the system became more marked and came closer.

The vigorous Northeast monsoon had already brought excess rainfall across many districts, she added. The State has received 22 cm of rainfall so far this season since October 1. This is half the average Northeast monsoon total of 44 cm.

(GS Paper 1 – Geography (Climatology); GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management)

English Summary:

A low-pressure area off the Tamil Nadu coast is expected to intensify into Cyclone “Montha”. Heavy rains are forecast for northern Tamil Nadu and Chennai. Authorities warned of flood risk amid an active northeast monsoon.

Hindi Summary:

तमिल नाडु के तट के निकट कम दबाव का क्षेत्र भविष्य में “मोंथा” चक्रवात का रूप ले सकता है। उत्तरी तमिल नाडु में भारी वर्षा की संभावना है और चेतावनी दी गई है कि पूर्वोत्तर मानसून के सक्रिय रहने से बाढ़ का जोखिम बढ़ सकता है

Gyan Bharatam Mission to ink pact with institutes

It is a flagship initiative of Culture Ministry for identifying, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's manuscripts; the institutes will be categorised as cluster centres and independent centres

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Gyan Bharatam Mission on manuscripts, under the Union Culture Ministry, will on Saturday sign Memorandums of Understanding with around 20 institutes across the country for conservation, upkeep, and digitisation of manuscripts.

While the 20 institutes will sign the MoUs on Saturday, 30 more will do so over the next few days, a senior official of the Union Culture Ministry told *The Hindu*. Some of these institutes are Asiatic Society Kolkata, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj, and Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai.

Gyan Bharatam is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture for identifying, documenting, conserving, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's vast manuscript heritage.

It was announced during the Union Budget this year.

The mission's mandate

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 1 – Indian Heritage and Culture

GS Paper 2 – Governance (Government Policies & Initiatives)



Preserving history: The mission is an initiative to identify, document and digitise India's vast manuscript heritage. FILE PHOTO

is to preserve and establish a dedicated digital platform – known as the National Digital Repository (NDR) – to share India's manuscript heritage worldwide.

The institutions set to sign MoUs have been categorised into cluster centres and independent centres.

In the case of a cluster centre, the institution shall be responsible for executing all manuscript-related activities of its own centre, as well as those of its designated cluster partner centres, which shall not exceed 20. In the case of the independent centres, the institution shall be respon-

sible for executing all manuscript-related activities pertaining solely to its own collection.

Gyan Bharatam shall provide the overarching framework, guidance, monitoring, and support for the execution of activities under this partnership. In addition, it shall also provide funding, necessary equipment, and budgetary allocations to the designated Centres, subject to approval of work plans, milestones, and quality verification.

The various activities to be provided by the institutes with GB's support have been categorised into

survey and cataloguing, conservation and capacity building, technology and digitisation, linguistics and translation, research, publication, and outreach.

The centres have also been asked to constitute a dedicated Gyan Bharatam Cell experienced in each vertical, in the spirit of voluntary service, to represent the Centre with sincerity, while also serving as a vital channel of communication to foster collaboration and ensure smooth coordination.

Funds in instalments

As far as finances are concerned, funds shall be released in phased instalments in accordance with the implementation schedule and milestones outlined in the approved work plan.

The first instalment (70%) shall be disbursed upon the annual budget, the second (30%) instalment shall be released only upon submission of progress reports, detailed financial report, submission of utilisation certificates (UCs) and other important documents.

English Summary:

The **Gyan Bharatam Mission**, under the **Union Ministry of Culture**, aims to identify, digitise, preserve, and promote **India's vast manuscript heritage**. On Saturday, the ministry will sign **MoUs with around 20 institutes**, followed by 30 more, for **conservation, upkeep, and digitisation** of manuscripts.

Institutions include Asiatic Society (Kolkata), University of Kashmir (Srinagar), Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Prayagraj), and the Government Oriental Manuscript Library (Chennai).

The mission will create a dedicated digital platform — the **National Digital Repository (NDR)** — to share India's manuscript heritage globally.

Institutions will be categorised as:

- **Cluster Centres** (responsible for their own and partner centres' manuscript-related activities)
- **Independent Centres** (responsible for their own collections only).

Each centre will have a **Gyan Bharatam Cell** for voluntary service, coordination, and communication. The mission will also focus on **surveying, cataloguing, capacity building, translation, research, and publication**.

Funding will be provided in **two instalments** — 70% upfront and 30% after submission of progress and audit reports.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

ज्ञान भारतम मिशन, संस्कृति मंत्रालय की एक प्रमुख पहल है, जिसका उद्देश्य भारत की विशाल **पांडुलिपि विरासत** की पहचान, डिजिटलीकरण, संरक्षण और प्रचार-प्रसार करना है।

मंत्रालय लगभग **20 संस्थानों के साथ समझौता ज्ञापन (MoU)** पर हस्ताक्षर करेगा, और अगले कुछ दिनों में 30 और संस्थानों के साथ समझौते होंगे। इनमें **एशियाटिक सोसाइटी (कोलकाता)**, **कश्मीर विश्वविद्यालय (श्रीनगर)**, **हिंदी साहित्य सम्मेलन (प्रयागराज)** और सरकारी **ओरिएंटल मैनुस्क्रिप्ट लाइब्रेरी (चेन्नई)** जैसे संस्थान शामिल हैं।

मिशन के तहत एक **राष्ट्रीय डिजिटल रिपोजिटरी (NDR)** प्लेटफॉर्म स्थापित किया जाएगा ताकि भारत की पांडुलिपि धरोहर को विश्व स्तर पर साझा किया जा सके।

संस्थान दो श्रेणियों में विभाजित होंगे —

1. **क्लस्टर केंद्र (Cluster Centres)**: अपने तथा संबद्ध संस्थानों की गतिविधियों के लिए उत्तरदायी।
 2. **स्वतंत्र केंद्र (Independent Centres)**: केवल अपनी पांडुलिपियों से जुड़ी गतिविधियों के लिए उत्तरदायी।
- प्रत्येक केंद्र में एक **ज्ञान भारतम सेल** होगा जो स्वैच्छिक सेवा, समन्वय और सहयोग सुनिश्चित करेगा।

मिशन में **सर्वेक्षण, सूचीकरण, क्षमता निर्माण, अनुवाद, अनुसंधान और प्रकाशन** जैसी गतिविधियाँ भी होंगी। वित्तीय सहायता **दो किश्तों** में दी जाएगी — 70% अग्रिम और शेष 30% रिपोर्ट व लेखा परीक्षण के बाद।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- Ministry: **Ministry of Culture**
- Digital Platform: **National Digital Repository (NDR)**
- Aim: **Preserve, digitise, and promote Indian manuscripts**
- Structure: **Cluster Centres + Independent Centres**
- Focus: **Digitisation, research, translation, publication, outreach**
- Funding pattern: **70%-30% instalment model**

EC warns parties against misuse of AI-generated content during elections

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming Bihar Assembly election, the Election Commission on Friday issued an advisory to all political parties on responsible use and disclosure of synthetically generated information and AI-generated content during election.

In a letter to the heads of all political parties, the poll body said that it had been brought to its notice that “the misuse of hyper-realistic synthetically generated information, including depicting political leaders making electorally sensitive messages, is contaminating the level-playing field in the electoral arena, disrupting fair and equal conditions for all political participants, which is a *sine*

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 2 – Governance (Election Commission of India, Electoral Reforms, Role of Technology in Elections)

GS Paper 4 – Ethics in Public Administration (Political ethics, misinformation, transparency)

The poll body had issued similar social media ethics rules in May 2024 ahead of the general elections

qua non for preserving the integrity of the political campaigning during elections”.

“The use of technology for creating, generating, modifying and altering information and publishing and transmitting synthetically generated information is a deep threat and challenge because of its ability to masquerade as truth and unwittingly trap political stakeholders into incorrect conclusions and therefore, ECI finds it particularly imperative to ensure that transparency and accountability are main-

tained to preserve electoral integrity and voter trust,” the letter said.

Previous guidelines

The EC had issued detailed guidelines in May last year just before the general elections regarding responsible and ethical use of social media platforms, and an advisory, dated January 16, 2025, specifically addressing concerns around labelling of synthetic and AI-generated content used by political parties for election campaigning. The poll body asked political parties, candidates, and campaign representatives to ensure that any AI-generated or AI-altered image, audio, or video used or disseminated for campaigning purposes shall bear a clear, prominent, and legible label such as “AI-Generated”.

English Summary:

Ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has issued an

advisory to all political parties regarding the **responsible use of AI-generated and synthetically altered content**.

The EC warned that misuse of hyper-realistic synthetic media — especially fake videos or audios depicting political leaders — poses a **serious threat to electoral integrity**, as it can **mislead voters, distort facts, and create false narratives**.

The advisory emphasised that:

- Political parties must **disclose AI-generated or synthetically modified content** clearly, labelling it as “AI-Generated”.
- Misuse of AI tools to spread misinformation undermines **free and fair elections**, disrupts the **level playing field**, and erodes **voter trust**.
- Transparency, authenticity, and accountability are essential for maintaining the sanctity of elections.

The EC also recalled that it had issued **similar social media ethics guidelines in May 2024** before the general elections and again in **January 2025**, specifically addressing concerns around synthetic media.

The new guidelines reiterate that **no AI-generated text, image, audio, or video** may be used for campaigning without a **clear, visible label** identifying it as artificially created content.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

बिहार विधानसभा चुनाव से पहले **भारत निर्वाचन आयोग (ECI)** ने सभी राजनीतिक दलों को **एआई (Artificial Intelligence) आधारित या कृत्रिम रूप से तैयार की गई सामग्री** के जिम्मेदार उपयोग पर परामर्श जारी किया है।

आयोग ने चेतावनी दी कि एआई-निर्मित “डीपफेक” या कृत्रिम वीडियो, ऑडियो और छवियाँ चुनावी प्रक्रिया की **सत्यता और निष्पक्षता के लिए खतरा** हैं। ये मतदाताओं को भ्रमित कर सकती हैं और झूठी राजनीतिक कथाएँ बना सकती हैं।

निर्देशों के प्रमुख बिंदु:

- प्रत्येक एआई-निर्मित या परिवर्तित सामग्री पर स्पष्ट रूप से **“AI-Generated”** लिखा होना चाहिए।
- किसी भी राजनीतिक अभियान में इस तरह की सामग्री का दुरुपयोग **जनमत को गुमराह** करता है और **मतदाता विश्वास को कमजोर** करता है।
- आयोग ने कहा कि **पारदर्शिता, जवाबदेही और नैतिकता** चुनाव प्रक्रिया की नींव हैं।

आयोग ने बताया कि **मई 2024** में आम चुनावों से पहले और **जनवरी 2025** में भी इस संबंध में दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए गए थे। अब इन नियमों को और सख्ती से लागू किया जाएगा ताकि चुनाव प्रक्रिया में **एआई के दुरुपयोग** को रोका जा सके।

Sanctioning Russia

Trump is seeking to bring Putin to talks
by breaking his strategic will

The Trump administration has imposed fresh sanctions on Russia as punitive measures relating to Moscow's refusal to strike a ceasefire agreement to bring the war in Ukraine to a halt, with Washington targeting Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil. Russia's use of the oil trade to finance war has been a bone of contention for NATO members since the early days of Russia's incursion into and attacks on Ukraine, an indirect dimension of the conflict that has pulled Asian powers India and China into the fray. Over the summer, Mr. Trump sought to up the ante in this regard by slapping India with an additional 25% tariff for importing Russian oil, over and above the basic 25% rate imposed on other countries as well, even though China, as a top importer of Russian seaborne crude, was spared this levy. Now, the latest round of sanctions appeared to have penalised both trading partners of Moscow significantly, with reports suggesting that at least four major state-owned Chinese oil companies have suspended purchases from Russia and that at least one private and three state-owned Indian refinery companies are planning for "recalibration of Russian oil imports" including the possibility of a "massive cut" over time.

At the heart of the White House move is the seething frustration of Mr. Trump over failed attempts to not only bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table – a feat achieved in Alaska in August and a second summit agreed in Budapest before it was postponed following the collapse of ceasefire talks – but also to nudge the Kremlin towards at least a short-term arrangement that might lead to a cessation of hostilities as a precursor to a broader treaty on territorial and institutional agreements. It is possible that the latest sanctions may lead to a genuine tightening of options for Mr. Putin on ending the war, especially as Washington will now be joining the European Union that has adopted its 19th sanctions package against Moscow, specifically focusing on technology supply chains, energy revenues, and financial networks. Nevertheless, it may be premature to applaud their potential impact on the Kremlin's strategic calculus. Ultimately, whether sanctions have teeth or not depends on the consistency of their enforcement, including shutting down the inevitable loopholes and workarounds that Moscow will seek to exploit to continue selling oil abroad, possibly at even sharper discounts. Mr. Trump may find that he has travelled full circle to arrive at the same sticky negotiating points between Moscow and Kiev that his predecessor faced – an early end to ground hostilities, control of Donbas, and the permissible extent of NATO influence in the region. Only if sanctions can break Russian strategic will on at least one of these points will the prospects for peace brighten considerably.

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 2 – International Relations (India–Russia–US relations, Global Sanctions,

Geopolitics)

GS Paper 3 – International Economic Developments & Energy Security

English Summary:

The **Trump administration** has imposed **fresh sanctions on Russia** as punitive measures for Moscow's refusal to agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine. The sanctions mainly target **Russian oil giants like Rosneft and Lukoil**, accusing Russia of using oil trade revenues to finance its war.

The move has complicated global oil markets, particularly for countries like **India and China**, major importers of Russian crude. Reports suggest that several Indian and Chinese companies have **suspended or recalibrated Russian oil imports** in response.

The sanctions aim to **pressure President Vladimir Putin** into peace negotiations and end hostilities, but also expose **US frustration** over repeated diplomatic failures.

The **US strategy** seems designed to:

1. Weaken Russia's economic ability to sustain the war,
2. Align with **European Union sanctions** (now in their 19th package), and
3. Signal to allies the seriousness of enforcing economic and technological restrictions.

However, the article notes that these sanctions' **effectiveness depends on consistent enforcement**, including closing loopholes Russia might use to continue oil sales through alternate routes or discounts.

It cautions that the sanctions might not immediately change **Kremlin's strategic calculus**, though they may tighten Moscow's financial options and global leverage over time.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

ट्रंप प्रशासन ने रूस पर **नए प्रतिबंध** लगाए हैं क्योंकि मॉस्को ने यूक्रेन युद्ध में संघर्षविराम समझौते से इनकार कर दिया था। ये प्रतिबंध मुख्य रूप से **रूसी तेल कंपनियों रोसनेफ्ट और लुकोइल** को निशाना बनाते हैं, जिन पर युद्ध को वित्तपोषित करने के लिए तेल व्यापार के उपयोग का आरोप है।

इस कदम का असर वैश्विक तेल बाजारों पर पड़ा है, खासकर **भारत और चीन** जैसे देशों पर जो रूसी तेल के बड़े खरीदार हैं। रिपोर्टों के अनुसार, कई भारतीय और चीनी कंपनियों ने **रूसी तेल आयात को स्थगित या पुनर्संतुलित** करने की योजना बनाई है।

अमेरिका का उद्देश्य **रूसी राष्ट्रपति व्लादिमीर पुतिन पर दबाव** बनाकर उन्हें बातचीत की मेज़ पर लाना है।

ट्रंप प्रशासन के प्रमुख लक्ष्य हैं:

1. रूस की आर्थिक क्षमता को कमजोर करना,
2. यूरोपीय संघ के प्रतिबंधों के साथ समन्वय स्थापित करना, और
3. अंतर्राष्ट्रीय समुदाय को यह दिखाना कि अमेरिका आर्थिक और तकनीकी प्रतिबंधों को सख्ती से लागू करेगा।

हालाँकि, विश्लेषकों का मानना है कि इन प्रतिबंधों की **सफलता उनके सख्त क्रियान्वयन** पर निर्भर करेगी, क्योंकि रूस तेल बिक्री जारी रखने के लिए वैकल्पिक रास्ते खोज सकता है।

फिलहाल, इन प्रतिबंधों से **रूस की रणनीतिक सोच में त्वरित बदलाव** की उम्मीद नहीं है, लेकिन ये मॉस्को के वित्तीय और कूटनीतिक विकल्पों को सीमित कर सकते हैं।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** Global Sanctions on Russia (US-led measures)
- **Actors:** USA, Russia, EU, India, China
- **Purpose:** Pressure Russia to cease Ukraine conflict
- **Mechanism:** Target oil exports, finance networks, technology trade
- **India's Impact:** Indian refiners reassessing Russian crude imports
- **GS Relevance:**
 - GS-II → International Relations, India's foreign policy balancing
 - GS-III → Energy security, global oil market volatility

Sleeping deathtraps

Modifications at body shops make sleeper buses vulnerable

The accident in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh, in the early hours of October 24, involving a “luxury” bus from Hyderabad to Bengaluru with 46 passengers, was one that mirrored previous such tragedies. It was apparently triggered by a fuel leak after the bus collided with a bike that had been knocked to the ground earlier in a hit-and-run incident. The accident claimed 20 lives including the bike rider; the survivors barely managed to escape through broken windows. Some 10 days earlier, 20 people were burnt alive when an air-conditioned bus from Jaisalmer to Jodhpur, with 57 passengers, caught fire. There have been several eerily similar fires such as in 2023, on a Nagpur-Mumbai bus.

Typically, most of these buses carry the names of well-known brands but the fact is that only the engine and the chassis are purchased from these OEMs. The chassis is then made into a full bus in body-building shops. While there is a case that increasingly advanced electronics, electrical and the air-conditioning systems used carry the risk of electric fires, rigorous safety standards are typically followed while designing and installing these systems. But what is not rigorous is body installation and modifications made at the body shops. The Automotive Industry Standards (AIS) developed by the Road Transport Ministry do lay down the structural and fire safety requirements for bodies as well, but these are seldom followed. Often, the body is made of poor quality composite material that is highly inflammable. There is hardly any crash testing. At the body shop, unsafe modifications are sometimes made such as installing an extra fuel tank. The sleeper arrangements on board restrict passenger movement. Soft, highly inflammable materials are used for curtains and other barricades. Recent regulations specify that there must be four exits on such buses – two main doors and two collapsible windows – with no seat or sleeper obstructing them. But these do not apply to the existing fleet. The drivers are often not trained to handle emergencies. It would enhance safety to mandate that the emergency exit arrangements are explained to passengers as they are on a flight. Crash testing of the entire bus assembly must be mandated to enhance safety during collisions. Though current standards mandate fire detection and safety systems that would detect and give audible and visual warnings in a fire followed by the activation of firefighting devices, these are seldom followed at the body shops. What is needed is a more comprehensive AIS that takes into account risks in sleeper buses followed by strict implementation and regular monitoring.

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GS Paper Mapping:
GS Paper 2 – Governance (Road Safety & Regulation, Accountability in Public Transport)
GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management, Infrastructure & Technology in Transport Sector

English Summary:

The article discusses the **recurring incidents of sleeper bus fires** in India, highlighting severe **safety lapses and unregulated vehicle modifications** as the primary causes.

The **Kurnool accident (Andhra Pradesh)** on **October 24**, involving a sleeper bus from Hyderabad to Bengaluru, resulted in the death of **20 passengers** after the vehicle caught fire following a collision. Similar incidents occurred earlier in **Jodhpur (Rajasthan)** and **Nagpur-Mumbai routes**, exposing systemic flaws.

 Key Issues Identified:

1. **Unsafe bus modifications:**

- Many buses are made in **body-building shops** using only the engine and chassis from recognized manufacturers.
- Local workshops often use **flammable composite materials**, poor wiring, and **unsafe fuel tank installations**, violating **Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)**.

2. **Lack of structural and fire safety compliance:**

- Most modifications are untested; there's **no crash testing** of the final assembly.
- Fire detection, alarm, and suppression systems mandated under AIS are rarely installed or maintained.

3. **Passenger safety compromises:**

- Sleeper designs restrict movement and use **flammable materials** for curtains and partitions.
- Emergency exits and collapsible windows are often **blocked or absent**.
- Drivers are **not trained for emergency evacuation protocols**.

 Recommendations by the Editorial:

- Mandate **crash testing** for all sleeper bus assemblies.
- Ensure **fire detection and automatic suppression systems** are functional.
- Update and enforce a **comprehensive AIS framework** to include body shop certification.
- Conduct **frequent inspections and audits** by transport authorities.
- Compulsory **training for drivers and crew** on emergency exit procedures.

The piece calls for **stronger regulatory oversight** and **accountability of private bus operators**, suggesting that without strict enforcement and periodic audits, India's highways will continue to witness preventable tragedies.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

लेख में स्लीपर बसों में आग लगने की बार-बार होने वाली दुर्घटनाओं पर चिंता व्यक्त की गई है और इसका मुख्य कारण अनियंत्रित और असुरक्षित बॉडी-मॉडिफिकेशन बताया गया है।

कुरनूल (आंध्र प्रदेश) की 24 अक्टूबर की घटना में **20 लोगों की मृत्यु** हुई जब हैदराबाद से बेंगलुरु जा रही बस बाइक से टकराने के बाद आग की चपेट में आ गई। इससे पहले **जोधपुर** और **नागपुर-मुंबई** जैसी घटनाएँ भी हुई थीं।

 मुख्य समस्याएँ:

1. **अनियंत्रित बॉडी-शॉप निर्माण:**

- बस निर्माता केवल इंजन और चैसिस देते हैं; बाकी संरचना स्थानीय बॉडी-शॉप में बनती है।
- सस्ते, **ज्वलनशील कंपोज़िट मटेरियल**, गलत वायरिंग और **अतिरिक्त ईंधन टैंक** जैसी खतरनाक जोड़ियाँ की जाती हैं।

2. **मानकों का उल्लंघन:**

- **ऑटोमोटिव इंडस्ट्री स्टैंडर्ड (AIS)** के अग्नि-सुरक्षा और संरचनात्मक मानक पालन नहीं होते।
- किसी भी बस **असेंबली का क्रैश टेस्ट** अनिवार्य नहीं है।

3. **यात्रियों की सुरक्षा की अनदेखी:**

- स्लीपर डिज़ाइन में **आवागमन बाधित** रहता है।
- **आपातकालीन निकास** और **खिड़कियाँ** अवरुद्ध या अनुपलब्ध रहती हैं।

- चालक दल को आपात स्थिति में निकासी प्रशिक्षण नहीं दिया जाता।

सुझाव:

- सभी स्लीपर बसों का क्रेश टेस्ट और अग्नि सुरक्षा परीक्षण अनिवार्य किया जाए।
- AIS मानकों को अद्यतन कर बॉडी-शॉप प्रमाणन और नियमित निरीक्षण लागू किए जाएँ।
- अग्नि चेतावनी व बुझाने की प्रणाली को बाध्यकारी किया जाए।
- बस ड्राइवर्स और परिचालकों के लिए आपात प्रशिक्षण अनिवार्य बनाया जाए।

लेख का निष्कर्ष यह है कि यदि सख्त प्रवर्तन और नियमित निगरानी नहीं की गई, तो स्लीपर बसें यात्रियों के लिए “सोते हुए मौत के जाल” बनी रहेंगी।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** Road Safety & Transport Regulation in India
- **Context:** Sleeper bus fire in Kurnool (Oct 2025)
- **Issues:** Poor body shop standards, lack of AIS enforcement, fire hazards
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-II:** Governance, Accountability, Regulatory Framework
 - **GS-III:** Disaster management, Infrastructure safety, Transport technology

Respect the health rights of India's children

The deaths of 25 children linked to contaminated cough syrup has shocked the conscience of the nation. In a news cycle that often highlights ‘man bites dog’ sensationalism, the general public is largely aware of two things: that 25 children died, and that a paediatrician in Madhya Pradesh who defiantly prescribed the syrup to the children is said to have received a paltry commission of ₹2.54 a bottle; thus the cost of each of those young lives was ₹2.54.

That all this happened despite the Union Health Ministry having banned certain cough syrup formulations for children under the age of four years – as recently as April 2025 – citing the risk of contamination, is shocking. There has also been much discussion on responsibility – which agency failed in its duty to monitor and prevent the distribution of the syrup. The regulatory agencies in India responsible include the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation under the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India which handles large manufacturers of drugs and export approvals, and State drug control officers who handle the regulation, care, manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs by small- and medium-scale manufacturers.

Where the focus needs to be

Rather than apportion blame, it would be wise to allow the law to take its course. The focus must be on the regulatory framework behind the distribution of paediatric medicines in India, and the challenges India faces in ensuring the protection it has guaranteed to its children in Article 39(f) of the Constitution, which is also listed as an important Directive Principle of State Policy.

Children (the age group under 18 years) make up 39% of India's population. There are a catena of laws and policies in India – approximately 13 – that are specifically designed to protect children, from the seminal National Policy for Children 1974 to the India Newborn Action Plan 2014. There are also about 10 pieces of legislation with special provisions for children such as the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act to The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act.

Significantly, while these are critical interventions, they focus heavily on protecting children in the workforce (labour laws), and preventing and punishing the sexual exploitation of children. There are important initiatives for children in health and education, but the specific



Jayanthi Natarajan

is a former Union Minister, an advocate and a columnist

area of pharmacovigilance in the dissemination of paediatric drugs requires far more oversight and also the development of robust infrastructure.

In a similar context, Dr. Harry Shirkey called children “therapeutic orphans”. Children are not small adults. The pharmacodynamic responses of children and adults are vastly different due to a spectrum of different physiologies. Further, clinical trials of drugs are usually conducted on adults and for ethical and other reasons almost never on children, resulting in an alarming lack of paediatric guidelines of dosage and administration. All too often, the dosage and administration of drugs for children are extrapolated from guidelines for adults, leaving children in much danger of overdosage and more serious consequences. Special development strategies of drugs for children are a cornerstone of their health-care needs, particularly public health care.

Overseas, the regulatory framework for children-related pharmaceuticals is an eye-opener. In the European Union, it is under the Paediatric Use Marketing Authorisation and in the United States, under the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act (BCPA). *Inter alia*, such legislation also provides incentives for research into paediatric drugs. India does not have a specific policy or legislation and operates on general guidelines. Since children are totally dependent on their parents or guardians for their health needs, it is necessary that the government frames clear guidelines.

Health-care-related financial burdens often cause many impoverished families to fall into deeper poverty, making it even more vital that the pharmaceutical needs of children are made affordable.

The essential medicine concept

Therefore, the introduction of the essential medicine concept in the health-care sector contributes significantly to the greater availability and affordability of life-saving medicines. Essential medicines are those which satisfy the priority health-care needs of the population, are intended to be available in all health-care systems and are of quality and affordable. Several years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced an essential Medicine list for children (EMLc). This is used by policy makers to update the EMLc lists in their own countries. Although EML for adults are periodically revised, the EMLc for children is not addressed regularly. This requires immediate attention of policymakers.

Other basic safe practices in the distribution of children's pharmaceuticals include constant

education for care-givers and pharmacists, and making it mandatory to read the label, dispense the correct dosage and watch for side-effects particularly when buying over-the-counter medication.

Regulation of over-the-counter medication for children especially for cough, cold and fever is an important dimension of public health care. The use of OTC medication varies in rural and urban areas, but is more common in an urban setting.

Public health-care outlets are another area of focus where clear guidelines need to be enforced in dispensing pharmaceuticals to children. A zero tolerance policy must be adopted against substitute or substandard medication. In the case of teenagers, attention must be paid to prevent the misuse of drugs.

Over the last three years, WHO has issued several warnings on contaminated cough syrup. Some of these are related to cough syrup made in various places in India. Children have also died in the Gambia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Cameroon as a result of these contaminated syrups. India has emerged as the pharmacy to the Global South with huge exports of cough syrups, but this carries with it a responsibility to ensure the absolute safety of the medicines exported.

Need for India data

India's health policy with regard to paediatric medicines cannot be framed only on the basis of data on children available from other countries. Our genetics are unique to us and our research needs to be based on wholly Indian data. Nor should data on paediatric medicines be extrapolated from data that is related to adults.

We owe a fiduciary duty to our children to take care in framing a health policy for them. We expect responsible policymakers to take into account diverse factors including awareness of environmental pitfalls such as how toxicity of a cough syrup may be exacerbated by malnutrition in children.

Thus, adult medicines modified during administration to children can only be considered as off label and unlicensed. They should not be used at all since they are contraindicated in terms of formulation, age and indicators.

Clearly, monitoring safe medicine use in children is of utmost importance. The use of medicines not proven to be safe for children is a violation of the rights of voiceless children. India urgently needs a robust and holistic infrastructure to monitor and promote awareness of safety protocols with regard to medicines given to children.

There needs to be a holistic framework to monitor medicine use for children

- children in health and education, but the specific

GS Paper Mapping:
GS Paper 2 – Governance & Social Justice (Health, Child Rights, Regulatory Frameworks)
GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology (Pharmacology, Drug Safety & Public Health)

English Summary:

The article by **Jayanthi Natarajan** highlights the tragic incident where **25 children died due to contaminated cough syrup** in Madhya Pradesh, exposing deep flaws in India's drug regulatory and public health systems.

Despite the **Union Health Ministry banning certain paediatric cough syrups for children under six years**, unapproved and unsafe formulations are still being sold due to poor **monitoring, regulation, and enforcement** by the Central and State Drug Control authorities.

⚠ Key Issues Highlighted:

1. Regulatory Lapses:

- Agencies like **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**, **State Drug Controllers**, and the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** failed to ensure quality control.
- There is an absence of strict pharmacovigilance (drug safety monitoring) and accountability.

2. Pharmacological Neglect of Children:

- Children are not “small adults”; their **drug absorption and metabolism differ** significantly.
- Most drugs are tested on adults, and doses are extrapolated for children — leading to **overdose or harmful effects**.
- This has created an entire class of “**therapeutic orphans**.”

3. Global Context:

- India has faced repeated cases of **exporting toxic syrups** (e.g., Gambia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Cameroon).
- Such incidents tarnish India's reputation as a **pharmacy of the Global South**.

4. Socio-economic Impact:

- Health-related expenses push poor families deeper into **poverty**, making affordable and safe paediatric medicines crucial.

5. Need for Policy Reform:

- There is an urgent need for a **holistic child health framework** under Article 39(f) (Directive Principles of State Policy).
- Laws like the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act** and **Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies Act** focus on child welfare but lack integration with **drug safety and public health systems**.

6. Way Forward:

- **Strengthen CDSCO** and empower State Drug Control authorities.
- Introduce **compulsory pharmacovigilance** for paediatric drugs.
- Promote **Essential Medicines Lists (EML)** for children, similar to WHO's guidelines.
- Regulate over-the-counter (OTC) drug sales and educate caregivers about safe usage.
- Mandate **child-specific clinical trials** to avoid extrapolating adult data.

The author concludes that **India owes its children the right to health**, and safeguarding that requires robust law enforcement, research-backed medical protocols, and accountability in pharmaceutical governance.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

लेखिका **जयवंती नटराजन** ने हाल ही में **मध्य प्रदेश** में **25 बच्चों की दूषित कफ सिरप से हुई मौतों** को लेकर भारत की स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली और दवा नियंत्रण व्यवस्था की गंभीर कमियों पर प्रकाश डाला है।

हालाँकि केंद्र सरकार ने **छह वर्ष से कम उम्र के बच्चों के लिए कुछ सिरपों पर प्रतिबंध लगाया** है, लेकिन कमजोर निगरानी और भ्रष्ट प्रणाली के कारण **असुरक्षित दवाएँ बाजार में उपलब्ध** हैं।

⚠ मुख्य बिंदु:

1. **विनियामक असफलता:**
 - केंद्रीय औषधि मानक नियंत्रण संगठन (CDSCO) और राज्य दवा नियंत्रक एजेंसियाँ अपने दायित्व में असफल रही।
 - फार्माकोविजिलेंस (दवा सुरक्षा निगरानी) का अभाव है।
2. **बच्चों की औषधीय उपेक्षा:**
 - बच्चे “छोटे वयस्क” नहीं हैं — उनके शरीर में दवाओं का असर अलग होता है।
 - अधिकांश दवाओं का परीक्षण वयस्कों पर होता है और बाल खुराक **अनुमान पर आधारित** होती है।
 - इस कारण बच्चों को “थेरेप्यूटिक ऑफ़न (औषधीय अनाथ)” कहा गया है।
3. **वैश्विक छवि पर असर:**
 - गाम्बिया, उज्बेकिस्तान, इंडोनेशिया और कैमरून जैसे देशों में भारतीय सिरप से हुई मौतों ने भारत की “ग्लोबल साउथ फार्मसी” की छवि को नुकसान पहुँचाया है।
4. **सामाजिक-आर्थिक प्रभाव:**
 - स्वास्थ्य खर्च गरीब परिवारों को **गरीबी के जाल** में फँसा देता है।
 - **सस्ती और सुरक्षित बाल दवाएँ** एक मानवीय आवश्यकता हैं।
5. **सुधार के सुझाव:**
 - सीडीएससीओ और राज्य दवा नियंत्रण एजेंसियों को सशक्त किया जाए।
 - बाल दवाओं के लिए विशेष परीक्षण और फार्माकोविजिलेंस अनिवार्य हो।
 - बच्चों के लिए आवश्यक दवाओं की सूची (EML) तैयार की जाए।
 - ओवर-द-काउंटर (OTC) दवाओं की बिक्री पर निगरानी और लेबलिंग बाध्यकारी हो।

लेखिका का निष्कर्ष है कि **बच्चों का स्वास्थ्य अधिकार संविधान द्वारा संरक्षित मौलिक अधिकार है**, और इसे सुनिश्चित करने के लिए **सख्त दवा नियंत्रण, अनुसंधान और जवाबदेही** आवश्यक है।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** Child Health Rights, Drug Regulation, Pharmacovigilance in India
- **Article 39(f):** Directive Principle ensuring protection of child health
- **Institutions Involved:** CDSCO, Health Ministry, WHO, State Drug Authorities
- **Global Angle:** Export of contaminated syrups damaging India's credibility
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-II:** Health Governance, Child Rights, Regulatory Accountability
 - **GS-III:** Public Health, Biotechnology, Drug Safety, Ethical Standards



Madhya Pradesh is India's largest soybean producer, but young farmers are losing interest in farming, facing key issues such as improper implementation of minimum support price, seed quality, input cost and the possibility of the import of soybean and soybean meal from the United States. **A.M. Jigesh** reports on a brewing crisis

Arvind Singh Rathore was born in 1989, which was the year before his grandfather, late Thakur Datar Singh Rathore, and his father, Thakur Santosh Singh Rathore, began cultivating soybean on their ancestral farmland in Muradpura, a village on the outskirts of Indore in Madhya Pradesh. The oilseed was quite new to farmers in this area even though others in the State had been sowing it as far back as the late 1970s and early 1980s. Arvind grew up helping his family earn a living growing soybean. For about 15 years now, he has been managing soybean on 25 acres of land, with the help of his father. But something has changed. The young farmer, also a district leader of the Rashtriya Swamijewak Sangh-supported Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, now wants to leave agriculture and look for another job in another sector. The reasons are many.

Even as the harvesting of soybean was going on, he found time to talk about some of the reasons. He said youngsters like him were no longer interested in farming due to multiple issues that ranged from climate change to the import-export policies of the Union Government. "The yield is very low this time," he said. "We get two quintals to 2.5 quintals per acre now. There was a time when we used to get more than four quintals. This is less than half of what my grandfather and father used to get. The price is also almost a ₹1,000 less than what we used to get 15 years ago. We do not have any other alternate crops here as maize, a popular alternate crop, is what the nilgai likes." The nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) is an antelope species which farmers consider to be a nuisance as it destroys crops, Arvind pointed out.

Arvind has also been reaching out to his farmer friends on the impact that the possible import of soybean from the United States could have. "The government is already importing soybean oil and other edible oils. But if soybean is imported from the U.S., our crisis will deepen. The government should set its import-export policy right," he says.

The MSP issue

There is another issue that he and other farmer leaders are engaged with, which is proper implementation of the minimum support price (MSP) and procurement by the government in local markets. In the ongoing *kharif* season, the government had announced ₹5,328 as the MSP for a quintal of soybean. But in the Chhawan grain market of Indore, farmers have been selling their produce for as low as ₹3,000 per quintal. According to Arvind, "The government had promised MSP, but we are not getting even half the MSP after the harvest. Soybean cultivation gives us huge losses. Both the Centre and State governments claim that they have doubled the income of farmers. The reality on the ground is quite the opposite. Farmers are leaving agriculture. They are compelled to do it to protect their land."

The Union Government, in a statement on October 6, 2025, had said that the country's overall oilseed sowing area, during the 2025 *kharif* season, had decreased by 10.62 lakh hectares compared to the previous year. The decrease in soybean alone was 9.1 lakh hectares. Madhya Pradesh is India's largest soybean producer – over 40% – harvesting about 52 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) from about 53 lakh hectares.

Dilip Singh is another farmer in the neighbourhood who has been cultivating soybean since 1997. He too agreed with Arvind that farmers are not recovering even the input cost which is the



This is a very dangerous story being put forth by some vested interests... the people who want to import soybean to India. For them it is business. If that happens, the industry will be dead...

D.N. PATHAK, Executive Director of the Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA)

reason for the decrease in cultivation. Their forebears used to cultivate coarse cereals, millets and pulses earlier but switched to soybean based on what the government presented to them – soybean cultivation was linked to ensuring self-reliance in edible oil requirements and in meeting the protein needs of a huge population dependent on vegetarian food.

Upset with the change in fortunes, Dilip rued the shift to soybean. "Now the prices of millets and pulses have increased and the prices of soybean have come down. We should not have shifted to soybean," he said. In 2014, he used to get between ₹4,200 and ₹4,500 for a quintal of soybean. "This season, I sold soybean for ₹3,300 and ₹3,500 a quintal. If it is very good quality, then it will get ₹4,000. But no one is buying at the MSP rate," he said.

Both Arvind and Dilip said the Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (price difference payment scheme) announced by the government was no solution.

"For one acre, I have to spend ₹8,000 to ₹10,000 as input cost. The harvest machine itself costs ₹2,500 to ₹3,000 to run per acre. The Bhavantar Yojana is a fraud being played on farmers as the model price and average price are different. The government says something and does something else. This is duplicity," Arvind lamented.

The threat of imports

Sher Singh Thakur, another farmer, said the government should stop any plan to import soybean. "The officials should promote value addition and help the farmer. They should first think about the farmer. Every farmer is facing losses. The government is importing edible oil. But farmers here are unable to sell their soybean at a decent price. We have to take a loan for input costs and 70% of the farmers depend on loans," he said.

The Executive Director of the Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA), D.N. Pathak, has seen both the growth and the crisis in the soybean sector. He believes that any shortage in its cultivation will have a direct impact on oilseed availability as soybean in India is not an oilseed crop, Pathak said. "Only 18% or 19% of the soybean is used to make oil. It is basically a protein crop." He said SOPA has been requesting the government to ensure that farmers get the correct price. "Productivity is low. It has been low for the last 30 to 40 years. It has not improved. A lot needs to be done to improve productivity. The industry should also work there. The government should certainly make efforts," he said.

Pathak said that talk about the import of soybean was being floated by an import lobby with vested interests. "They are asking why we grow soybean? This is a very dangerous story being put forth by some vested interests... the people who want to export soybean in India, and the people who want to import soybean to India. For them it is business. If that happens, the industry will be dead. And the farmer will also be dead."

He said, "The government has to understand this. We have about 180 plants for extracting soybean oil and for making soybean meal. All of them will have to be closed down. We have about ₹6 billion to ₹7 billion worth of investment. All this will go away. Banks will write off the loans. I don't know what farmers will do. Whatever they grow in this area instead of soybean... the price of that product will crash as soybean is cultivated in a huge area. It is actually scary."

A trained professional in electronics, Pathak joined SOPA in 1994, as he had a deep interest in

agriculture. It comes as no surprise as his family of farmers is from Uttar Pradesh. "We need about 7 million tonnes to 8 million tonnes of soybean meal," he says. "This means that we must crush about 100 lakh tonnes of soybean, which is our production now. If we grow more, we export. But we cannot compete because our MSP is so high. So, if somebody were to bring soybean from the U.S., what will happen to this soybean which our farmers grow? Or is there a suggestion that we should not grow soybean? U.S. soybean is roughly ₹380 a tonne. Our soybean is ₹620 per tonne. So should we bring U.S. soybean at ₹380?"

He raises more questions. "Then who will buy the local soybean? What will the farmer do? The whole import talk is absolutely ridiculous," says a visibly angry Pathak. "I don't know why it should even happen. Our processors are mainly into oil extraction and making soybean meal. They cannot compete with U.S. processors."

Kedar Sirshi is a member of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and president of the Congress party's farmer cell in Madhya Pradesh. According to him, the State's economy is dependent on soybean. "The production has been coming down of late. Substandard seeds is one of the main reasons. This year, it is particularly low. Sowing has been done across approximately 52 lakh hectares to 53 lakh hectares. But production will be very low in at least 30 lakh hectares. Farmers are likely to get up to 2 quintals to 2.5 quintals an acre," he said, adding that total production from the State will be at least 20 LMT less, from about 52 LMT to 55 LMT, which was the average production rate. He said the market prices at present is 35% to 40% less than MSP. "Soybean is the lifeline of the farmers of Madhya Pradesh. If the yield increases and the proper price is given, it will help farmers. Farmers do not have any tools for price mitigation. Industries are in crisis and this crisis is percolating to farmers. All other countries provide heavy subsidies to farmers and industry. But here, both the sections do not enjoy any subsidies," he claimed.

The advent of soybean in the State

In the 1980s, Madhya Pradesh first tried black soybean. The present variety, which is yellow soybean, reached farms by the first decade of 2000. Earlier, cooperative societies used to procure soybean till the end of the 1990s and production was good too. Kedar said, "M.P.'s farmers stood on their legs with soybean farming. The losses only began in the last 10 to 15 years. The biggest issue was the seeds. Low quality seeds resulted in a decrease in production and companies began to queue up offering fertilizers and pesticides to enhance production. But this did not work. Rather than it being from lab to land, seeds are coming from market to land," he said.

When asked about the Bhavantar scheme, he said, "It is a 'copy paste exercise' of the price loss coverage of the United States Department of Agriculture, where farmers are given financial support when the prices of their products fell or their revenue decreased. There is no transparency in fixing the model price."

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of a number farmers' outfits, in which Sirshi is a member, is opposed to the policies of the State and Union Governments, particularly in the soybean sector. The Morcha claims to have the backing of a lot of farmers such as Arvind who are associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party for the issues they take up. They have also been raising issues such as suicides by soybean farmers. One of their major campaigns is against the possibility of the import of soybean and soybean meal from the U.S. The SKM cited a lack of transparency in discussions and the reluctance of governments to state that agriculture and agri markets are not part of any such negotiations.

They also point towards recent agreements between India and the United Kingdom and the EU27, on integrated agricultural facilities across



From only 30,000 hectares during the 1970s, the country has now more than 12 million hectares under soybean cultivation. You will not see any other crop having expanded in such a way

KUNWAR HARENDRA SINGH, Director of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) Institute of Soybean Research

India. The SKM had demanded that the Centre scrap all trade negotiations that will impact the lives of farmers. SOPA had also sent a letter to the Centre highlighting the point that the country has sufficient stocks of soybean meal to meet domestic demand and that allowing imports will have "devastating consequences" for India's agriculture sector.

Arun Chauhan, leader of the All India Kisan Sabha, a constituent of SKM, said that the decrease in production would be about 25% when compared to last year. "There is huge concern among farmers about U.S. imports. This has resulted in decreased cultivation. Farmers fear that their soybean will not be valued if cheap soybean is imported from the U.S. is dumped in Indian markets. Even otherwise, this year, farmers are likely to face losses worth ₹300 crore in the State; a bulk of this will be from soybean. We have urged the government to intervene. The SKM recently met all District Collectors in an attempt to demand compensation for farmers. Arun said, "We will hold a protest in Bhopal on October 27 raising the issues of farmers who are cultivating soybean and other crops."

Another farmer, Kailash Parthani, has been a trader for 35 years at the Chhawan grain market. Like Pathak, he has also seen the ups and downs of soybean. He purchases soybean from farmers for processors such as the Patanjali group. He said, "Cultivation is down and yield is less. Traders are also worried about the future of soybean. The Bhavantar scheme is not helping farmers. Unless soybean meal is exported, it will be difficult to survive. If U.S. soybean comes here, it will be a double blow," he said. Kailash said some farmers are keeping soybean for three to four years expecting that the prices will improve as export picks up. According to SOPA, on an average, India exports about two million tonnes of soybean meal, in this season, it could go down by 1.8 million tonnes. SOPA states that the reason for lack of demand for Indian soybean is its higher price.

The Chhawan market is one of the biggest soybean markets in India. During the season, traders handle about 2,000 tonnes to 2,500 tonnes of soybean a month. Said Kailash, "Traders of this market brought yellow soybean and provided it to farmers for cultivation after the 1990s. The best time was between 1995 to 2015 when we used to get 6,000 tonnes per month."

Varun, a former secretary of the market, nodded in agreement. According to him, traders in the market deal with buyers from across the country. "We have a membership of about 1,500 traders. There are a lot of workers too in this market. The fluctuations in the soybean market have impacted traders. They are losing revenue. Such fluctuations are basically from the policies of the government. The import policy of the government is a problem. If the government allows imports of soybean, it will be a major problem."

An average trader in the market makes about ₹70,000 per month. "Import will act against both the trader and the farmer. It is against Armanbharta," he said.

Manoj Kala, president of the market, has a clear demand. He wants the government to ensure MSP to farmers and that the de-oiled cake of soybean should be procured by the government.

A reposing of faith in soybean

In another part of Indore, despite the sentiment and arguments expressed from the ground, the scientific community has not lost hope in soybean and its future. The Director of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) Institute of Soybean Research, Kunwar Harendra Singh said: "From only 30,000 hectares during the 1970s, the country has now more than 12 million hectares under soybean cultivation. You will not see any other crop having expanded in such a way. So this is the big achievement as far as this crop is concerned."

He said that the present decrease in the area of sowing is primarily due to a decline in prices. "The government has been increasing the MSP, but the market rates were declining very fast. And then, other crops like maize are in demand," he said. "This is the only plant based group which has 40% protein... This needs the attention of the government and also different industries to create the awareness on how to use this good quality protein," he added, pointing to the need for more research on the use of soybean as a human food.

Mahavir Prasad Sharma, his colleague at the institute, said there is an incubation centre for start-ups in the institute that helps entrepreneurs develop soybean-based food products. A focus area is developing products that will be a 'palate pleaser' as far as youngsters are concerned.

Said Kunwar, "The crop basically belongs to China, and in India earlier, only a few States such as Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand and some of the northeastern States used to cultivate it. More than 90% of soy is being used for cattle feed. We do not have value-added products. We can make different nutritional powders from this. But the industry has to come forward for that."

Farmers like Arvind are in touch with scientists like Kunwar to understand the latest developments in soybean cultivation and its processing. Arvind, however, said that had ICAR provided them with adequate quantity of good seeds, they would not have depended on private seed suppliers, whom they cannot trust.

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 3 – Agriculture (Crops, MSP, Farm Distress, Global Trade Impact)

GS Paper 2 – Governance & Policy Implementation (Agriculture Schemes, WTO & Imports Regulation)

English Summary:

The article analyses the **agrarian distress in Madhya Pradesh**, India's largest soybean-producing state, and how young farmers are **losing interest in soybean cultivation** due to falling prices, rising costs, and poor policy implementation.

Background:

Soybean, introduced in the 1970s, expanded from **30,000 hectares to over 12 million hectares**, making Madhya Pradesh the "Soy State of India." It became a key **cash crop and protein source** for farmers, replacing traditional cereals and pulses.

However, in recent years, soybean cultivation has become **unprofitable** due to multiple factors:

Key Issues Highlighted:

1. **Low Yield and Poor MSP Implementation:**
 - Current yields are only **7–8 quintals per acre**, half of what earlier generations achieved.
 - Farmers complain that the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** of ₹4,600 per quintal is ineffective as **procurement is minimal**, and most are forced to sell at **₹3,800–₹4,000** to private traders.
2. **Seed Quality & Input Costs:**
 - Declining **seed quality**, spurious pesticides, and rising **fertiliser prices** have hurt productivity.
 - Lack of **timely monsoon** and soil degradation have worsened the crisis.
3. **Import Threat from the United States:**
 - Farmers fear that import of **soybean and soymeal from the US** will **flood Indian markets**, depressing local prices further.
 - Trade associations argue that imports will help poultry and feed industries, but farmers see it as a **direct blow to domestic producers**.
4. **Young Farmers' Disinterest:**
 - The younger generation is **moving away from agriculture** due to repeated crop failures, erratic prices, and lack of institutional support.
 - Many are seeking non-farm employment or shifting to maize and vegetables.
5. **Government Response & Policy Gaps:**
 - The **Soybean Processors Association of India (SOPA)** has demanded strict control on imports and **scientific price stabilisation mechanisms**.
 - There is **duplication and inconsistency** between the Centre and State governments regarding MSP implementation and crop insurance.
6. **Structural Problems in Farming:**
 - Inadequate **irrigation coverage**, poor **storage infrastructure**, and lack of **market linkages** reduce farmer earnings.
 - Small and marginal farmers are trapped in debt cycles due to reliance on local traders and moneylenders.

Analytical Insights:

- The article situates the crisis in a broader context of **agrarian stagnation** and the **failure to diversify crops** sustainably.
- The introduction of soybean initially improved farmer income, but **policy neglect and lack of innovation** have made it vulnerable.
- The crisis underscores the need for:
 - **Value addition and processing infrastructure** in soybean-producing regions.
 - **Enforcement of MSP and procurement** by government agencies.
 - **Import regulation** to safeguard domestic producers.

- **Crop diversification and soil rejuvenation** schemes under PM-KUSUM and PM-Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

लेख में **मध्य प्रदेश के सोयाबीन किसानों की बढ़ती आर्थिक समस्या** पर प्रकाश डाला गया है। कभी “**सोय राज्य (Soy State)**” कहलाने वाला यह क्षेत्र अब **कृषि संकट** से गुजर रहा है।

🌱 पृष्ठभूमि:

1970 के दशक में शुरू हुई सोयाबीन खेती ने 30,000 हेक्टेयर से बढ़कर **1.2 करोड़ हेक्टेयर** क्षेत्र को कवर किया। यह किसानों की प्रमुख नकदी फसल बन गई थी, लेकिन अब यह **अलाभकारी** होती जा रही है।

⚠️ मुख्य समस्याएँ:

1. **कम उत्पादकता और MSP विफलता:**
 - उत्पादन घटकर **7-8 क्विंटल प्रति एकड़** रह गया है।
 - सरकार द्वारा घोषित **₹4,600 प्रति क्विंटल MSP** का कोई ठोस लाभ नहीं मिल रहा, किसान **₹3,800-₹4,000** में बेचने को मजबूर हैं।
2. **बीज और लागत की समस्या:**
 - बीजों की गुणवत्ता खराब, खाद-कीटनाशक महंगे, और **जलवायु परिवर्तन** ने उत्पादन घटाया है।
3. **अमेरिकी आयात का खतरा:**
 - अमेरिका से **सोयाबीन और सोयामील के आयात** से घरेलू बाजार में कीमतें और गिरने का डर है।
 - प्रोसेसिंग कंपनियाँ इसे लाभकारी बता रही हैं, लेकिन किसानों के लिए यह **आय पर सीधा आघात** है।
4. **युवा किसानों की अरुचि:**
 - बार-बार फसल विफलता और सरकारी समर्थन के अभाव से **युवा पीढ़ी खेती छोड़ रही है**।
5. **नीतिगत असंगति:**
 - **केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों** के बीच MSP और बीमा नीतियों में **स्पष्ट समन्वय की कमी** है।
6. **संरचनात्मक समस्याएँ:**
 - सिंचाई की कमी, भंडारण सुविधाओं का अभाव, और मंडी तक सीमित पहुँच ने स्थिति बिगाड़ी है।

समाधान और सुझाव:

- **MSP और सरकारी खरीद व्यवस्था** को प्रभावी बनाया जाए।
- **आयात नीति में संतुलन** रखा जाए ताकि घरेलू किसान सुरक्षित रहें।
- **फसल विविधीकरण और मृदा सुधार योजनाओं** को बढ़ावा दिया जाए।
- **प्रसंस्करण उद्योग और वैल्यू एडिशन** की व्यवस्था ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में की जाए।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** Soybean Crisis in Madhya Pradesh
- **Relevance:** Agriculture, Trade, Farmer Welfare
- **Schemes Mentioned:** MSP, PM-KUSUM, PMFBY, PM-Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- **Concerns:** Import threat, market volatility, youth migration from agriculture
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-III:** Agriculture, Cropping patterns, MSP reforms, Food processing
 - **GS-II:** Policy implementation, Centre-State coordination

Japan's new PM commits to higher defence spend, ties with India, Quad

Takaichi said she 'looks forward' to promoting the Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership; 'in order to promote the main pillar of Tokyo's diplomacy, a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, India is a crucial partner,' says an Assistant Minister

Suhasini Haidar
TOKYO

In a dramatic announcement three days after she was sworn in, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said her government will ensure that Japan's defence spending would increase to 2% of its GDP by March 2026, two years ahead of schedule, even as she pledged support for "security partnerships" like the Quad, which includes India. Ms. Takaichi, who said the government's first priority is to tackle inflation and boost fiscal spending, was addressing the Japanese Parliament, or Diet, in an inaugural speech about her agenda in office.

Ms. Takaichi, the country's first woman Prime Minister, also responded on Friday to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulatory message on her appointment, saying she "looks forward" to promoting the Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

"The free, open, and stable international order



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi attends the House of Representatives plenary session to deliver her policy speech in Tokyo on Friday. AFP

with which we have become familiar is being significantly shaken by historical shifts in the balance of power and intensifying geopolitical competition," Ms. Takaichi said, citing Russia, China and North Korea as "serious concerns" and promising to deepen Japan's "multilateral security consultations" involving the U.S., South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and the Quad.

In an interview to *The Hindu*, Assistant Minister and Spokesperson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Toshihiro Kitamura said India was a "unique" country

for its leadership of the Global South, and that Ms. Takaichi was committed to following former PM Shinzo Abe's lead on the Indo-Pacific.

Crucial partner

"In order to promote the main pillar of the Japanese diplomacy, a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, India is a crucial partner. Prime Minister Takaichi is fully committed to promote further cooperation with India," Mr. Kitamura said.

In the parliament speech, Ms. Takaichi also ordered a review of Japan's National Security, Strategic

and Defence plans that included the commitment on raising defence expenditure.

Japan's GDP last year was about \$4 trillion (591 trillion Yen), and according to the National Security Strategy documents issued in 2022, defence spending was due to reach 11 trillion Yen, or 2%, only by the end of the financial year in 2027. The announcement on defence spending and the Indo-Pacific is significant as it comes a day before Ms. Takaichi leaves for Malaysia where she will meet with counterparts from ASEAN countries on October 26, and then will return to prepare for U.S. President Donald Trump's three-day visit to Japan beginning October 27.

Ms. Takaichi promised to elevate the Japan-U.S. relationship to "even greater heights". It remains to be seen whether Ms. Takaichi will also raise the Quad and scheduling the Summit due to be held in India later this year, which has been stalled due to India-U.S. tensions on trade issues.

Ms. Takaichi called Ja-

pan's population decline its "biggest problem", and struck a sharp note on immigration, suggesting controls on foreign nationals working in the country, including restrictions on land acquisition by them.

Ms. Takaichi gave the parliament address after appointing her Cabinet, which includes several faces familiar to New Delhi. Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi was a minister in the Shinzo Abe cabinet (2017-19), while Internal Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi was the Foreign Minister (2021-23), under former PM Fumio Kishida, and travelled to Delhi for the G20 and Quad Foreign Minister's meeting. Meanwhile, 44-year-old Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi is the son of former Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi, who travelled to India in 2005 to reset ties, set off strategic talks and launched the practice of annual summits with PM Manmohan Singh.

(The correspondent is in Japan at the invitation of the Japanese Foreign Ministry)

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 2 – International Relations (India-Japan Relations, Indo-Pacific, QUAD)

GS Paper 3 – Security (Defence Cooperation, Strategic Partnerships)

English Summary:

In her first major policy address after assuming office, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi announced that Japan will **raise its defence spending to 2% of GDP by March 2026**, two years ahead of schedule.

This marks a **historic shift in Japan's post-war defence policy**, symbolizing a move away from pacifism towards proactive security participation in regional and global affairs.

Ms. Takaichi also pledged to strengthen **security partnerships** with the **Quad countries — India, the U.S., and Australia** — and deepen strategic cooperation in the **Indo-Pacific region**.

Key Highlights:

1. Defence Expansion:

- Japan's GDP ($\approx$ \$4 trillion) will allocate about **¥11 trillion (2% of GDP)** for defence by FY 2026.
- The new strategy builds on Japan's **2022 National Security Strategy**, focusing on regional threats from **China, Russia, and North Korea**.

2. Strategic Partnerships:

- Ms. Takaichi emphasized “**multilateral security consultations**” with the U.S., South Korea, Philippines, Australia, and India.
- The **Japan–India Strategic and Global Partnership** is described as the “**main pillar of Tokyo’s diplomacy.**”

3. Focus on Indo-Pacific:

- The policy underlines Japan’s commitment to maintaining a “**Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)**”, countering China’s assertive influence in the region.
- India is viewed as a **crucial partner** in ensuring maritime security, freedom of navigation, and economic connectivity.

4. Domestic Policy Notes:

- Takaichi termed **Japan’s declining population** as its “biggest problem,” and proposed reviewing policies on **immigration and labour**.
- She also vowed to **stabilize inflation**, manage fiscal spending, and modernize Japan’s defence forces.

5. Continuity in Diplomacy:

- Takaichi’s foreign policy follows the legacy of **former PM Shinzo Abe**, who championed the **Quad and Indo-Pacific vision**.
- Key cabinet members like **Toshimitsu Motegi** (former FM) and **Yoshimasa Hayashi** (former Defence Minister) are seen as maintaining policy continuity.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

जापान की नई प्रधानमंत्री **साने ताकाइची** ने पदभार ग्रहण करने के तीन दिन बाद घोषणा की कि जापान **मार्च 2026 तक अपने GDP का 2% रक्षा व्यय** में खर्च करेगा — जो कि पहले निर्धारित समय से दो वर्ष पहले है।

यह निर्णय जापान की **युद्धोत्तर शांतिवादी नीति से एक ऐतिहासिक परिवर्तन** को दर्शाता है, जिससे वह अब क्षेत्रीय और वैश्विक सुरक्षा में सक्रिय भूमिका निभाना चाहता है।

🔗 मुख्य बिंदु:

1. रक्षा व्यय में वृद्धि:

- जापान का GDP लगभग **\$4 ट्रिलियन** है और उसमें से **¥11 ट्रिलियन (2%)** रक्षा क्षेत्र को आवंटित किया जाएगा।
- नई रणनीति का केंद्र **चीन, रूस और उत्तर कोरिया** से उत्पन्न सुरक्षा चुनौतियाँ हैं।

2. भारत और क्वाड पर ध्यान:

- ताकाइची ने कहा कि **भारत, अमेरिका, ऑस्ट्रेलिया और जापान** के साथ सुरक्षा साझेदारी को और मजबूत किया जाएगा।
- उन्होंने कहा, “भारत जापान की कूटनीति का मुख्य स्तंभ है और **इंडो-पैसिफिक** में एक महत्वपूर्ण साझेदार है।”

3. इंडो-पैसिफिक नीति:

- जापान ने **Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)** की अवधारणा पर बल दिया है ताकि चीन की बढ़ती दखलअंदाजी का संतुलन बनाया जा सके।

4. घरेलू नीतियाँ:

- जापान की **घटती जनसंख्या** को सबसे बड़ी चुनौती बताया गया।
- उन्होंने **प्रवासन नीति की समीक्षा, मुद्रास्फीति नियंत्रण और राजकोषीय प्रबंधन** को अपनी प्राथमिकताएँ बताया।

5. कूटनीतिक निरंतरता:

- ताकाइची का दृष्टिकोण **शिंजो आबे की “इंडो-पैसिफिक” रणनीति** का विस्तार है।
- उनके मंत्रिमंडल में कई अनुभवी नेता शामिल हैं जो भारत और Quad से निकट संबंधों को आगे बढ़ाएँगे।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** Japan’s Strategic Shift and India–Japan–Quad Relations
- **Key Terms:** Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), Quad, Multilateral Security, 2% Defence Spending Target

- **Implications for India:**
 - Deepened **maritime cooperation** and joint naval exercises (Malabar).
 - Enhanced **technology and defence production partnerships**.
 - Alignment on **China's assertiveness in Indo-Pacific**.
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-II:** International Relations – India–Japan relations, Quad diplomacy.
 - **GS-III:** Internal & External Security, Defence Policy.

India opposed to any move that may affect truce in Gaza

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

A day after the Israeli Knesset passed a preliminary Bill on annexation of the West Bank, India reiterated that it opposes any “unilateral” moves that has the potential to dismantle the peace initiative of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Speaking at the UN Security Council’s Quarterly Open Debate convened by Russia, India’s Permanent Representative at the United Nations P. Harish said India’s position is based on its assessment of the “overall Palestinian question” and emphasised that food and other requirements “must flow into Gaza in an unimpeded manner”.

“The landmark initiative of the United States has generated diplomatic momentum towards peace and all parties must adhere to their obligations in this regard. We also remain firmly opposed to any unilateral moves by parties concerned. Now is the time for all parties to support ongoing peace efforts, rather than to derail them,” said Mr. Harish on Thursday.

The remarks came soon after the Knesset approved a Bill to apply Israeli sove-



P. Harish

reignty in the West Bank. The Bill titled “Application of Israeli Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria, 2025” was initiated by Member of Knesset Avi Maoz and was passed by a narrow margin. It was sent to the Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee for discussion before being submitted for further votes.

Palestinian question

Mr. Harish did not refer to the Knesset’s move but reminded that India’s position is “firmly rooted in its consistent stance on the developments since October 7, 2023 as well as the overall Palestinian question.”

“India has clearly condemned terrorism; stressed there must be an end to destruction, despair and suffering of civilians and sought the immediate release of all hostages; held that humanitarian assis-

tance, particularly, food, fuel and other necessities must flow into Gaza in an unimpeded manner,” said Mr. Harish who described President Trump’s peace initiative as an “enabler and catalyst in this regard”.

He said that India supports “inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty” and that the two-state solution is the “only pragmatic path”.

Mr. Harish highlighted India’s recognition of Palestine in 1988 when India began advocating certain important elements of its policy for the Israel-Palestinian conflict – “a sovereign, independent, viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, within secure and recognised borders”.

The Indian envoy said that the Palestinian people require support from the international community to “rebuild” their lives. He said peace in Palestine has regional implications and India seeks lasting peace in the region. He further reminded the Israeli and Palestinian stakeholders to “honour their respective commitments”.

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 2 – International Relations (India's Foreign Policy, UN, West Asia Conflict)

GS Paper 3 – Internal Security and Global Peace (Impact of Global Conflicts on India)

English Summary:

India has reiterated its opposition to **unilateral actions** that could undermine peace efforts in **West Asia**, particularly the **Gaza truce**. The statement came after the **Israeli Knesset** passed a preliminary bill titled “*Application of Israeli Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria, 2025*”, which aims to annex parts of the **West Bank**.

Speaking at the **UN Security Council's Quarterly Open Debate**, India's Permanent Representative **P. Harish** said that such unilateral steps threaten to derail **President Donald Trump's peace initiative** and ongoing truce efforts in Gaza.

🌐 India's Key Positions:

1. Opposition to Unilateral Moves:

- India stated that all parties must adhere to peace obligations and avoid unilateral actions that could **destabilize ceasefire agreements**.
- Emphasized that **food, fuel, and humanitarian aid** must flow freely into Gaza.

2. Support for Two-State Solution:

- India reaffirmed support for the “**two-state solution**”, envisioning a **sovereign, independent, and viable Palestine** living side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders.

3. Historical Consistency:

- India's stance is consistent since recognizing **Palestine in 1988** and advocating for the “**inalienable rights of Palestinians**” — self-determination, sovereignty, and national independence.

4. Condemnation of Terrorism:

- India condemned all forms of terrorism but stressed that **collective punishment of civilians must end** and that humanitarian access should not be blocked.

5. Regional Implications:

- Mr. Harish warned that instability in Gaza has **broader implications for regional peace**, and urged both Israel and Palestine to **honour their commitments** to existing peace frameworks.
-

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

भारत ने **गाज़ा युद्धविराम (truce)** को प्रभावित करने वाली किसी भी **एकतरफा कार्रवाई** का विरोध किया है। यह बयान उस समय आया जब **इज़रायली संसद (Knesset)** ने “*जूडिया और समारिया 2025 में इज़रायली संप्रभुता लागू करने*” संबंधी विधेयक को प्रारंभिक रूप से पारित किया।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद की त्रैमासिक खुली बहस में भारत के स्थायी प्रतिनिधि **पी. हरीश** ने कहा कि ऐसी कार्रवाइयाँ **ट्रम्प शांति पहल** और गाज़ा में चल रहे युद्धविराम को कमजोर कर सकती हैं।

🌐 भारत के प्रमुख रुख:

1. एकतरफा कदमों का विरोध:

- भारत ने कहा कि सभी पक्षों को **शांति दायित्वों का पालन** करना चाहिए और कोई भी एकतरफा कदम **युद्धविराम को कमजोर** कर सकता है।
- गाज़ा में **खाद्य, ईंधन और मानवीय सहायता** का अबाध प्रवाह आवश्यक है।

2. दो-राष्ट्र समाधान का समर्थन:

- भारत ने पुनः पुष्टि की कि **इज़राइल और फिलिस्तीन** दोनों को **स्वतंत्र और सुरक्षित सीमाओं** में साथ-साथ रहना चाहिए — यही “**व्यावहारिक मार्ग**” है।

3. ऐतिहासिक स्थिरता:

- भारत ने **1988 में फिलिस्तीन को मान्यता दी थी** और तब से उसके **अविभाज्य अधिकारों** — **आत्मनिर्णय, स्वतंत्रता और संप्रभुता** — का समर्थन करता रहा है।

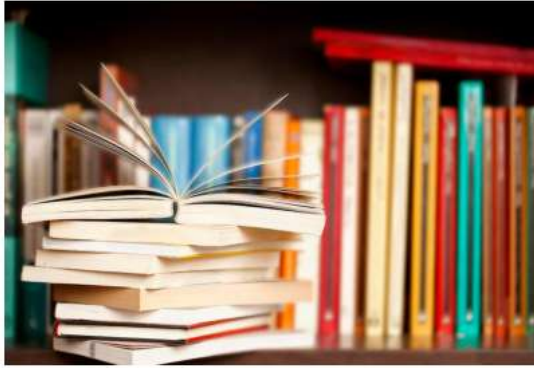
4. आतंकवाद की निंदा:

- भारत ने आतंकवाद की कड़ी निंदा की लेकिन कहा कि **नागरिकों के खिलाफ दंडात्मक कदम** अस्वीकार्य

- हैं और मानवीय सहायता बाधित नहीं होनी चाहिए।
5. क्षेत्रीय शांति पर प्रभाव:
- भारत ने चेतावनी दी कि गाज़ा में अस्थिरता का असर पूरे पश्चिम एशिया क्षेत्र पर पड़ सकता है।
 - भारत ने दोनों पक्षों से अपने वादों और शांति प्रतिबद्धताओं का पालन करने की अपील की।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **Topic:** India's Stance on Israel–Palestine Conflict
- **Representative:** P. Harish, India's Permanent Representative to the UN
- **India's Position:**
 - Against unilateral annexation.
 - Supports **Two-State Solution**.
 - Recognized **Palestine in 1988**.
 - Advocates **peace, coexistence, and humanitarian relief**.
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-II:** India and its Neighbourhood Relations; Role of UN; India's Foreign Policy.
 - **GS-III:** Security, International Peace, and Global Stability.



The new award will be open to fiction from any country aimed at children aged 8 to 12. GETTY IMAGES

Children's fiction to get its first Booker Prize debut in 2027

Associated Press

LONDON

The Booker Prize Foundation announced Friday that it is setting up the Children's Booker Prize alongside its existing awards for English-language and translated fiction.

Like its sister prizes, the children's award comes with a 50,000-pound (\$67,000) purse.

The prize will open for submissions early next year, and the inaugural award will be handed out in 2027, with the winner picked by a jury of children and adults led by writer Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Britain's current children's laureate.

Mr. Cottrell-Boyce, whose books include the Carnegie Medal-winning "*Millions*," said he was "buzzing" about the prospect.

"It's going to be – as they say – absolute scenes in there. Let the yelling commence," he said.

Funded by the arts, environment, and education charity AKO Foundation, the new award will be open to fiction from any country aimed at children aged 8 to 12, either written in English or translated, and published in the U.K. or Ireland.

Booker Prize Foundation Chief Executive Gaby Wood said the prize aimed to inspire more young people to read and be "a seed from which we hope future generations of lifelong readers will grow." The original Booker Prize was founded in 1969 and has established a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Its winners have included Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan, Arundhati Roy, and Hilary Mantel.

The International Booker Prize was established in 2005 as a lifetime achievement award. Since 2016, it has gone to a single work of translated fiction, with the prize money split between author and translator. Past winners include Nobel literature laureates Olga Tokarczuk of Poland and Han Kang of South Korea.

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 1 – Indian Heritage and Culture (Art, Literature, Awards)

GS Paper 2 – Education and Social Development (Encouraging Reading Culture, Youth Literacy)

English Summary:

The **Booker Prize Foundation** has announced the launch of a **new international award — the Children's Booker Prize** — which will make its debut in **2027**. This new prize aims to celebrate excellence in fiction written for **children aged 8 to 12**.

The award will run alongside the existing **Booker Prize (for English fiction)** and the **International Booker Prize (for translated fiction)**.

Key Features of the Award:

- **Prize Money:** £50,000 (≈ \$67,000 USD).
- **Eligibility:** Open to fiction from any country, written in or translated into English, and published in the **U.K. or Ireland**.
- **Jury Composition:** The first jury will include **children and adults**, led by British children's laureate **Frank Cottrell-Boyce**.
- **Purpose:** To promote reading among young people and inspire a lifelong love for books.

Background and Significance:

- The **original Booker Prize** (founded in 1969) is one of the most prestigious literary awards in the world, known for transforming writers' careers.
- The **International Booker Prize** was introduced in 2005 and now honours translated works, with the prize shared between author and translator.
- The new **Children's Booker Prize** — funded by the **AKO Foundation** (a charity supporting arts, education, and environment) — aims to “sow the seed for future generations of readers.”

Contextual Relevance for Exams:

This move reflects a growing global effort to strengthen **children's literature, reading habits, and creative imagination** — key components of **NEP 2020's emphasis on foundational literacy and cultural development**.

Hindi Summary (हिंदी सारांश):

बुकर्स पुरस्कार फाउंडेशन ने घोषणा की है कि वर्ष **2027** से बच्चों के लिए विशेष “**चिल्ड्रेन बुकर्स प्राइज**” शुरू किया जाएगा। यह पुरस्कार **8 से 12 वर्ष के बच्चों के लिए लिखी गई काल्पनिक (fiction) पुस्तकों** को दिया जाएगा।

पुरस्कार की प्रमुख विशेषताएँ:

- **इनाम राशि:** £50,000 (लगभग ₹67,00,000)।
- **पात्रता:** किसी भी देश की ऐसी रचना जो अंग्रेज़ी में लिखी गई हो या अनूदित होकर **यू.के. या आयरलैंड में प्रकाशित** हुई हो।
- **जुरी:** बच्चों और वयस्कों की मिश्रित समिति, जिसका नेतृत्व **फ्रैंक कॉट्रेल-बॉयस** करेंगे, जो ब्रिटेन के मौजूदा **चिल्ड्रेन लॉरेट (Children's Laureate)** हैं।
- **उद्देश्य:** बच्चों में **पठन संस्कृति (reading culture)** को बढ़ावा देना और साहित्य के प्रति आजीवन रुचि विकसित करना।

पृष्ठभूमि और महत्व:

- **मूल बुकर्स पुरस्कार** (1969) विश्व का प्रतिष्ठित साहित्यिक सम्मान है।
- **इंटरनेशनल बुकर्स पुरस्कार** (2005) अनूदित साहित्य को सम्मानित करता है।
- नया **चिल्ड्रेन बुकर्स पुरस्कार**, **AKO Foundation** द्वारा समर्थित है, जो कला, शिक्षा और पर्यावरण के क्षेत्र में कार्यरत संस्था है।

यह कदम आने वाली पीढ़ियों में **पठन और सृजनशीलता को प्रोत्साहित करने** की दिशा में एक ऐतिहासिक पहल है, जो **राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति (NEP 2020)** के लक्ष्यों — “**बुनियादी साक्षरता और सांस्कृतिक सशक्तिकरण**” — से भी जुड़ा हुआ है।

Key Points for Exam Notes:

- **New Award:** Children's Booker Prize (from 2027).
- **For:** Fiction aimed at children aged 8–12.

- **Prize Money:** £50,000.
- **Organizer:** Booker Prize Foundation.
- **Supported by:** AKO Foundation.
- **Purpose:** To encourage children's literature and reading habits.
- **Related to:** NEP 2020 (India) – foundational literacy, cultural values.
- **GS Relevance:**
 - **GS-I:** Art & Culture (Literature, Global Awards).
 - **GS-II:** Education Policy, Youth Development.