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22 March 2026



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📍 New Delhi | Guwahati | Online Edition Available

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CONTENT

Israel-Lebanon Conflict (2026)	4
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance	9
MCQs.....	10
Mains Questions	11
PRARAMBH 2026: Nationwide Awareness Campaign on New Income Tax Act, 2025.....	12
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	14
MCQs.....	14
Mains Questions	16
Global Terrorism Index 2026	16
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	19
MCQs.....	19
Mains Questions	21
New Wild Kiwi Species Actinidia indica Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by Botanical Survey of India	21
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	24
MCQs.....	24
Mains Questions	26
INS Taragiri (F41)	26
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	29
MCQs.....	30
Mains Questions	31
Shaheen Falcon (Falco peregrinus peregrinator).....	31
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	34
MCQs.....	34

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Mains Questions.....	36
World Water Day 2026.....	36
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	39
MCQs.....	39
Mains Questions.....	41
US Tariff Reset: From IEEPA to Section 122 & Section 301.....	41
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	44
MCQs.....	44
Mains Questions.....	46
Supreme Court Expands Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers.....	46
UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance.....	48
MCQs.....	49
Mains Questions.....	50

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Israel–Lebanon Conflict (2026)

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Lebanon, centred on the activities of Hezbollah, represents a complex mix of **security concerns, proxy warfare, and regional geopolitics**. It has significant implications for international relations, internal security, and global stability.

Historical Background of the Conflict

(a) Origins (1970s-1980s)

- Conflict roots lie in **Arab-Israel tensions** and Palestinian militancy.
- In 1978 and 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon to counter the Palestine Liberation Organization.
- The 1982 invasion led to the **emergence of Hezbollah**, backed by Iran.

(b) Rise of Hezbollah

- Formed as a **Shia resistance group**, later evolved into:
 - Militant organisation
 - Political party in Lebanon
- Supported by Iran and linked with Syria.

(c) 2000 & 2006 Turning Points

- **2000**: Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon (seen as Hezbollah's victory)
- **2006 War**: Full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah
 - Strengthened Hezbollah's military reputation
 - Led to UN Resolution 1701 (buffer zone concept)

2. Immediate Triggers of Current Conflict

(a) October 7 Hamas Attack

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- Hamas attack on Israel triggered wider regional tensions.
- Hezbollah opened a **northern front** in support of Hamas.

(b) Escalation Cycle

- Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel
- Israel conducted:
 - Airstrikes in southern Lebanon
 - Targeted killings of Hezbollah leaders
- Situation escalated into a **ground offensive (2026)**

Why is Israel Attacking Lebanon? (Core Reasons)

(a) Elimination of Security Threat

- Hezbollah has:
 - Tens of thousands of rockets
 - Advanced missiles and drones
- Capable of targeting **major Israeli cities**

(b) Creation of Buffer Zone

- Israel aims to push Hezbollah **north of Litani River**
- Objective: Prevent cross-border infiltration and rocket attacks

(c) Breaking Iran's Proxy Network

- Hezbollah acts as Iran's **forward military base**
- Weakening Hezbollah reduces Iran's influence

(d) Pre-emptive Doctrine

- Israel follows **pre-emptive security strategy**



- Neutralise threats before full-scale war

Why Southern Lebanon is the Focus

- Hezbollah's **core operational base** lies in southern Lebanon
- Features:
 - Dense civilian settlements (urban warfare advantage)
 - Underground tunnels and bunkers
 - Strategic hills overlooking northern Israel
- Area south of **Litani River** is critical for military operations

Hezbollah's Capabilities and Strategy

Military Strength:

- Large stockpile of:
 - Rockets, missiles, drones
- Experienced fighters (trained in Syrian Civil War)

Strategy:

- Guerrilla warfare
- Asymmetric tactics
- Hit-and-run rocket attacks

Political Role:

- Major political actor in Lebanon
- Controls significant territory and governance networks

Regional Geopolitics

(a) Iran-Israel Rivalry

- Iran supports Hezbollah financially and militarily

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- Conflict seen as **proxy war** between Iran and Israel

(b) Syria Factor

- Syria acts as a **transit corridor** for weapons
- Weak Syrian state has enabled Hezbollah expansion

(c) Role of Global Powers

- United States supports Israel
- Russia's limited involvement due to Ukraine conflict
- UN calls for restraint but limited enforcement

Humanitarian and Economic Impact

In Lebanon:

- Massive displacement
- Infrastructure destruction
- Economic crisis deepens

In Israel:

- Evacuation of northern regions
- Economic disruptions
- Security pressure

Global Impact:

- Risk to **oil supply routes**
- Impact on **global trade (Mediterranean & Red Sea routes)**

Legal and Ethical Dimensions

- Issues of **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**
- Concerns over:

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- Civilian casualties
- Proportionality of force
- Use of populated areas by militants

Key Challenges

- Weak Lebanese state authority
- Non-state actor dominance
- Multi-front conflict risk (Gaza, Lebanon, Syria)
- Lack of effective international mediation

Way Forward

(a) Diplomatic Measures

- Ceasefire negotiations via UN
- Revival of UN Resolution 1701 enforcement

(b) Security Measures

- Strengthening Lebanese Armed Forces
- Limiting non-state actors' military power

(c) Regional Stability

- Address Iran-Israel tensions
- Reduce proxy conflicts

(d) Humanitarian Focus

- Aid to affected civilians
- Reconstruction of infrastructure

Conclusion

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The Israel-Lebanon conflict is not merely a border dispute but a **multi-layered geopolitical crisis** involving proxy warfare, regional rivalries, and security dilemmas. While Israel seeks to neutralize Hezbollah, the deeper issue lies in **Iran's influence and instability in West Asia**.

A long-term solution requires **diplomatic engagement, regional cooperation, and addressing root political conflicts**, without which cycles of violence are likely to continue.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Hezbollah, Axis of Resistance, Blue Line, UNSC Resolution 1701, Proxy Warfare
- Data: Hezbollah rocket arsenal (~150,000+), Israel-Lebanon border dynamics
- Related: Iran-Israel shadow war, West Asia geopolitics

GS-2 (IR)

- Israel's security doctrine & multi-front strategy
- India's multi-alignment in West Asia

GS-3 (Security)

- Non-state actors & hybrid warfare
- Internal security linkages with regional conflicts

GS-2 (International Organisations)

- Role of UN in conflict management (Resolution 1701)

Essay / Interview

- "Proxy Wars and Regional Instability: The Israel-Hezbollah Conflict as a Case Study"
- "From Gaza to Lebanon: Israel's Multi-Front Security Dilemma in West Asia"



MCQs

1. With reference to the Israel-Lebanon escalation in March 2026, consider the following statements:
2. Israel launched ground and air operations targeting Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon.
3. Hezbollah is backed by Iran and forms a key part of the “Axis of Resistance”.
4. The conflict is entirely unrelated to the October 2023 Hamas attack.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

2. The UNSC Resolution that called for disarmament of armed groups south of the Litani River in Lebanon is:
 - (a) 1701
 - (b) 242
 - (c) 338
 - (d) 1441

Answer: (a)

3. Which of the following is NOT a stated objective of Israel’s current operations in southern Lebanon?
 - (a) Creating a security buffer zone



- (b) Dismantling Hezbollah's rocket infrastructure
- (c) Occupying Beirut
- (d) Reducing Iran's regional influence

Answer: (c)

4. Hezbollah is primarily based among which community in Lebanon?

- (a) Sunni
- (b) Christian
- (c) Shia
- (d) Druze

Answer: (c)

Mains Questions

1. "The Israel-Hezbollah conflict of 2026 is a classic example of proxy warfare and security dilemma in West Asia." Discuss the causes, objectives, and broader regional implications. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse why southern Lebanon remains a persistent flashpoint between Israel and Hezbollah. What role can multilateral diplomacy play in de-escalation? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Non-state actors like Hezbollah have fundamentally altered the nature of conflict in West Asia." Examine this statement with reference to the ongoing Israel-Lebanon escalation and its impact on India's strategic interests. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Proxy Wars, Power Projection, and Regional Instability: Understanding the Israel-Hezbollah Confrontation in the Larger West Asian Context."



PRARAMBH 2026: Nationwide Awareness Campaign on New Income Tax Act, 2025

Why in News?

- Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched **PRARAMBH 2026** (Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat) on **21 March 2026**. It is a comprehensive, multi-channel nationwide awareness campaign to educate citizens about the **Income Tax Act, 2025**, which is scheduled to come into effect from **1 April 2026**.
- The initiative aims to ensure smooth transition to the new tax regime, promote voluntary compliance, and reduce litigation by familiarising taxpayers with the updated provisions, simplified procedures, and new compliance requirements.

Key Features of PRARAMBH 2026

- **Objective**
 - Create widespread awareness about the new Income Tax Act, 2025.
 - Encourage responsible tax filing and higher voluntary compliance.
 - Support the vision of **Viksit Bharat** through a transparent and efficient tax system.
- **Campaign Design**
 - Multi-channel approach: Print, television, radio, outdoor advertising (hoardings), digital platforms, and social media.
 - Targeted outreach to different segments – salaried class, professionals, businesses, senior citizens, and new taxpayers.
 - Use of regional languages for better penetration across the country.
- **Core Focus Areas**
 - Key changes in the new Income Tax Act, 2025.
 - Simplified filing procedures and reduced compliance burden.
 - New provisions related to deductions, exemptions, and penalties.



- Importance of timely filing and consequences of non-compliance.

Background: Income Tax Act, 2025

• Need for New Law

- The existing Income Tax Act, 1961 has undergone numerous amendments, making it complex and litigation-prone.
- The new Act aims to simplify language, remove redundant provisions, and align with modern economic realities.

• Major Expected Changes (from 1 April 2026)

- Streamlined tax slabs and rates.
- Rationalisation of deductions and exemptions.
- Enhanced use of digital processes and faceless mechanisms.
- Stronger deterrence against tax evasion with updated penalty provisions.

• Government's Tax Reform Journey

- Follows earlier reforms such as GST, faceless assessment, and direct tax Vivad se Vishwas schemes.
- Part of the broader goal of ease of doing business and improving India's tax-to-GDP ratio.

Implications

• For Taxpayers

- Greater clarity and reduced compliance burden.
- Opportunity to plan finances according to the new provisions.

• For Revenue Administration

- Expected improvement in voluntary compliance.
- Reduction in disputes and litigation.



- For Economy
 - Stronger tax base to fund development initiatives under Viksit Bharat.
 - Enhanced investor confidence through a predictable tax regime.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: PRARAMBH 2026, Income Tax Act 2025, Mission Viksit Bharat
- Data: Launch date (21 March 2026), Effective date (1 April 2026)
- Related: Direct Tax Reforms, Faceless Assessment, GST

GS-3 (Economy)

- Tax reforms and their impact on economic governance
- Revenue mobilisation and fiscal policy

GS-2 (Governance)

- Citizen-centric governance and awareness campaigns
- Role of Ministry of Finance in policy implementation

Essay / Interview

- “Simplifying Taxation for Viksit Bharat: The Role of Awareness Campaigns like PRARAMBH 2026”
- “From Complexity to Clarity: Reforming India’s Direct Tax Regime”

MCQs

1. With reference to PRARAMBH 2026, consider the following statements:
2. It is a nationwide awareness campaign on the Income Tax Act, 2025.
3. The campaign was launched by the Union Finance Minister.



4. The new Income Tax Act comes into effect from 1 April 2026.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. PRARAMBH 2026 stands for:

- (a) Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat
- (b) Public Revenue Awareness and Reform Mission
- (c) People's Right to Accurate Revenue and Monetary Benefits
- (d) Progressive Revenue Administration and Modernisation of Bharat

Answer: (a)

3. The existing Income Tax Act that is being replaced is from the year:

- (a) 1956
- (b) 1961
- (c) 1975
- (d) 1991

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following is NOT a medium used in the PRARAMBH 2026 campaign?

- (a) Print media
- (b) Television and radio



- (c) Outdoor advertising
- (d) Door-to-door physical surveys

Answer: (d)

Mains Questions

1. “Effective tax reforms require not only legislative changes but also widespread public awareness.” Discuss this statement in the context of the launch of PRARAMBH 2026 and the new Income Tax Act, 2025. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the significance of simplifying the Income Tax Act for achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat. What challenges may arise during its implementation? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. “Citizen-centric governance is essential for successful policy implementation.” Examine this statement with reference to awareness campaigns like PRARAMBH 2026. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** “Towards a Simpler and Fairer Tax Regime: India’s Journey from the 1961 Act to the Income Tax Act, 2025.”

Global Terrorism Index 2026

Why in News?

- The **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**, a Sydney-based independent think tank, released the **Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026** on 22 March 2026.
- The report reveals a significant decline in global terrorism – deaths fell by **28%** and incidents by **22%** in 2025. However, **Pakistan** has for the first time topped the index as the country most impacted by terrorism, while **India** has been ranked **13th**.
- Sub-Saharan Africa continues to remain the global epicentre of terrorism, with six of the ten most affected countries from the region. The deadliest terrorist groups in 2025 were Islamic State (IS), Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and al-Shabaab.



Key Highlights of Global Terrorism Index 2026

- **Global Trends**
 - Deaths from terrorism declined by **28%**.
 - Number of terrorist incidents decreased by **22%**.
 - Despite the decline, terrorism remains highly concentrated – just **10 countries** accounted for **87%** of all terrorism-related deaths in 2025.
- **Country Rankings**
 - **Pakistan** ranked **1st** (most impacted) – first time at the top.
 - **India** placed at **13th** position.
 - Six of the top ten most affected countries are in **sub-Saharan Africa**.
- **Deadliest Terrorist Organisations (2025)**
 - Islamic State (IS)
 - Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)
 - Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
 - Al-Shabaab
- **Methodology**
 - Scores countries on a scale of **0 to 10** (0 = no impact, 10 = highest impact).
 - Composite score based on four indicators: number of incidents, fatalities, injuries, and property damage.
 - Covers **163 countries** (99.7% of world population).

Background: Global Terrorism Index

- **About IEP**
 - Independent, non-profit think tank based in Sydney.

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- Produces annual GTI since 2012 to measure the impact of terrorism.

- **India's Performance**

- India has consistently featured in the top 15-20 most affected countries due to cross-border terrorism, Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), and insurgencies in the Northeast.
- The slight improvement or stable ranking reflects continued counter-terrorism efforts by security forces.

- **Regional Concentration**

- Sub-Saharan Africa has replaced the Middle East and South Asia as the primary epicentre in recent years, driven by groups like JNIM and al-Shabaab.
- Pakistan's top ranking is attributed to surge in TTP attacks and instability along the Afghanistan border.

Implications

- **For Global Security**

- Despite overall decline, terrorism remains a concentrated but potent threat.
- Shift in epicentre towards Africa has implications for international peacekeeping and development aid.

- **For India**

- Continued vigilance required against cross-border terrorism from Pakistan-based groups.
- Need to strengthen intelligence sharing, border management, and deradicalisation programmes.
- Positive global ranking trend can support India's diplomatic push against state-sponsored terrorism.

- **Policy Relevance**

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- Highlights the importance of addressing root causes – governance deficits, poverty, and ideological extremism.
- Reinforces the need for coordinated international action under frameworks like FATF and UNSC resolutions.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), TTP, JNIM, al-Shabaab
- Data: Deaths down 28%, Incidents down 22%, Pakistan ranked 1st, India ranked 13th
- Related: FATF, Cross-border Terrorism, Left-Wing Extremism

GS-3 (Internal Security)

- Terrorism trends and counter-terrorism strategies
- Linkages between terrorism and regional instability

GS-2 (IR)

- India's counter-terrorism diplomacy and global rankings

Essay / Interview

- “Declining Global Terrorism but Rising Regional Concentration: Challenges for International Security Architecture”
- “State-Sponsored Terrorism and India's Security Concerns in the Light of Global Terrorism Index 2026”

MCQs

1. With reference to the Global Terrorism Index 2026, consider the following statements:
2. Pakistan has topped the index for the first time as the most impacted country by terrorism.

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3. India has been ranked 13th in the index.
4. Deaths from terrorism declined by 28% and incidents by 22% in 2025.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. The Global Terrorism Index is published annually by:

- (a) United Nations
- (b) Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)
- (c) Global Peace Index Foundation
- (d) Amnesty International

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is NOT listed among the deadliest terror outfits in 2025 as per GTI 2026?

- (a) Islamic State (IS)
- (b) Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
- (c) Boko Haram
- (d) Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)

Answer: (c)

4. The GTI scores countries on a scale of:



- (a) 0 to 5
- (b) 0 to 10
- (c) 1 to 100
- (d) A to E grade

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "The Global Terrorism Index 2026 shows an overall decline in terrorism but highlights its dangerous concentration in certain regions." Discuss the key findings and their implications for global and regional security. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the factors responsible for Pakistan topping the Global Terrorism Index 2026 and its implications for India's internal and external security. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Countering terrorism requires a multi-dimensional strategy addressing both immediate threats and underlying causes." Examine this statement in the light of trends highlighted in the Global Terrorism Index 2026. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Global Decline to Regional Concentration: The Evolving Nature of Terrorism and India's Response Strategy."

New Wild Kiwi Species *Actinidia indica* Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by Botanical Survey of India

Why in News?

- Scientists from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** have discovered and described a **new species of wild kiwi**, named ***Actinidia indica***, from Arunachal Pradesh. The discovery was published in March 2026 and adds to India's rich biodiversity.
- The species has been recorded only from a narrow stretch near **Ziro Valley** at an elevation of around **1,725 metres**. This finding increases the global count of ***Actinidia*** species to **56**, of which only a few are found in India.

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- It highlights the unique biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas and the importance of continued botanical exploration in the region.

Key Features of *Actinidia indica*

- **Morphological Characteristics**
 - A perennial climbing shrub reaching **2-4 metres** in height.
 - Densely hairy young branches.
 - Large ovate leaves.
 - White to creamy flowers measuring **4-6 cm** across.
 - Globose, olive-green fruits of **2.5-4 cm** diameter with a distinctive **reticulate lenticel pattern** (a key identifying trait).
- **Habitat**
 - Thrives in a biologically rich **transition zone** between temperate and subtropical forests.
 - Currently known only from a narrow stretch near Ziro Valley, Lower Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh.
 - Elevation: Approximately **1,725 metres**.
- **Taxonomic Significance**
 - Belongs to the family **Actinidiaceae** (kiwi family).
 - The discovery brings the total number of known **Actinidia** species worldwide to **56**.

Background: Botanical Survey of India & Biodiversity of Arunachal Pradesh

- **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)**
 - Established in 1890; premier institution for taxonomic research and documentation of India's plant wealth.



- Plays a key role in discovery, conservation, and sustainable utilisation of plant resources.

- **Arunachal Pradesh - Biodiversity Hotspot**

- Part of the Eastern Himalayas, one of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots.
- Known for high endemism and many undiscovered plant species due to difficult terrain and altitudinal variation.
- Ziro Valley is already recognised for its unique Apatani tribal agro-ecosystem and biodiversity.

- **Genus Actinidia**

- Includes commercially important kiwi fruit species (*Actinidia deliciosa* and *Actinidia chinensis*).
- Most species are wild climbers native to East and Southeast Asia.
- Only a few *Actinidia* species were previously recorded from India (mainly in Northeast).

Implications

- **Conservation**

- The narrow distribution range makes the species vulnerable to habitat loss, climate change, and human activities.
- Calls for immediate protection and ex-situ conservation measures.

- **Scientific & Economic**

- Potential for genetic resources in kiwi breeding programmes (disease resistance, climate adaptability).
- Adds to India's documented plant diversity and strengthens its claim in global biodiversity databases.

- **Policy**

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- Reinforces the need for continued botanical surveys under the National Biodiversity Mission.
- Highlights the importance of community involvement in conservation in biodiversity-rich states like Arunachal Pradesh.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Actinidia indica, Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Ziro Valley, Actinidiaceae, Eastern Himalayas Biodiversity Hotspot
- Data: New species count (global Actinidia = 56), Elevation (1,725 m), Location (Arunachal Pradesh)
- Related: Biodiversity Hotspots, Plant Taxonomy, Northeast India Flora

GS-3 (Environment & Biodiversity)

- Discovery of new species and conservation challenges
- Eastern Himalayas as a biodiversity hotspot

GS-1 (Geography)

- Altitudinal zonation and transition zones in the Himalayas

Essay / Interview

- “New Species Discoveries in the Eastern Himalayas: Opportunities and Conservation Imperatives”
- “From Taxonomic Research to Bio-prospecting: The Role of Botanical Survey of India in Viksit Bharat”

MCQs

1. With reference to the newly discovered plant Actinidia indica, consider the following statements:

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2. It is a new species of wild kiwi discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.
3. It was found near Ziro Valley at an elevation of around 1,725 metres.
4. It belongs to the family Actinidiaceae.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) was established in:
 - (a) 1857
 - (b) 1890
 - (c) 1947
 - (d) 1952

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is a key identifying feature of *Actinidia indica*?
 - (a) Red flowers
 - (b) Reticulate lenticel pattern on fruits
 - (c) Thorny stems
 - (d) Underground tubers

Answer: (b)

4. The Eastern Himalayas are recognised as one of the:



- (a) 4 biodiversity hotspots of India
- (b) 36 global biodiversity hotspots
- (c) 10 global biodiversity hotspots
- (d) Only marine biodiversity hotspot

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "Recent discoveries of new plant species like *Actinidia indica* in Arunachal Pradesh highlight the immense but under-explored biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas." Discuss the significance of such discoveries and the challenges in conserving them. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the role of the Botanical Survey of India in documenting and conserving India's floral diversity. How can taxonomic research contribute to sustainable development? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Biodiversity hotspots like the Eastern Himalayas face multiple threats despite their ecological importance." Analyse this statement with special reference to new species discoveries and conservation needs in Arunachal Pradesh. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Documenting the Undiscovered: Taxonomic Research as a Pillar of Biodiversity Conservation in India."

INS Taragiri (F41)

Why in News?

- The Indian Navy is scheduled to commission its latest stealth frigate, **INS Taragiri (F41)**, on **03 April 2026**. It is the **fourth ship** of the **Nilgiri Class (Project 17A)**, built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL)**, Mumbai.



- The ship is a reincarnation of the earlier Leander-class frigate INS Taragiri and represents a significant upgrade in stealth, firepower, and multi-role capabilities compared to the previous Shivalik-class (Project 17) frigates.
- Designed by the **Warship Design Bureau (WDB)**, INS Taragiri strengthens the Indian Navy's blue-water operational capabilities and indigenous shipbuilding prowess under **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

Key Features of INS Taragiri

- **Class & Design**
 - Nilgiri Class (Project 17A) – follow-on to the Shivalik-class (P17).
 - Advanced stealth design with reduced radar cross-section.
 - High-speed and high-endurance platform optimised for multi-dimensional maritime operations.
- **Propulsion System**
 - **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** configuration.
 - One diesel engine and one gas turbine driving Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPP) on each shaft.
 - Equipped with state-of-the-art **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)** for efficient machinery control.
- **Weapon & Sensor Suite** (major upgrade over P17)
 - **BrahMos** supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles.
 - **MRSAM** (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles) with **MFSTAR** radar.
 - **76 mm Super Rapid Gun Mount (SRGM)**.
 - Close-in weapon systems: 30 mm and 12.7 mm guns.
 - Advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) suite including rockets and torpedoes.



- **Other Capabilities**

- Multi-role stealth frigate capable of air defence, anti-surface, anti-submarine, and electronic warfare operations.
- Enhanced survivability and crew comfort features.

Background: Project 17A (Nilgiri Class)

- **Project Overview**

- Seven stealth frigates being built under Project 17A.
- Four by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) and three by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE).
- Represents a major leap in indigenous warship design and construction with over 75% indigenous content.

- **Earlier Ships**

- INS Nilgiri (lead ship) commissioned in 2024.
- Subsequent ships: Himgiri, Dunagiri, and now Taragiri.

- **Strategic Significance**

- Enhances Indian Navy's surface fleet strength in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Supports India's maritime security objectives, including protection of sea lanes and power projection.
- Boosts defence indigenisation under **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make in India**.

Implications

- **For Indian Navy**

- Strengthens multi-role operational capability in anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine domains.
- Improves fleet readiness and deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.



- **For Defence Industry**

- Milestone in indigenous warship building with high local content.
- Encourages private sector participation and technology absorption.

- **For National Security**

- Reinforces India's maritime posture amid growing challenges in the Indian Ocean.
- Contributes to regional stability and security partnerships (e.g., Quad, Malabar exercises).

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: INS Taragiri, Project 17A (Nilgiri Class), CODOG propulsion, BrahMos, MRSAM, MFSTAR
- Data: Commissioning date (3 April 2026), Builder (Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd), Class (stealth frigate)
- Related: Atmanirbhar Bharat, Warship Design Bureau, Indian Navy's force levels

GS-3 (Defence & Security)

- Indigenous defence production and modernisation of armed forces
- Maritime security and blue-water navy capabilities

GS-3 (Science & Technology)

- Defence technology and shipbuilding indigenisation

Essay / Interview

- "Project 17A and the Rise of Indigenous Warship Building in India"
- "Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Role of Stealth Frigates like INS Taragiri"



MCQs

1. With reference to INS Taragiri, consider the following statements:
2. It is the fourth ship of the Nilgiri Class (Project 17A).
3. It is being built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd.
4. It features Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. INS Taragiri is a reincarnation of an earlier:
 - (a) Kolkata-class destroyer
 - (b) Leander-class frigate
 - (c) Talwar-class frigate
 - (d) Visakhapatnam-class destroyer

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following missiles is part of the weapon suite of INS Taragiri?
 - (a) Barak-8 only
 - (b) BrahMos supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missile
 - (c) Agni series
 - (d) Prithvi series



Answer: (b)

4. Project 17A refers to the construction of:

- (a) Aircraft carriers
- (b) Stealth frigates (Nilgiri Class)
- (c) Nuclear submarines
- (d) Offshore patrol vessels

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "Project 17A frigates like INS Taragiri represent a quantum leap in India's indigenous warship building capability." Discuss the strategic and technological significance of the Nilgiri-class frigates. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the role of stealth frigates in enhancing the Indian Navy's multi-dimensional maritime operations in the Indian Ocean Region. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence is not just about manufacturing but also about design capability and self-reliance in critical technologies." Examine this statement in the context of Project 17A. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Leander to Nilgiri: The Evolution of Indigenous Frigate Design and Its Impact on India's Maritime Power."

Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*)

Why in News?

- A pair of **Shaheen Falcons** (a non-migratory subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon) has been sighted nesting in a multi-storey residential complex under construction in **Kochi**, Kerala.



- The unusual urban nesting has drawn attention from ornithologists and wildlife enthusiasts, highlighting the species' adaptability while raising concerns about habitat loss and urbanisation pressures on raptors.
- The Shaheen Falcon is a Schedule I species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and is protected under CITES Appendix I.

Key Features of Shaheen Falcon

- **Taxonomy**
 - Scientific name: **Falco peregrinus peregrinator**.
 - Non-migratory subspecies of the globally widespread Peregrine Falcon.
- **Physical Characteristics**
 - Muscular body with the female significantly larger than the male (reverse sexual dimorphism).
 - Distinctive dark vertical stripe (moustachial stripe) from the eye to the side of the face, giving a "severe" appearance.
 - Slate-grey to blackish upperparts and barred underparts.
- **Habitat & Distribution**
 - Prefers rocky and hilly regions, cliffs, and rock pinnacles.
 - Primarily found in the **Indian subcontinent**.
 - Also recorded in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - The Kochi sighting shows increasing adaptation to urban environments with tall structures.
- **Feeding & Hunting**
 - Chiefly feeds on birds; occasionally mammals (bats, rats, rabbits), insects, reptiles, and rarely fish.



- Famous for the “stoop” – high-speed hunting dive that can exceed 300 km/h, making it one of the fastest animals on earth.

Background & Conservation Status

• Ecological Role

- Apex avian predator that helps control bird and small mammal populations.
- Indicator species for environmental health and pesticide levels (like DDT in the past).

• Threats

- Habitat loss due to urbanisation and quarrying.
- Electrocution from power lines and collision with high-rise buildings.
- Disturbance during nesting season.

• Protection

- Listed in **Schedule I** of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 → highest protection level.
- Included in **CITES Appendix I**.
- Protected under the Bombay Natural History Society and various state wildlife boards.

Implications of the Kochi Sighting

• Positive

- Demonstrates the species' resilience and ability to use man-made structures (similar to Peregrines nesting on skyscrapers worldwide).
- Opportunity for public awareness and citizen science in urban biodiversity monitoring.

• Challenges

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- Construction activity can disturb nesting.
- Need for temporary restrictions around the nesting site to ensure successful fledging.
- Highlights the urgency of integrating biodiversity considerations into urban planning.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Shaheen Falcon (*Falco peregrinus peregrinator*), Stoop, Schedule I species, Peregrine Falcon
- Data: Non-migratory subspecies, Distribution (Indian subcontinent + Andaman & Nicobar), Speed (>300 km/h)
- Related: Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, CITES, Urban Biodiversity

GS-3 (Environment & Biodiversity)

- Urban wildlife conservation and human-animal interface
- Protection of Schedule I species

GS-1 (Geography)

- Biodiversity of the Western Ghats and peninsular India

Essay / Interview

- “Urbanisation vs Biodiversity: Can Cities Become Safe Habitats for Raptors like the Shaheen Falcon?”
- “From Cliffs to Concrete Jungles: The Adaptability and Conservation Challenges of India’s Raptors”

MCQs

1. With reference to the Shaheen Falcon, consider the following statements:



2. It is a non-migratory subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon.
3. It is mainly found in the Indian subcontinent and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
4. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. The characteristic high-speed hunting dive of the Shaheen Falcon is known as:

- (a) Glide
- (b) Stoop
- (c) Hover
- (d) Soar

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is a key physical feature of the Shaheen Falcon?

- (a) Bright red beak
- (b) Dark vertical stripe from eye to side of face
- (c) Long tail feathers
- (d) White crown

Answer: (b)

4. The Shaheen Falcon primarily feeds on:



- (a) Fish
- (b) Birds
- (c) Fruits
- (d) Grass

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "The recent nesting of Shaheen Falcons in urban Kochi highlights both the adaptability of wildlife and the challenges of rapid urbanisation." Discuss the conservation implications for raptors in Indian cities. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the ecological significance of the Shaheen Falcon and the legal framework for its protection in India. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Urban biodiversity conservation requires integration of ecological considerations into city planning." Analyse this statement with reference to the Shaheen Falcon sighting and similar cases. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Wild Cliffs to Concrete Towers: The Future of India's Raptors in an Urbanising Landscape."

World Water Day 2026

Why in News?

- On **22 March 2026**, the Prime Minister of India extended greetings to the nation on the occasion of **World Water Day**. This annual United Nations Observance focuses on the critical importance of freshwater and sustainable water management.
- The **2026 theme** is "**Water and Gender**", which underscores the pivotal role of women and girls in water collection, management, and decision-making, while addressing the disproportionate burden they bear due to water scarcity and poor sanitation.



- The day aligns with global efforts to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal 6** (Clean Water and Sanitation for all by 2030).

Key Details of World Water Day

- **Date & Origin**
 - Observed every year on **22 March** since **1993**.
 - The idea was first proposed in **1992** at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro.
 - The UN General Assembly officially declared 22 March as World Water Day.
- **2026 Theme: Water and Gender**
 - Emphasises how women and girls are disproportionately affected by water crises.
 - Highlights their central role in water governance, hygiene, and household water security.
 - Calls for gender-inclusive policies in water resource management.
- **Core Objectives**
 - Raise awareness about water scarcity, pollution, and lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
 - Promote sustainable management of freshwater resources.
 - Support achievement of **SDG 6**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Significance

- **Global Water Challenges**
 - Over 2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water.
 - Water pollution, climate change-induced extremes (floods and droughts), and over-extraction remain major threats.



- **Gender Dimension**

- Women and girls spend millions of hours annually collecting water in water-stressed regions.
- Improved water access directly enhances girls' education, women's health, and economic participation.

- **For India**

- India faces acute water stress in many regions despite being home to major river systems.
- The theme resonates with national missions like **Jal Jeevan Mission, Namami Gange, Atal Bhujal Yojana, and Amrit Sarovar.**
- Reinforces the need for community participation, especially of women, in water conservation and watershed management.

Implications & Way Forward

- **Policy Focus**

- Gender-sensitive water policies and greater representation of women in water user associations.
- Integration of water conservation with climate adaptation strategies.

- **India's Initiatives**

- Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide tap water to every rural household.
- Emphasis on rainwater harvesting, rejuvenation of water bodies, and wastewater recycling.

- **Global Call**

- Urgent action to bridge the water access gap and achieve SDG 6 by 2030.



UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: World Water Day, SDG 6, Water and Gender (2026 theme), Jal Jeevan Mission
- Data: Observed since 1993, Proposed in 1992 at Earth Summit (Rio)
- Related: Namami Gange, Atal Bhujal Yojana, National Water Policy

GS-3 (Environment)

- Water resource management and conservation
- Climate change and water security

GS-2 (Governance)

- Government schemes for water and sanitation
- Gender mainstreaming in environmental policies

GS-1 (Society)

- Gender issues in access to basic resources

Essay / Interview

- “Water and Gender: Addressing the Invisible Burden on Women for Achieving Water Security”
- “From Scarcity to Sustainability: India’s Quest for Water Security in the 21st Century”

MCQs

1. With reference to World Water Day 2026, consider the following statements:
2. It is observed annually on 22 March.
3. The theme for 2026 is “Water and Gender”.
4. The day was first proposed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. World Water Day primarily supports the achievement of which Sustainable Development Goal?

- (a) SDG 5
- (b) SDG 6
- (c) SDG 13
- (d) SDG 15

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is NOT a major water-related challenge highlighted on World Water Day?

- (a) Water scarcity
- (b) Water pollution
- (c) Lack of sanitation
- (d) Over-abundance of freshwater in all regions

Answer: (d)

4. In India, which scheme aims at providing tap water connection to every rural household?

- (a) Namami Gange
- (b) Jal Jeevan Mission



(c) Atal Bhujal Yojana

(d) Swachh Bharat Mission

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "The theme 'Water and Gender' for World Water Day 2026 underscores the need for inclusive water governance." Discuss the challenges faced by women in water management and suggest measures to address them. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine India's efforts towards achieving SDG 6 in the context of schemes like Jal Jeevan Mission and Namami Gange. What gaps remain? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Water scarcity is not just an environmental issue but a socio-economic and gender justice concern." Analyse this statement with reference to World Water Day observances. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Water for All: Bridging the Gender Gap in Access, Management, and Decision-Making."

US Tariff Reset: From IEEPA to Section 122 & Section 301

Why in News?

- A recent **US Supreme Court** ruling struck down tariffs imposed under the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)**, invalidating the legal foundation of several "reciprocal tariff" measures introduced by the Trump administration.
- In response, the US has imposed temporary **10% global tariffs** under **Section 122** of the Trade Act, 1974 (valid for 150 days, extendable). Simultaneously, the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** is fast-tracking **Section 301 investigations** into structural excess capacity, overproduction, and unfair trade practices in multiple countries, including India.
- This shift has created significant uncertainty for ongoing and prospective trade agreements, including the India-US bilateral trade deal, and is being viewed as a major recalibration of US trade policy.

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Key Elements of the US Tariff Reset

- **From IEEPA to Section 122 & Section 301**
 - IEEPA-based tariffs declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.
 - Temporary **10% global tariffs** imposed under **Section 122** of the Trade Act, 1974.
 - Long-term strategy: Use **Section 301** investigations to impose country-specific and sector-specific tariffs with stronger legal backing.
- **Section 301 Investigations**
 - Focus on structural excess capacity, overproduction, forced labour, and export distortions.
 - Fast-tracked process with short public comment periods.
 - Allows the executive to impose flexible, long-lasting tariffs without Congressional approval.
- **Rationale**
 - Rebuild a “reciprocal tariff” framework.
 - Maintain trade pressure even on countries that had negotiated earlier deals.
 - Address perceived unfair trade practices by major economies.

Impact on Global Trade & Key Countries

- **Erosion of Existing Agreements**
 - Countries like Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, and the EU had offered concessions expecting tariff relief.
 - Uniform 10% tariffs have made those concessions appear less valuable.
- **International Reactions**
 - Malaysia declared its trade agreement with the US null and void.
 - European Commission paused EU-US trade talks.



- South Korea raised concerns over investment and currency commitments.

- **Implications for India**

- India faces Section 301 scrutiny in sectors such as solar modules, petrochemicals, and steel.
- Bilateral trade surplus with the US stood at **\$58 billion** in 2025.
- Uncertainty over the fate of the proposed India-US trade agreement.
- Any final deal will depend on India's tariff advantage and ability to address US concerns on excess capacity.

Broader Implications

- **For Global Trade System**

- Weakens multilateralism and the rules-based order under WTO.
- Encourages unilateral actions and protectionism.
- Erodes trust in negotiated trade agreements.

- **For Supply Chains**

- Increased costs and disruption of global value chains.
- Risk of retaliatory measures and fragmentation of trade.

- **For India**

- Need to diversify export markets to reduce dependence on the US.
- Strengthen domestic manufacturing competitiveness through PLI schemes and improved logistics.
- Engage strategically in negotiations while safeguarding policy space.



UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Section 301, Section 122, IEEPA, USTR, Reciprocal Tariffs
- Data: Temporary 10% global tariffs under Section 122; India's 2025 trade surplus with US (\$58 billion)
- Related: WTO, Trade Act 1974, India-US Trade Relations

GS-2 (IR)

- India-US bilateral relations and trade negotiations
- Impact of US unilateral trade policy on global order

GS-3 (Economy)

- Trade policy, tariffs, and their impact on exports
- Global value chains and protectionism

Essay / Interview

- "Unilateralism vs Multilateralism: The Recalibration of US Trade Policy and Its Implications for India"
- "From IEEPA to Section 301: Navigating Uncertainty in Global Trade Agreements"

MCQs

1. With reference to the recent US tariff reset, consider the following statements:
2. The US Supreme Court struck down tariffs imposed under IEEPA.
3. Temporary 10% global tariffs have been imposed under Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974.
4. Section 301 investigations are being used to target structural excess capacity and overproduction.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. Section 301 of the US Trade Act, 1974, primarily empowers the USTR to:

- (a) Impose emergency tariffs
- (b) Investigate and respond to unfair foreign trade practices
- (c) Regulate domestic subsidies
- (d) Negotiate free trade agreements

Answer: (b)

3. India's bilateral trade surplus with the US in 2025 was approximately: (a) \$25 billion

- (b) \$58 billion
- (c) \$100 billion
- (d) \$150 billion

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following countries declared its trade agreement with the US null and void following the tariff changes?

- (a) South Korea
- (b) Malaysia
- (c) Japan



(d) European Union

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "The US shift from IEEPA to Section 301 tariffs marks a significant recalibration of global trade policy with far-reaching implications." Discuss the key changes and their impact on India's trade strategy. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse how unilateral US tariff actions under Section 301 undermine the rules-based multilateral trading system. What should be India's response? (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Increased protectionism and uncertainty in US trade policy pose challenges for emerging economies like India." Examine the statement with reference to recent developments and suggest a way forward for India. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Unilateralism in Trade: The Erosion of Multilateralism and India's Strategic Choices in a Fragmenting Global Order."

Supreme Court Expands Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers

Why in News?

- In a landmark judgment delivered on **21 March 2026**, the Supreme Court struck down the restrictive provision in the **Social Security Code, 2020** that limited paid maternity leave for adoptive mothers to only those cases where the child was below three months of age.
- The Court held that such a distinction between biological and adoptive motherhood violates **Article 14 (Equality)** and undermines child welfare. Adoptive mothers are now entitled to **12 weeks of paid maternity leave** irrespective of the child's age at the time of adoption.
- The verdict is expected to benefit thousands of working women who adopt older children and aligns with a more inclusive, child-centric understanding of parenthood.

Key Provisions & Changes

- **Earlier Position**

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- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (amended 2017): 26 weeks for biological mothers.
- For adoptive and surrogate mothers: Only **12 weeks** if the child was below three months (Section 5(4) of 1961 Act → Section 60(4) of Social Security Code, 2020).
- **Supreme Court Ruling**
 - Declared the three-month age cap unconstitutional.
 - Adoptive mothers entitled to **12 weeks** of paid maternity leave **regardless of the child's age**.
 - Recognised adoption as part of reproductive choices and emphasised emotional bonding needs of adopted children.
- **Court's Observations**
 - Motherhood cannot be viewed through a "narrow lens of biology".
 - Adopted children, especially those from institutions, require greater parental care for emotional development.
 - Parenting is a shared responsibility; the Court urged the government to consider a formal framework for **paternity leave**.

Background: Evolution of Maternity Benefits in India

- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961** → 12 weeks leave.
- **2017 Amendment** → Increased to 26 weeks for biological mothers; introduced benefits for adoptive/surrogate mothers with conditions.
- **Social Security Code, 2020** → Consolidated labour laws but retained the restrictive clause for adoptive mothers.
- **Data Insight**
 - Less than 5% of adoptions in India involve children below three months of age.
 - Adoption process often takes several months, making the earlier provision largely ineffective.

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Implications

- **For Working Women**
 - Removes discrimination between biological and adoptive motherhood.
 - Reduces conflict between career and caregiving for adoptive mothers.
- **For Child Welfare**
 - Promotes better emotional bonding and stable family environment for adopted children.
 - Advances a child-centric approach in labour laws.
- **Broader Societal Impact**
 - Encourages adoption and supports inclusive family structures.
 - Moves towards gender-balanced parenting by recognising shared responsibilities.
- **Policy Direction**
 - Government may now consider extending or formalising paternity leave (currently 15 days for central government employees).

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Social Security Code 2020, Maternity Benefit Act 1961 (2017 Amendment), Article 14, Adoptive Motherhood
- Data: 26 weeks for biological mothers, 12 weeks now for adoptive mothers (irrespective of age)
- Related: Fundamental Rights, Labour Law Reforms, SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

GS-2 (Governance & Social Justice)

- Labour rights and gender-sensitive policies



- Judicial intervention in social legislation

GS-1 (Society)

- Family structures, adoption, and gender roles in India

Essay / Interview

- “Parenthood Beyond Biology: The Supreme Court’s Progressive Ruling on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers”
- “Towards Inclusive Labour Laws: Balancing Gender Justice, Child Welfare and Economic Participation”

MCQs

1. With reference to the recent Supreme Court judgment on maternity leave, consider the following statements:
2. Adoptive mothers are now entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave irrespective of the child’s age.
3. The Court struck down the relevant provision of the Social Security Code, 2020.
4. Biological mothers are entitled to 26 weeks of maternity leave under the 2017 Amendment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

2. Under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (as amended in 2017), biological mothers are entitled to how many weeks of paid leave?



- (a) 12 weeks
- (b) 18 weeks
- (c) 26 weeks
- (d) 32 weeks

Answer: (c)

3. The Supreme Court's ruling on adoptive mothers' maternity leave is primarily based on which Article of the Constitution?

- (a) Article 15
- (b) Article 14
- (c) Article 21
- (d) Article 23

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following is NOT a ground cited by the Supreme Court for striking down the age restriction?

- (a) Violation of equality
- (b) Child's emotional bonding needs
- (c) Discrimination against working women
- (d) Reduction in fertility rates

Answer: (d)

Mains Questions

1. "The Supreme Court's judgment expanding maternity leave for adoptive mothers reflects a progressive, child-centric and inclusive interpretation of equality." Discuss the significance



of the ruling and its implications for gender justice and family welfare. (15 marks / 250 words)

2. Analyse the evolution of maternity benefit laws in India and the gaps that still remain, particularly regarding adoptive and surrogate mothers as well as paternity leave. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Labour laws must evolve to recognise diverse family structures and shared parenting responsibilities." Examine this statement in the light of the recent Supreme Court verdict on maternity leave for adoptive mothers. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Beyond Biology: Redefining Motherhood, Parenthood and Gender Justice in India's Labour Laws."

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