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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



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## GS I

### 1. Monsoon sets in over Nicobar, likely to reach Kerala by May 31, says IMD

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

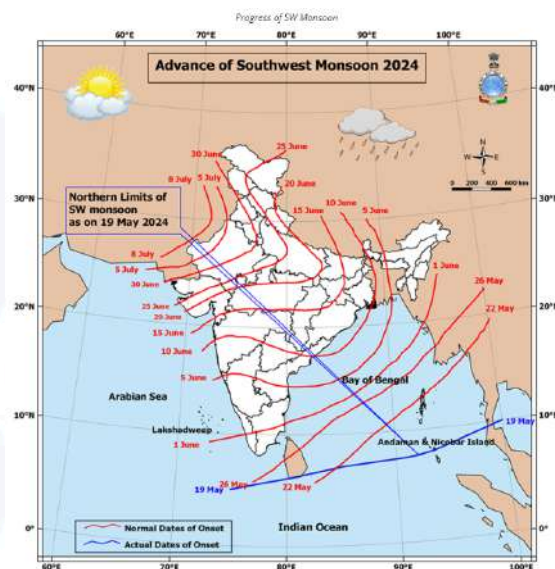
Prelims: Indian Monsoon, Jet Streams

Mains: Salient features of World's Physical Geography.

**News:** The southwest monsoon recently made its onset over the Nicobar Islands, the southernmost region of the country.

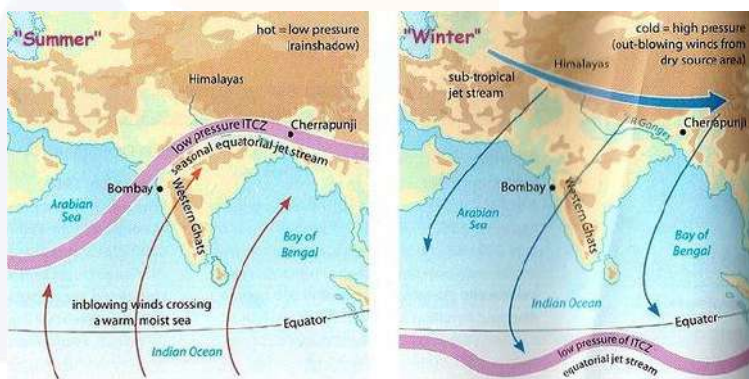
#### About Monsoon

- A monsoon is traditionally a seasonal reversing wind accompanied by corresponding changes in precipitation and associated with annual latitudinal oscillation of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).
- On the Indian subcontinent, as the rain bearing winds come from the southwest direction, it is known as the southwest monsoon.



#### Onset of Monsoon

- The onset of the monsoon signals the beginning of the four-month (June-September) southwest monsoon season, during which India gets more than 70% of its annual rainfall. The monsoon generally covers the entire country by July 15.
- According to the IMD, the onset of the monsoon happens when there is a significant transition in the large-scale atmospheric and ocean circulations in the Indo-Pacific region.



## GS III

# 2. Consistent, coordinated: Evolution & essentials of India's climate policy

Source: IE, Page 11

Prelims: Indian Climate Policy

Mains: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation

**News:** The article discusses the evolution of India's climate policy, highlighting its determinants and the country's approach towards sustainable development.

### Historical Context and Global Disparity

- The 1990s saw significant environmental policy changes globally and in India, influenced by the Rio Summit of 1992.
- Developed countries, with 16% of the world's population, used 74% of excess resources from 1970-2017.
- In contrast, India and other developing nations remained within their sustainability limits during this period.

### Determinants of India's Climate Policy

- Geography
  - India covers 2.4% of the world's land area, with 4% of its freshwater resources.
  - It is one of the 17 mega-biodiverse countries, experiencing six distinct seasons.
  - Climate change has disrupted this harmony, impacting nature and society.
- Population
  - Home to 1.4 billion people, almost one-sixth of humanity.
  - India has low human-to-land ratio, necessitating integrated land and water management.
- Impacts
  - India is the 5th most affected country by climate change (Global Climate Risk Index).
  - Predicted economic loss due to climate change could be 2.8% of GDP (World Bank, 2018).
- Worldview
  - Guided by ancestral principles of living in harmony with nature.
  - Inspired by Gandhi's ideals of trusteeship and sustainable living.
- Actions
  - Despite low historical emissions, India has undertaken significant climate actions.
  - Emphasises evidence-based and scientifically informed actions.

### Evolution and Philosophy of India's Climate Policy

- It is centred on inclusive growth, poverty eradication, and climate-friendly lifestyles.
- Advocates the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability' (CBDR-RC).
- Promotes global initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- Believes in holistic development, integrating development and environmental sustainability.
- Embraces the ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – One Earth, One World, One Future.
- Serves as a model for sustainable development for developing nations, countering developed countries' narratives.





## Editorials, Opinions and Ideas

### 3. Renew the generalised system of preferences

Source: The Hindu, Page 9

The article discusses the need to bring back the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) between India and the USA. It forms an important part of your General Studies Paper II and III under topics International Relations and Indian Economy.

#### About GSP

- The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is a trade policy tool adopted by developed countries to offer lower tariffs to developing countries, incentivizing economic reform.
- Each developed country tailors its GSP program to specific qualification criteria to promote economic reforms without harming domestic production.
- It is the oldest and most extensive "aid for trade" approach within the World Trade Organization framework.

#### Importance of GSP

- Market Access: GSP facilitates stable market access for developing countries, aiding small businesses and women-owned enterprises to expand beyond domestic markets.
- Alternative to Chinese Imports: It provides alternatives to Chinese imports, benefiting suppliers in trusted developing countries.
- Cost Reduction: GSP reduces tariff bills for American companies, particularly benefiting small- and medium-sized enterprises.
- Labour and Environmental Reforms: It promotes reforms in labour rights, environmental sustainability, and intellectual property rights protection.

#### GSP's Role in India-US Partnership

- Trade Negotiations: GSP renewal could bolster U.S.-India trade negotiations, potentially increasing bilateral trade from the current \$200 billion to higher levels.
- Pre-2020 Negotiations: Before GSP's expiration in 2020, negotiations between the U.S. and India were close to finalising a significant trade deal covering various sectors.
- Current Trade Landscape: While India is actively negotiating free trade agreements with multiple countries, the U.S. is currently not pursuing FTAs, making GSP a critical tool for enhancing trade relations with India.
- Private Sector Collaboration: Private sectors in both countries are increasing investments in key technologies, but lack regulatory stability and ease of doing business that a strong trade agreement can provide.

#### Suggestions

- Renew GSP: Renewing the GSP program could enable comprehensive trade negotiations covering goods, services, labour rights, environmental laws, and regulatory practices.
- Higher Trade Ambition: The U.S. and India should aim higher in their trade relationship, leveraging GSP as a tool to deepen their strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Policy Adjustment: Given the Biden administration's stance on not negotiating new FTAs, utilising GSP remains the most effective trade policy tool for the U.S. to engage with India.
- Mutual Benefits: Both countries stand to gain significantly from renewed GSP negotiations, enhancing market access, investment, and regulatory certainty.



## 4. House is the Key

Source: IE, Page 9

The article emphasises that addressing worker accommodation can significantly contribute to achieving India's manufacturing sector goals. It becomes important for your General Studies Paper III under the topics Industrial Policy and Employment.

### Transforming India's Manufacturing Sector

- Ambitions and Goals
  - Aim to grow India's economy to \$10 trillion by 2035.
  - Increase manufacturing's share of GDP from 15% to 25%.
  - Leverage opportunities post-COVID, especially related to China's market position.
- Government Efforts and Initiatives
  - Launch of Production Linked Incentives (PLIs) and Make in India campaigns.
  - 100-day plans for all ministries to initiate reforms quickly.
  - State-level engagement with large manufacturers (e.g., Foxconn, Micron, Tata).
  - Creation of industrial hubs like Sriperumbudur (assembly and packaging) and Hosur (Electric Vehicles).

### Importance of Worker Empowerment

- Importance of empowering workers to enhance manufacturing capabilities. Currently, workers are facing issues with ad hoc accommodations leading to long commutes and reduced productivity.
- Safe, on-premises or factory-adjacent accommodation as a solution to improve skilling, productivity, and reduce attrition.
- Examples from multinational firms: Apple and Foxconn committing to workers' housing.
- Lessons from international models:
  - China's in situ housing for workers with large-scale dormitories.
  - Korea's stringent labour laws and worker-friendly policies.
  - Historical examples from India (Bhilai, Tata Steel Jamshedpur) integrating housing with factory establishments.

### Recommendations

- Land Allotment and Regulation
  - Extend land allotment policies to include workers' accommodation.
  - State-level regulatory adjustments to facilitate this infrastructure.
  - Potential models for development: state-built, company-managed, or managed by specialized institutions.
- Union Government Role
  - Provide tax incentives and fiscal benefits for workers' accommodation investments.
  - Priority sector tagging for construction finance of worker housing.
  - Use of financing vehicles like the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).
- Private Sector Leadership
  - Encouragement for private sector initiatives in workers' housing.
  - Benefits include reduced transportation costs, increased productivity, better training opportunities, reduced attrition, and lower carbon footprint.



## InBrief

### 5. With food scarce, lion-tailed macaques leave forest canopies for the urban jungle

Source: The Hindu, Page 2

News: Recently, in the town of Valparai, Lion Tailed Macaques were spotted, signalling their frequent visits to towns from their natural habitat.

#### About Lion-Tailed Macaques

- The Lion Tailed Macaque (*Macaca silenus*) is an old world monkey native to the western ghats of Southern India.
- They spend most of their time in the upper reaches of a tropical rainforest.
- As per the International Unit for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) it was reported that 3000-3500 of the lion-tailed macaque population are scattered in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- Its red list categorises it as 'endangered'.
- Threats: Creation of exotic plantations such as tea, eucalyptus and coffee, Hunting, Pet trade etc.
- It is protected under Schedule I, Part I, of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



### 6. Army gets 27,000 AK-203 rifles through joint venture

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

News: The Indian Army has started receiving the Russian AK-203 assault rifles after the deal with Russia.

#### About AK-203 Rifles

- The Indian Small Arms System (INSAS) 5.56x45 mm assault rifle is anticipated to be replaced by the AK-203 assault rifle, which is thought to be the most sophisticated version of the AK-47 rifle.
- A joint venture between Russia and India - Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) produces the AK-203 rifles. It was set up in 2019 jointly between erstwhile OFB [now Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) and Munitions India Limited (MIL)] of India and Rosoboronexport and Kalashnikov of Russia.
- This model, which is among the best assault rifles available, combines outstanding ergonomics, adaptability to various shooters, and high-performance features.
- The joint venture intends to guarantee that all AK-203 rifle production is locally sourced to India.





## 7. Rs 100 cr-a 3rd of MPLAD funds still unutilised

Source: IE, Page 4

News: In the last 10 years, Lok Sabha members elected from Delhi's seven constituencies have not utilised Rs 100 crore from their entitled Rs 311.5 crore funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme.

### About MPLAD Scheme

- MPLAD Scheme was introduced in 1993. The objective is to enable the MP to suggest and get executed developmental works of a capital nature based on locally felt needs with an emphasis on the creation of durable assets.
- Each MP is allocated Rs. 5 crores per year since 2011-12. MoSPI disburses funds to district authorities, not directly to MPs.
- Elected Members of Rajya Sabha representing the whole of the State as they do, may select works for implementation in one or more district(s) as they may choose.
- Nominated Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may also select works for implementation in one or more districts, anywhere in the country.
- MPs can also recommend work of up to Rs. 25 lakhs per year outside their constituency or state of election to promote national unity, harmony, and fraternity.
- A State level nodal department is chosen, which is responsible for supervision and monitoring, and maintaining coordination with line departments.

## 8. Illegal mining in Sariska

Source: IE, Page 11

News: The Supreme Court has ordered the Rajasthan government to shutter 68 mines operating within a 1-kilometre periphery of the critical tiger habitat (CTH) of the Sariska reserve.

### About Sariska Tiger Reserve

- The Sariska Tiger Reserve is a part of Rajasthan's Alwar District and is situated in the Aravali Hills.
- Sariska became a part of India's Project Tiger when it was designated as a tiger reserve in 1978 after first being designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1955.
- It is the world's first reserve to relocate tigers with success.
- Ajabgarh, Pratapgarh, Pandu Pol, Bhangarh Fort, Siliserh Lake, and JaiSamand Lake are just a few of the historic temples, palaces, and lakes that can be found in Sariska.
- Sariska's vegetation is similar to that of Northern Tropical Thorn Forests and Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests.
- Apart from the tiger, the reserve is home to a wide range of other wild creatures, including the leopard, sambhar, chital, nilgai, etc.





## 9. What are the NIA's allegations against NSCN?

Source: The Hindu, Sunday Edition

**News:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a chargesheet in a Guwahati court where it accused the “China-Myanmar module” of the faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland –Isak Muivah (NSCN - IM) of supporting cadres of two banned Meitei outfits to infiltrate India.

### About National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- National Investigation Agency (NIA) is the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India. It comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The National Investigation Agency Act of 2008 was passed in response to the terror attacks in Mumbai. Without specific state authorization, the NIA can handle offences across state lines related to terrorism.
- The Indian government has notified many Special Courts to hear matters pertaining to offences committed in different Union states. These are presided over by a judge appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the High Court with jurisdiction in that region.
- It is headquartered in Delhi. It also has various regional branches - Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, Jammu, Chandigarh, Ranchi, Chennai and Imphal.



## 10. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger finalise regional alliance project

Source: The Hindu, Sunday Edition

**News:** Junta-run Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have finalised plans to form a confederation after turning their backs on former colonial ruler France to seek closer ties with Russia.

### In Detail:

- The Sahel region has faced years of deadly jihadist violence.
- In January, the three countries announced their departure from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), criticising it for being under French influence and deciding to establish their own regional grouping.
- These three nations, all former French colonies, were recently overtaken by military regimes.
- Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have formed the Confederation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) and are seeking closer relations with Russia. The Liptako-Gourma Charter establishes the Alliance of Sahel States (AES).



## Daily Quiz

1. Consider the following statements about the onset of the southwest monsoon in India:

1. The withdrawal of the subtropical westerly jet stream from the region is a key factor for its arrival.
2. The burst of the monsoon is associated with the strengthening of the easterly jet stream.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

2. The principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability' (CBDR-RC) is associated with:

- A. International trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization (WTO)
- B. Global efforts to address climate change
- C. Protection of intellectual property rights
- D. International criminal justice system

3. The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a trade program that offers:

- A. Tariff concessions by developed countries to developing countries.
- B. Duty-free access for all goods exported by developing countries.
- C. Financial aid for infrastructure development in developing countries.
- D. Automatic Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to developing countries.

4. Consider the following benefits to a Industrial Worker:

1. Increased government spending on social welfare programs.
2. Improved skilling opportunities and worker productivity.
3. Reduced burden on public transportation infrastructure.

How many of the above benefits can be reaped by a worker if he/she is provided accommodation in factory premises?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. All are correct.
- D. All are incorrect.

5. Consider the following statements about Lion-Tailed Macaques:

1. They are found primarily in the Western Ghats mountain range of India.
2. They are listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
3. They are known for their distinctive mane of black hair around their face.

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

6. Recently, The Indian Army has started receiving the Russian AK-203 assault rifles after the deal with Russia. In this regard, which of the statements given below is incorrect regarding AK-203 rifles?

- A. The AK-203 rifles are being manufactured at Korwa Ordnance Factory, Uttar Pradesh.
- B. The AK-203 is a 9mm caliber assault rifle.
- C. The AK-203 assault rifles will replace the indigenous INSAS assault rifles.
- D. The AK-403 assault rifles have an 800-meter sighting range.





7. Consider the following statements regarding the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme:

1. Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs are eligible to recommend works under the MPLAD scheme.
2. The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal ministry for the implementation of the MPLAD scheme.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

8. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Sariska Tiger Reserve?

1. Sariska Tiger Reserve is located in the state of Rajasthan.
2. It is part of the Aravalli Range and known for its rich biodiversity including tigers, leopards, and various bird species.
3. The reserve was declared a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1973.
4. The Kankwari Fort, located within the reserve, was built by the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1, 2, and 3 only
- C. 1, 3, and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

9. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the National Investigation Agency (NIA)?

1. The NIA was established under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.
2. The NIA has jurisdiction over all states in India without special permission from state governments.
3. The NIA is empowered to deal with crimes related to terrorism and certain other offenses affecting national security.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. All are correct.
- D. All are incorrect.

10. Consider the following statements regarding members of Alliance of Sahel States (AES):

1. Niger shares its boundary with Nigeria.
2. Both Mali and Niger share their boundary with Algeria.
3. Burkina Faso shares its boundary with Nigeria.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

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



## Solutions

**Answer 1: C**

**Solutions:**

- Statement 1 is correct: When subtropical westerly jet stream weakens and retreats northward, it allows the southwesterly winds to pick up moisture from the Arabian Sea and bring rain.
- Statement 2 is correct: The strengthening of the easterly jet stream steers the moisture-laden winds further inland, leading to the burst of the monsoon and widespread rainfall across India.

Hence, Option C is correct.

**Answer 2: B**

**Solutions:** CBDR-RC is a core principle of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and subsequent agreements like the Paris Agreement. It acknowledges the shared responsibility for climate change but differentiates the extent of action based on historical contribution and development status.

Hence, Option B is correct.

**Answer 3: A**

**Solutions:** The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a program designed to promote economic development in developing countries by providing them with preferential treatment in the form of lower tariffs or duty-free access for their exports.

Hence, Option A is correct.

**Answer 4: C**

**Solutions:** A worker can reap all the given benefits due to the accommodation provided near his/her factory premises. Hence, Option C is correct.

**Answer 5: D**

**Solutions:**

- Statement 1 is correct: The Lion Tailed Macaque (*Macaca silenus*) is an old world monkey native to the western ghats of Southern India.
- Statement 2 is correct: Its red list categories it as 'endangered'.
- Statement 3 is correct: They are known for their distinctive mane of black hair around their face.

Hence, Option D is correct.

**Answer 6: B**

**Solutions:** The AK-203 is a Russian gas-operated, magazine-fed, select fire assault rifle designed to chamber the 7.62×39mm cartridge. Hence, Option B is correct.

**Answer 7: A**

**Solutions:**

- Statement 1 is correct: Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs are eligible to recommend works under the MPLAD scheme.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal ministry for the implementation of the MPLAD scheme.

Hence, Option A is correct.

**Answer 8: B**

**Solutions:**

- Statement 1 is correct: Sariska Tiger Reserve is located in the state of Rajasthan.
- Statement 2 is correct: It is part of the Aravalli Range and is known for its rich





biodiversity, including tigers, leopards, and various bird species.

- Statement 3 is correct: The reserve was declared a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1973.
- Statement 4 is incorrect: The Kankwari Fort, located within the reserve, was built by Jai Singh II in the 17th century, not by the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Hence, option B is correct.

**Answer 9: C**

**Solutions:**

- Statement 1 is correct: The NIA was established under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.
- Statement 2 is correct: The NIA has jurisdiction over all states in India and can take up cases without requiring

special permission from state governments.

- Statement 3 is correct: The NIA is empowered to deal with crimes related to terrorism and certain other offences that affect national security.

Hence, option C is correct.

**Answer 10: B**

**Solutions:**

- All are correct except statement 3. Hence, option B is correct.





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