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## **1. Supreme Court's 5-Judge Bench Upholds 'Right to be Forgotten' as an Intrinsic Part of Right to Privacy**

**Context:** In a landmark verdict with profound implications for digital rights and data privacy, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday unanimously upheld the 'Right to be Forgotten' (RTBF) as an intrinsic part of the Right to Privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court, however, clarified that this right is not absolute and must be balanced against the public's Right to Information and freedom of speech.



### **Significance**

- The judgment stemmed from a batch of petitions filed by individuals seeking the removal of outdated, irrelevant, or potentially harmful personal information from online platforms and search engine results.
- The Court laid down a framework for adjudication, stating that petitions for RTBF must be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The criteria for allowing such requests will include the sensitivity of the data, the role of the individual in public life, the relevance of the information to the public, and the time elapsed.
- The Bench, headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, directed the Union Government to expedite the finalization of the Digital India Act, incorporating a robust statutory mechanism for individuals to seek redressal for RTBF claims, reducing the burden on constitutional courts.

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## Analysis

- Legal experts have hailed the judgment as a crucial step in empowering citizens in the digital age.
- It provides a legal basis for individuals to reclaim control over their digital footprint, particularly in cases involving past criminal acquittals or sensitive personal events that continue to cause social stigma.
- The ruling seeks to strike a delicate balance, ensuring that history is not erased while protecting individual dignity.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper II:** Polity and Governance - Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure; Fundamental Rights.

**GS Paper IV:** Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude - Concept of public service; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information.

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## **2. India-UK FTA Talks Enter Final Stage; Data Localisation and Rules of Origin Remain Key Hurdles, Source: The Economic Times**

**Context:** Negotiations for the much-anticipated India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) have entered their final, and most challenging, phase, with officials from both countries holding intense discussions in London this week. Sources close to the talks indicate that while significant progress has been made on chapters related to goods trade, services, and investment, a few contentious issues are preventing a final deal.



### **Significance**

- The key sticking points reportedly revolve around data localisation, rules of origin, and intellectual property rights (IPR).
- India is keen on ensuring it retains the policy space to regulate cross-border data flows and is hesitant to commit to clauses that would prevent it from mandating data localisation for certain sectors.
- The UK, on the other hand, is pushing for the free flow of data, a key demand of its powerful financial and tech services sectors.
- Another point of contention is the 'rules of origin' criteria, which determine the national source of a product.
- India is seeking stringent rules to prevent goods from third countries from entering its market via the UK with concessional tariffs.

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## Analysis

- In return for market access for its Scotch whisky and automobiles, the UK is seeking greater access for its legal and financial firms in India.
- India's primary demand is for a more liberal visa regime for its skilled professionals and students.
- Officials from both sides remain publicly optimistic, stating that a "balanced, fair, and mutually beneficial" deal is within reach, but acknowledge that the final political will is needed to bridge the gaps on these sensitive issues.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper II:** International Relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

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### **3. Ministry of Culture Announces 'GI-Tourism' Circuits to Promote Local Crafts** **Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** In a novel initiative to boost local economies and preserve traditional heritage, the Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, has announced the development of 'Geographical Indication (GI) Tourism Circuits'. The first phase will see the creation of five dedicated circuits across the country, each centered around a cluster of GI-tagged products.



#### **Significance**

- The five circuits announced are: the 'Sandalwood and Silk Trail' in Karnataka (covering Mysuru Silk, Channapatna Toys, and Mysore Sandalwood Oil); the 'Terracotta and Textile Trail' in Uttar Pradesh (covering Gorakhpur Terracotta, Banaras Brocades and Sarees); the 'Spirit of Bengal Trail' (covering Darjeeling Tea, Malda Mangoes, and Shantiniketan Leather Goods); the 'Deccan Heritage Trail' in Telangana (covering Pochampally Ikat and Bidriware); and the 'Colourful Rajasthan Trail' (covering Bagru Hand Block Print and Blue Pottery of Jaipur).

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## **Analysis**

- Under this scheme, the government will develop infrastructure, create experiential centres, and run targeted promotional campaigns to attract both domestic and international tourists.
- The circuits will offer tourists a chance to visit the places of origin, witness the intricate production processes, interact with the artisans, and purchase authentic products.
- The aim is to create a sustainable ecosystem where tourism directly supports the artisan communities, prevents the migration of skilled craftsmen, and protects India's rich intellectual property heritage.
- This initiative aligns with the 'Vocal for Local' and 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaigns.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper I:** Art and Culture - Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times. (Also relevant for Prelims on GI tags).

**GS Paper III:** Economy - Intellectual Property Rights.

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#### **4. Progress on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) Reviewed; Rail Link in UAE Nears Completion, Source: Indian Express**

**Context:** A high-level inter-ministerial meeting was held today to review the progress of the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which was announced during the G20 Summit in 2023. The meeting, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, took stock of the advancements made on various legs of the multi-modal transport corridor.



#### **Significance**

- A significant update came from the Middle Eastern section, where the UAE's national rail network, Etihad Rail, is close to completing the link between the port of Fujairah and the border with Saudi Arabia.
- This is a critical segment of the corridor that will connect Indian maritime cargo to the wider region.
- Discussions are also at an advanced stage with Saudi Arabia and Jordan to finalize the alignment and financing for the railway line that will extend to the port of Haifa in Israel.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways reported that Indian ports on the west coast, particularly Mundra and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), are undergoing infrastructure upgrades to handle the expected increase in container traffic.

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## Analysis

- Despite the progress, challenges remain, particularly concerning the geopolitical stability of the Middle East.
- Officials acknowledged that the security situation requires a cautious and phased approach.
- The corridor, seen as a strategic counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to create a seamless trade route connecting India to Europe, reducing transit times and logistics costs.
- The review meeting concluded with a directive to fast-track diplomatic and technical consultations with all partner countries.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper II:** International Relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**GS Paper III:** Economy - Infrastructure: Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc.

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## **5. Project Cheetah: Two More Cubs Born in Kuno National Park, Bringing Total to Eight, Source: Hindustan Times**

**Context:** In a heartening development for India's ambitious cheetah reintroduction program, two more cubs were born to a Namibian cheetah, 'Jwala', inside her enclosure at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh. This is Jwala's second litter this year and takes the total number of cubs born in India to eight.



### **Significance**

- Forest officials confirmed that the mother and the newborn cubs are healthy and are being monitored round-the-clock via CCTV cameras.
- The birth is a significant morale booster for 'Project Cheetah', which has faced several setbacks, including the deaths of multiple adult cheetahs translocated from Namibia and South Africa due to health issues and territorial conflicts.
- The survival and successful breeding of the cheetahs are critical indicators for the long-term success of the project.

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## **Analysis**

- The Environment Ministry has termed the births a "resounding success," indicating that the animals are adapting well to Indian conditions.
- However, wildlife experts remain cautiously optimistic.
- They point out that the real challenge lies in the survival of these cubs to adulthood and their eventual ability to hunt and thrive in the wild outside the protected enclosures.
- The KNP management is working on expanding the cheetah habitat and augmenting the prey base to support the growing population.
- The success of Project Cheetah is vital for the restoration of open forest and savanna ecosystems in India.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper III:** Environment - Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation. Biodiversity and its conservation.

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## **6. National Cyber Security Coordinator issues alert on new 'Quantum-Shatter' Ransomware, Source: PIB (Ministry of Home Affairs)**

**Context:** The office of the National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) today issued a high-priority alert to all critical information infrastructure operators and government departments about a new and sophisticated ransomware variant named 'Quantum-Shatter'. The alert warns that this malware is designed to target legacy encryption standards, potentially posing a severe threat to financial, energy, and communication networks.



### **Significance**

- According to the initial analysis by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), Quantum-Shatter does not rely on quantum computing itself but uses advanced classical algorithms that are highly effective against older cryptographic protocols (like early versions of RSA and SHA-1) that may still be in use in some legacy IT systems.
- The ransomware encrypts files and demands payment in cryptocurrency, but its primary threat lies in its ability to compromise systems that have not been updated to modern, quantum-resistant cryptographic standards.

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## Analysis

- The NCSC has issued a set of immediate recommendations, including conducting a comprehensive audit of all cryptographic protocols in use, immediately decommissioning all deprecated standards, and accelerating the transition to quantum-safe cryptography.
- It has also advised organisations to strengthen their data backup and recovery procedures.
- The advisory underscores the urgent need for India to prepare for the 'Y2Q' (Years to Quantum) threat, where future quantum computers could break most current forms of public-key encryption, making proactive cryptographic modernization a national security imperative.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper III:** Security - Basics of cyber security, money laundering, and its prevention. Security challenges and their management.

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## **7. Agricultural Ministry Launches 'Kisan-Drone 2.0' Scheme with Focus on Co-operatives, Source: The Economic Times**

**Context:** The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare today launched the second phase of its ambitious drone promotion scheme, 'Kisan-Drone 2.0'. This phase places a significant emphasis on leveraging Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to create a network of "drone-as-a-service" providers at the village level.



### **Significance**

- Under the new scheme, the government will provide a higher subsidy of up to 60% of the cost, or ₹6 lakhs, whichever is lower, for PACS and FPOs to purchase agricultural drones.
- The scheme aims to create at least one drone service hub in every block of the country within the next three years.
- These hubs will provide services like crop health monitoring, nutrient and pesticide spraying, and land survey data to small and marginal farmers on a rental basis, making the technology accessible and affordable.
- The scheme also includes a major component for training and certifying local youth as drone pilots and technicians, creating rural employment opportunities.

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## Analysis

- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated that the initiative is a key part of modernizing Indian agriculture.
- "By using drones for precision application of inputs, we can significantly reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides, lower costs for farmers, improve crop yields, and protect soil health," he said.
- The move is expected to boost the domestic drone manufacturing industry and drive the adoption of precision agriculture technologies across the country.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper III:** Indian Economy - Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing. e-technology in the aid of farmers.

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## **8. BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Meet Concludes in Colombo; Maritime Security and Connectivity Top Agenda, Source: The Hindu**

**Context:** The 20th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Foreign Ministers' meeting concluded in Colombo today, with member states reaffirming their commitment to strengthening regional cooperation, particularly in maritime security and connectivity. India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, led the Indian delegation.



### **Significance**

- A key outcome of the meeting was the finalization of the 'BIMSTEC Maritime Security Cooperation' agenda.
- This includes enhancing collaboration on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), sharing of shipping information to combat transnational crime, and conducting joint coastal security exercises.
- The ministers also reviewed the progress on the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, which includes projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and a seamless multi-modal transport network across the Bay of Bengal region.
- Dr. Jaishankar emphasized that connectivity is the "bedrock of our cooperation" and called for the early finalization of the Motor Vehicles Agreement to facilitate the movement of goods and people.

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## Analysis

- The meeting also saw discussions on a regional energy grid and the need for a coordinated approach to climate change adaptation.
- As the largest economy in the grouping, India reiterated its commitment to provide technical and financial assistance for BIMSTEC's institutional development.
- The Colombo meet is seen as a crucial step in revitalizing the regional organization, which India views as a key platform for its 'Neighborhood First' and 'Act East' policies, and as a viable alternative to SAARC.

## UPSC Syllabus Correlation:

**GS Paper II:** International Relations - India and its neighbour-hood- relations. Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.



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## **9. Study by Lancet Commission Finds Rising AMR a 'Silent Pandemic' in India; Calls for Stricter Antibiotic Stewardship, Source: Indian Express**

**Context:** A new report by the Lancet Commission on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) has termed the rising tide of drug-resistant infections in India a "silent pandemic" that poses a grave threat to public health and the economy. The study, one of the most comprehensive to date, estimates that AMR was directly responsible for over 2.5 lakh deaths in India in 2024 and was associated with nearly 1 million deaths.



### **Significance**

- The report identifies the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in human health, animal husbandry, and agriculture as the primary drivers of resistance.
- It highlights the widespread availability of over-the-counter antibiotics without prescription and the use of powerful, last-resort antibiotics for common ailments as major problems.
- The study found alarmingly high levels of resistance in pathogens causing common infections like pneumonia, urinary tract infections, and sepsis.
- The economic impact is also severe, with prolonged hospital stays and the need for more expensive treatments pushing many families into poverty.

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## **Analysis**

- The Commission has called for urgent, multi-pronged action.
- It recommends strictly enforcing the ban on the sale of 'Schedule H1' antibiotics without a prescription, completely phasing out the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in poultry and livestock, and investing in sanitation and hygiene to prevent infections in the first place.
- It also urges the government to incentivize the research and development of new antibiotics and alternative therapies.
- The report serves as a stark warning that the gains made in modern medicine could be undone if AMR is not tackled on a war footing.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper II:** Social Justice - Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

**GS Paper III:** Science and Technology - Awareness in the fields of Bio-technology.

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## **10. National e-Governance Division (NeGD) Launches 'Bhashini-for-Justice' to Translate Judicial Proceedings, Source: PIB (Ministry of Electronics and IT)**

**Context:** In a significant move to break down language barriers in the justice delivery system, the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) today launched the 'Bhashini-for-Justice' platform. This AI-powered translation tool has been integrated into the e-Courts project to provide real-time translation of judicial proceedings and documents into various Indian languages.



### **Significance**

- The platform, developed under the National Language Translation Mission (NLTM), utilizes advanced Natural Language Processing (NLP) to translate court orders, judgments, and oral arguments from English into 22 scheduled Indian languages, and vice versa.
- In its initial phase, the service will be rolled out in all High Courts and will be gradually extended to district and subordinate courts.
- The platform aims to help litigants who are not proficient in English to better understand the legal proceedings in which they are involved, thereby enhancing access to justice.

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## **Analysis**

- Speaking at the launch, the Union Law Minister stated that this initiative is a crucial step towards realizing the vision of "justice for all."
- He noted that "language should not be a barrier to justice," and this tool will empower common citizens to engage more meaningfully with the legal system.
- The Supreme Court's AI committee has supported the initiative, viewing it as a tool that can significantly reduce the cognitive load on judges and lawyers dealing with multilingual case files.
- While the accuracy of legal translation remains a challenge, Bhashini's developers claim a high degree of context-aware accuracy, which will be continuously improved through machine learning.

## **UPSC Syllabus Correlation:**

**GS Paper II:** Polity and Governance - Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential.