

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 06-02-2025

Furlough vs Parole

Why in News?

Convicts of the Hashimpura massacre recently moved the Delhi High Court against a Delhi prison rule about furloughs.

- **Similarities** - Both furlough and parole stem from jail manuals and prison rule.
- Both are conditional releases, subject to good behavior in prison and to not committing specific offences.
- Both are in the domain of executive.

Furlough	Parole
• In furlough, the sentence continues to run despite the convict being released from prison for a specified period of time.	• When the convict is released on parole, the sentence is suspended and the quantum of sentence remains intact.
• Furlough is usually granted in case of long-term imprisonment and after spending a certain period of time incarcerated.	• Paroles are granted in short-term imprisonment.
• It is aimed to prevent solitude of prisoners, allow them to establish family and social ties, a way of motivation for maintaining good conduct, and to remain disciplined in prison.	• It aims to provide relief to prisoners in certain specified exigencies such as illness, sowing and harvesting of crops, and to pursue an appeal against conviction in the SC.
• Granted by the Deputy Inspector General of Prisons.	• Granted by the Divisional Commissioner.
• There is limitation in the case of furlough.	• Parole can be granted a number of times.
• Since furlough is not granted for any particular reason, it can be denied in the interest of the society.	• For parole, a specific reason is required.

Delhi prison rules on furlough

- Chapter XIX of the Rules deals with furlough and parole.
- The rules says that if an appeal of a convict is pending before the high court or the period for filing an appeal before the high court has not expired, “furlough will not be granted” by the executive.
- It would be open to the convict to seek appropriate directions from the court.

Reference

[The Indian Express | Difference between parole and furlough](#)

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

Why in News?

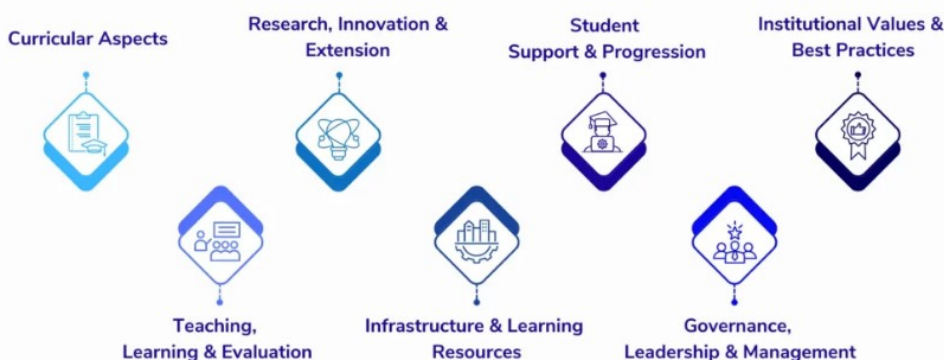
The CBI recently arrested 10 people of NAAC inspection team and office-bearers of Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation (KLEF), Andhra Pradesh, in a case of bribery for a favorable NAAC rating.

- NAAC is a body set up under the **University Grants Commission (UGC)**.
- **Established in** - 1994.
- **Headquarters** - Bengaluru.
- NAAC is controlled by a General Council (GC) and an Executive Committee (EC).
- **Governing council**- Headed by - UGC chief.
- **Aim** - To evaluate the performance of higher education institutions, and providing accreditation.
- NAAC grades are widely regarded as a marker of quality, with institutions prominently displaying them.

UGC regulations of 2012

- It made it mandatory for higher education institutions to get accredited after 6 years of functioning, or after two batches have graduated.
- This means that for funds from the UGC, a higher education institution needs to be accredited.
- **Autonomous Accreditation** - These grades also specifically matter in certain scenarios for instance, to apply for **autonomy**, a college needs to be accredited with a minimum **NAAC grade of 'A'**.
- **Criteria** - Institutions are assessed on parameters including infrastructure, teaching and evaluation, governance, and research.

NAAC Accreditation Criteria



- **Process** - The process of assessment involves the institute itself submitting a 'self-study' report, a 'student satisfaction survey' conducted by NAAC, and a 'peer team visit'.
- It ends with a NAAC grade and accreditation certification of quality provided by NAAC for a period of 5 years or 7 years in the case of institutions that have had an 'A' grade or higher in previous cycles.

National Education Policy 2020

- It suggested that the present 8-point grading system transition into a ***binary accreditation system*** the institution will be identified as 'accredited', 'awaiting accreditation', or 'not accredited.'
- In 2024, NAAC announced reforms in the accreditation process in line with the committee's recommendations binary accreditation instead of grades, along with a maturity-based graded accreditation.
- The system classified from ***levels 1 to 5*** for accredited institutions to improve their quality.
- Institutions can evolve from Levels 1 to 4 as "Institutions of national excellence", and progress to Level 5 as "Institutions of Global Excellence for Multi-Disciplinary Research and Education".
- This system is ***still in the process of being rolled*** out with workshops having been held with stakeholders so far.

Reference

[The Indian Express | NAAC bribery case](#)

Gaia BH3

Why in News?

Recently, the astronomers have discovered a gigantic black hole, Gaia BH3.

- **Gaia BH3** - It is a ***dormant black hole***, and it is the 3rd kind of Gaia Black Hole.
- It is the ***1st black hole*** found in the Milky Way galaxy's outer reaches and the largest known stellar-mass black hole in the galaxy.
- **Discovered in** - ***2024***.
- **Discovered by** - European Space Agency's Gaia telescope.

Gaia telescope has been constantly monitoring the motions of billions of stars in the galaxy since 2013 under European Space Agency's astrometry mission.

- **Distance** - 1,926 light-years from Earth, which makes it the ***2nd closest black hole to the Earth***.
- **Located in** - About 2,000 light years away in the constellation.
- **Constellation** - *Aquila* and appears to be a passive black hole.
- **Solar Mass** - Nearly 33 times the mass of the Sun.



- **Features** - It isn't actively pulling material from its surroundings due to lacks of significant supply of matter in its neighborhood.
- It doesn't have associated X-ray emissions either.

Gaia's Black Hole	
Gaia BH1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the closest black hole to the earth. • Located in - About 1,560 light years away in the constellation Ophiuchus. • Distance - 1.4% of Milky Way's width. • Galaxy's centre - 26,670 light years away.
Gaia BH2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in - About 3,800 light years away in the constellation Centaurus. • Solar Masses - 9 times that of the sun.

References

1. [The Hindu| Gigantic Black Hole, Gaia BH3](#)
2. [ESA| Gaia BH3](#)

Pyricularia Spp Infection

Why in News?

Recently, researchers from the ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) have identified a new fungal disease, *Pyricularia Spp*, that severely affected ginger crops.

- **Pyricularia Spp** - It is a fungal pathogen cause a ***blast disease***, which is a new threat to ginger cultivation.

Pyricularia is well known for causing blast diseases in monocot plants like rice, wheat, and barley.

- Pyricularia has been **1st time reported** in ***ginger crop*** in 2024 in parts of Kodagu district in Karnataka.
- **Early-stage Infection** - It appears as *yellowing of the ginger plant leaves*,

accompanied by black or dark olive-green spots.

- Once the infection takes hold, it spreads rapidly and can cover the entire field within hours.
- **Spread** - Over large areas in 10 hours with some affected fields located up to 20 km apart.
- **Reason for spread** - It is largely driven by the specific climatic conditions that prevailed in Kodagu.
- The dew fall during August and September created favorable environment.
- **Causes** - It leading to severe crop loss and plant death.
- The rhizomes of the affected plants remain unaffected in the premature yellowing and drying of the leaves.
- The farmers of Kodagu have experienced losses up to 30% in rhizome weight.
- **Preventive measures** - Immediate fungicide application is advised to curb the rapid spread of the disease.
- Use of fungicides such as Propiconazole at 1 ml/L or a combination of Carbendazim and Mancozeb at a ratio of 2g/L.
- Propiconazole or Tebuconazole 1ml/L can be sprayed 4 months after planting.

Reference

[The Hindu | Pyricularia Spp Affecting Ginger Crop in Kodagu](#)

One Liners 06-02-2025

Polity & Governance

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- **Beneficiary** - 8.46 lakh households.
- **Aims** - To increase rooftop solar installations in India.
- It is the *world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative*.
- **Recent Developments** - Government aims for 10 lakh installations by March and 20 lakh by October. 45% of households estimated to receive zero electricity bills.

Web portal of National Youth Parliament Scheme (NYPS) 2.0

- **Initiated by** - Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
- **Aim** - Strengthen roots of democracy and Enable students and other citizens to learn about Parliaments.
- **Objectives** - Inculcate discipline and tolerance for different views.
 - To know Functioning of the Government.
 - Understanding Constitutional values.
 - Learning to Live in a democratic way.
- **Institution Participation** - Educational institutions can organize Youth Parliament sittings.
- **Individual Participation** - By taking a quiz on 'Bhartiya Democracy in Action.'

Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY)

- **Launched in** - 2015.
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- **Umbrella scheme** - Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA).
- **Aim** - At providing *short duration skill-based training programs* to rural youth above 18 years and farmers on agri-based vocational areas for creating a pool of skilled manpower.
- **Purpose** - To impart short term skill training for *7 days* duration.

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Scheme

- **Launched in** - 2005.
- **ATMA** - It promotes decentralized farmer-friendly extension system in the country.
- **Objective** - To *support state government's* efforts to revitalize the extension system,
 - Making available the latest agricultural technologies,
 - Good agricultural practices in different thematic areas of agriculture and allied areas to *farmers, farm women and youth*, through various interventions.
- **Implemented in** - *28 States & 5 UTs* in the country.
- It is also known as Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

- **Established in** - 1974.
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- **Under** - Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- **KVK** - It serve as *single window agricultural knowledge*, resource and capacity development centres in different states of the country.
- **Purpose** - To imparting training to the farmers, farm women and rural youths on different aspects of agriculture and allied sectors.
- It is also known as *Farm Science Centre*.

National Skill Development Mission

- **Launched in** - 2015, on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day 15th July.
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- **Umbrella scheme** - Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA).
- **Concept** - It operationalizing *skill training courses of minimum 200 hours* duration for rural youth and farmers in the areas of agriculture and allied sectors.

International Relations and Issues

3rd India-Japan Steel Dialogue

- **Aim** - To foster innovation, sustainable growth, and resilience in the steel industry and enhance bilateral collaboration in steel production and safety.
- Based on Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) signed on December 2020.
- **Key Highlights**
 - Strategic initiatives to promote ease of doing business.
 - Sustained growth in steel demand from infrastructure investment.
 - Release of the Green Steel Report and Taxonomy of Green Steel.
 - Emphasis on R & D opportunities for Japanese investors.

Agriculture

Extra-long Staple (ELS) Cotton

- It is a classification of cotton based on the length of its fibres.
- It mostly comes from the species *Gossypium barbadense*, commonly known as *Egyptian or Pima cotton*.
- **Fibre lengths** - 30 mm and above.
- **Origin** - South America.
- **Growing countries** - China, Egypt, Australia, *India* and Peru.
- **India** - It is grown along rain fed parts of Atpadi taluka, Maharashtra and Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

Environment

Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary

- Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary is a bird sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh, protects part of the Kolleru Lake wetland.
- **Established in** - 1999 under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- **Kolleru Lake** - Located between the Godavari and Krishna deltas in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Kolleru Lake wetland**- Recognized as Ramsar site in 2002.

Miscellaneous

15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias (IMWP)

- **Hosted by** - Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC).
- **Coordinated with** - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organization.
- **Aim** - To focus on pharmaceutical standards and harmonization.
- Introduced the IP Online platform for Indian Pharmacopoeia standards.
- Enhancing collaboration among global pharmacopoeias.