



29 Mar 2025

National and International News

<p>Light Combat Helicopter (LCH)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Defence Ministry signed two contracts with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) to purchase 156 indigenous Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) and related training equipment, totaling over ₹62,700 crore, excluding taxes. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters with a considerable load of weapons and fuel, meeting the specific requirements laid out by the Indian Armed Forces. It has the maximum take-off weight of 5.8 tonnes, maximum speed of 268 kilometers per hour, range of 550 kilometers, endurance of over three hours and service ceiling — the maximum density altitude to which it can fly — of 6.5 kilometres. The helicopter uses radar-absorbing material to lower radar signature and has a significantly crash-proof structure and landing gear. The helicopter is equipped with a countermeasure dispensing system that protects it from enemy radars or infrared seekers of the enemy missiles. As far as weapons systems are concerned, a 20 mm turret gun, 70 mm rockets and air-to-air missile systems are onboard. LCH is powered by two French-origin Shakti engines manufactured by the HAL.
<p>EPIC</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rajya Sabha Chairman Dhankhar leaves the meeting as MPs demand a debate on the EPIC issue. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) is issued to all registered voters to prevent impersonation during elections. It serves as an identity document but does not grant the right to vote unless the elector's name is present in the electoral roll. The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 provides for the issuance of EPICs. EPICs were introduced in 1993 and are issued by state governments. EPIC Number Format: It is a unique alphanumeric code consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three alphabetical codes A seven-digit numerical code Each EPIC number includes a Functional Unique Serial Number (FUSN) for the respective Assembly constituency.



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Right to Information Act, 2005

Why in news?

- Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, criticized Section 44(3) of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, for undermining the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Key Points:

- Right To Information is derived from the **fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution.**
- If we do not have information on how our Government and Public Institutions function, we cannot express any informed opinion on it.
- The basic object of the Right to Information Act is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government.
- **The Act and its rules define a format for –**
 - requisitioning information,
 - a time period within which information must be provided,
 - a method of giving the information,
 - charges for applying and
 - exemptions of information which will not be given.
- **The RTI Act, 2005 extends to the whole of India.**
- All bodies, which are constituted under the Constitution or under any law or under any Government notification or all bodies, including NGOs, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are covered.
- All private bodies, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are directly covered.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Sec. 4:** Public authorities must maintain records that are catalogued and indexed to facilitate access to information.
 - Sec. 6:** Individuals can request information from the Central or State Public Information Officer by submitting a written request specifying the details.
 - Sec. 7:** The Public Information Officer must provide or reject the requested information within 30 days, as per Secs. 8 and 9.
 - Sec. 19:** If no decision is made within 30 days or the individual is aggrieved by the decision, they can appeal to a senior officer.
 - Exemptions:** Information related to defense, national security, or personal details is exempt from disclosure.

Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024

Why in news?

- The Lok Sabha passed a Bill aimed at modernizing the provisions for the carriage of goods by sea and simplifying maritime regulations.

Key Points:

- The **Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024** was introduced in Lok Sabha on **August 9, 2024.**
- The Bill seeks to **replace the Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925.**
- The Act **establishes the responsibilities, liabilities, rights, and immunities in case of goods carried from a port in India to another**



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	<p>port in India or any other port in the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Act is in conformance with the International Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules of Law relating to Bills of Lading of August 1924 (Hague Rules) and subsequent amendments to it. • The Bill empowers the central government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (i) issue directions for carrying out provisions of the Bill, and (ii) amend the schedule specifying rules applicable to bills of lading. • A bill of lading refers to a document issued by a freight carrier to a shipper. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It contains details such as the type, quantity, condition, and destination of goods being carried. • The rules outline the responsibilities, liabilities, rights, and immunities of goods carriers.
Earthquake	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured Myanmar and Thailand of "all possible assistance" following a 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck both countries. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An earthquake is the shaking of the Earth's crust caused by a sudden release of energy. This release of energy occurs along a fault, which is a break in the Earth's crustal rocks. • Earthquakes are caused by the movement of tectonic plates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When two tectonic plates slide past each other, the jagged edges can get caught, and when they release, the energy is released as vibrations. • Earthquakes can also be caused by the injection or withdrawal of magma, or explosions of chemical or nuclear devices.
SMILE program	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ADB-funded SMILE program aims to enhance India's logistics efficiency, reduce costs, and strengthen multimodal infrastructure. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SMILE program aims to enhance logistics efficiency through the following key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthening Institutional Framework: Develop and operationalize a comprehensive policy to enhance logistics infrastructure at the National, State, and City levels. ○ Standardizing Logistics Assets: Standardize warehousing and other logistics assets to strengthen supply chains and attract more private sector investment. ○ Improving External Trade Logistics: Enhance efficiencies in external trade logistics to streamline international trade processes. ○ Adopting Smart Systems: Implement smart systems for more efficient and low-emission logistics. • It is designed to study and identify policy, infrastructure, and digital interventions in various processes which are helpful in improving India's



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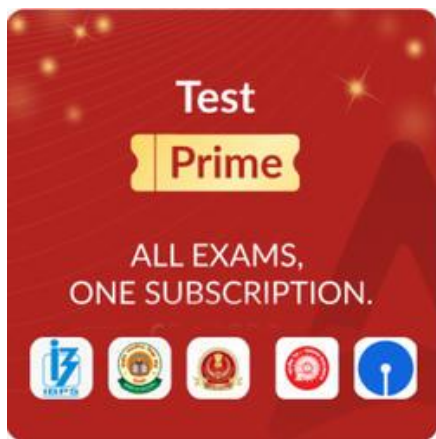
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competitiveness in Logistics Performance Index and resultantly increased job opportunities.

- The SMILE Program aligns with the Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative by strengthening domestic manufacturing, improving logistics efficiency, and enabling better integration into global trade network.



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