

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 04-03-2025

### Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3)

#### Why in News?

India launches C-3 initiative at the 12<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific that held in Jaipur.

- **C-3** - It is a multi-nation alliance for *city-to-city collaboration*, knowledge-sharing, and *private sector partnerships*.
- It is a critical platform for policymakers, industry leaders, researchers, and development partners to discuss and implement *sustainable solutions for waste management* and resource efficiency as economies in the Asia-Pacific region
- **Role** - It will act as a *catalyst for resource efficiency* and a low-carbon economy, strengthening collaboration between policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers to build a sustainable future.
- **Significance** - It is expected to be a game changer in the city- city partnerships across nations.

#### India's Initiatives for Circular Economy

- **Mission LiFE** (Lifestyle for Environment)
- **Panchamrit Goals** at COP26 - Committing India to net-zero emissions by 2070
- **Swachh Bharat Mission & AMRUT 2.0** - For tackling urban waste and wastewater recycling

### Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific

- **Launched in** - 2009, under the aegis of *United Nations*.
- The word 'Circular Economy' was added to the conference title from the 10th forum (2020).
- **Objective** - To chart pathways and opportunities for realizing *circular and zero waste societies* in the Asia-Pacific region.
- To provide strategic policy *advices to national government* authorities in mainstreaming 3Rs.
- To address policies, programs, measures, tools and technologies in the context of achieving
  - Resource efficiency
  - Sustainable production and consumption
  - Integrated solid waste management

- Sound material-cycle
- Low-carbon and zero waste society
- To provide a *knowledge sharing platform* for disseminating and sharing best practices in 3R areas, including new and emerging issues of concern in waste management.

**Jaipur Declaration (2025-2034)** is a non-political, non-binding commitment that will guide the next decade of efforts towards resource efficiency and sustainable urban growth.

## References

1. [The Hindu| Launch of Cities Coalition for Circularity](#)
2. [PIB| 12<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum](#)

## National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

### Why in News?

Recently, Indian PM chaired the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Board for Wildlife in Gir National Park in Gujarat.

- **Establishment** - It was constituted as a **statutory body** under the *Wildlife Protection Act, 1972*.
- **Aim** - To promote the conservation and development of wildlife and forests.
- **Composition** - *47 members* including the Prime Minister.
  - **Chairman** - *Prime Minister* of India.
- **Term of office** - 3 years for the members other than those who are member's ex-officio.
- **Powers** - It recommends on the setting up of and management of ***national parks, sanctuaries, and other protected areas*** and on matters relating to restriction of activities in those areas.
- **Meeting** - It shall ordinarily ***meet once in a year***, presided by chairperson or Vice-chairperson in chairperson's absence.
- The *Member-Secretary shall prepare agenda* items for the meetings, obtain approval of the Chairperson and circulate it.
- Quorum shall be one-half of the total number of members.
- **Standing committee** - If constituted, it shall consist of the *Vice-Chairperson* (Union Minister in charge of Forests and Wildlife), the Member Secretary and ***not more than 10 members*** to be nominated by the Vice-Chairperson from amongst the members of the NBWL.

### Key takeaways from the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting

- **Dolphin Estimation** - *1<sup>st</sup> ever riverine dolphin estimation* conducted in India, estimated a total of ***6,327 dolphins***.
- *Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest* numbers, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam.

- **Asiatic Lion estimation** - It announced the initiation of the 16<sup>th</sup> cycle of lion estimation to be conducted in 2025.
- It is carried out once every 5 years
- **National Referral Centre for Wildlife** - The foundation stone was laid at Junagadh, which will function as the hub for coordination and governance of various aspects related to wildlife health and disease management.
- **Preserving traditional knowledge and manuscripts** - For conservation and management of forests and wildlife.
- There are plans to the success story of Gir in Lion and Leopard conservation.

## Reference

[PIB| 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Board for Wildlife](#)

## Narwhals (Unicorn of Sea)

### Why in News?

*Researchers from the Florida University, Canada's Department of Fisheries & Oceans, in partnership with Inuit communities of Canada used drones to provide new insights into narwhal behaviour.*

- It is a medium-sized ***odontocete or toothed whale***.
- It is different from all other toothed whales in that it has *no teeth in its mouth*.
  - Scientific name - Monodon Monoceros (one tooth, one horn).
- **Nativity** - It is found *only in Arctic waters*, spend their lives in the Arctic waters of Canada, Greenland, Norway and Russia.
- **Habitat** - Most narwhals winter for up to 5 months under sea ice in the Baffin Bay-Davis Strait area.
- **Coloration** - They change color as they age.
  - Newborns are a blue-gray
  - Juveniles are blue-black
  - Adults are a mottled gray.
  - Old narwhals are nearly all white

*Narwhales coloration contributed to their name "**corpse whale**", refers to how their skin colour resembles that of a drowned sailor.*

- **Diet** - They *change their diets seasonally*, feeding intensely in the winter and eating little during the ice-free summer season.
- **Tusks** - Some have up to 2 tusks, while others have none.
- The spiralled tusk juts from the head and can grow as long as 10 feet.
  - **Males** - They have a single long, straight tooth (or tusk) that *protrudes 2 to 3 meters* out of the upper left jaw.
  - **Females** - They *almost never have a tusk*.



- **Usage of tusks** - Used to investigate, manipulate and influence the behavior of Arctic char, a prey.
- **Tusking behaviour** - A situation where 2 or more of them simultaneously raise their tusks almost vertically out of the water, crossing them in what may be a ritualistic behaviour.
- It is to assess a potential opponent's qualities or to display those qualities to potential mates.
- **Threats** - Oil and gas development and climate change pose threats to narwhals.
- **Conservation status**
  - IUCN - Least Concerned

## References

1. [Down To Earth| Study on Narwhals usage of their Tusks](#)
2. [WWF| Narwhals are Unicorns of Sea](#)

## Selenium Causes Hair Loss

### Why in News?

ICMR interim report links high levels of selenium in wheat to hair loss.

- **Issue** - High levels of selenium in wheat from Punjab and Haryana have caused sudden hair loss in individuals.
- **Impacted people** - Between end-December 2024 and January, 2025, over 300 cases of sudden hair loss were reported in people living in 18 villages in Shegaon taluka in Maharashtra.
- **Diagnosis** - The amount of selenium detected in the blood of affected individuals was about 31 times higher than controls.
- The selenium content was also high in wheat samples collected from 2 ration shops and a few households of affected people.
- **Selenosis** - It is condition characterised by sudden hair loss, due to intake of excessive selenium.

- It is a *trace mineral*, which means that the body only needs a small amount of it.
- It is found naturally in foods or as a supplement.
- **Selenoproteins** - It is an essential component of various *enzymes and proteins*.
- **Storage** - Most selenium in the body is *stored in muscle tissue*.
- The *thyroid gland holds the highest concentration* of selenium due to various selenoproteins that assist with thyroid function.
- **Importance** - It helps to *make DNA* and protect against cell damage and infections
- It involves in *reproduction and the metabolism of thyroid* hormones.

The **Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of Selenium** for adult men and women 19+ years of age is 55 micrograms daily. Women who are pregnant and lactating need about 60 and 70 micrograms daily, respectively.

## Reference

1. [The Hindu| High level of selenium cause Hair Loss](#)
2. [Nutrition Source| Selenium and Health](#)

## Women's Role in India's Financial Growth

### Why in News?

Recently, a new report was released regarding the role of women in India's financial growth.

- **Report** - "From Borrowers to Builders: Women's Role in India's Financial Growth Story".
- **Launched by** - NITI Aayog.
- **Published by**
  - TransUnion CIBIL
  - Women Entrepreneurship Platform's (WEP) of NITI Aayog
  - MicroSave Consulting (MSC).
- **Findings** - It reveals that more women in India are seeking credit and actively monitoring their credit scores.
- **Increased financial awareness** - As of December 2024, 27 million women were monitoring their credit, marking a 42% increase from the previous year.

**Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is incubated in Niti Aayog**, works towards building an inclusive ecosystem that fosters financial literacy, access to credit, mentorship, and market linkages. It has also constituted Financing Women Collaborative (FWC) to achieve its goal.

- **Increased self-monitoring** - Women's share of the total self-monitoring base increased to 19.43% in December 2024, up from 17.89% in 2023.
- More women from non-metro regions are actively self-monitoring their credit compared to those in metro areas,

- Growth of 48% in non-metro regions and 30% in metro areas.
- In 2024, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana accounted for 49% of all self-monitoring women, with the southern region leading at 10.2 million.
- **Increase in women borrowers** - Since 2019, women's share in business loan origination has increased by 14%.
- Their share in gold loans has grown by 6%, with women accounting for 35% of business borrowers by December 2024.
- Northern and central states, including Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, saw the highest compounded annual growth rates (CAGR) in active women borrowers over the past 5 years.
- **Challenges** - Credit aversion, poor banking experiences, barriers to credit readiness and issues with collateral and guarantors persist.

*Promoting women's entrepreneurship could create employment opportunities for 150 to 170 million people while driving greater participation from women in the labour force.*

## Reference

[PIB| Niti Aayog Report on Women's role in India's Financial Growth](#)

**Related News-** [empowHER Biz](#) | [Boosting women entrepreneurship](#)

### One Liners 04-03-2025

#### Polity & Governance

##### EPIC Number

- **EPIC** - Electors Photo Identification Card.
- **Issued by** - Election Commission of India (ECI).
- It is the voter ID card number, which serves as identification proof for Indian citizens over the age of 18.
- **Challenges** - Duplication in EPIC number, caused by use of identical alphanumeric series by 2 different States/UTs.
- Irrespective of the EPIC number, any elector can cast a vote only at their designated polling station, where they are enrolled in the electoral roll.

##### Sashakt Panchayat-Netri Abhiyan

- **Launched in** - 2025, by Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Aim** - To strengthen the capacity-building interventions for women elected representatives of Panchayat across the nation.
- **Focus** - Leadership, decision-making capabilities, and reinforcing women's role in grassroots governance.

## **Jan Aushadhi Diwas, 2025**

- **Celebrated on** - 7<sup>th</sup> March, every year.
- **Theme** - Jan Aushadhi - Virasat Ke Saath.
- **Objective** - To enhance awareness about the scheme and promote generic medicines.
- More than 500 Free Health Camps (Jan Arogya Mela) organized especially for *senior citizens*.

## **ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Human Rights**

- **ITEC** - Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Executive (ITEC) provide an opportunity to share and exchange each other's rich cultural diversity and human rights values.
- **Organized by** - National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- **Beneficiaries** - National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) of Global South.
- 14 out of 37 *global south* countries participated.
- **Focus** - Women rights, gender equality, protecting marginalized communities and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

## **DISHA Program**

- **DISHA** - Developing Innovations, Successful Harnessing, and Adoption.
- It is a step towards *building a knowledge-based economy* where research-driven solutions transform industries.
- **Aim** - To *support faculty members and students* working on disruptive technologies across disciplines, ensuring that India remains at the forefront of global innovation.
- **Aligned with** - Anusandhan National Research Foundation (*ANRF*), which seeks to create a unified research ecosystem bridging science, humanities, and social sciences.

## **Bilateral Relations**

### **India and Nepal Ties in WASH**

- **WASH** - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH).
- **India-Nepal Ties** - They signed MoUs to strengthen cooperation in WASH Sector, including waste management.
- It aids in ensuring better access to clean drinking water and sanitation for their populations.

## **Economy**

### **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**

- **TFR** - It is the average number of children a woman would have during her reproductive years.
- **Key indicator in** - Population growth and change.
- **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-21:**
  - **India TFR at national level** - 2.0.
  - **States with TFR >1.8** - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
  - **States with average TFR 2.4** - Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan.

### **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)**

- **PMI Data** - It is prepared on the basis of *responses from purchasing executives* of 400 firms.
- **Performances** - India's *PMI in services slipped* to 56.5 in January, the lowest level since November 2022.
- Manufacturing sales and output PMI was also down.

### **Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)**

- **Established in** - *1963*, as an autonomous body.
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Aim** - To impart knowledge through research and training in *international business and trade*.
- **Recognition** - It got University status, deemed to be University in 2002.
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) recognized it as *Grade 'A'* Institution in 2005 & 2015.

### **Science**

#### **Centre for Fuel Cell Technology (CFCT)**

- **Objective** - To develop Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cells (*PEMFC*).
- **Nodal centre** - International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI).
- **PEMFC** - It is one of the *low temperature fuel cells*, in its entirety, demonstrate its application in decentralised power generation systems and transportation applications.

