

## The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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**Page 03 : GS 2 : Social Justice**

The first cargo-carrying mothership from Xiamen, China, docked at India's Vizhinjam international seaport on Thursday morning.

- ✚ Vizhinjam is India's first deep-water container transshipment port.
- ✚ The container ship *San Fernando*, flagged by the Marshall Islands and managed by Bernhard Schulte Ship Management, carried 1,930 containers.

## Carrying 1,930 containers, *San Fernando* becomes first mothership to dock at Kerala's Vizhinjam port

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Scripting a new chapter in the maritime history of the country, the first mothership carrying cargo from the Xiamen port in China called at the Vizhinjam international seaport, India's first deep-water container transshipment port, on Thursday morning.

The Marshall Island-flagged container ship *San Fernando*, owned by SFL Corporation Ltd. and chartered by Maersk (AP Moller Group), Denmark, is managed and operated by Bernhard Schulte Ship Management, Singapore.

Adani Port pilots boarded the ship carrying 1,930



**Mega visitor:** *San Fernando* will leave for Colombo on Friday after the official reception planned by the Kerala government.

containers around 7.45 a.m. when the ship reached the passage leading to the berth. The ship was then navigated through the buoyed channel to enter the tranquil breakwater area inside the

port. The ship turned around before the tugs pushed it to the berth and moved the ship to the wharf with mooring ropes.

Four tugs were pressed in to bring the ship to the berth. Three tugs were in-

involved in pushing the ship forward and pulling the aft, or *vice versa*, to turn the ship to get the bow facing out and then aligned the ship with the berth before the tugs finally pushed the ship to berth. The ship's bow thruster and the power from the main engine were also used for the berthing.

The vessel was set to begin the work of offloading 1,930 containers by around 2 p.m.

### Water salute

The ship was also accorded a water salute at the port. The ship will leave for Colombo on Friday after the official reception planned by the State government to

be attended by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and others.

The work on the ₹7,700-crore port project, one of the major flagship infrastructure projects promoted by the Kerala government with the Adani Group in the public-private partnership (PPP) mode, started on December 5, 2015.

However, the project, which was scheduled to be commissioned in 2019, got delayed and missed several deadlines due to various reasons. The trial run of the port will officially begin on July 12, ahead of the revised scheduled commissioning in December 2024.

### What is a mothership?

- ✚ A mothership is a large vessel or aircraft that carries, launches, or supports smaller vehicles or vessels.
- ✚ In maritime contexts, it typically refers to a large ship that provides logistical support, housing, and transportation for smaller boats or submarines.
- ✚ Motherships are crucial in various operations, including military, exploration, and commercial activities.
- ✚ They offer facilities like maintenance, supplies, and crew quarters for the smaller crafts they support.

### Deepwater transshipment port

#### ✚ Deepwater port

- A deepwater port is a manmade structure that are used as ports or terminals to transport, store, or handle oil or natural gas.

## Daily News Analysis

- These structures can be fixed or floating, and are located beyond state seaward boundaries.
- They can include: Pipelines, Pumping stations, Service platforms, Mooring buoys.

### ✚ Transshipment port

- A transshipment port is a port where goods are offloaded and loaded onto a different ship to continue their journey to their final destination.

### Vizhinjam port:

- ✚ Vizhinjam port is India's first international deepwater transshipment port.

### ✚ Some of the special features are:

- **Unique Depth:** Vizhinjam boasts a natural depth of over 18 meters, expandable to 20 meters, making it capable of accommodating large vessels and mother ships.
- **Versatile Purpose:** The port is designed to handle container transshipment, multi-purpose, and break-bulk cargo. It is strategically located just ten nautical miles from the international shipping route.



- **Low Maintenance:** The port has minimal littoral drift and requires minimal maintenance dredging, reducing operational costs.
- **Competitive Advantage:** Vizhinjam aims to compete with transshipment hubs like Colombo, Singapore, and Dubai. It is expected to reduce container movement costs to and from foreign destinations.
- **Initial Capacity:** The first phase of the project has a capacity of one million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units), which can be expanded to 6.2 million TEU.

## Daily News Analysis

- **Job Opportunities:** The project is expected to create 5,000 direct job opportunities, support industrial growth, and boost cruise tourism.
- **Advanced Infrastructure:** Vizhinjam offers state-of-the-art automation and infrastructure to handle Megamax container ships efficiently.



**Page 04 : GS 2 – International Relations : Important International Institutions**

India hosted the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' meeting amidst the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, marked by military rule and internal conflict since the 2021 coup.

- The gathering aimed to address regional cooperation and stability, emphasising India's strategic role in fostering dialogue among Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) members.

**About the News**

- India has urged the BIMSTEC group to bring new energy, resources, and commitment to enhance cooperation among its member countries.
- This call was made by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during a two-day retreat with his counterparts from the seven BIMSTEC nations: India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan.
- Discussions on the first day included topics such as connectivity, trade and business collaboration, health and space cooperation, digital public infrastructure, capacity building, and societal exchanges.
- Jaishankar emphasized that BIMSTEC aligns with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, 'Act East Policy,' and 'SAGAR' vision, focusing on the Bay of Bengal region.
- He highlighted the need to realize the collaborative potential of the

## India hosts BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers amid raging Myanmar crisis

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

The seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) should find solutions to the regional challenges within itself, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday, addressing the first BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' retreat held here.

The meeting assumes significance as it is being held against the backdrop of major developments in Myanmar, where the military junta has been receiving battlefield setbacks against dozens of ethnic armed organisations (EAO).

"Global and regional developments also make it imperative that we find more solutions among ourselves. There are long-standing goals such as capacity-building and economic cooperation that have acquired a new urgency. And not least, a grouping that is so complementary and so congenial in its membership should surely harbour higher aspirations," Mr. Jaishankar said.

This is the first time such an event was organised since the Charter of BIMSTEC came into effect on May 20, which marked a landmark development



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with the Foreign Ministers of other countries, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

in the evolution of the organisation.

The developments in Myanmar pose a major issue before the BIMSTEC as instability there has put a question mark on a number of developmental and connectivity projects that were aimed at firming up ties among countries like Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand.

A day before the beginning of the meeting in Delhi, the military junta in Naypyidaw lost control of Naungcho, a major town along a trade highway to China in the northern Shan State, to the Ta'ang National Liberation Army.

Following his meeting with Myanmar Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister U. Than Swe, Mr. Jaishankar said, "Our discussions focused on the connectivity projects, so crucial for the future of BIMSTEC. Also ex-

changed views on border stability and humanitarian assistance."

The External Affairs Ministry is yet to clarify if India will extend humanitarian assistance to the affected civilian population inside Myanmar. Till now, assistance has been limited to the displaced population and personnel of the Myanmar military who sought refuge in Mizoram.

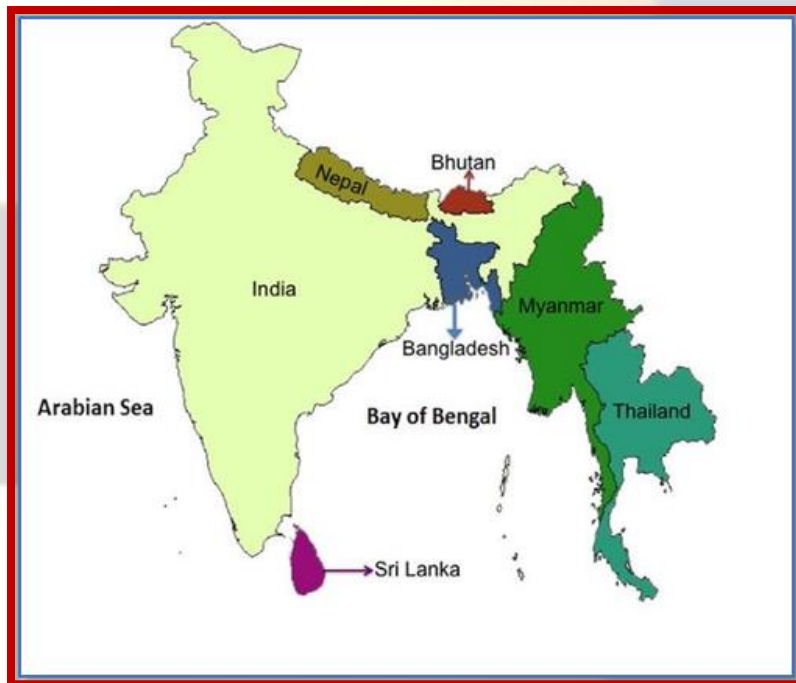
India has maintained a cautious approach to the crisis in Myanmar where the EAOs have gained control over the trade routes and territories that are close to the international borders. "Countering transnational crimes including cyber, narcotics and illegal arms is a shared priority of all three nations. We will continue to cooperate in that regard," said Mr. Jaishankar after meeting with his Myanmar and Thai counterparts.

## Daily News Analysis

region and conveyed a strong message of determination to enhance cooperation among the member countries.

### About Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):

- ✚ **Full Name:** Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- ✚ **Established:** 1997.
- ✚ **Member Countries:** 07 members
  - **Five are from South Asia –**
    1. Bangladesh
    2. Bhutan
    3. India
    4. Nepal
    5. Sri Lanka
  - **Two are from Southeast Asia –**
    1. Myanmar
    2. Thailand
- ✚ **Objective:** Promote regional cooperation, economic growth, and development.
- ✚ **Headquarters:** Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- ✚ **Key Sectors of Cooperation:** Trade and investment, technology, energy, transport and communication, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, and people-to-people contact.
- ✚ **Significance:**
  - Bridges South and Southeast Asia.
  - Enhances regional connectivity.
  - Facilitates economic integration and cooperation.
- ✚ **Recent Focus:**
  - Combating terrorism and transnational crime.
  - Enhancing connectivity and trade.
  - Addressing climate change and disaster management.
- ✚ **Strategic Importance:** Enhances India's Act East Policy and strengthens ties with Southeast Asian nations.



### Principles of BIMSTEC

- ✚ Sovereign Equality
- ✚ Territorial Integrity
- ✚ Political Independence
- ✚ No-interference in Internal Affairs
- ✚ Peaceful Co-existence

## Daily News Analysis

- ✚ Mutual Benefit
- ✚ Constitute an addition to and not be a substitute for bilateral, regional or multilateral cooperation involving the Member States.

### Key Areas of Cooperation within BIMSTEC

- ✚ Trade and Investment
- ✚ Technology
- ✚ Energy
- ✚ Transportation and Communication
- ✚ Tourism
- ✚ Fisheries
- ✚ Agriculture
- ✚ Cultural Cooperation
- ✚ Environment and Disaster Management
- ✚ Public Health
- ✚ People-to-People Contact
- ✚ Poverty Alleviation
- ✚ Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime
- ✚ Climate Change

### How BIMSTEC is Different from SAARC

SAARC	BIMSTEC
1. A regional organisation looking into South Asia	1. Interregional organisation connecting South Asia and South East Asia.
2. Established in 1985 during the cold war era.	2. Established in 1997 in the post-Cold War.
3. Member countries suffer for mistrust and suspicion.	3. Members maintain reasonably friendly relations.
4. Suffers from regional politics.	4. Core objective is the improvement of economic cooperation among countries.
5. Asymmetric power balance.	5. Balancing of power with the presence of Thailand and India on the bloc.
6. Intra-regional trade only 5 percent.	6. Intra-regional trade has increased around 6 percent in a decade.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question : (2015)

**Ques: Critically analyse potential of BIMSTEC in replacing SAARC as the primary platform for regional cooperation in South Asia?**  
**(200 words/12.5m)**



# Centre begins efforts to implement Labour Codes

Mandaviya starts meeting representatives of trade unions seeking their cooperation; passed by both Houses, the Codes are not yet operational following the objections raised by the unions

**A.M. Jigeeesh**  
NEW DELHI

Almost a month after the swearing-in of a Narendra Modi government for the third term, the Union Labour Ministry has started efforts to implement the four Labour Codes, which were passed in Parliament in its second term in 2019 and 2020.

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra have started meeting representatives of various trade unions seeking their cooperation to implement the controversial legislation.

Though passed in both Houses, the Codes are not yet operational owing to objections from trade unions. The Centre has been maintaining that some States are yet to frame the Rules for the Codes. Almost all the States have framed the Rules, and the Centre had said it is helping those States which could not draft the Rules to complete the process.



**Strong opposition:** Leaders of trade unions taking out a rally in Visakhapatnam opposing the Labour Codes. FILE PHOTO

The Central trade unions (CTUs) had opposed the implementation of the Codes citing that they will curtail trade union rights and social security measures for workers. Recently, the Citigroup had said in its employment analysis report on India that implementing the four Labour Codes could improve the “ease of doing business” scenario in the country.

Mr. Mandaviya met the representatives of Sangh Parivar-backed trade union Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) earlier this

week, while Ms. Dawra met a delegation of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) on Wednesday. The leaders of both the trade unions told *The Hindu* that the Minister and the Secretary were keen to implement the four Labour Codes and sought their help.

BMS general secretary Ravindra Himte said in a release that it had demanded early implementation of the Code on Wages and the Code on Social Security. He, however, said the Industrial Relations Code

and Occupational Safety and Health Code contain many anti-worker provisions which need to be changed.

Manali Shah, national secretary of SEWA, said the issue came up in the meeting and the Centre is keen to implement it. She, however, said SEWA is opposed to the four codes and the purpose of visit was mainly to raise the lack of social security measures for unorganised and migrant workers.

“The current social security legislation fails to adequately safeguard their rights as State policies and laws concerning social security offer no specific provisions for migrant workers. Both migrant workers crossing State borders and workers employed outside India face similar deprivation of protection under social security laws and schemes,” a memorandum by SEWA said. Ten Central unions, including SEWA, had written to Mr. Mandaviya urging him to meet the trade unions on the issues of workers.

## New Labour Codes:

### 1. Code on Wages, 2019

- ✚ The Code on Wages consolidates four existing laws: the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965; and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- ✚ It aims to regulate wage and bonus payments across all employment sectors, ensuring minimum wages and prohibiting gender discrimination in wages and recruitment.
- ✚ The code introduces the concept of a floor wage, set by the central government, below which minimum wages cannot fall.



## Daily News Analysis

- ✚ It mandates regular reviews of minimum wages, specifies penalties for non-compliance, and establishes advisory boards for wage fixation and employment enhancement.

### 2. Industrial Relations Code, 2020

- ✚ The Industrial Relations Code merges and streamlines the Trade Unions Act, 1926; the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946; and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
- ✚ It introduces a higher threshold for mandatory standing orders from establishments with 100 to 300 workers.
- ✚ The code outlines conditions for legal strikes, requiring a 60-day notice and prohibiting strikes during tribunal proceedings.
- ✚ It mandates government approval for closure, lay-off, or retrenchment in establishments with more than 300 workers.
- ✚ The code also proposes a re-skilling fund for retrenched workers, financed by employers.

### 3. Code on Social Security, 2020

- ✚ The Code on Social Security integrates nine laws related to social security and welfare, including the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, and the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- ✚ It expands the definition of employees to include gig and platform workers, interstate migrants, and more.
- ✚ The code proposes social security funds for unorganised workers and establishes a National Social Security Board.
- ✚ It reduces the gratuity period for journalists and allows the central government to alter PF and ESI contributions during emergencies like pandemics.

### 1. Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

- ✚ This code consolidates 13 existing laws related to health, safety, and working conditions, such as the Factories Act, 1948, and the Mines Act, 1952.
- ✚ It redefines a factory based on worker count and power usage and extends to hazardous conditions without a worker threshold.
- ✚ The code sets an eight-hour workday limit, mandates appointment letters, and ensures safety and consent for women working at night.
- ✚ It offers portability benefits for interstate migrant workers and introduces journey allowances but removes temporary accommodation provisions near worksites.

## PYQ UPSC Mains : (2015)

**Ques: Success of 'Make in India' programme depends on the success of 'Skill India' programme and radical labour reforms." Discuss with logical arguments. (200 words/12.5m)**

### Page : 09 GS 2 : Indian Polity – Federal structure

In the run-up to the Union Budget, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh demand special financial packages, raising questions about the fairness and impact of such allocations.

This article explores the basis of Finance Commission allocations, political influence on central transfers, the impact of GST on state autonomy, and the need for balanced regional development.

### Should States get special packages outside Finance Commission allocations?



**Arun Kumar**  
former professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi



**Pinaki Chakraborty**  
fellow at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy

#### PARLEY

In the run-up to the Union Budget, Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, who are in a position to decide the political fate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre, have demanded special financial packages for their respective States. These packages could potentially increase the fiscal burden on the Centre and also other States. Should States get special packages outside Finance Commission allocations? Arun Kumar and Pinaki Chakraborty discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Prashanth Perumal J. Edited excerpts:

**What is the basis on which the Finance Commission determines how much money is allocated to different States? Do you think there is a case for States such as Bihar and Andhra Pradesh to receive funds beyond what is being allocated to them through the Finance Commission?**

**Arun Kumar:** The last Finance Commission had said that States should be given 41% of the divisible tax pool. Within that 41%, what does each State get? For that, there is a formula which is based on income, population, the area, forests and ecology, demographic performance, etc. If we look at the 15th Finance Commission, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 2020-21 got the largest amount of funds and Karnataka and Kerala saw the largest decrease in the share of funds. So, in other words, the criteria that the Finance Commission use can change the amount of funds going to different States.

Apart from the Finance Commission devolution, which is statutory, how the remaining amount is spent is determined by the Centre, and that is where political determination comes in; States which are closer to the Centre get more funds. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are part of the NDA and their support is critical to the government. So, I suppose they will be able to draw more funds.

**Pinaki Chakraborty:** As far as transfers by the Finance Commission are concerned, the scope for discretion is very limited. Other Central transfers are also determined by certain principles of distribution across States. We can debate those schemes, their designs, etc., but those are certainly not arbitrary. So, that is the overall framework of transfer.

When there is a specific demand by a specific State for higher transfer of resources for a specific purpose, constitutionally there is no bar on giving more money to that State. But generally, it is not done on a large scale because if that becomes the order of the day, fiscal



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and his Ministers meet Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi. ANI

prudence becomes a casualty. So, the possibility of large-scale discretionary transfers is limited.

Andhra Pradesh had a major fiscal shock after bifurcation and that was partly offset when the Finance Commission provided revenue deficit grants. Why Andhra Pradesh still requires Central support requires a careful analysis. But Bihar's case is different. Bihar's per capita development spending is less than 60% of the all-States average. So, Bihar has a serious fiscal capacity problem. This has not been fully offset by Finance Commission transfers or additional Central transfers.

**What is the relationship between additional Central aid and the economic performance of States? Does the allocation of more funds to a certain State boost its long-term economic performance?**

**AK:** There are several factors. The public and private sector together determine the development of a State. But with all other things remaining the same, higher allocations from the Centre to a State would boost the growth of that State. The major problem is the issue of governance – how well is the State governed and how well are the resources that are received by the State spent on development. Poorer States tend to have a greater amount of leakage of funds. But more importantly, the credit-deposit ratio of Bihar is much lower than the all-India average. This means that a large part of Bihar's savings is leaking out of the State to other States. So, even if you allocate more funds from the Centre, the leakage may be greater than the additional resources they get.

**PC:** If we look at revenue sharing, the part which is not within the purview of the Finance Commission has increased and that is also why we see an increase in centrally sponsored schemes. So, there is a larger political economy



When there is a specific demand by a specific State for higher transfer of resources for a specific purpose, constitutionally there is no bar on giving more money to that State. But generally, it is not done on a large scale because if that becomes the order of the day, fiscal prudence becomes a casualty.

PINAKI CHAKRABORTY

question which needs to be discussed. When we talk about resource flow to the richer regions of the country, it is much, much higher than the resource flow to the poorer regions of the country. This cannot be explained by governance differences alone. If there is a problem of resources, where a State is spending only 50% of the all-States average as public expenditure, this can't just be explained by differences in governance and quality of expenditure. We need to channelise more resources for higher capital investment in the poorer regions of the country for balanced regional development.

**By taking away from States the power to tax their citizens, has GST (Goods and Services Tax) exacerbated competition among States to get more funds from the Centre? We also see that there is no longer tax competition between the States after the centralisation of taxation under GST. Is that good or bad?**

**PC:** Because of this race to the bottom among States after liberalisation, States themselves decided to introduce a floor rate for sales tax in 2000-01. GST has resulted in significant loss of fiscal autonomy for the States because the States used to get two-thirds of their revenue from VAT (Value Added Tax). States also cannot set the tax rate, which is a key component of fiscal autonomy. So, there needs to be some flexibility somewhere within the GST structure so that the States don't feel that they are not able to tax to provide public services. We should discuss what kind of GST flexibility can bring an element of fiscal autonomy without compromising on the fiscal harmonisation across States.

**AK:** GST has damaged federalism because States are very diverse. The problems of Assam are not the same as those of Gujarat. The States have different sources of revenue and expenditure requirements. What we require in India, a very diverse country, is greater decentralisation and it is the only answer to the problems we face. Across the country, greater centralisation that has come in with GST is perhaps not good. What has happened with GST is that it has benefited the organised sector at the expense of the

unorganised sector. Even though the unorganised sector has been kept out of GST, the organised sector is the one that has been rising and that is why you see that GST collections have been rising post-pandemic. This decline in the unorganised sector, which is concentrated in the backward States, means that backward States will under-perform. So, GST needs reform. I recommend that the tax be collected at the last point instead of at each intermediate stage, which creates a lot of complications. There is a lot of corruption associated with input credit, there are fake companies, etc. Trucks are stopped by the police and implementing agencies and money is extorted. So, the black economy continues to flourish. We need to collect a lot more from direct taxes and reduce collections from indirect taxes, which are having a negative impact on the backward States as compared to the advanced ones.

**We see that States with political weight usually get more funds from the Centre at the cost of other States. So, how fair and objective is Central aid to states? Is there any way to stop politics from influencing how Central funds are allocated to the States?**

**AK:** Seventy per cent of the funds that the Centre spends is non-discretionary. But the remaining 30% are discretionary. The allocation of funds by the Centre to the States depends on politics or political considerations. Greater decentralisation and greater autonomy to the States is the only way to change that.

**PC:** The real problem of discretion is that if the Centre decides to introduce a new scheme and says that 60% of it will be funded by the Centre and 40% will be funded by the States, it is actually tying up State resources. So, we need deliberations at the national level involving all the stakeholders to understand which schemes the Centre should intervene in, and which it should leave to the States. The 14th Finance Commission had given an important framework for this, recommending that the Centre should intervene in schemes where there are large externalities or national priorities involved. But if the Centre wants to run a primary health centre in a remote village, that is not going to help. So, I think this discussion about political alignment is only of marginal importance. What is really discretionary is the Centre's complete autonomy in deciding which sector and where to spend.



To listen to the full interview  
Scan the code or go to the link  
[www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)

### Demand for Special Financial Packages

- In the run-up to the Union Budget, the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have demanded special financial packages for their respective States.
- These demands could potentially increase the fiscal burden on the Centre and other States.
- There is a debate on whether States should get special packages outside Finance Commission allocations.

### Basis for Finance Commission Allocations

## Daily News Analysis

- ✚ The Finance Commission determines allocations based on income, population, area, forests and ecology, and demographic performance.
- ✚ In 2020-21, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar received the largest amounts, while Karnataka and Kerala saw the largest decreases.
- ✚ The criteria used by the Finance Commission can change the distribution of funds among States.

### Justification for Additional Central Support

- ✚ Andhra Pradesh experienced a fiscal shock after bifurcation, partly offset by revenue deficit grants.
- ✚ Bihar faces a serious fiscal capacity problem, with per capita development spending less than 60% of the all-States average.
- ✚ Additional Central support for Bihar has not fully offset its fiscal challenges.

### GST and Federalism

- ✚ GST has damaged federalism due to the diverse needs of different States.
- ✚ Greater decentralisation is needed to address the diverse problems of States.
- ✚ The organised sector benefits more from GST, while the unorganised sector, concentrated in backward States, suffers.
- ✚ GST reform is needed, such as collecting tax at the last point to reduce complications and corruption.

### Political Influence on Central Aid

- ✚ Seventy per cent of Central spending is non-discretionary, but the remaining 30% is discretionary.
- ✚ Political considerations influence the allocation of discretionary funds.
- ✚ Greater decentralisation and autonomy to States is needed to reduce political influence on fund allocation.

### Need for Deliberation on Central Schemes

- ✚ The Centre's decision to introduce new schemes can tie up State resources.
- ✚ National-level deliberations are needed to determine which schemes the Centre should intervene in and which should be left to States.
- ✚ The 14th Finance Commission recommended that the Centre should focus on schemes with large externalities or national priorities.

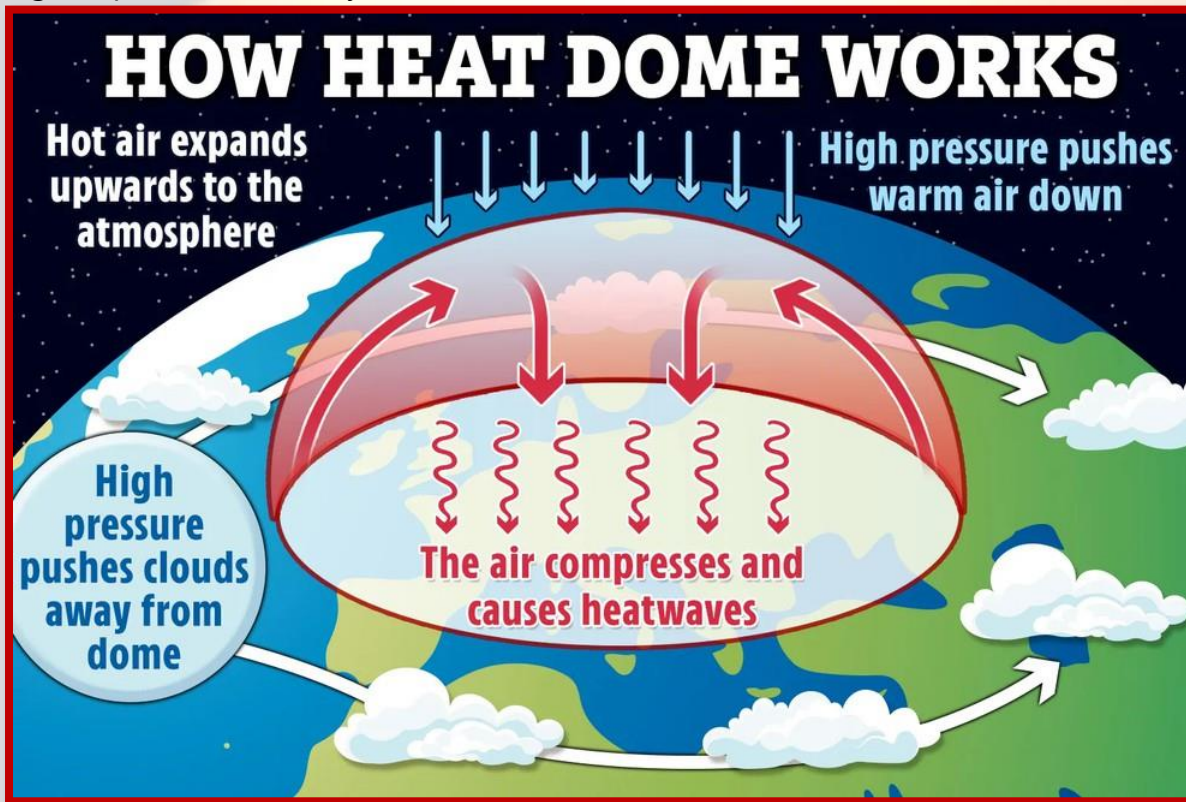
### PYQ UPSC Mains : (2015)

**Ques: The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasised in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and the extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings..** (200 words/12.5m)



**Term In News : Heat Dome**

The entire western United States has come under the grip of a sweltering heatwave, which began last week. The scorching temperatures and dry conditions are a result of a heat dome centred over California.

**About Heat Dome:**

- + It is a weather phenomenon where a high-pressure system in the atmosphere traps warm air like a lid on a pot, for an extended period of time.
- + As the warm air is not able to rise upward, the sky remains clear — clouds are formed under the opposite circumstances as the rising warm air cools down, and the water in it condenses out.
- + The high-pressure system allows more sunlight to reach the earth, which results in more warming and drying of soil. This leads to less evaporation and reduces the likelihood of the formation of rain clouds.
- + The longer the heat dome stays in one place, the warmer conditions can get with every passing day. While heat domes cause heat waves, they can occur without heat domes as well.
- + **What is the role of the jet stream?**
  - o A heat dome's formation is tied to the behaviour of the jet stream — an area of fast-moving air high in the atmosphere that usually helps move weather systems along the Earth's surface.
  - o Typically, the jet stream has a wave-like pattern that keeps moving from north to south and then north again.

## Daily News Analysis

- When these waves get bigger and elongated, they move slowly and sometimes can become stationary. This is when a high-pressure system gets stuck in place and leads to the occurrence of a heat dome.

### UPSC Prelims Practice Question

**Ques :** With reference to “heat dome” seen in the news recently, consider the following statements:

1. It occurs when an area of low-pressure traps cold air over a region.
2. The heat dome’s formation is related to the behaviour of the jet stream.

**Select the correct statement using the codes given below:**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans : b)**

## Page : 08 Editorial Analysis

*Breaking the taboo around men's reproductive health*

**W**orld Population Day (July 11) has passed. As we grapple with the multifaceted challenges of global population dynamics, it is crucial to turn the spotlight on a subject often overshadowed in discussions on reproductive health: male infertility. Male infertility remains a stigmatised issue, shrouded in silence and with misconceptions. This neglect exacerbates the emotional and psychological toll on those who are affected and impedes progress towards effective solutions.

In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that globally, between 60 million to 80 million couples struggle with infertility. However, the exact prevalence of infertility in India remains unspecified according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) National Guidelines for Accreditation, Supervision and Regulation of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) Clinics (2005). Extrapolating from WHO's data, it is suggested that approximately 13 million to 19 million Indian couples may face infertility issues. This incidence is only set to increase, shaped by factors such as environmental pollution and adverse lifestyle shifts. Male infertility accounts for 50% of all infertility cases in the country. Thus, it is important to shed light on male infertility, understand its causes, and identify solutions to aid the millions of affected couples.

**Understanding the subject**

Male infertility is not a standard experience. Its causes, and therefore its forms, vary. Infertility in men can manifest as an absence of sperm, low sperm count, low sperm motility, or both. The form of infertility can depend on various factors that include stress, hormonal imbalance, genetic, anatomical and epigenetic factors, or even



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It is time to recognise and address the subject of male reproductive health issues in India

exposure to certain infections. External factors such as environmental pollution and an indiscriminate use of pesticides on crops, plastics, and plasticisers can also affect fertility and influence the epigenetic makeup. Lifestyle factors such as diets, sleep patterns, work schedules, and consumption of alcohol and tobacco also play a major role. Adding to these factors is a growing preference for late marriages among youth, creating challenges due to declining sperm quality with age.

While the challenges listed above may appear daunting, male reproductive health can be safeguarded through various lifestyle interventions. First and foremost, it is imperative to be aware of reproductive and sexual health and the factors that influence it, particularly during the formative period from secondary school to junior college. Here, parents, particularly fathers, play a critical role and must educate their sons on the issue. At an individual level, young men should proactively adopt good lifestyle practices, ensuring healthy eating, regular sleep patterns, and eliminating the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other intoxicants. While mobile phones and laptops have become occupational hazards in most fields, their excessive usage, in proximity to the body, should be avoided. Stress is a major deterrent to reproductive health, and regular exercise, yoga, and meditation can go a long way in reducing its adverse effects on well-being. Couples together must also adopt such healthy lifestyle practices to safeguard their reproductive health and enhance their well-being.

**Treatment options**

While lifestyle interventions play a critical preventative role, it is also important to discuss

treatments available for those grappling with infertility. Treatment options are varied, and their efficacy depends on the cause and the form of infertility. It is important to seek help from a medical professional to identify and treat the issue. The medical professional will guide the person to undergo a routine semen analysis, conducted after a two to seven day period of sexual abstinence (WHO recommended). If the issue is physical or anatomical such as blocked sperm flow, undescended testicles, or an abnormal urethral opening, these can be fixed with surgery. If the issue is an absence of sperm, then treatments such as intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) should be undertaken. Alternatively, couples facing this issue can also opt for donor sperm insemination or adoption. In cases where the sperm count is very low, there is a chance for the couple to conceive naturally if sperm motility is very good. However, if both sperm count and motility are low, intrauterine insemination (IUI), in vitro fertilisation (IVF), or ICSI are advocated. In cases of male infertility due to gene mutation/s, genetic counselling is of utmost importance before seeking the support of assisted reproductive technologies such as IVF and ICSI.

With millions of couples in India facing infertility issues, there is an urgent need for open and informed discussions on reproductive health. It is time to recognise and address the significant issue of male reproductive health. Awareness building, sex education, and timely medical interventions are key to supporting couples on their journey to parenthood. By breaking the taboo surrounding male infertility and fostering a more informed and supportive environment, we can help many couples realise their dream of having children.

**GS Paper 02 : Social Justice – Health**

**Practice Question :** Discuss the challenges and implications of male infertility in India. How can awareness and lifestyle interventions help address this issue? Suggest measures to break the stigma associated with male infertility. (150 w/10m)

**Context**

- The article discusses the urgent need to address male infertility, a significant yet often overlooked aspect of reproductive health.



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- ✚ Highlighting the prevalence, causes, and treatment options, it underscores the importance of awareness, lifestyle interventions, and open discussions to support affected couples and enhance their chances of parenthood.

### Reproductive Health

- ✚ World Population Day (July 11) has passed. As we grapple with the multifaceted challenges of global population dynamics, it is crucial to turn the spotlight on a subject often overshadowed in discussions on reproductive health: male infertility.
- ✚ Male infertility remains a stigmatised issue, shrouded in silence and with misconceptions.
- ✚ This neglect exacerbates the emotional and psychological toll on those who are affected and impedes progress towards effective solutions.
- ✚ In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that globally, between 60 million to 80 million couples struggle with infertility.
- ✚ Extrapolating from WHO's data, it is suggested that approximately 13 million to 19 million Indian couples may face infertility issues.
- ✚ This incidence is only set to increase, shaped by factors such as environmental pollution and adverse lifestyle shifts.
- ✚ Male infertility accounts for 50% of all infertility cases in the country. Thus, it is important to shed light on male infertility, understand its causes, and identify solutions to aid the millions of affected couples.

### Understanding the subject

- ✚ Male infertility is not a standard experience. Its causes, and therefore its forms, vary. Infertility in men can manifest as an absence of sperm, low sperm count, low sperm motility, or both.
- ✚ The form of infertility can depend on various factors that include stress, hormonal imbalance, genetic, anatomical and epigenetic factors, or even exposure to certain infections.
- ✚ External factors such as environmental pollution and an indiscriminate use of pesticides on crops, plastics, and plasticisers can also affect fertility and influence the epigenetic makeup.
- ✚ Lifestyle factors such as diets, sleep patterns, work schedules, and consumption of alcohol and tobacco also play a major role.
- ✚ Adding to these factors is a growing preference for late marriages among youth, creating challenges due to declining sperm quality with age.
- ✚ While the challenges listed above may appear daunting, male reproductive health can be safeguarded through various lifestyle interventions.
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## Daily News Analysis

- ✚ At an individual level, young men should proactively adopt good lifestyle practices, ensuring healthy eating, regular sleep patterns, and eliminating the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other intoxicants.
- ✚ While mobile phones and laptops have become occupational hazards in most fields, their excessive usage, in proximity to the body, should be avoided.
- ✚ Stress is a major deterrent to reproductive health, and regular exercise, yoga, and meditation can go a long way in reducing its adverse effects on well-being.
- ✚ Couples together must also adopt such healthy lifestyle practices to safeguard their reproductive health and enhance their well-being.

### Treatment options

- ✚ While lifestyle interventions play a critical preventative role, it is also important to discuss treatments available for those grappling with infertility.
- ✚ Treatment options are varied, and their efficacy depends on the cause and the form of infertility.
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### Conclusion

- ✚ Open and informed discussions on reproductive health are urgently needed, particularly for male infertility.
- ✚ Awareness building, sex education, and timely medical interventions can support couples on their journey to parenthood.
- ✚ Breaking the taboo surrounding male infertility and fostering a supportive environment can help many couples achieve their dream of having children.

## Evolution of Family Planning Programmes in India

### ✚ Early Beginnings and Clinic-Based Approaches

- India was one of the first countries to launch a national family planning programme in 1952.
- Initially, the programme was predominantly clinic-based, focusing on providing contraceptive services through established healthcare facilities.
- This phase marked the beginning of government-led efforts to address population growth and promote family planning to improve public health and economic stability.

### ✚ Shift Towards Target-Oriented Methods

- In the subsequent decades, the programme shifted towards more aggressive, target-oriented methods.
- The government set specific numerical targets for contraceptive acceptance and sterilizations, aiming to rapidly reduce birth rates.
- While this approach succeeded in increasing the adoption of family planning methods, it also faced criticism for its coercive tactics and lack of emphasis on voluntary participation and informed choice.

### ✚ Voluntary Adoption and Rights-Based Approach

- Responding to the criticisms of the target-oriented phase, India's family planning programme began to emphasise voluntary adoption of contraceptive methods.
- The shift towards a rights-based approach focused on respecting individuals' reproductive rights and providing a broader range of contraceptive options.
- This transition underscored the importance of informed choice and aimed to empower women and couples to make decisions about their reproductive health.

### ✚ Integration with Health Initiatives

- In 2012, the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) approach was introduced, integrating family planning with other health initiatives.
- This holistic approach recognised that family planning is intricately linked with broader health outcomes.
- By combining efforts to improve maternal and child health with family planning services, the programme aimed to create synergies that would enhance overall health outcomes and reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

### ✚ Family Planning (FP) Campaigns in 2020 and 2030

- India's commitment to global family planning initiatives was further solidified with its participation in the FP2020 and subsequent FP2030 campaigns.
- These initiatives focused on expanding access to family planning information and services, particularly for marginalized and underserved populations.
- They aimed to ensure that more women and girls could exercise their reproductive rights and have access to a full range of contraceptive methods.

### ✚ Expanding Contraceptive Choices and Quality Assurance



## Daily News Analysis

- The evolution of India's family planning programme has also seen an expansion in the range of contraceptive choices available to the population.
- Modern reversible contraceptives, such as condoms, intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCDs), oral pills, and injectable contraceptives, are now widely available.
- Pilot programmes are also introducing subdermal implants and subcutaneous injections to further broaden the options.
- Ensuring the quality of these services has become a priority, with efforts to provide comprehensive training to healthcare providers and implement robust quality assurance mechanisms.

### Family Planning Impact on Growth and Development

- + The growth and development of a country are linked to population dynamics.
- + The aim is to maintain and achieve replacement levels of fertility both nationally and sub-nationally.
- + India has already achieved a replacement level of fertility at the national level (TFR 2.0), and 31 states/UTs have already achieved this milestone as per NFHS-5 (2019-21).
- + Family planning has also been recognised globally as reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality.

### Mission Parivar Vikas, Its Expansion and Innovation in Family Planning Services

#### + Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV)

- This is one of the flagship family planning programmes of the government, was launched in 2016.
- The aim is to increase access to contraceptives and family planning services in 146 high fertility districts across seven states (Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, UP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Assam).
- The approach uses awareness campaigns such as Saarthi Vaahans (awareness on wheels) and Saas Bahu Sammelens to address social barriers for young women accessing contraceptives, and providing Nayi Pahel kits to newly married couples to sensitise them about responsible parenthood practices.

#### + Expansion and Innovation in Family Planning Services

- Improvements in the uptake of modern contraceptives in the MPV districts led to the government's decision to scale up this programme to all districts of the seven states and in six Northeastern states in 2021.
- Currently, the National Planning programme offers a variety of reversible modern contraceptives, including condoms, intrauterine contraceptive devices, oral pills, MPA injections, and more.
- In 10 states, covering two districts each, subdermal implants and subcutaneous injections are in the rollout stage, with plans for further extension.

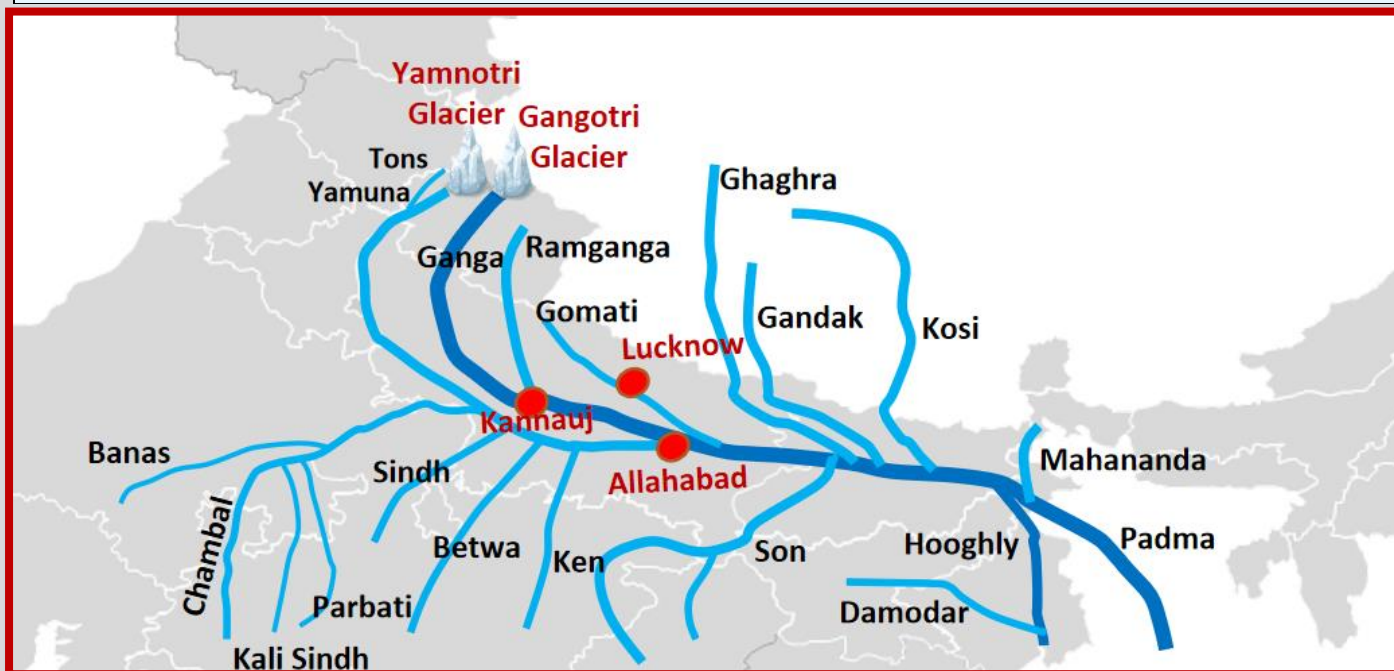
### Way Forward: Need to Reaffirm Commitment to Overcoming Barriers

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- ✚ As India commemorates World Population Day 2024, themed "Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancy for the Health and Well-being of Mother and Child," India acknowledges the efforts of state counterparts and the relentless dedication of our health workforce.
- ✚ This includes ANMs, ASHAs, and other ground-level functionaries who are at the forefront of delivering crucial services.
- ✚ The government should reaffirm its commitment to overcoming barriers related to access, misconceptions about contraceptive methods, lack of awareness, geographical and economic challenges, and restrictive social and cultural norms.
- ✚ Substantial investments are being made to improve family planning service delivery, including ensuring the availability of both temporary and long-term contraceptive methods.
- ✚ Additionally, family planning services are being extended to the last mile through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.

## Mapping : The Ganga River System

<b>Origin</b>	Gangotri Glacier
<b>Length</b>	2,525 km
<b>Catchment Area</b>	8.61 lakh sq. km



Origin and Flow of River





### Origin

- ✚ Ganga originates as Bhagirathi from **Gangotri glacier** near Gaumukh in the Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.
- ✚ **Alkananda joins Bhagirathi at Devaprayag**. But before the river reaches Devaprayag, the Dhauliganga, the Pindar, and the Mandakini rivers pour into the Alaknanda.
- ✚ Below Devaprayag, the combined water of the **Bhagirathi and Alaknanda** flows under the name of the Ganga.

### The flow of Ganga in Plains

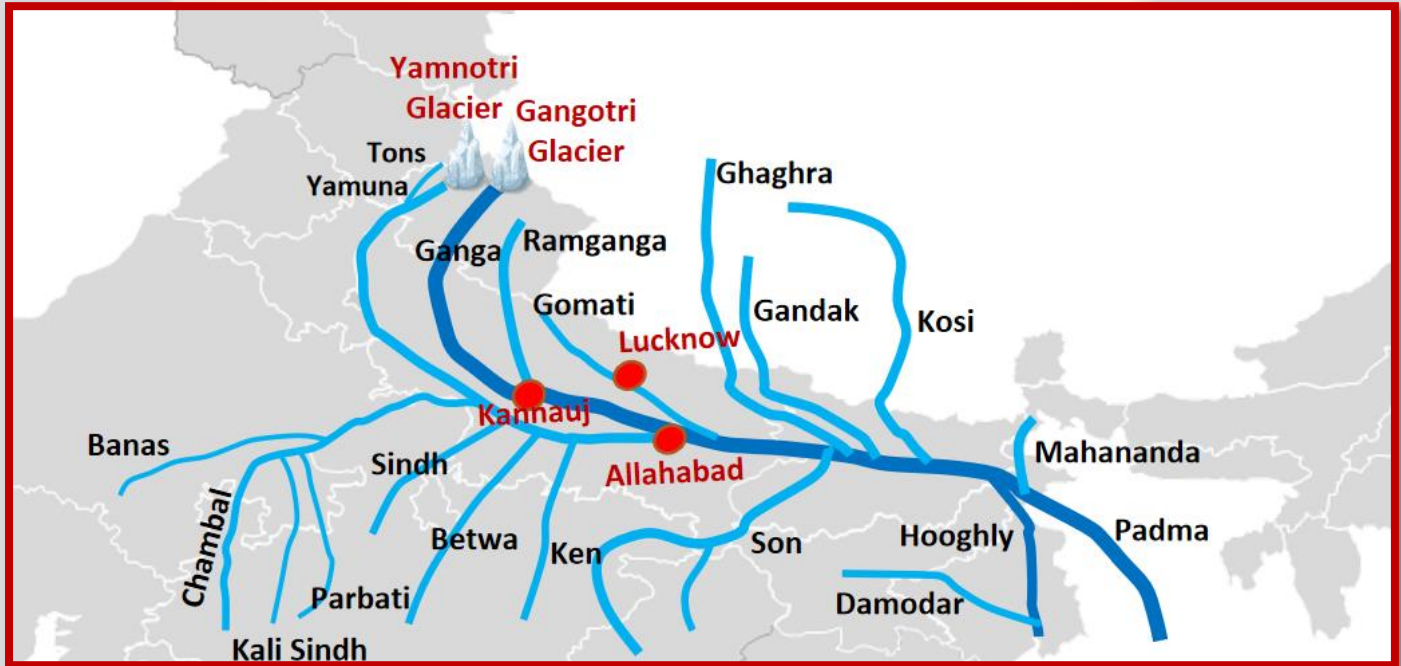
- ✚ Ganga enters plains at **Haridwar**.
- ✚ From here, it flows in south and southeast directions for a distance of 770 km to reach Allahabad, where the Yamuna joins it. After that, it passes through the Bihar plains.
- ✚ It ceases to be known as Ganga as it turns southeast and south of **Farraka** near Rajmahal Hills. It splits into Padma in Bangladesh and Hugli in West Bengal.
- ✚ After travelling 220 km further down in Bangladesh, the Brahmaputra (or the Jamuna as it is known here) joins it at Goalundo.
- ✚ Further, it meets **Meghna** and joins the Bay of Bengal.

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- The Ganga and the Brahmaputra form the largest delta in the world before entering the Bay of Bengal. The delta comprises a web of distributaries and islands covered by dense forests called the Sundarbans.

### Tributaries of Ganga

Numerous tributaries join Ganga, both on the left and the right. Most of them have their origins in the Himalayan Mountains, although some originate from the Peninsular Plateau.



### Right bank tributaries of Ganga

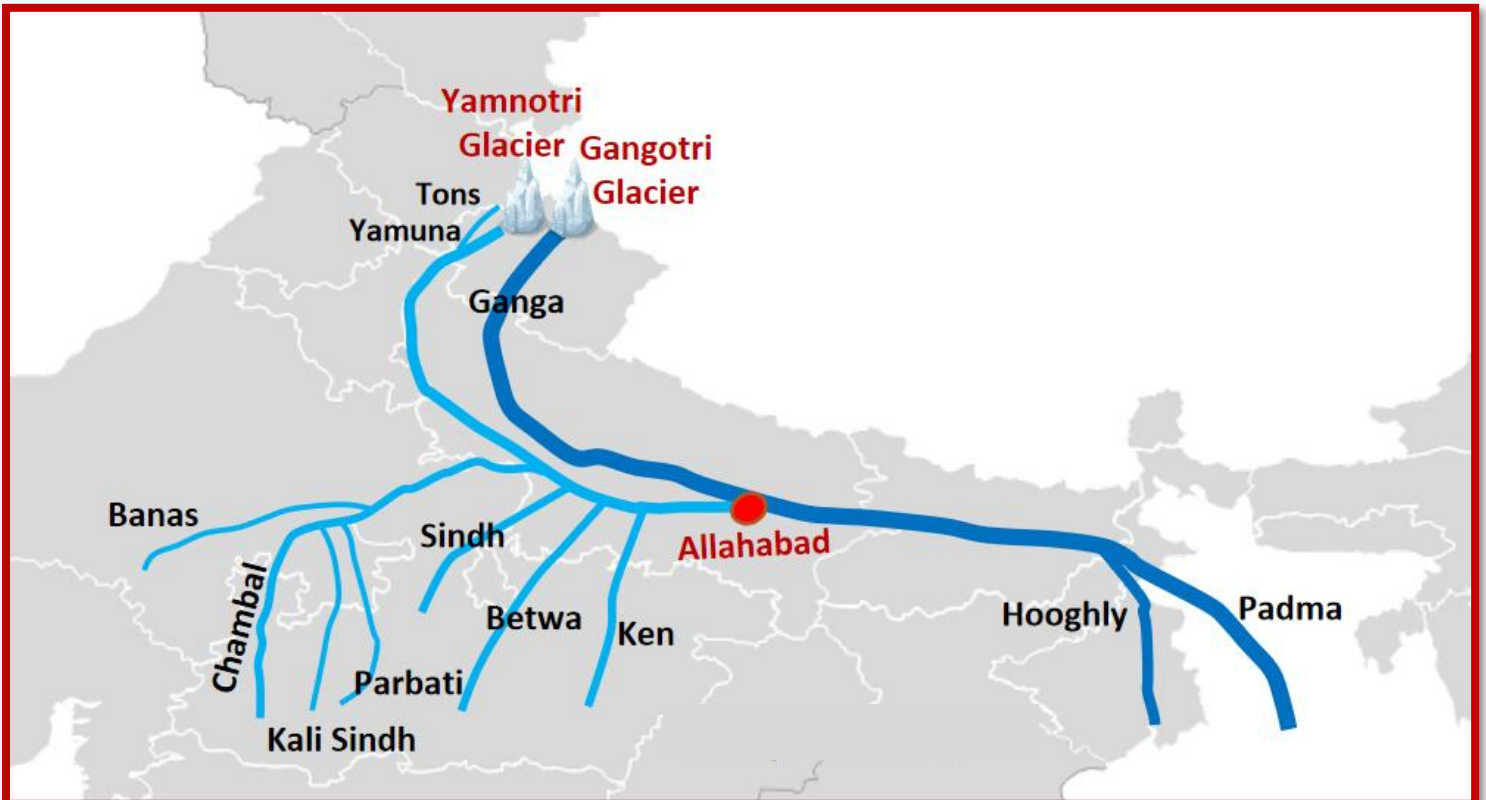
Right bank tributaries of the Ganga include Yamuna, Son and Damodar.

#### 1. Yamuna

Origin	Yamnotri glacier on Bandarpunch peak (Uttarakhand)
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Length	1380 km
Important Tributaries	– <b>Originating in the Himalayas:</b> Ton – <b>Originating in Peninsular Plateau:</b> Chambal, Sind, Betwa and Ken
Joins Ganga at	Allahabad



- ✚ Yamuna is the largest & most important tributary of the Ganga.
- ✚ It originates from the Yamnotri glacier on the **Bandarpunch Peak** in Garhwal in Uttarakhand (very close to the source of the Ganga).
- ✚ In the upper reaches, it is joined by many small streams. The most important tributary of Yamuna in the upper reaches is Tons which also rises from Bandarpunch Peak and joins Yamuna at Kalsi, right before Yamuna leaves the hills.
- ✚ After passing through the Himalayas, it enters the plains.
- ✚ Yamuna flows southward till Mathura and southeast after Mathura till Allahabad, where it unites with Ganga.

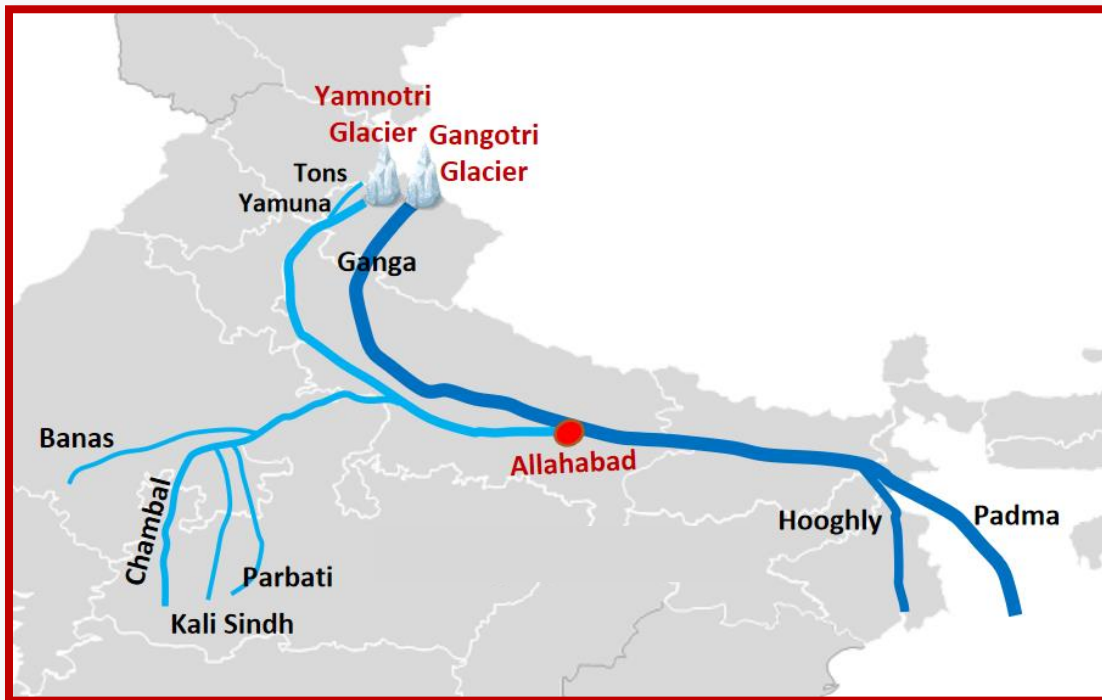


## Daily News Analysis

- Between Mathura and Allahabad, it is joined by Chambal, Sind, Betwa and Ken (tributaries of Yamuna originating from the Peninsular Plateau).

### Peninsular Tributaries of Yamuna

#### 1.1. Chambal



<b>Origin</b>	Near <b>Mhow Cantt</b> in Vindhya range of Madhya Pradesh
<b>Length</b>	1050 km
<b>Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– After originating near Mhow, it takes a north-westerly course through the Malwa plateau.</li> <li>– It then enters a gorge from Chaurasigarh to Kota (96 km long).</li> <li>– After Kota, it takes a north-easterly turn. Furthermore, at Pinahat, it turns east and flows parallel to Yamuna before joining it at Etawah (UP).</li> </ul>
<b>Tributaries</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Banas:</b> Originating from Aravali and joining Chambal near Sawai Madhopur.</li> <li><b>2. Kali Sind</b> (originate from Vindhyas)</li> </ol>

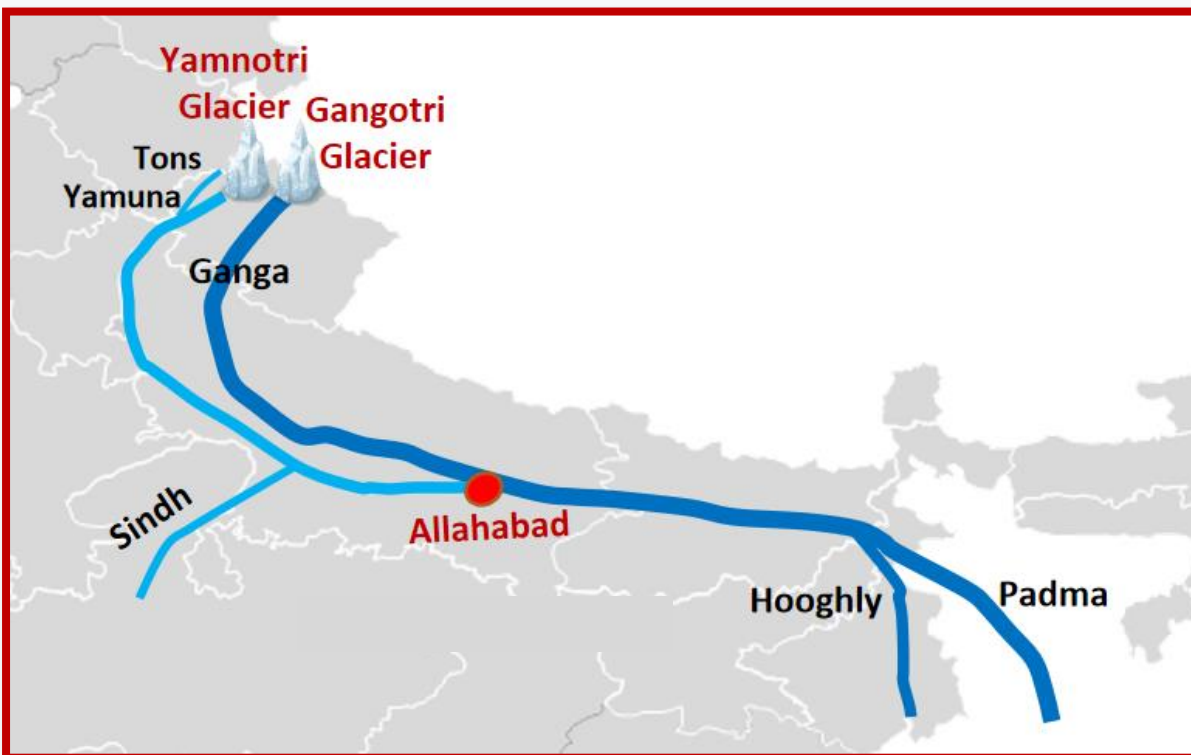
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### 3. Parbati (originate from Vindhya)

#### Projects

1. Gandhi Sagar
2. Rana Pratap Sagar (Rawatbhata)
3. Jawahar Sagar

### 1.2 Sindh



Origin	Vindhya Plateau
Length	415 km
Flow	After passing through MP, it joins Yamuna in UP.

### 1.3 Betwa

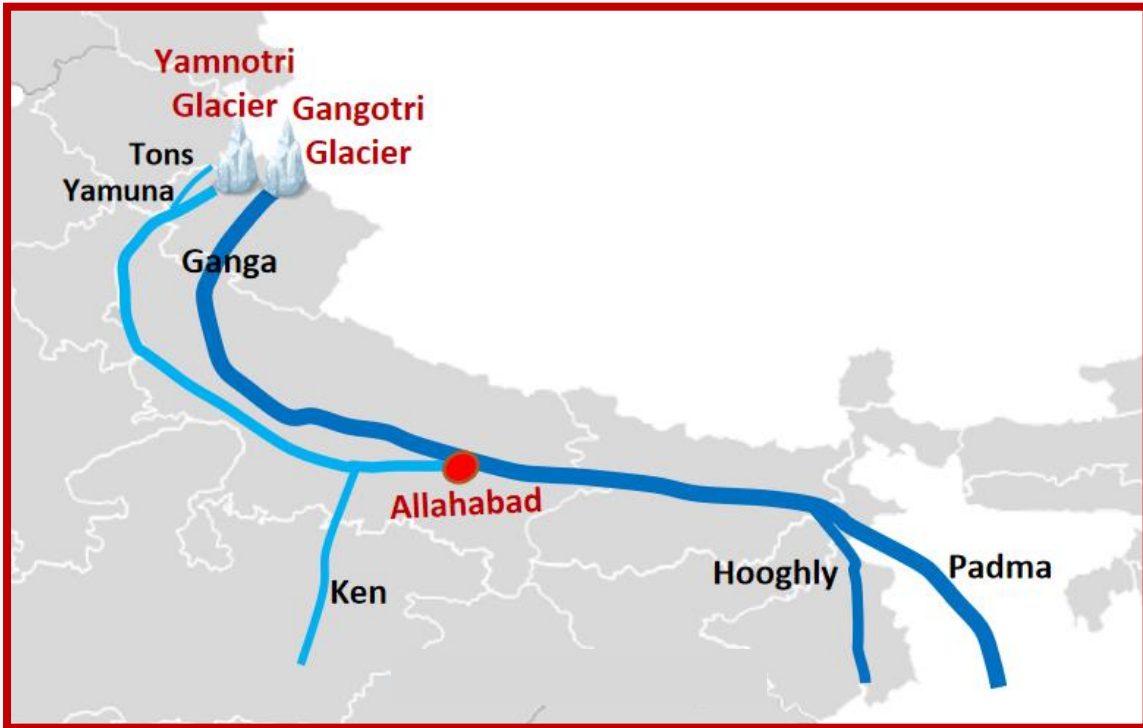


<b>Origin</b>	Bhopal district
<b>Length</b>	590 km
<b>Flow</b>	After passing through MP, it joins Yamuna near Hamirpur in UP.

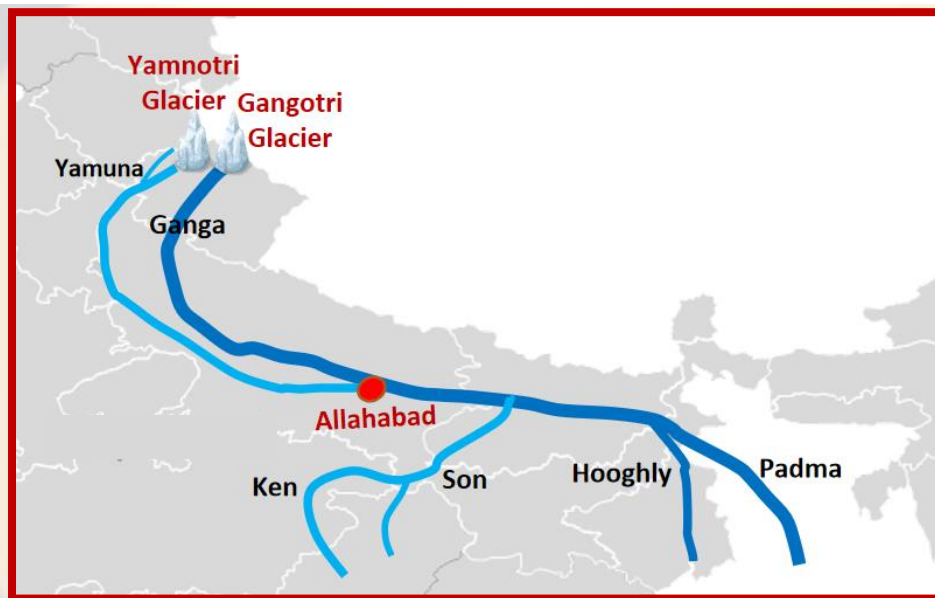
### 1.4 Ken

<b>Origin</b>	Barner Range of Madhya Pradesh
<b>Length</b>	360 Km
<b>Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The river passes through the Panna district of MP &amp; makes a gorge at Gangau.</li> <li>– It joins Yamuna in the Banda district in UP.</li> </ul>





## 2. Son

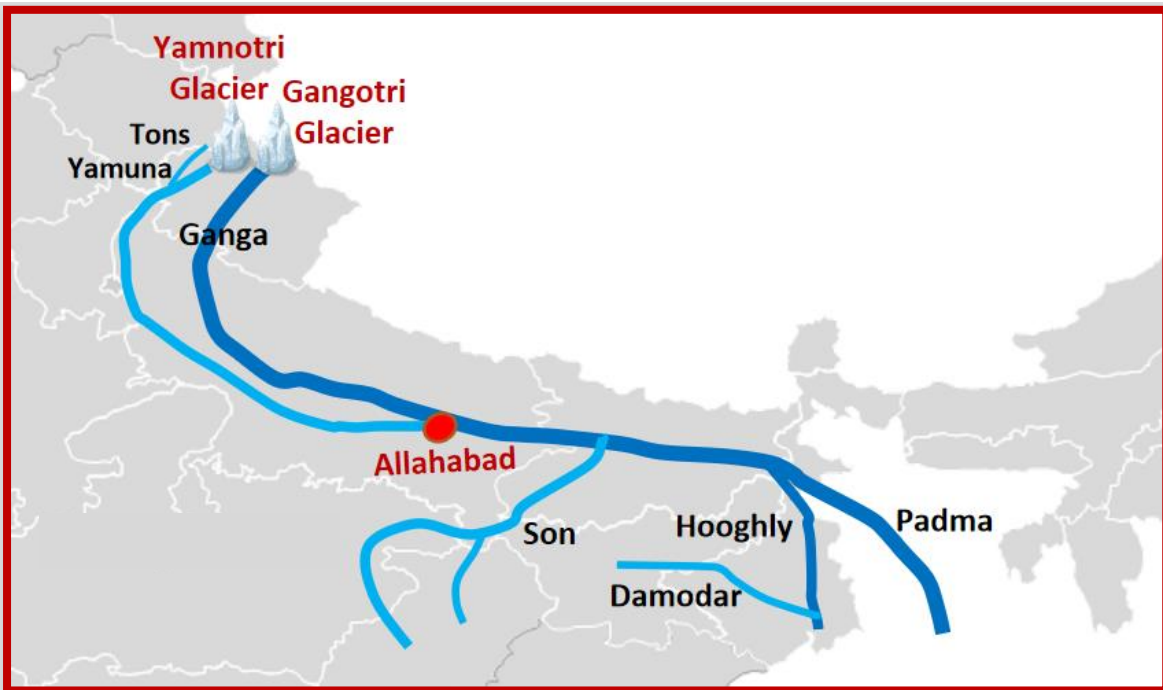


Origin	Amarkantak plateau in Chhattisgarh
Length	780 km

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<b>Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The river originates in the Amarkantak Plateau and flows in the north direction.</li> <li>– From the Kaimur range, it takes a northeast turn and passes through the Palamau district of Jharkhand.</li> <li>– Later, it joins Ganga in the Patna district of Bihar.</li> </ul>
<b>Waterfalls</b>	Son River forms waterfalls when it leaves the plateau.
<b>Important tributaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rihand (from Ramgarh Hills)</li> <li>– North Koel (from Chotanagpur Plateau)</li> </ul>

### 3. Damodar



## Daily News Analysis

<b>Origin</b>	Chotanagpur Plateau
<b>Length</b>	780 km
<b>Flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– After originating from the Chotanagpur Plateau, it flows through the rift valley.</li><li>– It used to cause devastating floods and earned the name of '<b>Sorrow of Bengal.</b>'</li><li>– It finally joins Hooghly in West Bengal, 48 km below Kolkata.</li></ul>
<b>Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– India's first multipurpose river project <b>Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC)</b> located on it with <b>Tilaiya, Maithon &amp; Panchet dams</b></li><li>– Damodar Valley is rich in coal deposits &amp; called the Ruhr Valley of India.</li></ul>