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DAILY ANALYSIS

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PRELIMS + MAINS VALUE ADDITION

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PRE

1

Delhi HC Upholds Centre's Curbs on Telegram amid NEET Row

GS 2

Polity / IT

WHY IN NEWS

The Delhi High Court upheld the Centre's temporary ban on Telegram, holding that the government's action was proportionate and justified given the platform's alleged use by organised cheating networks linked to the NEET (UG), 2026 controversy.

- The Court dismissed Telegram's challenge to the **16 June emergency blocking order**, finding that the Union government had followed the procedure prescribed under **Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000** and recorded adequate reasons for invoking emergency powers.
- A key part of the ruling is the Court's **endorsement of the government's interpretation** of Section 69A — that it empowers blocking of access to an **entire platform**, not just specific content.
- Rejecting Telegram's plea that the provision permits blocking of specific content alone, the Court held that the Act's broad definition of '**information**' includes software and computer programmes.
- Since Telegram functions through software infrastructure constituting a '**computer resource**', the government was legally empowered to direct a temporary block on the platform.
- The Court rejected the contention that the order reflected **non-application of mind**.

★ Prelims Pointer — Section 69A, IT Act 2000

- ▶ Empowers the Centre to **block public access to any information** through any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty, integrity, defence, security of the State, friendly foreign relations or public order.
- ▶ Procedure governed by the **IT (Blocking) Rules, 2009**; includes an **emergency provision** allowing interim blocking before a committee hearing.
- ▶ Validity of the broad blocking framework was earlier examined in **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)**, which read down Section 66A but **upheld Section 69A** with procedural safeguards.
- ▶ Non-compliance can attract imprisonment up to **7 years** and fine for the intermediary.

2

Walking Safely on Footpaths is a Fundamental Right: SC

GS 2

GS 1

Polity / Rights

WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court declared the freedom to walk on demarcated and well-maintained footpaths a fundamental right that has priority over movement by motorised vehicles, and called for a statutory framework to fix duty-bearers.

- The right was located within **Article 19(1)(d)** (freedom to move freely throughout India) read with **Article 21** (right to life and personal liberty).
- Justice **P.S. Narasimha**, authoring the judgment, held: if a road exists, there must be an enforceable duty to ensure a footpath is demarcated and maintained for walkers; the right to walk shall **override the privilege of a motorised vehicle**.
- The judgment arose from the death of a **five-year-old boy** crushed by a truck while walking to school with his father.
- The Court stressed the need to lay down a **statutory framework** — not only to declare the right, but to recognise the **duty-bearers** (civic and municipal bodies).
- Walking safely and carefree along wide footpaths, without danger lurking at every turn, was described as the **most basic of rights**.

★ Value Addition — Linkages

- ▶ Builds on the expansive reading of **Article 21** to include a clean environment, safe roads and dignity (the '**right to life with dignity**' jurisprudence).
- ▶ Connects to **SDG 11** (sustainable cities) and the idea of **walkability** / **non-motorised transport (NMT)** in urban planning.
- ▶ Pedestrian deaths form a large share of India's road fatalities — relevant to the **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019** and road-safety governance.

3

Tamil Nadu Assembly Opposes Mekedatu Reservoir

PRELIMS

GS 1 Geography

WHY IN NEWS

The Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution opposing Karnataka's proposal to build a balancing reservoir across the Cauvery at Mekedatu, citing the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award (2007) and the Supreme Court verdict (2018).

MEKEDATU PROJECT

KARNATAKA

- Mekedatu is **Rs 9,000-cr** project proposed at Ontigondlu in Karnataka.
- Project site is at confluence of Cauvery & its tributary Arkavathi.
- Reservoir aimed at ensuring **drinking water** to Bengaluru & adjacent areas.
- Project also envisioned to generate **400 MW** of power.



ThePrint

Mekedatu project location — at the Cauvery–Arkavathi confluence, Karnataka. (The Print)

★ Mekedatu Project — Key Facts

- ▶ A multi-purpose **balancing reservoir & drinking water** project by the Government of Karnataka, near **Kanakapura, Ramanagara district** (~90 km from Bengaluru, near the TN border).
- ▶ Located at the **confluence of the Cauvery and its tributary Arkavathi**; aims to supply about **4.75 TMC** drinking water to Bengaluru and generate ~**400 MW** power (est. ~Rs 9,000 crore).
- ▶ **Arkavathi**: rises in the **Nandi Hills** (Chikkaballapura); joins the Cauvery at **Sangama** near Mekedatu; feeds Hesaraghatta & T.G. Halli reservoirs.
- ▶ **Cauvery**: rises at **Talakaveri** (Brahmagiri range, Kodagu, Karnataka); ~800 km long; basin across Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu & Puducherry.
- ▶ TN's objection: fear of **reduced downstream flow** affecting irrigation and drinking water in the delta.

4

India's Cheapest Power is Here — the Grid Must Catch Up

GS 3

Energy / Infra

WHY IN NEWS

Solar and wind are now India's cheapest power sources, but tens of gigawatts of clean energy are being stranded because the transmission grid — not the projects — is the binding constraint.

- Over **45 GW** of renewables were added in 2025; paired with low battery costs, India can deliver **firm clean power at ~Rs 3.5/kWh**.
- India has **~250 GW** renewables today and **~100 GW** under construction; it will need about **2,000 GW by 2050** to meet rising demand and electrify industry and transport.
- More than **50 GW** of clean capacity is already stranded because projects come online in 12–18 months while transmission takes 3–5 years.
- **Four ways to unlock ~1,000 GW** on the existing grid without new land: (i) co-locating **batteries/storage** to use lines beyond their ~25% utilisation; (ii) routing clean power through **under-used coal-plant corridors**; (iii) plugging projects at **existing substations**; (iv) replacing old wires with **high-temperature low-sag (HTLS) conductors** to nearly double capacity.
- New transmission must be built '**smart**' — advanced conductors designed for storage can carry 4–5x more clean power at modest extra cost.

★ Prelims Pointer

- ▶ **HTLS conductors** can be manufactured domestically and roughly double transfer capacity on the same towers and rights-of-way.
- ▶ Reliable 24x7 clean power is increasingly demanded by **steel, aluminium, cement, data centres and chemicals**.

5

Defection as Merger: The Tenth Schedule Hollowed Out

GS 2

Polity

WHY IN NEWS

A surge of 'engineered splits dressed up as mergers' is hollowing out the anti-defection law, as groups crossing over claim the 'merger' exception to escape disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.

- Under the **Tenth Schedule** (added by the **52nd Amendment, 1985**), a member can be disqualified for **voluntarily giving up party membership** or **defying a party whip** in a division.
- The **91st Amendment (2003)** removed the earlier '**split**' **exception** (which let one-third of members defect) and retained only the '**merger**' **exception** — no disqualification if **two-thirds** of a party's legislators agree to merge with another party.
- The Supreme Court has held that a merger cannot be of the **legislature party alone**; it must also involve the **original (parent) political party**.
- With courts holding back judgments on several constitutional questions, presiding officers keep clearing stretched 'merger' claims, and the practice keeps gathering pace.
- The editorial argues bypassing the **two-thirds threshold** meant for wide political consensus is an affront to representative democracy.

★ Value Addition

- ▶ The **Speaker/Chairman** decides disqualification; **Kihoto Hollohan (1992)** made this subject to judicial review.
- ▶ In **Keisham Meghachandra Singh (2020)**, SC suggested an **independent tribunal** to decide defection cases within ~3 months.

6

From Drone Purchases to Drone Partnerships

GS 3

Defence / S&T

WHY IN NEWS

India's planned \$2 billion drone procurement from domestic manufacturers marks a shift from large platforms (fighter aircraft) to smaller, cheaper, 'attritable' systems — demanding new procurement models.

- Unlike a fighter jet or tank bought in 2015 that stays competitive for years, **tactical drones can become obsolete in 2–3 years** as threat environments evolve.
- Enemy **electronic warfare (EW)** units can adapt jammers to a new drone's signal in as little as **6–8 weeks** — the challenge is keeping drones **relevant**, not just acquiring them.
- Recent conflicts (Russia–Ukraine) show the utility of cheap **micro/nano** and **FPV drones**; Ukrainian engineers swapped jammable radio links for **fibre-optic cables**.
- A better model may be a **managed-service contract** — like procuring computers with maintenance, software updates and replacement support — giving industry demand predictability and surge capacity.
- Indian frameworks already help: the **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)** allows **commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS)** buys and streamlined upgrades; the **Defence Procurement Manual (DPM)** allows financial buffers for repairs/upgrades.

★ Prelims Pointer

- ▶ Examples cited: **MQ-9B Reaper** (US) and **Bayraktar TB-2** (Turkey) UCAVs; both Iran and the US/Israel have used drones extensively.
- ▶ Key shortcoming: current procurement remains **buyer–seller / transactional** rather than a continuous-iteration partnership.

7

Abhigyan App: Scanning Fingerprints On the Go

GS 2

Governance / Polity

WHY IN NEWS

Home Minister launched 'Abhigyan', an NCRB app linking portable fingerprint scanners to a national database of 1.3 crore criminal suspects and convicts, letting field police verify thumb impressions within seconds.

- **Abhigyan** is developed by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** and links to the **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)**, which stores prints of accused, convicts and prisoners.
- A demonstration showed prints matched against NAFIS in about **35 seconds**; the app allows two-step authentication and real-time identification on smartphones.
- Legal basis: the **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022**; an NCRB official noted **Section 3** limits mandatory recording of measurements to persons **convicted, arrested, or ordered to give security for good behaviour/peace**.
- The Act **does not** mention random testing of individuals without any evidence linking them to a punishable offence — raising **privacy/proportionality** concerns about street-level scans.
- Currently, NAFIS checks are available only via **1,556 workstations** at police stations and district HQs; the app makes the database portable.

★ Value Addition

- ▶ The 2022 Act replaced the colonial **Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920**, expanding the categories and types of 'measurements' (including biometrics) that can be collected.
- ▶ Privacy benchmark: **K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)** — any restriction must satisfy legality, necessity and **proportionality**.

8

Four Glacial Lakes in Arunachal Have Expanded: Study

GS 3

Environment / DM

WHY IN NEWS

A satellite-based assessment of five 'high-risk' glacial lakes in the Tawang district found four have expanded over a decade — adding fresh evidence on the threat of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the eastern Himalaya.



High-risk glacial lakes in Arunachal Pradesh's Mago Chu basin. (PTI)

- The report (not peer-reviewed) by **Suhora Technologies** studied five lakes in the **Mago Chu basin** classified by the **NDMA** as 'high-risk' or 'very high-risk'.
- Concerns intensified after the **October 2023 South Lhonak Lake** breach in Sikkim, which triggered floods that killed dozens and destroyed the **Chungthang hydropower dam**.
- GLOFs occur when **moraine dams fail** or when avalanches, landslides or icefalls suddenly displace water, generating destructive waves.

9

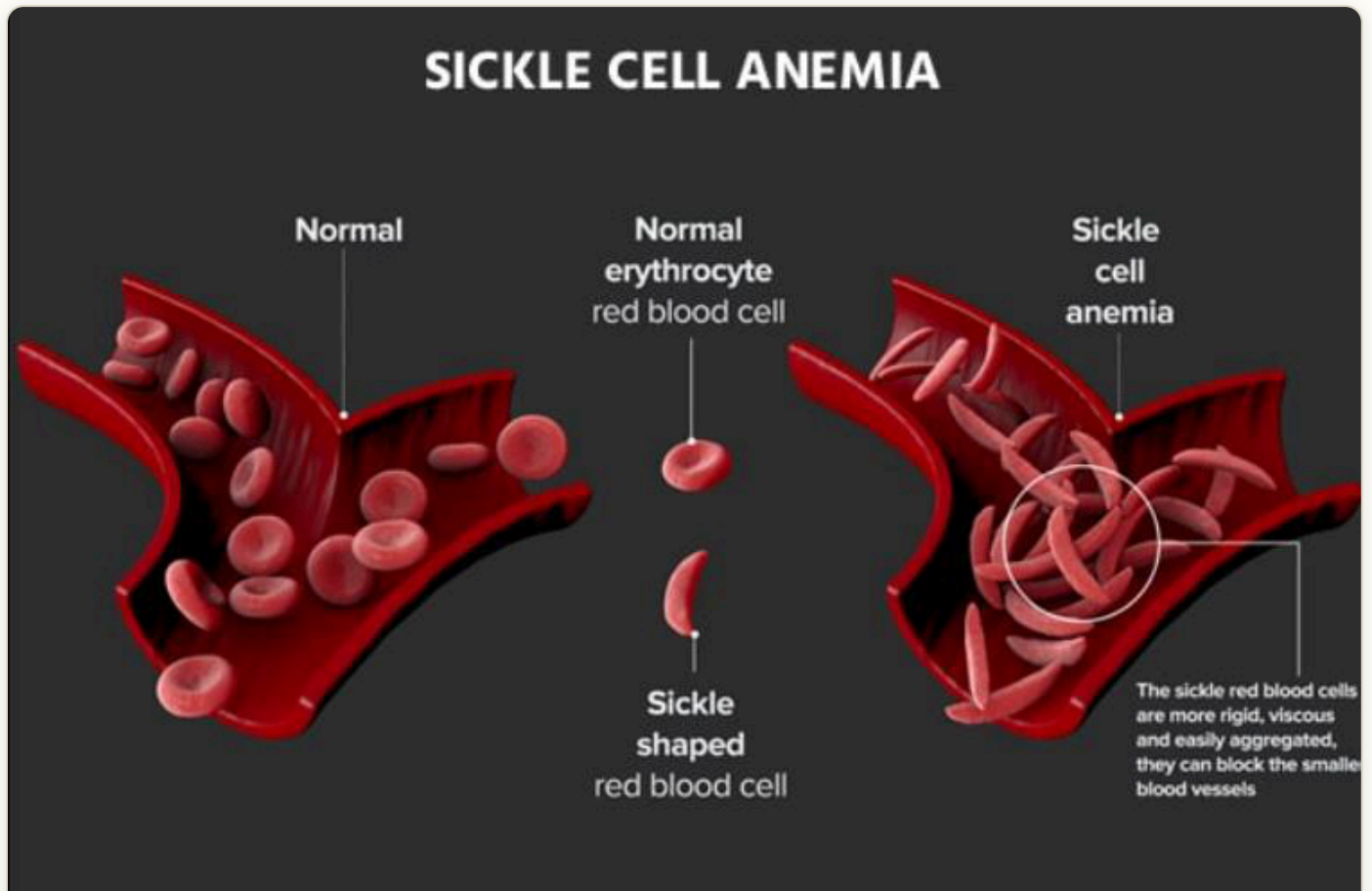
Sickle Cell Anaemia 'To Be Eradicated by 2047'

GS 2

Health / Society

WHY IN NEWS

President Droupadi Murmu said India would eliminate sickle cell anaemia well before the 2047 target, urging collective effort and awareness, especially among tribal communities.



Normal vs sickle-shaped red blood cells blocking blood vessels.

- Targets under the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCEM, 2023)** are being met ahead of schedule, including screening **7 crore people** aged 0–40.
- SCD is a group of **inherited red blood cell disorders** affecting haemoglobin; it is an **autosomal recessive** condition — both parents must carry the sickle cell gene.
- Sickled RBCs are rigid and crescent-shaped, blocking blood flow; complications include **pain, anaemia, jaundice, stroke and organ failure**.

★ Prelims Pointer — NSCEM

- ▶ Aims to eliminate SCD as a public-health problem in India **before 2047**; one of the **ten special problems in tribal health**.
- ▶ Covers **screening, prevention and management**; three pillars — health promotion, prevention, holistic management & care.
- ▶ Until recently a **blood and bone marrow transplant** was the only cure, limited by donor availability and risk.

10

Vivek Aggarwal is New FATF Vice-President

PRELIMS

GS 2 IR

WHY IN NEWS

The FATF Plenary appointed Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal as Vice-President of the global anti-money-laundering and counter-terror-financing watchdog for the 2026–2027 term.

- Mr. Aggarwal will succeed **Giles Thomson** and take office for **July 2026 – June 2027**, under the incoming **U.K. Presidency**; he has headed India's delegation and led its FATF Mutual Evaluation.
- His selection is viewed as significant for India's role in **global financial governance** and cooperation on AML, counter-terror financing and illicit financial flows.

★ FATF — Key Facts

- ▶ **Established 1989** by the **G7** for anti-money laundering (AML); mandate expanded in **2001** to counter terrorist financing (CTF).
- ▶ Monitors compliance with its **40 Recommendations**; **headquartered at the OECD, Paris**.
- ▶ **40 members** (38 jurisdictions + 2 regional bodies: **GCC** and **European Commission**); **India joined in 2010**.
- ▶ **Grey List** — increased monitoring for strategic deficiencies; **Black List** — high-risk, non-cooperative jurisdictions. As of Feb 2025: **North Korea, Iran, Myanmar** on the black list.

PRELIMS PRACTICE

10 QUESTIONS · WITH ANSWER KEY & REASONING

Q1. Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, recently in the news, is associated with which of the following?

- (a) Mandatory data localisation of social-media intermediaries
- (b) Power of the Centre to block public access to information through any computer resource
- (c) Compensation for failure to protect sensitive personal data
- (d) Recognition of electronic records and digital signatures

Answer: B. Section 69A empowers the Central Government to issue directions to block public access to any information, with procedure under the IT (Blocking) Rules, 2009.

Q2. With reference to the recent Supreme Court ruling on walking on footpaths, consider the following:

1. The right was located within Article 19(1)(d) read with Article 21.
2. The Court held the right to walk overrides the privilege of a motorised vehicle.
3. The Court directed that footpaths be a State subject under the Seventh Schedule.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) All / see key

Answer: Statements 1 and 2 only. The Court grounded the right in Articles 19(1)(d) and 21 and gave it priority over motorised vehicles; it did not alter the Seventh Schedule.

Q3. The Mokedatu balancing reservoir project is proposed at the confluence of the Cauvery with which tributary?

- (a) Hemavati
- (b) Bhavani
- (c) Arkavathi
- (d) Kabini

Answer: C. Mokedatu lies at the Cauvery–Arkavathi confluence near Kanakapura, Karnataka. The Arkavathi rises in the Nandi Hills.

Q4. Consider the following statements about the Cauvery river:

1. It rises at Talakaveri on the Brahmagiri range in Karnataka.
2. Its basin extends over Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
3. The Bhavani and Amaravati join it from the left bank.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) All / see key

Answer: Statements 1 and 2 only. The Bhavani, Amaravati and Noyil join the Cauvery from the right bank, not the left.

Q5. 'High-temperature low-sag (HTLS) conductors', recently discussed for the power grid, are significant because they:

- (a) Eliminate the need for battery storage at substations
(b) Nearly double transfer capacity on existing towers and rights-of-way
(c) Convert thermal plants into renewable hubs
(d) Are used only in offshore wind transmission

Answer: B. HTLS conductors can be domestically manufactured and roughly double the power a line carries without new land.

Q6. The 'merger' exception under the Tenth Schedule applies when how many of a party's legislators agree to merge with another party?

- (a) One-half
(b) One-third
(c) Two-thirds
(d) Three-fourths

Answer: C. Since the 91st Amendment (2003), disqualification does not apply if two-thirds of a party's legislators agree to a merger; the earlier one-third 'split' exception was removed.

Q7. The 'Abhigyan' application, recently launched, is linked to which database?

- (a) CCTNS
(b) NATGRID
(c) NAFIS
(d) NIA's terror database

Answer: C. Abhigyan, developed by the NCRB, links to the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS).

Q8. The legal basis for collecting fingerprints under apps like Abhigyan is primarily the:

- (a) Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920
- (b) Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022
- (c) DNA Technology (Use and Application) Bill
- (d) Aadhaar Act, 2016

Answer: B. The 2022 Act replaced the colonial 1920 Act and governs the collection of measurements including biometrics.

Q9. Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), in the news, are most directly caused by:

- (a) Excessive monsoon rainfall over plains
- (b) Failure of natural moraine dams or sudden displacement of water
- (c) Tectonic uplift of the Himalaya
- (d) Construction of run-of-the-river projects

Answer: B. GLOFs occur when moraine dams fail or when avalanches/landslides/icefalls suddenly displace lake water, as in the 2023 South Lhonak (Sikkim) event.

Q10. Consider the following statements about the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

1. It was established by the G7 in 1989 and is headquartered at the OECD, Paris.
 2. India became a member in 2010.
 3. As of early 2025, North Korea, Iran and Myanmar were on its black list.
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) All / see key

Answer: All three statements are correct. The FATF maintains the grey and black lists and works through its 40 Recommendations.

MAINS PRACTICE

REFRAMED QUESTIONS · GS 2 & GS 3

QUESTION 1 · GS 3 (DISASTER MANAGEMENT)

The growing frequency of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) exposes the fragility of Himalayan ecosystems under a warming climate. Critically examine the institutional preparedness and mitigation strategies needed to reduce GLOF-related disaster risk in India. **(250 words / 15 marks)**

हिमालयी पारिस्थितिकी तंत्रों पर जलवायु परिवर्तन के बढ़ते प्रभाव से GLOF का खतरा बढ़ रहा है। भारत में GLOF-संबंधी आपदाओं को कम करने हेतु आवश्यक संस्थागत तैयारी और शमन रणनीतियों का समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

QUESTION 2 · GS 2 (POLITY & GOVERNANCE)

"By recasting engineered defections as 'mergers', political actors have hollowed out the spirit of the Tenth Schedule." In the light of recent crossovers, evaluate whether the anti-defection law has strengthened party discipline at the cost of legislative deliberation and dissent. **(250 words / 15 marks)**

"सुनियोजित दल-बदल को 'विलय' का रूप देकर राजनेताओं ने दसवीं अनुसूची की आत्मा को खोखला कर दिया है।" हाल के दलबदल के आलोक में, मूल्यांकन कीजिए कि क्या दल-बदल विरोधी कानून ने विधायिका में विचार-विमर्श और असहमति की कीमत पर दलीय अनुशासन को मजबूत किया है।

"When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the storm."

जब जड़ें गहरी होती हैं, तो तूफानों से डरने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं होती।

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