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## Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM)

### Why in News?

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to integrate the **Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM)** on its fleet of **MiG-29** fighter jets. This move will significantly enhance the close-combat capabilities of the MiG-29, one of the IAF's frontline multi-role fighters. The ASRAAM, a European-designed "fire-and-forget" missile, has already been successfully integrated on the indigenous **LCA Tejas** and **Jaguar** aircraft.

### Key Features of ASRAAM

- **Origin & Developer**
  - European-designed short-range air-to-air missile.
  - Built by the multinational company **MBDA**.
- **Technical Specifications**
  - Length: **2.9 metres**
  - Weight: **88 kg**
  - Warhead: High-explosive
  - Speed: Exceeds **Mach 3**
  - Range: Greater than **25 km** against fast-moving targets
- **Guidance & Capabilities**
  - Uses **heat-seeking (infrared)** technology, optimised for close-in dogfights.
  - Operates on **fire-and-forget** principle – once launched, the missile guides itself to the target without further pilot input.



- Features **Lock-On After Launch (LOAL)** capability, allowing the pilot to fire before the seeker even acquires the target.
- Highly manoeuvrable, capable of pulling extreme G-forces to track rapidly turning fighter jets.

- **Design Advantages**

- Aerodynamic design and powerful rocket motor ensure high energy throughout the flight path.
- Effective against agile enemy aircraft in visual-range combat.

## Significance of the Induction

- **For Indian Air Force**

- Provides a modern, highly capable short-range air-to-air missile to replace or supplement older systems on the MiG-29 fleet.
- Enhances the IAF's within-visual-range (WVR) combat capability, especially in high-threat environments.

- **Indigenisation & Interoperability**

- ASRAAM integration on MiG-29, alongside its existing use on Tejas and Jaguar, demonstrates successful weapon-system integration across diverse platforms.
- Supports the broader goal of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in defence by increasing flexibility in weapon choices.

- **Strategic Impact**

- Strengthens India's air combat edge along sensitive borders.
- Improves overall operational readiness of the IAF's fighter fleet.



## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

### Prelims

- Key terms: ASRAAM, Fire-and-Forget Missile, Lock-On After Launch (LOAL), MiG-29, LCA Tejas
- Data: Length 2.9 m, Weight 88 kg, Speed > Mach 3, Range > 25 km
- Related: MBDA, Air-to-Air Missiles, Indian Air Force Modernisation

### GS-3 (Defence & Security)

- Missile technology and fighter aircraft upgradation
- Modernisation of the Indian Air Force

### GS-3 (Science & Technology)

- Defence R&D and integration of advanced weapon systems

### Essay / Interview

- “Missile Technology and Air Power: The Role of Advanced Short-Range Air-to-Air Missiles in Modern Warfare”
- “Atmanirbhar Bharat in Defence: Integrating Indigenous and Foreign Systems for Enhanced Combat Capability”

## MCQs

1. With reference to the Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM), consider the following statements:
2. It is a European-designed missile built by MBDA.
3. It operates on a fire-and-forget principle with Lock-On After Launch (LOAL) capability.



4. It has already been integrated on the LCA Tejas and Jaguar aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

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 ASRAAM is primarily used for:

- 3. (a) Long-range strategic strikes
- 4. (b) Short-range air-to-air combat
- 5. (c) Surface-to-air defence
- 6. (d) Anti-ship operations

7. **Answer: (b)**

8. Which of the following is NOT a feature of the ASRAAM?

- (a) Heat-seeking guidance
- (b) Speed exceeding Mach 3
- (c) Fire-and-forget capability
- (d) Nuclear warhead option

**Answer: (d)**

9. The Indian Air Force is planning to equip which fighter jet fleet with the ASRAAM missile?



- (a) Su-30MKI
- (b) MiG-29
- (c) Rafale
- (d) Mirage 2000

**Answer: (b)**

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## Mains Questions

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1. "The integration of advanced short-range air-to-air missiles like ASRAAM into the Indian Air Force's MiG-29 fleet represents a significant step in enhancing within-visual-range combat capability." Discuss the technical features of ASRAAM and its strategic importance. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the role of modern air-to-air missiles in transforming aerial warfare and how India is modernising its fighter aircraft inventory. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Indigenous platforms like LCA Tejas combined with advanced weapon systems strengthen India's air defence posture." Analyse this statement with reference to recent inductions such as ASRAAM. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Missiles in the Sky: The Evolution of Air Combat Technology and India's Defence Preparedness."

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## Massive Snow Avalanche Hits Zojila Pass in Ladakh

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### Why in News?

- A massive **snow avalanche** has struck the **Zojila Pass** in Ladakh, disrupting traffic and highlighting the region's extreme winter vulnerabilities. The pass, a critical link on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway (NH-1), remains highly prone to avalanches due to heavy snowfall and steep terrain. This incident once again underscores the



challenges of maintaining all-weather connectivity in high-altitude Himalayan regions and the importance of avalanche forecasting and mitigation measures.

## Key Details of Zojila Pass

### • Location & Geography

- Located in the **Kargil district** of Ladakh.
- Situated on the **Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway (NH-1)** at an altitude of **11,650 feet**.
- Lies in the **Greater Himalayan Range**.
- Known as the “**Mountain Pass of Blizzards**” due to extreme weather conditions.

### • Strategic Importance

- Vital lifeline connecting the Kashmir Valley with Ladakh.
- Remains closed for almost **half the year** (typically November to May/June) due to heavy snowfall and avalanche risks.

### • Historical Significance

- Site of fierce fighting during the **Indo-Pak War of 1947-48**.
- Captured by Pakistani-aided militias in 1948 with the aim of seizing Ladakh.
- Recaptured by the Indian Army on **1 November 1948** in an assault codenamed **Operation Bison**.

## What is an Avalanche?

### • Definition

- A large mass of snow that rapidly moves down a slope.
- Can be extremely deadly, burying or sweeping away anything in its path.



- **Causes**

- Occurs when a weak layer of snow fails under the weight of overlying snow.
- More likely on slopes without trees or large rocks, which normally help anchor the snow.
- Triggered by heavy snowfall, wind loading, temperature changes, or human activity (e.g., skiing or road clearing).

- **Types**

- Slab avalanches (most dangerous).
- Loose snow avalanches.
- Powder snow avalanches.

## Implications of the Avalanche

- **For Connectivity**

- Disruption of the strategic Srinagar-Leh highway, affecting movement of troops, civilians, and essential supplies to Ladakh.

- **For Disaster Management**

- Highlights the need for better avalanche forecasting, early warning systems, and structural mitigation measures (e.g., snow galleries, avalanche barriers).

- **For India's Border Security**

- Zojila Pass is critical for year-round access to Ladakh, especially in view of the sensitive Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.
- The government has been working on the **Zojila Tunnel** project to provide all-weather connectivity.



## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

### Prelims

- Key terms: Zojila Pass, Avalanche, Operation Bison, Srinagar-Kargil-Leh Highway (NH-1)
- Data: Altitude 11,650 feet, Closed for almost half the year, Location - Kargil district, Ladakh
- Related: Himalayan Passes, Border Infrastructure, Disaster Risk Reduction

### GS-1 (Geography)

- Physical geography of the Himalayas and strategic passes
- Avalanche phenomena in high-altitude regions

### GS-3 (Disaster Management & Internal Security)

- Avalanche risk management and border connectivity
- Infrastructure development in sensitive border areas

### Essay / Interview

- “Strategic Himalayan Passes and the Challenge of All-Weather Connectivity in India”
- “Natural Disasters in Border Regions: Balancing Development, Security, and Environmental Concerns”

## MCQs

1. With reference to Zojila Pass, consider the following statements:
2. It is located in the Kargil district of Ladakh on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway.
3. It lies in the Greater Himalayan Range at an altitude of 11,650 feet.



4. It was the site of Operation Bison during the 1947-48 Indo-Pak War.

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. Zojila Pass is popularly known as:

- (a) Gateway to Ladakh
- (b) Mountain Pass of Blizzards
- (c) Roof of the World
- (d) Snow Leopard Pass

**Answer: (b)**

3. Which of the following is the primary reason Zojila Pass remains closed for almost half the year?

- (a) Heavy snowfall and avalanche risk
- (b) Political restrictions
- (c) Lack of road maintenance
- (d) International border disputes

**Answer: (a)**

4. The ongoing major infrastructure project aimed at providing all-weather connectivity through Zojila Pass is:

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- (a) Atal Tunnel
- (b) Zojila Tunnel
- (c) Rohtang Tunnel
- (d) Shingo La Tunnel

**Answer: (b)**

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## Mains Questions

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1. "Strategic Himalayan passes like Zojila are vital for India's border connectivity but remain highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as avalanches." Discuss the geographical challenges and the steps needed for all-weather access. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the historical and strategic significance of Zojila Pass in the context of India's defence and connectivity to Ladakh. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Disaster risk reduction in high-altitude border regions requires a combination of engineering solutions and early warning systems." Analyse this statement with reference to recent avalanche incidents at Zojila Pass. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Securing the Heights: Infrastructure, Security and Sustainability in India's Himalayan Border Regions."

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## Red-crowned Roofed Turtle

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### Why in News?

- The **Red-crowned Roofed Turtle** (*Batagur kachuga*), once a prominent species in the Ganga River system, is now struggling to survive in a shrinking sanctuary. Environmentalists and conservationists have raised concerns over habitat degradation, pollution, and illegal fishing activities that are severely threatening the remaining populations of this freshwater turtle.



- The species is considered a **bio-indicator** of river health, and its declining numbers reflect the deteriorating condition of the Ganga and other river ecosystems in the region.

## Key Details about the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle

### • Taxonomy & Distribution

- A large freshwater turtle belonging to the genus **Batagur**.
- One of the three large freshwater turtle species found in India.
- Native to **India, Bangladesh, and Nepal**.
- Historically widespread in the **Ganga River** basin and also present in the **Brahmaputra** basin.

### • Physical Characteristics

- Males are significantly smaller than females (reaching only about half the length of females).
- Distinctive **reddish-orange head** with a **black crown**.
- **Greenish-brown carapace** (upper shell) with yellowish patterns.
- **Yellow plastron** (lower shell) with black markings.

### • Diet & Ecological Role

- Omnivorous – feeds on a variety of aquatic plants and animals.
- Acts as a **bio-indicator** of river health.
- Contributes to nutrient cycling in the aquatic ecosystem.

## Conservation Status

- IUCN Red List: **Critically Endangered**
- CITES: **Appendix II**

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- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I** (highest level of protection in India)

- **Major Threats**

- Habitat loss and degradation due to pollution, sand mining, and dam construction.
- Illegal fishing and poaching for meat and eggs.
- Shrinking of suitable riverine and wetland habitats.

#### 4. Significance of the Species

- **Ecological**

- Indicator of the overall health of river ecosystems.
- Plays a role in maintaining the balance of aquatic food webs.

- **Conservation Challenge**

- The species is now largely confined to fragmented and shrinking habitats, particularly in the Ganga basin.
- Requires urgent habitat restoration, strict enforcement of protection laws, and community involvement in conservation.

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### UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

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#### Prelims

- Key terms: Red-crowned Roofed Turtle (*Batagur kachuga*), Critically Endangered, Ganga River, Bio-indicator
- Data: IUCN status - Critically Endangered; Schedule I under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- Related: Riverine Biodiversity, Ganga Rejuvenation, Ramsar Sites



## GS-3 (Environment & Biodiversity)

- Conservation of endangered freshwater species
- Threats to riverine ecosystems and bio-indicators

## GS-1 (Geography)

- Major river systems of India and their biodiversity

## Essay / Interview

- “Vanishing River Giants: The Decline of Freshwater Turtles and the Health of India’s River Ecosystems”
- “From Pollution to Poaching: Challenges in Conserving Critically Endangered Species like the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle”

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### MCQs

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1. With reference to the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle, consider the following statements:
2. It is a freshwater turtle species endemic to South Asia.
3. It is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
4. It is protected 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)**

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2. The Red-crowned Roofed Turtle is primarily found in which river system?

- (a) Ganga and Brahmaputra
- (b) Godavari and Krishna
- (c) Narmada and Tapti
- (d) Mahanadi and Mahi

**Answer: (a)**

3. Which of the following best describes the ecological role of the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle?

- (a) Apex predator
- (b) Bio-indicator of river health
- (c) Primary producer
- (d) Pollinator

**Answer: (b)**

4. The scientific name of the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle is:

- (a) Batagur kachuga
- (b) Lissemys punctata
- (c) Geoclemys hamiltonii
- (d) Nilssonia gangetica

**Answer: (a)**



## Mains Questions

1. “The declining population of the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle is a stark indicator of the deteriorating health of India’s river ecosystems.” Discuss the threats faced by the species and the measures needed for its conservation. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the importance of freshwater turtles as bio-indicators and their role in maintaining riverine ecosystems. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. “Habitat degradation and illegal poaching continue to threaten many Schedule I species in India.” Analyse this statement with special reference to the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle in the Ganga basin. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** “Vanishing Riverine Biodiversity: The Urgent Need to Protect Species like the Red-crowned Roofed Turtle.”

## Earth Hour 2026: WWF-India and MoEFCC

### Why in News?

- The **World Wildlife Fund (WWF) India**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, organised awareness and outreach activities in **Gwalior**, Madhya Pradesh, to mark the **20th anniversary of Earth Hour**.
- The global event, held annually towards the end of March, encourages individuals, communities, governments, and businesses to switch off non-essential lights for one hour as a symbolic gesture to raise awareness about climate change, energy conservation, and environmental protection.

### Key Details of Earth Hour

- **What is Earth Hour?**
  - A global grassroots movement organised by the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**.

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- Aims to unite people worldwide to take collective action on environmental issues and protect the planet.
- **Origin & Growth**
  - Started in **Sydney, Australia**, in **2007** as a simple “lights-off” event.
  - Has since grown into a worldwide movement involving **millions of people** across over **190 countries and territories**.
- **Date & Timing**
  - Observed annually towards the end of **March**.
  - Participants switch off lights from **8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.** local time.
- **Participation**
  - Individuals, households, and communities turn off non-essential lights.
  - Governments and organisations switch off lights at iconic buildings, monuments, and landmarks.
  - The “lights-off” moment serves as a powerful visual symbol of collective commitment to environmental causes.

## Significance of Earth Hour

- **Environmental Awareness**
  - Highlights pressing issues such as **climate change**, **energy consumption**, **biodiversity loss**, and **sustainable living**.
  - Encourages behavioural change towards energy conservation and reduced carbon footprint.
- **Global Solidarity**
  - Demonstrates unified global action on environmental challenges.



- Serves as a reminder that individual and collective actions matter in addressing planetary crises.

- **For India**

- Reinforces India's commitment to climate action and sustainable development.
- Aligns with national initiatives such as **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)**, **Mission LiFE**, and energy conservation campaigns.
- Promotes public participation in environmental governance.

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## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

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### Prelims

- Key terms: Earth Hour, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Lights-Off Moment, Climate Change Awareness
- Data: Started in 2007 in Sydney; Observed on the last Saturday of March; 20th anniversary in 2026
- Related: Mission LiFE, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13 - Climate Action), Energy Conservation

### GS-3 (Environment)

- Global environmental movements and climate awareness campaigns
- Role of civil society and international organisations in conservation

### GS-3 (Economy & Sustainable Development)

- Energy conservation and sustainable lifestyles

### Essay / Interview

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- “Earth Hour and the Power of Symbolic Action in the Fight Against Climate Change”
- “From Global Movements to Local Action: India’s Role in Environmental Awareness and Sustainability”

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## MCQs

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1. With reference to Earth Hour, consider the following statements:
2. It is a global movement organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
3. It is observed every year towards the end of March with lights switched off from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. local time.
4. The first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia, in 2007.

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. Earth Hour primarily aims to raise awareness about:
  - (a) Ocean pollution
  - (b) Climate change and energy conservation
  - (c) Deforestation only
  - (d) Wildlife trafficking

**Answer: (b)**



3. Which of the following is NOT a typical participant in Earth Hour?

- (a) Individuals and households
- (b) Governments and iconic landmarks
- (c) Private companies and organisations
- (d) Only fossil fuel industries

**Answer: (d)**

4. Earth Hour 2026 marked the completion of how many years since its inception?

- (a) 10 years
- (b) 15 years
- (c) 20 years
- (d) 25 years

**Answer: (c)**

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## Mains Questions

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1. "Earth Hour serves as a powerful symbolic movement to raise global awareness on climate change and energy conservation." Discuss its significance and relevance for India's environmental goals. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the role of civil society organisations like WWF in promoting environmental awareness and how initiatives like Earth Hour complement government efforts such as Mission LiFE. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Individual and collective symbolic actions can drive behavioural change towards sustainability." Analyse this statement with reference to Earth Hour and similar global movements. (15 marks / 250 words)



4. **Essay (250 marks)** “From Lights Off to Lifestyle Change: The Power of Symbolic Action in the Global Climate Movement.”

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## G7 Foreign Ministers' Summit

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### Why in News?

- The Union External Affairs Minister recently met **French President Emmanuel Macron** on the sidelines of the **G7 Foreign Ministers' Summit**.
- The meeting provided an opportunity for bilateral discussions on strengthening India-France strategic partnership, cooperation in defence, technology, climate change, and Indo-Pacific security.
- The G7 summit itself focused on pressing global issues including the ongoing West Asia conflict, Ukraine, trade tensions, and climate action.

### About the G7 Group

- **Full Form & Nature**
  - **Group of Seven (G7)** – an informal grouping of seven advanced economies.
- **Founding & Evolution**
  - Established in **1975** in response to the global oil crisis.
  - Originally focused on economic issues.
  - Expanded scope over time to cover foreign and security policy, trade, climate change, development, and other global challenges.
  - Russia joined in 1998, temporarily making it the **G8**.
  - Russia was suspended in **2014** following the annexation of Crimea; the grouping reverted to **G7**.
- **Current Members**



- Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States.

- **Governance Structure**

- No permanent secretariat or formal administrative structure.
- **Rotating presidency** each calendar year among member states (EU does not hold the presidency).
- Agenda and priorities are set by the presiding country.
- Decisions are taken by **consensus**.

## Significance of the G7

- **Global Influence**

- Represents some of the world's largest economies and advanced democracies.
- Plays an important role in shaping global economic policies, security architecture, and responses to climate change.

- **For India**

- India is not a member but engages with the G7 through outreach sessions and bilateral meetings.
- The platform allows India to discuss issues of mutual interest such as counter-terrorism, clean energy, supply chain resilience, and Indo-Pacific stability.
- India's growing engagement with G7 reflects its rising global profile and strategic partnerships (especially with France, Japan, UK, and US).

## Implications of the Recent Meeting

- **India-France Relations**

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- Further strengthens the long-standing strategic partnership in defence, nuclear energy, space, and climate.
- France remains a key partner in India's defence modernisation and Indo-Pacific strategy.

## • Broader Geopolitics

- Highlights India's active diplomacy at multilateral forums even as a non-member.
- Provides an opportunity to articulate the Global South perspective on issues like climate finance, sustainable development, and equitable global governance.

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## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

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### Prelims

- Key terms: G7, Rotating Presidency, Consensus-based Decision Making, Outreach Engagement
- Data: Founded 1975; Members - Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, US; Russia was temporarily part of G8
- Related: G20, Quad, Indo-Pacific Strategy, India-France Strategic Partnership

### GS-2 (IR)

- India's engagement with major global groupings
- Multilateral diplomacy and strategic partnerships

### GS-3 (Economy)

- Role of advanced economies in shaping global economic policies

### Essay / Interview

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- “The Evolving Role of G7 in a Multipolar World and India’s Strategic Engagement”
- “From G7 to G20: India’s Rising Voice in Global Governance”

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## MCQs

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1. With reference to the G7 grouping, consider the following statements:
2. It is an informal grouping of seven advanced economies.
3. Its presidency rotates annually among member countries.
4. Russia is a permanent member of the G7.

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 G7 was originally established in response to:
  - (a) The end of the Cold War
  - (b) The 1970s oil crisis
  - (c) The formation of the European Union
  - (d) The Asian Financial Crisis

**Answer: (b)**

3. Which of the following countries is NOT a member of the G7?
  - (a) Japan



- (b) Germany
- (c) India
- (d) Canada

**Answer: (c)**

4. The G7 primarily takes decisions through:

- (a) Majority voting
- (b) Consensus
- (c) Unanimous voting with veto power
- (d) Rotation-based decisions

**Answer: (b)**

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## Mains Questions

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1. "The G7 remains an influential forum of advanced economies, but its relevance is being tested in a multipolar world." Discuss the evolving role of the G7 and India's strategic engagement with it. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the significance of India-France strategic partnership in the context of recent high-level meetings on the sidelines of the G7. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Multilateral platforms like the G7 provide opportunities for India to articulate the concerns of the Global South." Analyse this statement. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From G7 to G20: India's Rising Profile in Global Economic and Strategic Governance."



## Tiger Poisoned in Satpura Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh

### Why in News?

- A tiger from **Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR)** in Madhya Pradesh has been allegedly poisoned to death, leading to the arrest of five people. The incident has raised serious concerns over wildlife crime, poaching networks, and the effectiveness of protection measures in one of India's important tiger habitats.
- The case highlights ongoing challenges of human-wildlife conflict, illegal wildlife trade, and the need for stronger community engagement and enforcement in tiger reserves.

### Key Details of Satpura Tiger Reserve

- **Location & Geography**
  - Located in the **Satpura ranges** of the Central Indian Landscape in Madhya Pradesh.
  - Lies **south of the Narmada River**.
  - Comprises three protected areas: **Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pachmarhi Sanctuary**.
- **Terrain**
  - Extremely rugged terrain with sandstone peaks, narrow gorges, ravines, and dense forests.
  - Geological formations include the **Deccan trap series**, Gondwanas, and metamorphic rocks.
- **Vegetation & Flora**
  - Mainly **mixed deciduous forest**.



- Rich in teak, bamboo, Indian ebony, various acacias, wild mango, Indian gooseberry, satinwood, etc.
- Unique feature: Presence of **26 Himalayan species** and **42 Nilgiri species**, making it the northern extremity of the Western Ghats.

## • Fauna

- Home to tigers, leopards, sloth bears, Indian gaur (bison), and sambar deer.
- Supports a rich variety of wildlife typical of Central Indian highlands.

## Significance of Satpura Tiger Reserve

### • Ecological

- Important tiger habitat in the Central Indian Landscape.
- Acts as a critical corridor for wildlife movement in the Satpura-Maikal range.

### • Conservation Value

- Part of Project Tiger and contributes to India's tiger conservation efforts.
- Rich biodiversity with unique floral elements from both Himalayan and Western Ghats regions.

### • Challenges

- Human-wildlife conflict, encroachment, and illegal activities such as poisoning and poaching.
- Need for better community involvement and stricter enforcement of wildlife laws.

## Implications of the Incident

### • For Conservation

- Highlights the vulnerability of tigers even inside protected areas.



- Calls for stronger anti-poaching measures, community sensitization, and rapid response mechanisms.

- **For Policy**

- Reinforces the need to implement the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** more effectively.
- Supports calls for better compensation mechanisms for human-wildlife conflict and alternative livelihoods for fringe communities.

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## UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

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### Prelims

- Key terms: Satpura Tiger Reserve, Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, Pachmarhi Sanctuary, Central Indian Landscape
- Data: Location - South of Narmada River, Madhya Pradesh; Unique floral elements from Himalayan and Nilgiri regions
- Related: Project Tiger, Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, Tiger Corridors

### GS-3 (Environment & Biodiversity)

- Tiger conservation and threats from poaching and poisoning
- Human-wildlife conflict in protected areas

### GS-1 (Geography)

- Physical geography of the Satpura ranges and Central Indian highlands

### Essay / Interview

- “Protecting India’s Tigers: Challenges of Poaching, Poisoning and Human-Wildlife Conflict”
- “Balancing Conservation and Local Livelihoods in Tiger Reserves like Satpura”

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## MCQs

1. With reference to Satpura Tiger Reserve, consider the following statements:
2. It is located in Madhya Pradesh south of the Narmada River.
3. It comprises Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pachmarhi Sanctuary.
4. It is known for the presence of both Himalayan and Nilgiri floral species.

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 Satpura Tiger Reserve is part of which landscape?
  - (a) Western Ghats
  - (b) Central Indian Landscape
  - (c) Eastern Ghats
  - (d) Himalayan Landscape

**Answer: (b)**

3. Which of the following is NOT found in Satpura Tiger Reserve?
  - (a) Tiger
  - (b) Indian Gaur



(c) Snow Leopard

(d) Sloth Bear

**Answer: (c)**

4. The recent incident in Satpura Tiger Reserve involved:

(a) A tiger being poisoned

(b) A major forest fire

(c) Discovery of a new species

(d) Declaration of a new core area

**Answer: (a)**

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## Mains Questions

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1. "The poisoning of a tiger in Satpura Tiger Reserve highlights the persistent challenges of wildlife crime and human-wildlife conflict in India's protected areas." Discuss the causes and suggest measures for effective conservation. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the ecological significance of Satpura Tiger Reserve and its role in the Central Indian tiger landscape. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Community participation and strict enforcement are key to successful tiger conservation." Analyse this statement with special reference to reserves like Satpura. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Saving the Tiger: Balancing Conservation, Community Rights and Development in India's Tiger Reserves."



## India's Updated 2035 NDC

### Why in News?

- India has approved and unveiled its **updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** for 2035 to be submitted to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement.
- The new targets include **60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035**, a **47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP** from 2005 levels, and an enhanced **carbon sink of 3.5-4 billion tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.
- These commitments reflect a progression over the 2022 NDC while balancing climate ambition with developmental needs and energy security. India's emissions growth slowed to a two-decade low of 0.7% in 2025, indicating early signs of a structural shift.

### Key Highlights of India's Updated 2035 NDC

- **Non-Fossil Energy Capacity**
  - Target: **60%** of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources (solar, wind, hydro, biomass, nuclear) by 2035.
  - Current status: Approximately **52%** achieved (as of early 2026).
  - Earlier target (2022 NDC): 50% by 2030 (already on track or exceeded in capacity terms).
- **Emissions Intensity Reduction**
  - Target: **47%** reduction in emissions intensity of GDP from 2005 levels by 2035.
  - Earlier target: 45% by 2030.
  - Current progress: Around 36% reduction achieved between 2005 and 2020.
- **Carbon Sink Enhancement**



- Target: **3.5-4 billion tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through forest and tree cover.
- Earlier target: 2.5-3 billion tonnes by 2030.
- Current progress: Approximately 2.3 billion tonnes achieved by 2021.

## Understanding NDCs under the Paris Agreement

### • What are NDCs?

- Nationally Determined Contributions are voluntary climate action plans submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement.
- They are updated every five years with progressively higher ambition, reflecting national circumstances and capabilities (**CBDR-RC** principle).

### • India's NDC Evolution

- 2015: First NDC (targets for 2025).
- 2022: Updated NDC (targets for 2030).
- 2026: Third update (targets for 2035).

### • Global Stocktake Influence

- The first Global Stocktake (concluded at COP28) highlighted that the world is not on track for the 1.5°C goal.
- India's updated NDC responds to this while maintaining equity and developmental priorities.

## Significance of India's Updated NDC

### • Climate Leadership

- Positions India as a proactive leader among developing countries.
- Demonstrates "incremental progression" while upholding equity and CBDR-RC.



- **Balancing Growth & Sustainability**

- Reflects “climate justice” by prioritising energy access, industrial growth, and poverty alleviation alongside mitigation.

- **Strategic Autonomy**

- NDCs remain self-determined, aligning with domestic priorities like energy security and affordable power.

## Implementation Framework

- **National Missions**

- Operationalised through the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** and its missions, plus State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC).

- **Key Schemes**

- Jal Jeevan Mission, National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, MISHTI, PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Soil Health Card, etc.

- **People-Centric Approach**

- Promotes **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)** as a mass movement.
- Initiatives like **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam** encourage community participation.

## Challenges & Concerns

- **Ambition Gap**

- Critics argue the 60% non-fossil capacity target by 2035 is modest given current progress.

- **Implementation Hurdles**

- Gap between installed capacity and actual generation from renewables due to intermittency and grid constraints.



- Land acquisition and transmission bottlenecks.
- Forest and tree cover (~24.6%) still below the national target of 33%.

## • Global Context

- Developed countries rolling back commitments and imposing unilateral measures (e.g., carbon border taxes).

## Way Forward

### • Renewable Ecosystem

- Invest in grid modernisation, energy storage, and green hydrogen.

### • Carbon Sink

- Scale up agroforestry, urban forestry, and community-led conservation.

### • Climate Finance

- Push for adequate international climate finance and technology transfer.

### • Domestic Reforms

- Streamline approvals, strengthen climate governance, and improve ease of doing business for green projects.

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## MCQs

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1. With reference to India's updated 2035 NDCs, consider the following statements:
2. India aims for 60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035.
3. The target for emissions intensity reduction is 47% from 2005 levels.
4. The carbon sink target has been set at 3.5-4 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

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

**Answer: (d)**

2. The principle of CBDR-RC, frequently referenced in India's NDCs, stands for:

- (a) Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
- (b) Collective Binding Development and Resource Conservation
- (c) Climate Balanced Development and Renewable Commitment
- (d) Coordinated Bilateral Development and Regional Cooperation

**Answer: (a)**

3. Which of the following is NOT part of India's updated 2035 NDC targets?

- (a) 60% non-fossil power capacity
- (b) Net-zero emissions by 2035
- (c) 47% emissions intensity reduction
- (d) 3.5-4 billion tonnes carbon sink

**Answer: (b)**

4. The first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement was concluded at:

- (a) COP26
- (b) COP27
- (c) COP28
- (d) COP29



Answer: (c)

## Mains Questions

1. "India's updated 2035 NDCs reflect a balanced approach between climate ambition and developmental priorities." Discuss the key targets and their significance in the context of the Global Stocktake. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Analyse the challenges India faces in achieving its 2035 non-fossil energy capacity target and suggest measures to bridge the capacity-generation gap. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Equity and CBDR-RC remain central to India's climate diplomacy." Examine this statement with reference to India's evolving NDCs and global expectations. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Paris to 2035: India's Climate Leadership and the Quest for a Just and Sustainable Global Order."

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