UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS – 5 July 2025

GS Paper 2 :

PM-POSHAN scheme

Syllabus: Schemes

Source: TH

Context: A century after its inception in Madras, the PM-POSHAN scheme continues to combat hunger and promote education, but a new report highlights persistent ground-level challenges like fund delays, caste discrimination, and rising costs.

About PM-POSHAN scheme:

- **Full Name:** Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana
- **Launched In:** 2021–22 (replacing the 1995 Midday Meal Scheme)
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme (60:40 Centre-State cost-sharing)
- **Objective:** Provide one hot cooked meal per day to students of Classes 1–8 in government and government-aided schools.

Key Features:

- **Nutritional Focus:** Provides rice/wheat, pulses, vegetables, and eggs/bananas where allowed.
- **Coverage:** Benefits 11.80 crore children in 11.20 lakh schools (as of 2023–24).
- **Funding Outlay:** ₹54,061 crore (Centre) + ₹31,733 crore (States/UTs) till 2025–26.
- **Additional Innovations:** Promotes nutrition gardens, IT-based monitoring, and social audit mechanisms.

- **Implementation Linkages:** Tied with Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and Poshan Abhiyan for holistic child development.

Successes of PM-POSHAN in India:

- **Increased Enrolment & Retention:** As per a 2024 review, MDM schemes boosted enrolment, attendance, and retention, especially among marginalized groups (Jean Dreze study).
- **Gender Equity & Girls' Education:** Tamil Nadu reports dropout rates have fallen drastically among girls due to nutritional support and inclusion of breakfast.
- **Tackling Classroom Hunger:** Midday meals offer first and only meal for lakhs of poor children, enhancing concentration and learning outcomes (UNICEF reports).
- **Local Innovations:** Tamil Nadu's Breakfast Scheme and Kerala's egg-fried rice menus show proactive state-level reforms addressing nutrition.
- **Community Participation:** Kerala's model uses local cooks and community buy-in to support child nutrition and hygiene.

Key Challenges in PM-POSHAN Implementation:

- **Delayed Fund Disbursal:** Teachers in Kerala and UP report using personal loans and funds to manage meal expenses due to 3–6 months fund delays.
- **Inadequate Per-Child Allocation:** States like UP and Kerala receive ₹6–10 per child/day, far below actual costs (₹30–40 per child/day).
- **One-Size-Fits-All Policy:** Uniform guidelines ignore local dietary needs, especially in tribal/rural belts.
- **Caste-based Discrimination:** Reports from Delhi NCR, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar reveal Dalit students being segregated or denied meals.
- **Teacher Burden:** School heads like Vasudha in Kerala say cooking/admin duties reduce teaching hours, affecting quality education.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Most schools lack multiple cooks, storage, or kitchen space, despite serving hundreds of students.

Way Forward:

- **Revise Cost Norms:** Update allocations based on inflation and region-specific dietary costs to ensure adequate, nutritious meals.
- **Ensure Timely Fund Transfers:** Implement direct transfer systems to schools with strict timelines for transparency.
- **Decentralise Menu Planning:** Let states and districts tailor meal plans to local tastes and nutrition needs (e.g., Odisha's millet inclusion).
- **Strengthen Monitoring Systems:** Use tech-enabled real-time dashboards and social audits to ensure transparency and community oversight.

- **Promote Equity and Dignity:** Conduct regular sensitization and awareness campaigns to eliminate caste-based discrimination in schools.
- **Leverage NGO Partnerships:** Collaborate with civil society to address psychosocial, gender, and nutrition gaps beyond government structures.

Conclusion:
The PM-POSHAN scheme remains central to India's battle against child hunger and dropout rates. While its intent is commendable, implementation gaps weaken its transformative potential. Addressing funding, inclusion, and flexibility can turn it into a true engine of educational equity.

GS Paper 3:

Code of Conduct

Syllabus: Code of Conduct

Source: ToI

Context: Tamil Nadu's Higher Education Department has released a draft Model Code of Conduct for College Teachers, focusing on social media behaviour, political neutrality, and ethical classroom conduct.

About Code of Conduct:

What is a Code of Conduct?

- A Code of Conduct is a framework of ethical and professional standards that guides the behaviour of individuals within an organization or institution.

- It defines what is acceptable and unacceptable, aiming to uphold integrity, professionalism, respect, and accountability in both personal and institutional contexts.
- While a Code of Ethics is value-driven, focusing on moral philosophy (e.g., deontology, virtue ethics), a Code of Conduct is more rule-based and actionable, specifying expected behaviours and consequences for violations.

Types of Code of Conduct:

- **Compliance-Based Code of Conduct:**
  - Focuses on legal obligations and institutional policies.
  - Ensures adherence to laws and rules, with penalties for violations.
  - Based on deontological ethics—duty to follow rules.
- **Value-Based Code of Conduct:**
  - Driven by organizational values such as equity, justice, and integrity.
  - Encourages ethical reflection and self-governance.
  - Inspired by virtue ethics—cultivating good character and moral habits.

Features of a Code of Conduct:

- **Defines Acceptable Behaviour:** Sets clear standards for professional conduct, ensuring ethical integrity in institutions.
  - *E.g.,* TANSCHE's draft mandates respectful online behaviour to protect institutional reputation.
- **Guides Teacher-Student Interaction:** Encourages mutual respect, promotes inclusivity, and safeguards student privacy.
  - *E.g.,* DU guidelines stress maintaining professional boundaries and equal treatment.
- **Addresses Social Media Usage:** Encourages responsible content-sharing without harming public sentiments or institutional image.
  - *E.g.,* Teachers advised against making reels that promote personal agendas or offend communities.
- **Political Neutrality:** Discourages active political participation that might compromise academic impartiality.
  - *E.g.,* Teachers in Tamil Nadu advised not to associate with politically disruptive movements.
- **Promotes Inclusivity:** Prohibits discrimination based on caste, gender, or religion to uphold equality.
  - *E.g.,* NEP 2020 emphasises creating inclusive campuses free of any bias or prejudice.
- **Research Integrity:** Insists on honesty in academic work, avoiding plagiarism and data fabrication.

- *E.g.,* UGC has made anti-plagiarism software mandatory for thesis submissions.

Ways to Implement the Code of Conduct:

- **Institutional Policy Adoption:** Universities can localize the state's model code based on institutional context.
- **Ethics Training & Orientation:** Periodic workshops can instill ethical awareness and decision-making capacity.
- **Leadership Role-Modelling:** Senior staff must exemplify values to instill ethical norms across all levels.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Stakeholders should be encouraged to provide inputs to refine conduct policies.
- **Ethics Committees:** Establish committees to review, investigate, and advise on ethical violations.

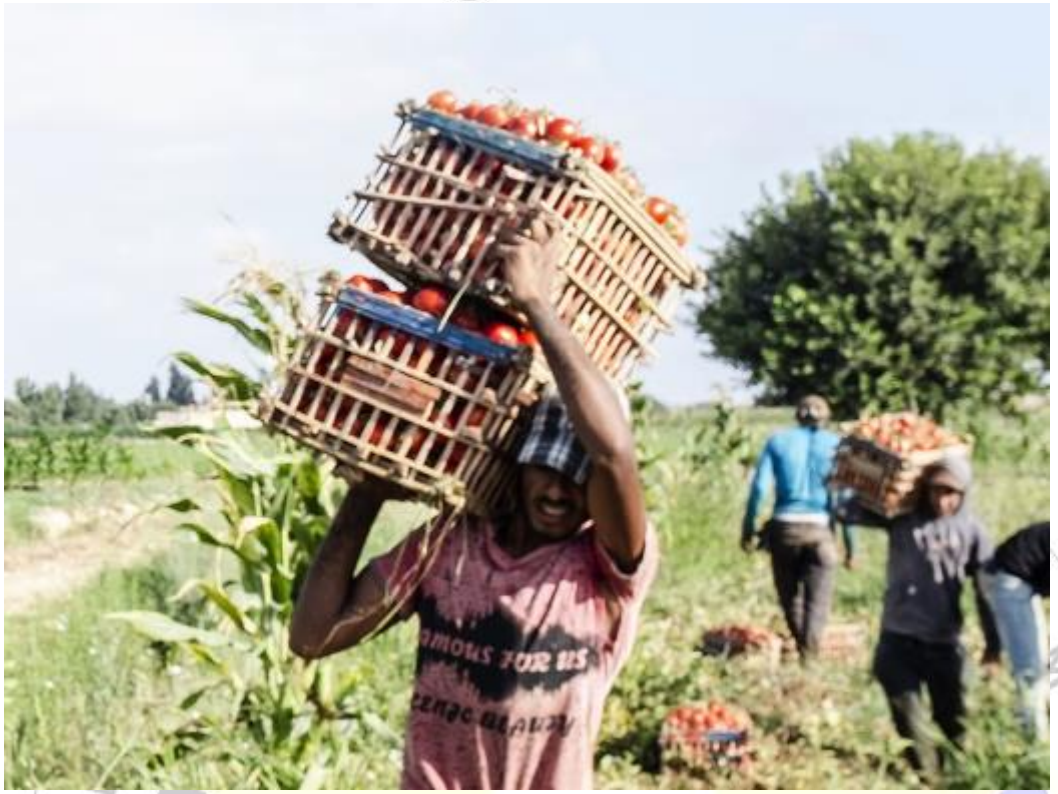
Limitations of a Code of Conduct:

- **Lack of Enforcement:** Without regular oversight, codes may become ceremonial with no real impact.
- **Over-standardization:** Uniform rules may fail to reflect local, cultural, or institutional diversity.
- **Potential Chilling Effect:** Ambiguous rules might restrict teachers' academic freedom or personal expression.
- **Ambiguity:** Vague terms in codes can lead to misinterpretation or arbitrary enforcement.
- **Resistance to Change:** Long-standing faculty might view new norms as disruptive or unnecessary.

Conclusion:
A well-crafted Code of Conduct in higher education ensures ethical integrity, professional responsibility, and inclusive academic environments. However, its effectiveness depends on clear communication, institutional support, and participatory enforcement. Balancing regulation with academic freedom is key to its long-term success.

Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems Report

Context: The FAO released the "Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems" report highlighting that empowering youth in agriculture can boost global GDP by 1.4% and tackle rising unemployment and food insecurity.



About Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems Report:

- **Youth Employment Decline in Agriculture:** Share of working youth in agrifood systems fell from 54% (2005) to 44%, despite high dependence in low-income countries.
- **Rising NEET Youth:** Over 20% of global youth (aged 15–24) are not in employment, education, or training; women are twice as likely to be affected.
- **Massive GDP Potential:** Eliminating youth NEET status, especially among 20–24-year-olds, could raise global GDP by 1.4% (~$1.5 trillion) — nearly 45% of it via agrifood systems.
- **Urban-Rural Divide:** 54% of youth now live in urban areas; rural youth form only 5% in industrial agrifood systems — signalling future labour shortages in agriculture.
- **Vulnerability to Climate Change:** Around 395 million rural youth live in areas likely to face declining agricultural productivity due to extreme weather and climate stress.
- **Food Insecurity Rising Among Youth:** Global food insecurity among youth has increased from 16.7% to 24.4% (2014–2023), especially in Africa and crisis-affected regions.

Key Measures Recommended by FAO:

Inquire More:

- Bridge data gaps in youth participation in agrifood systems.
- Generate stronger evidence for youth-inclusive policies.

Include More:

- Amplify youth voices in policy-making.
- Encourage inclusive decision-making for rural and urban youth.

Invest More:

- **Create Decent Jobs:** Support on- and off-farm employment.
- **Modernize Agrifood Systems:** Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and value chains.
- **Access to Resources:** Improve youth access to land, finance, training, markets, and digital tools.
- **Promote Orderly Migration:** Create safer and legal migration routes for youth in agriculture.

Relevance in UPSC Examination Syllabus:

GS Paper III – Agriculture:

- Role of agriculture in employment generation
- Agrifood value chains and structural transformation
- Youth in rural economy and sustainable development

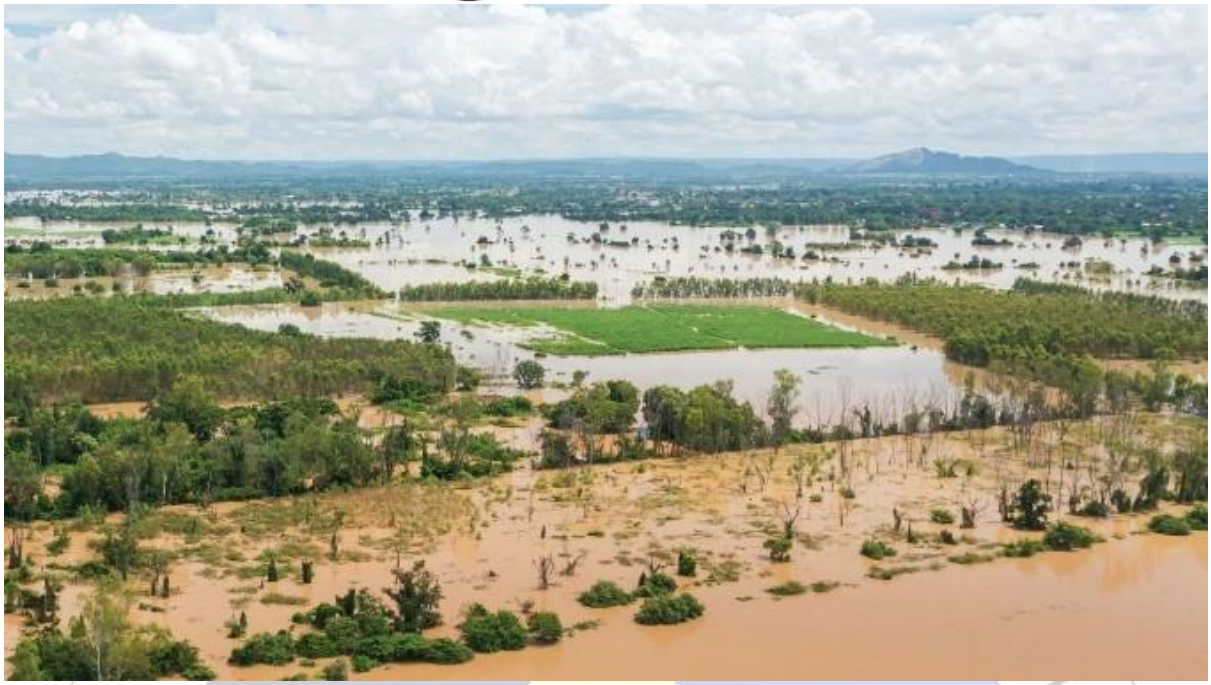
GS Paper II – Governance & Social Justice:

- Policy interventions for vulnerable sections
- NEET youth and education-employment reforms

C-FLOOD App

Source: PIB

Context: Union Jal Shakti Minister inaugurated C-FLOOD, India's first unified web-based flood inundation forecasting platform.



About C-FLOOD App:

What is C-FLOOD?
C-FLOOD is a web-based, real-time flood forecasting system that provides two-day advance inundation forecasts through flood maps and water level predictions.

Developed By:

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune
- Central Water Commission (CWC)
- In collaboration with NRSC, under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, MeitY, and DST.

Objective: To provide an integrated, high-resolution flood forecasting tool for early warning, disaster risk reduction, and local-level planning.

Key Features:

- **2-Day Forecasts at Village Level:** Delivers localized flood maps and water levels down to the gram panchayat level.
- **Hydrodynamic Modelling:** Uses advanced 2-D simulations powered by High Performance Computing (HPC) under NSM.
- **Multi-Basin Coverage:** Currently covers Mahanadi, Godavari, and Tapi basins, with more to be added.
- **Real-Time Data Integration:** Pulls forecast outputs from national and regional models into a unified decision-support portal.
- **Disaster Portal Integration:** Designed for integration with the National Disaster Management Emergency Response Portal (NDEM).

Significance:

- Enhances predictive flood risk management and early evacuation planning.
- Bridges scientific modelling and field-level response, improving India's disaster resilience.
- Promotes inter-agency collaboration and real-time validation using satellite and ground data.
- Sets a benchmark for climate-adaptive water governance in line with Viksit Bharat @2047 goals.

India's first Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC)

Source: PIB

Context: India's first Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC) at the RVC Centre, Meerut, has been officially recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

About India's first Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC):

What is it?

A scientifically managed, internationally recognised zone that ensures horses are free from specified equine diseases, allowing them to participate in global trade and competitions.

- **Established at:** Remount Veterinary Corps (RVC) Centre & College, Meerut Cantonment, Uttar Pradesh
- **Recognised by:** World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).
- **Established under:** Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

Key Features of the EDFC

- **Disease-Free Status:** Officially declared free from Equine Influenza, Glanders, Surra, Equine Piroplasmosis, and Equine Infectious Anemia. India has also remained free of African Horse Sickness since 2014.
- **Robust Biosecurity Protocols:** Implements strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) covering hygiene, pest control, animal health surveillance, waste management, and sanitation.

- **Compartmentalisation Standards:** Follows WOAH's Terrestrial Animal Health Code, maintaining a sub-population of animals with a defined health status.
- **24/7 Surveillance & Monitoring:** Continuous veterinary screening ensures early detection and containment of infections.

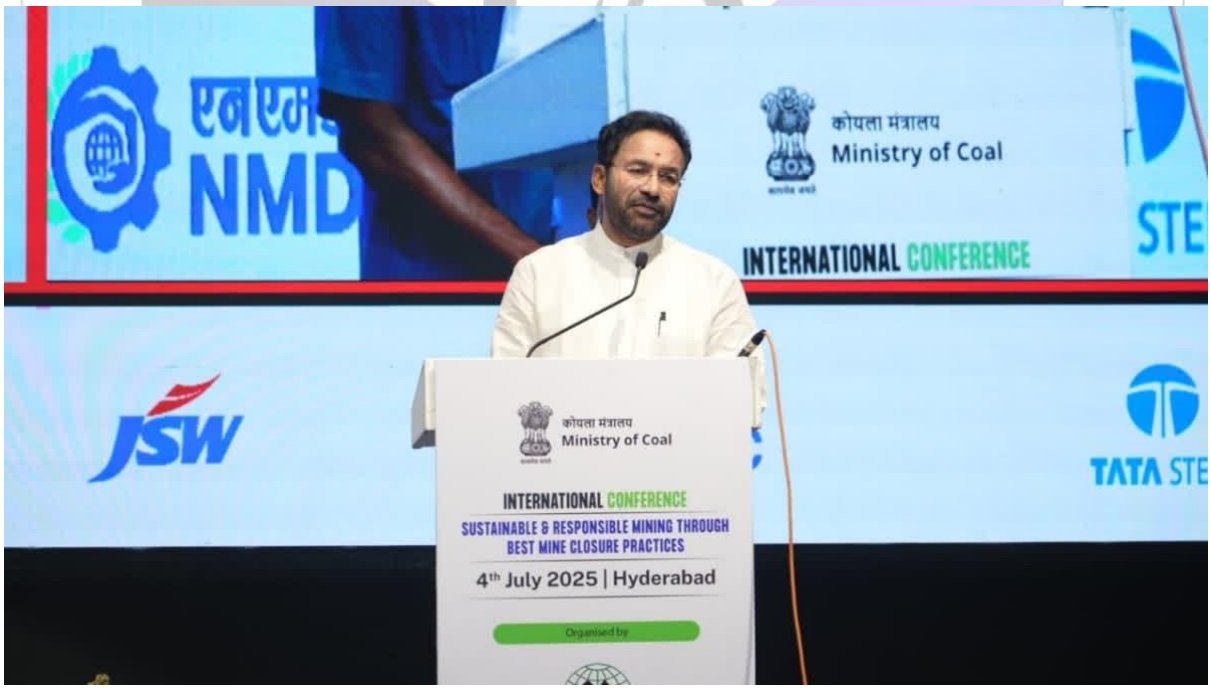
Functions:

- **Boosts International Trade:** Facilitates export of high-value Indian sport horses compliant with global standards.
- **Promotes Equestrian Sports:** Enables Indian horses and riders to participate in global equestrian events.
- **Improves Animal Health Systems:** Demonstrates India's commitment to global biosecurity and science-based animal husbandry practices.
- **Expands to Poultry Sector:** India is replicating this model for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)-Free Compartments to allow safe export of poultry products.

Aluminium Vision Document

Source: ET

Context: Union Coal and Mines Minister unveiled the Aluminium Vision Document at the International Conference on Sustainable and Responsible Mining in Hyderabad to position India as a global aluminium production hub by 2047.



About Aluminium Vision Document:

What is it?
A strategic policy roadmap to transform India's aluminium industry for self-reliance, clean energy transition, and global competitiveness.

- **Published by:** Ministry of Coal and Mines, Government of India.
- **Aim:** To scale up aluminium production sustainably and make India a leading global player in green aluminium

Key Features of the Vision Document

- **Massive Production Expansion:** Targets a six-fold increase in aluminium production capacity by 2047 to meet future strategic and economic demands.
- **Boost to Raw Material Base:** Aims to expand bauxite production capacity to 150 MTPA, ensuring long-term raw material security.
- **Circular Economy Push:** Plans to double India's aluminium recycling rate, reducing dependency on primary raw materials.
- **Green Technology Adoption:** Focus on low-carbon, energy-efficient technologies to align with net-zero goals and sustainable development.
- **Policy and Institutional Reforms:** Proposes targeted reforms for smoother mining approvals, faster project clearances, and better resource governance.

Strategic Relevance:
Aluminium identified as a critical mineral vital for clean energy (solar, wind), EVs, defence, and infrastructure.

Significance of the Vision Document:

- **Clean Energy Transition:** Supports India's decarbonisation efforts by promoting aluminium as a lightweight, recyclable green metal.
- **Economic Growth Driver:** Enhances industrial output, exports, and job creation across the aluminium value chain.
- **Technological Innovation:** Encourages R&D for advanced smelting technologies and digitisation of aluminium production processes.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Vision:** Reinforces self-reliance by reducing import dependency and making India a global manufacturing hub.
- **Environmental Leadership:** Positions India as a champion of responsible mining and green aluminium economy.

WHO 3 by 35 Initiative

Source: WHO

Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the 3 by 35 Initiative, aiming to reduce harmful product consumption and generate sustainable public revenue through targeted health taxes.

World Health Organization

About WHO 3 by 35 Initiative:

What It Is?
A global initiative to increase the real prices of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by at least 50% by 2035 through higher taxes.

- **Launched By:** The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with global development partners, civil society, and governments.
- **Objective:** To reduce consumption of harmful products, improve public health, and mobilize US$ 1 trillion in additional public revenue by 2035, thereby supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key Features:

- **Tax-Based Strategy:** Raise taxes to increase prices of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by at least 50%.
- **Country-Specific Approach:** Policies tailored to national contexts with technical, legal, and administrative support.

Three Pillars of Action:

- **Mobilizing Countries:** Engaging political leaders and ministries to drive action.
- **Supporting Policies:** Providing technical assistance for evidence-based, effective health taxes.
- **Building Partnerships:** Strengthening civil society roles and fostering global collaboration.

Expected Impact:

- Generate up to US$ 3.7 trillion in revenue within 5 years.

- Save millions of lives by curbing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).
- Reduce reliance on foreign aid through sustainable domestic financing.

Significance:

- **Public Health Impact:** Tackles leading NCDs by reducing harmful consumption habits.
- **Economic Benefit:** Strengthens domestic resource mobilization amid fiscal challenges.
- **Global Development:** Supports countries in achieving health and financing targets under the SDGs.
- **Equity and Sustainability:** Promotes long-term, equitable health financing mechanisms.

Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR)

Source: ET

Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted a ₹1 lakh crore 7-day Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) auction to manage surplus liquidity, which had peaked at ₹3.75 lakh crore.

About Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR):

What is VRRR?

The Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) is a monetary policy tool used by the RBI to absorb excess liquidity from the banking system for a fixed duration, with the interest rate determined through auction rather than being fixed.

It allows banks to lend funds to the RBI for a period longer than one day — typically 7, 14, or 28 days — in exchange for interest.

- **Announced By:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as part of its liquidity management framework.

Objective:

- To manage surplus liquidity in the financial system.
- To fine-tune short-term interest rates and strengthen the monetary transmission mechanism.

- To provide a market-driven interest rate environment in short-term lending between banks and the central bank.

How It Works?

- The RBI announces a VRRR auction specifying the total amount and tenor (e.g., 7 days).
- Banks submit competitive bids indicating the amount and rate at which they are willing to lend funds to RBI.
- RBI selects the cut-off rate based on bids received and accepts offers at or above that rate.
- Banks earn interest based on the market-determined rate during the period of the VRRR.

Key Features:

- **Market-determined rates:** Interest rates are discovered via auction, not fixed by RBI.
- **Term-based:** Unlike the overnight fixed reverse repo, VRRR operates for multiple days, often 7 or 14.
- **Liquidity absorption tool:** Used when there is excess liquidity in the banking system.
- **Upper rate limit:** VRRR rate cannot exceed the prevailing Repo Rate.
- **Flexibility:** RBI can conduct VRRR of varying durations depending on liquidity conditions.

Implications of VRRR:

- **Money Market Impact:** Leads to tighter liquidity, pushing up short-term rates like the call money and TREPS (tri-party repo) rates.
- **Bond Market Impact:** An increase in VRRR rates may raise short-term bond yields, making borrowing costlier for the government and corporates.

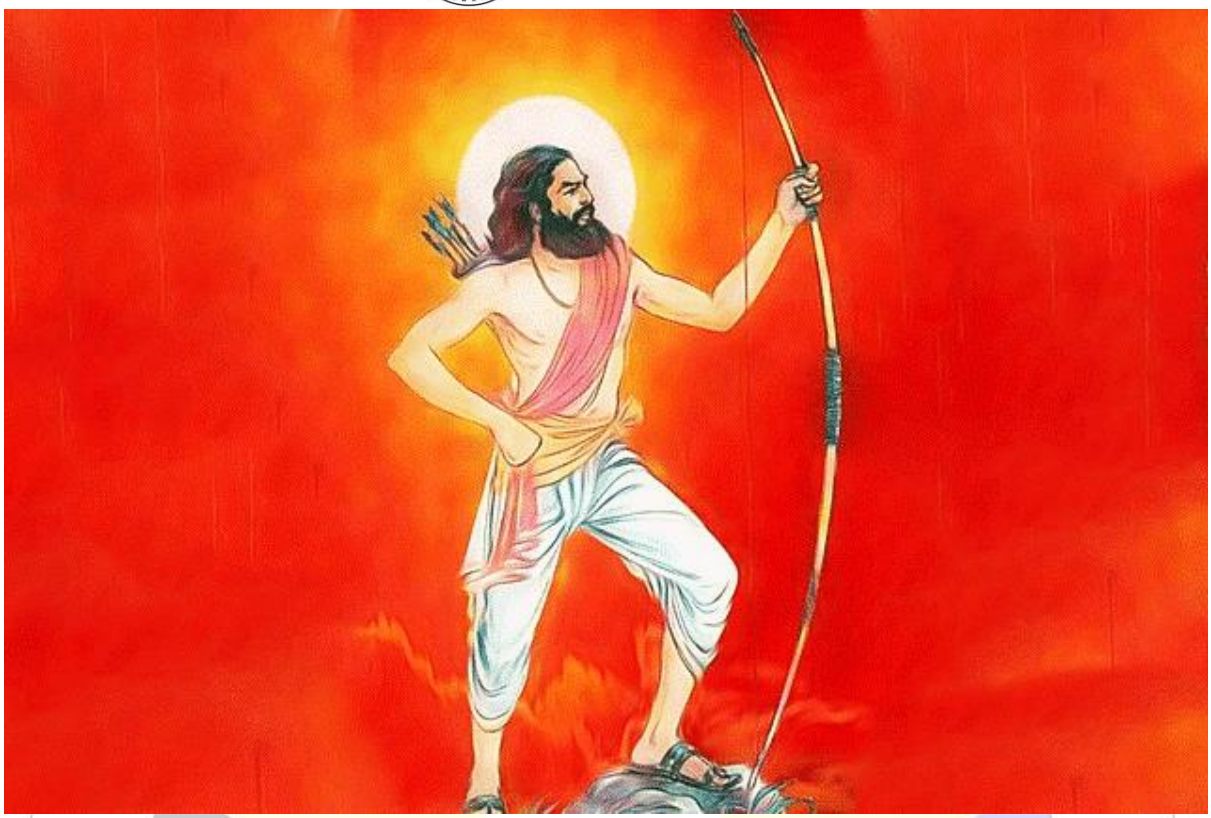
Banking Sector Impact:

- Offers banks a higher return on surplus funds, enhancing profitability.
- However, it temporarily locks funds, potentially limiting their availability for lending and investment.

Alluri Sitarama Raju

Source: DC

Context: Union Defence Minister, at the 128th birth anniversary celebrations of Alluri Sitarama Raju, praised his contributions to India's freedom struggle and reaffirmed the government's goal to eliminate Maoist insurgency by August 2026.



About Alluri Sitarama Raju:

Who He Was?
Alluri Sitarama Raju was a fearless revolutionary and freedom fighter known for leading a tribal uprising against British colonial rule.
Though not a tribal himself, he is revered for defending tribal rights and lives.

- **Region:** He was born on 4 July 1897 in Mogallu village, near Bhimavaram in present-day Andhra Pradesh, and operated mainly in the Eastern Ghats' Agency areas of Andhra Pradesh.

Historical Background:

- **Early Life:** Raju received his early education in his village and later moved to Visakhapatnam.
- By the age of 18, he renounced worldly life to become a sanyasi, travelling through forests and hills, and connecting deeply with tribal communities.
- **Influence of Gandhiji:** Initially inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement, he encouraged tribals to boycott British institutions.
- When peaceful methods failed to bring change, he adopted armed resistance.

Major Contributions to India's Freedom Movement:

Leader of the Rampa Rebellion (1922–1924):

- He led the Rampa Rebellion against the British in response to the Madras Forest Act, 1882, which restricted tribal farming practices like Podu cultivation and displaced many from their lands.
- Tribals were also forced into unpaid labour for road and rail construction, which intensified resentment.

Guerrilla Warfare Against the British:

- Raju mobilized tribal youth and formed a resistance army that conducted guerrilla-style raids on British police stations, seizing arms and killing colonial officers.

Legacy and Martyrdom:

- His success and growing influence led the British to place a ₹10,000 bounty on his head.
- In 1924, he was captured through deceit, tied to a tree, and shot dead on 7 May 1924.

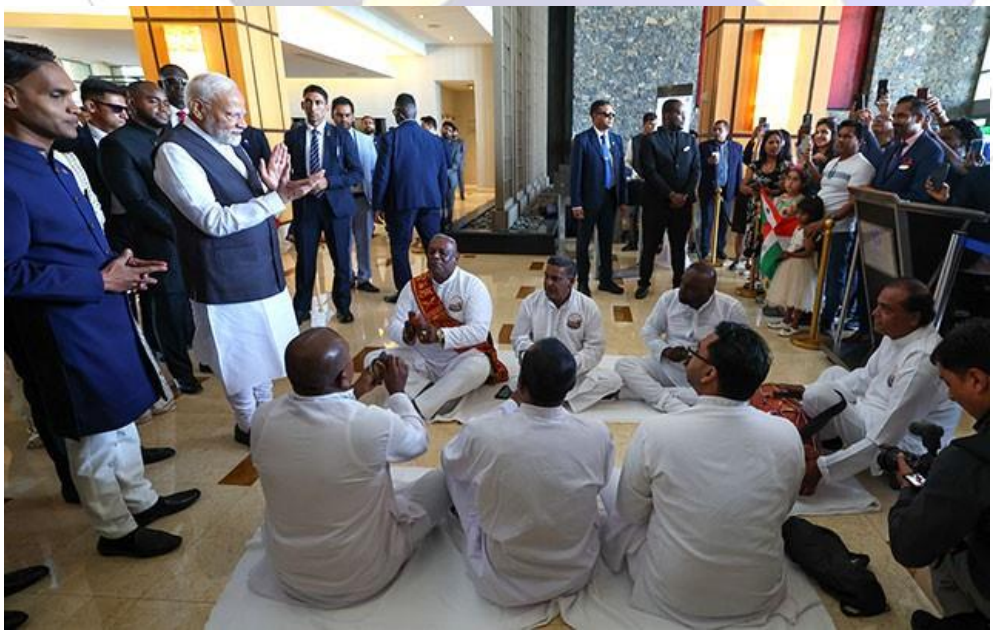
Legacy:

- Fondly remembered as "Manyam Veerudu" (Hero of the Jungle).
- Honoured annually by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, which observes July 4 as a state festival in his memory.
- He remains a symbol of tribal resistance, justice, and sacrifice in India's struggle for independence.

Chautal

Source: ITV

Context: Prime Minister of India shared a video of a Bhojpuri Chautal performance during his visit to Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, highlighting the cultural connection between India and the Indian diaspora.



About Chautal:

What it is?
Chautal (also spelled Chowtal or Chartal) is a traditional 12-beat rhythmic cycle (tāl) used in Indian classical music, especially associated with the dhrupad style and pakhawaj

Origin:

- Chautal originated in North Indian classical traditions, particularly within the dhrupad
- The name Chautal means "four claps," referring to the tala's vibhag (division) structure.

Characteristics:

- It consists of 12 matras (beats).
- There are two schools of thought on its structure:
    - One follows four vibhags of 4, 4, 2, 2 beats (all claps, no waves).
    - Another treats it like Ektal, with six vibhags of 2 beats (clap-wave alternation).
- Played mostly in medium tempo, never extremely fast or slow.
- Emphasizes powerful, weighty playing, especially on pakhawaj.
- It often lacks a fixed theka (standard repeated pattern); instead, "thapi"—a more fluid, improvisational structure—is followed.

Instrument Used:

- Pakhawaj is the primary percussion instrument used for Chautal.
- Unlike tabla-based styles, pakhawaj allows more freedom for improvisation and expressive rhythm cycles.

Significance:

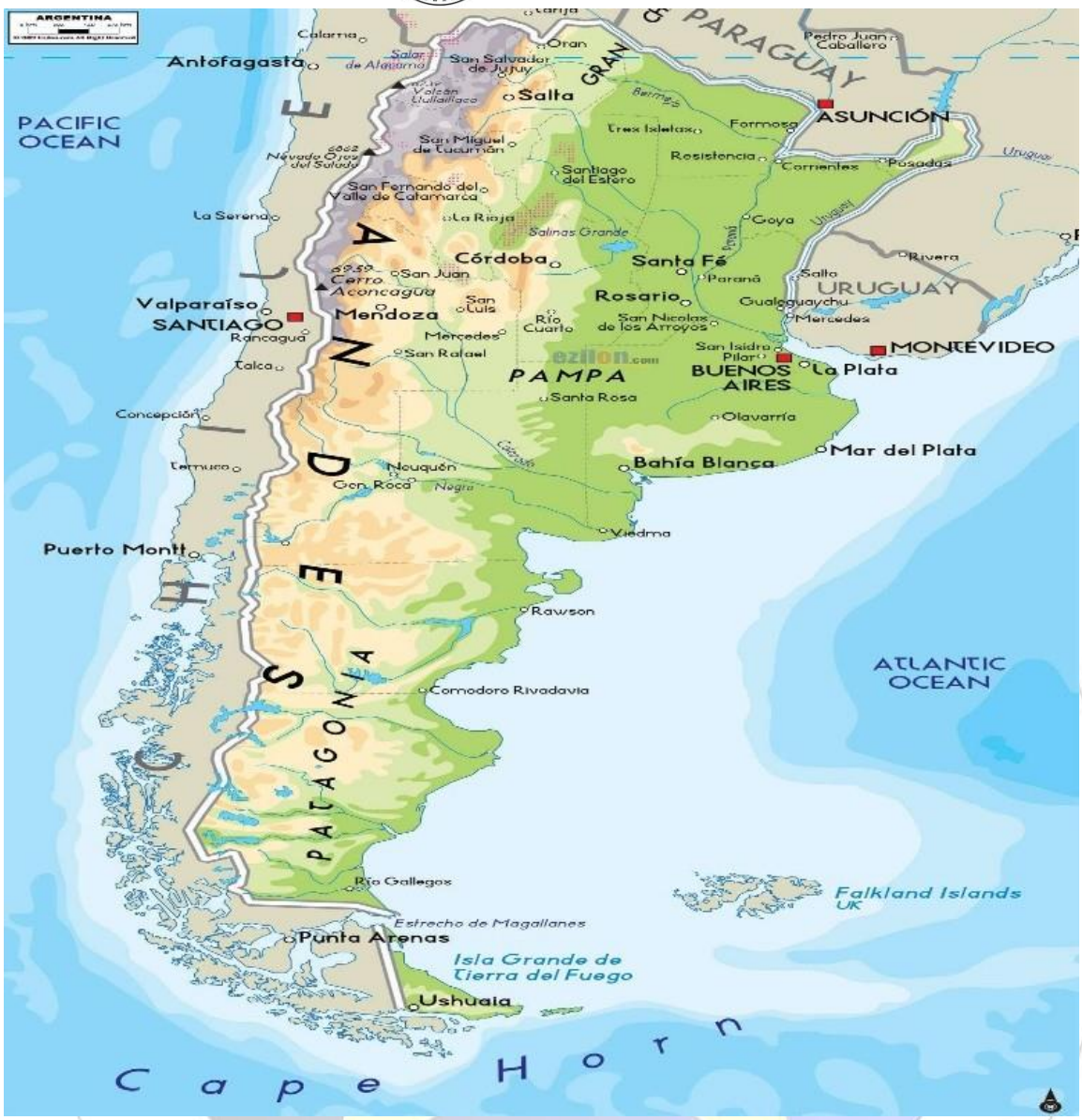
- Strongly associated with the dhrupad tradition, India's oldest surviving form of classical music.
- Reflects spiritual depth, tradition, and power in rhythm.

Mapping:

Argentina

Source: DH

Context: Prime Minister of India arrived in Buenos Aires on an official visit to Argentina, to enhance cooperation in defence, energy, agriculture, and trade.



About Argentina:

- **Location:** Argentina is in southern South America.
- **Capital:** Buenos Aires
- **Neighbours:** Chile (west), Bolivia and Paraguay (north), Brazil and Uruguay (northeast), and the Atlantic Ocean (east).

Geography of Argentina

- **Mountains:** The Andes along the western edge include Mount Aconcagua (6,959 m), the highest peak in South America.
- **Rivers:** Major rivers include the Paraná, Uruguay, Pilcomayo, Bermejo, and Santa Cruz.

Other Features:

- **Pampas:** Fertile plains ideal for farming and cattle grazing.
- **Patagonia:** Cold, windswept region in the south with glaciers and steppe landscapes.
- **Gran Chaco & Mesopotamia:** Subtropical lowlands with seasonal rivers and wetlands.
- **Coastline:** About 2,900 miles (4,700 km) along the Atlantic Ocean.

India–Argentina Relations:

- **Diplomatic Ties:** Established in 1949, with growing collaboration in political, economic, and scientific fields.
- **Trade:** Bilateral trade has expanded, especially in agricultural products, pharmaceuticals, and industrial machinery.
- **Energy & Mining:** India is investing in Argentina's lithium reserves—a key resource for electric vehicle batteries.

