



31 January 2025

National and International News


<p>Axiom-4 Mission</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla will serve as the pilot for the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS). Shukla, one of the four astronaut-designates chosen for India's Gaganyaan mission, will make history as the first Indian astronaut to travel to the ISS. The mission is set to launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Axiom Mission 4 (or Ax-4) is a private spaceflight to the International Space Station. It is operated by Axiom Space and uses a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft. The flight is in collaboration with NASA and will be the fourth flight of Axiom Space after Axiom Mission 1, Axiom Mission 2 and Axiom Mission 3. Mission Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Axiom-4 aims to facilitate commercial activities in space, including scientific research, technological development, and space tourism. It is set to carry a diverse crew of astronauts from different countries, reflecting the growing international interest in space exploration. The mission will support various scientific experiments and technological tests in the unique microgravity environment of space. <p>About International Space Station (ISS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Space Station is a modular space station launched in 1998. Modular stations can allow modules to be added to or removed from the existing structure, allowing greater flexibility. It is a large laboratory in space that allows astronauts to come aboard and stay for weeks or months to carry out experiments in microgravity. The first crew on the ISS arrived on November 2, 2000. Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct scientific research in astrobiology, astronomy, meteorology, physics, and other fields. It is the largest artificial object in space. It circles the Earth in roughly 93 minutes, completing 15.5 orbits per day.
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	<p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About Gaganyaan mission
<p>Household Consumption Expenditure Survey</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the summary findings of the second of two consecutive surveys on household consumption expenditure, which were planned for 2022-23 and 2023-24. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is designed to collect information on consumption and expenditure of the households on goods and services. The survey provides data required to assess trends in economic well-being and to determine and update the basket of consumer goods and services and weights used for the calculation of the Consumer Price Index. Data collected in HCES is also used to measure poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. The Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) compiled from HCES is the primary indicator used for most analytical purposes. This survey is conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI). Important Findings of HCES: 2023-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In nominal terms, the average Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) in 2023-24 rises by approximately 9% in rural areas and 8% in urban areas compared to 2022-23. The urban-rural MPCE gap has narrowed to 71% in 2022-23 from 84% in 2011-12, and further decreased to 70% in 2023-24, indicating sustained consumption growth in rural areas. When ranked by MPCE, the largest increase in average MPCE from 2022-23 to 2023-24 has been observed in the bottom 5 to 10% of India's population, both in rural and urban areas. As seen in HCES: 2022-23, non-food items continue to be the primary contributor to the average household monthly expenditure in 2023-24. In both rural and urban households, the major expenditure share in the food items category in 2023-24 is on beverages, refreshments, and processed foods. For non-food expenditures, major spending categories in both rural and urban areas include conveyance, clothing, bedding & footwear, miscellaneous goods & entertainment, and durable goods. Consumption inequality has decreased in both rural and urban areas from 2022-23 levels. The Gini coefficient for rural areas has fallen from 0.266 in



	<p>2022-23 to 0.237 in 2023-24, and for urban areas, it has dropped from 0.314 in 2022-23 to 0.284 in 2023-24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Gini coefficient is a statistical measure of income or wealth inequality in a population.
<p>PM-JANMAN Scheme</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Rural Development has announced a significant infrastructure enhancement for Maharashtra under the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN). <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM JANMAN is a government scheme that aims to bring tribal communities into the mainstream. • The scheme (comprising Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes) will be implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the State governments and the PVTG communities. • The scheme will concentrate on 11 critical interventions overseen by 9 line Ministries, ensuring the implementation of existing schemes in villages inhabited by PVTGs. • The scheme is expected to enhance the quality of life and well-being of the PVTGs, by addressing their multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, and by recognizing and valuing their unique and valuable contribution to national and global development. <p>Who are PVTGs, or Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PVTGs, or Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, are a category of tribal communities in India that are considered more vulnerable than other tribal groups. • The Indian government created the PVTG list to improve the living standards of these endangered groups. • The 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Odisha are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Birhor, Bondo, Chuktia Bhunjia, Didayi, Dongria Kondh, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Soura, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan, and Soura.
<p>Places in news: Point Nemo</p> 	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the ongoing Navika Sagar Parikrama-II mission to circumnavigate the globe, Indian Navy officers Lieutenant Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A., aboard the sailing vessel INSV Tarini, successfully passed through Point Nemo. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point Nemo, also known as the Oceanic Pole of Inaccessibility (the most remote location on earth, situated 2,688 kilometres from the nearest landmass) is located in the South Pacific Ocean, equidistant from the coasts of three distant islands. • It is used as a cemetery for spacecraft debris.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point Nemo is the final resting place for decommissioned spacecraft, including the ISS in 2030. It is named after Captain Nemo from Jules Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. The ocean around Point Nemo is nutrient-poor, making it difficult for marine life to survive.
Ad hoc Judges in High Court	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Special Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, relaxed a condition that allowed the appointment of ad hoc judges to State High Courts only if judicial vacancies exceeded 20% of the sanctioned strength. This condition had been set by the Supreme Court in an April 2021 judgment in the Lok Prahari vs. Union of India case. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc judges are temporary judges appointed to a court, typically to address specific needs such as reducing case backlogs or filling gaps when permanent judges are unavailable. The President of India appoints additional judges to High Courts under Article 224 of the Constitution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article 224 of the Indian Constitution provides that if by reason of any temporary increase in the business of a High Court or by reason of arrears of work therein, it appears to the President that the number of the Judges of that Court should be for the time being increased, the President may appoint duly qualified persons to be additional Judges of the Court for such period not exceeding two years as he may specify. The President may appoint additional judges for a temporary period of up to two years if the court's business increases or there is a backlog of work. The President makes these appointments in consultation with the National Judicial Appointments Commission. Additional judges cannot hold office after they turn 62 years old. In the Lok Prahari v. Union of India case, 2021, the SC laid down the following requirements to initiate the appointment process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancy Thresholds: More than 20% of the sanctioned strength of judges is vacant. Pending Cases: More than 10% of the backlog of pending cases is over 5 years old. Regular Appointments First: Ad hoc appointment process can only be initiated after the process for regular judicial appointments has been triggered.
Leprosy	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, the Central Government has approved a new treatment regimen for leprosy, with the goal of halting its transmission at the subnational level by 2027.



- This includes the introduction of a three-drug regimen for Pauci-Bacillary (PB) cases, replacing the previous two-drug regimen that was administered for six months.

Key Points:

- Leprosy, also known as **Hansen's disease**, is a chronic infectious disease caused by a type of **bacteria, Mycobacterium leprae**.
- The disease predominantly affects the skin and peripheral nerves. Left untreated, the disease may cause progressive and permanent disabilities.
 - It is more common in **tropical and subtropical areas**.
- It is a **neglected tropical disease (NTD)** which still occurs in more than 120 countries, with more than 200 000 new cases reported each year.
- It is known to **occur at all ages ranging from early childhood to old age**.
- **Transmission:** It is transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.
- **Symptoms:**
 - The main symptom of leprosy is disfiguring skin sores, lumps, or bumps that don't go away after several weeks or months.
 - Nerve damage can lead to:
 - Loss of feeling in the arms and legs
 - Muscle weakness
- **Treatment:** It is curable with multidrug therapy (MDT) and treatment during early stages can prevent disability.
- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) & Roadmap for Leprosy (2023-27):**
 - It is launched to achieve zero transmission of leprosy by 2027 i.e. three years before the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3.
 - SDG 3.3 is by 2030, to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.
- **National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP):**
 - The NLEP is a Centrally Sponsored Health Scheme introduced in 1983 and it has been implemented with the major objective of reducing the disease burden, prevention of disability and improving awareness among the masses about Leprosy and its curability.

What are Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)?

- NTDs are a diverse group of conditions caused by a variety of pathogens (including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins) and associated with devastating health, social and economic consequences.



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