

**PRELIMS EDGE 2025****26-07-2025****SCHEMES IN NEWS****Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme (EBP Programme)**

- It is a flagship initiative to promote the use of ethanol by blending it with petrol.
- It was launched in January, 2003.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG)
- **Aim:** It sought to promote the use of alternative and environment friendly fuels and to reduce import dependency for energy requirements.
- **Targets:** As per the programme targets, India had to achieve 10% blending rate (E10) by 2021-22 and 20% blending rate (E20) by 2025-26.
- **The National Policy of Biofuels-2018**, as amended in 2022, advanced the target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol to Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26 from 2030.
- **Coverage:** It is being implemented across the country except Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Procurement of ethanol**
  - The **Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)** are to procure ethanol from domestic sources.

- Government has notified **administered price of ethanol** since 2014.

**Status**

- India has successfully achieved 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol in 2025, five years ahead of its original target set for 2030
- **Ethanol blending in petrol** has risen from just **1.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2025**, a nearly 13-fold increase over 11 years.
- **Ethanol production** has surged from 38 crore litres in 2014 to **661.1 crore litres by June 2025**.
- **Savings:** India has saved approximately **1.36 lakh crore rupees** in foreign exchange by **reducing its dependency** on imported crude oil.
- About **1.96 lakh crore rupees** have been paid to **distilleries**, fueling the growth of the domestic biofuel industry.
- Additionally, **1.18 lakh crore rupees** have been disbursed to **farmers**, thereby enhancing rural incomes and supporting the agricultural economy.
- The increased use of ethanol-blended petrol has helped **reduce carbon dioxide**

**emissions by 698 lakh tonnes**, contributing to India's climate goals.

#### Palna Scheme

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** introduced by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Samarthya Vertical of Umbrella Mission Shakti for all States and UTs**.
- **Objective:** The objective of the Scheme is to provide quality crèche facilities in a safe and secure environment for children (from ages 6 months – 6 years), nutritional support, health and cognitive development of children, growth monitoring & immunization.
- **Crèche facilities** under Palna are provided to all mothers, irrespective of their employment status.
- There are two types of Crèches under Palna: Standalone Crèches and Anganwadi-cum-Crèches (AWCCs).
- The Mission Shakti Guidelines state that the crèche timings need to be flexible depending on the local requirements.
- **Crèches shall be open for 26 days in a month and for seven and half (7.5) hours per day** as per the work schedule of the majority of the mothers in the area.
- The Standard Operating Procedures for AWCCs also state that the Creche timings may be decided by State/ UT governments as per local need.
- **Funding:** For General States it is in the ratio 60:40, for North Eastern & Special Category States (90:10) UTs with Legislature (60:40) and for UTs without Legislature centre will provide 100% assistance.

- **Services:** The scheme will provide an integrated package of the following services:

- Daycare Facilities including Sleeping Facilities.
- Early Stimulation for children below 3 years and Pre-school Education for 3 to 6 years old children.
- Supplementary Nutrition (to be locally sourced)
- Growth Monitoring.
- Health Check-up and Immunization

#### India Skills Accelerator Initiative

- It is an **initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
- **Aim:** It aims to close these gaps through inclusive upskilling and reskilling, mobilizing investment in lifelong learning, and fostering government-industry collaboration.
- It functions as a national public-private collaboration platform designed to enable cross-sectoral efforts in unlocking innovative ideas and driving systemic progress on complex challenges that demand a multi-stakeholder approach.
- At its core, the Accelerator **aims to catalyze change across three critical levels:**
  - By improving awareness and shifting mindsets around future skills needs
  - Increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, and

- Committing to upgrade institutional structures and policy frameworks to support a more adaptive and responsive skilling ecosystem.
- By enabling agile career transitions, promoting scalable training, and aligning education with industry need – especially in high-growth sectors like AI, robotics, and energy – the initiative is to empower India's youth and drive future-ready workforce development

### Samarth Incubation Program

- It is a **cutting-edge Incubation Program for startups in Telecom & ICT Sector**.
- It is an initiative of the **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), an autonomous telecom R&D institution under the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India**
- This initiative is aimed at nurturing sustainable and scalable business models by providing startups with financial grant, advanced resources and guidance for transition from ideation to commercialization.
- In the first phase 18 startups have been selected in cohort 1 through a competitive process.

### Features

- Each selected startup receives a grant of up to ₹5 lakh, fully furnished office space for six months at C-DOT campuses in Delhi and Bengaluru.
- It also provides access to C-DOT's lab facilities, and mentorship from C-DOT technologists and external experts.

- It offers holistic support to startups and innovators working in telecom applications, cybersecurity, 5G/6G technologies, artificial intelligence, IoT, and quantum technologies.
- The program is structured in two cohorts of six months each, accommodating up to 18 startups per cohort—thus supporting a maximum of 36 startups under the initiative.
- Delivered in a hybrid format, "Samarth" leverages state-of-the-art infrastructure, expert mentorship, and access to a strong network of investors and industry leaders to empower emerging entrepreneurs.
- Progressing startups will also be eligible for potential collaboration and further financial grants under the C-DOT Collaborative Research Program (CCRP).
- **Implementing Partners:** Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) and TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs) have been selected as the implementation partner for the program

## TERMS IN NEWS

### Preah Vihear Temple





- It is a Hindu temple located in the Preah Vihear Province, in the northern part of Cambodia.
- It is located atop a cliff on the Cambodia–Thailand border in the Dangrek Mountain range .
- It is dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- It was built primarily during the golden period of the Khmer Empire, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
- It was built firstly by King Suryavarman I (1002-50) and then expanded upon by Suryavarman II (1113-50).
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Temple Architecture

- It is an outstanding masterpiece of Khmer architecture.
- The temple is composed of a series of sanctuaries linked by a system of pavements and staircases over an 800-metre-long axis.
- It features more than five successive gopuras.
- Unlike other structures of this kind, the gopuras here are connected by a long path and topped with multi-tiered platforms.
- Each gopura has a small staircase. Some of these gopuras have stone roofs, while others have wooden roofs, many of which are in ruins.

### Dispute

- Preah Vihear Temple is the subject of a long-running territorial dispute between Thailand and Cambodia.
- In 1962, the International Court of Justice ruled that it belonged to Cambodia.

- However, Thailand has maintained that the land surrounding the temple — especially a 4.6 sq.km. patch — remains unresolved.
- Tensions escalated again in 2008 after Cambodia succeeded in registering Preah Vihear as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Thai nationalists objected, and skirmishes broke out, culminating in a deadly exchange in 2011 that killed at least 15 people.
- The ICJ reaffirmed its ruling in 2013, this time declaring that the surrounding land was also Cambodian — a decision that still stings in Bangkok

## SPECIES IN NEWS

### Pangolin



- **Pangolins are nocturnal mammals that dig burrows and feed on ants and termites**, and play a vital role in ecosystem management, mostly in aerating and adding moisture to the soil.
- **Pangolin Species:** There are eight species of pangolin:
  - **4 Species in Africa:** Black-bellied pangolin, White-bellied pangolin, Giant Ground pangolin and Temminck's Ground pangolin.

- **4 Species in Asia:** Indian pangolin, Philippine pangolin, Sunda pangolin and the Chinese pangolin.
- Out of the eight species of pangolin, the Indian Pangolin and the Chinese Pangolin are found in India:

#### Indian Pangolin:

- Indian Pangolin is a large anteater covered by 11-13 rows of scales on the back. A terminal scale is also present on the lower side of the tail of the Indian Pangolin, which is absent in the Chinese Pangolin.
- The species is found in various types of tropical forests as well as open land, grasslands, and degraded habitats, including in close proximity to villages.
- Indian Pangolin is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East. It can be found at elevation up to 2500 m. The species also occurs in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

#### Chinese Pangolin:

- It is found in the Himalayan foothills in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh and through Southern China.
- It is adaptable to a wide range of habitats including primary and secondary tropical forests, limestone and bamboo forests, grasslands, and agricultural fields.

#### Characteristics:

- They have large, protective keratin scales covering their skin and they are the only known mammals with this feature.

- If under threat, a pangolin will immediately curl into a tight ball and will use their sharp-scaled tails to defend themselves.
- They tend to be solitary animals meeting only to mate and produce a litter of one to three offspring which they raise for about two years.
- **Food Habits:** They are nocturnal animals and their diet consists of mainly ants and termites which they capture using their long tongues.

#### Threats:

- Trafficking of live pangolin and its scales is a highly lucrative business for the organized mafia who exploit poor and vulnerable forest-dwelling communities for their criminal interests.
- Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade, for its meat and scales.
- Heavy Deforestation of their Habitat.

#### Conservation Status:

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered (India- Endangered, Chinese Pangolin- Critically Endangered)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Under Schedule I of WPA, 1972

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1: These are nocturnal mammals that dig burrows and feed on ants and termites, and play a vital role in ecosystem management, mostly in aerating and adding moisture to the soil. They have large, protective keratin scales covering their skin and they are the only

known mammals with this feature. If under threat, they will immediately curl into a tight ball and will use their sharp-scaled tails to defend themselves.

Identify the species from the given description

- A. Pangolin
- B. Otters
- C. Malabar Civet
- D. Honey Badger

Q2: The Preah Vihear Temple that has been the flash point of a recent kinetic conflict is located in which of the following countries?

- A. Cambodia
- B. Thailand
- C. Myanmar
- D. Laos

Q3: Consider the following statements regarding the Ethanol Blended Petrol Programme

- 1. As per the programme targets, India had to achieve 10% blending rate (E10) by 2021-22 and 20% blending rate (E20) by 2025-26.
- 2. But as of now, India has only achieved 5% blending rate in 2025

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2
- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

Q4 : Consider the following statements regarding the Samarth Incubation Program

- 1. It is a cutting-edge Incubation Program for startups in Telecom & ICT Sector.
- 2. It is an initiative of the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), an autonomous telecom R&D institution

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2
- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

Q5: Consider the following statements regarding India Skill Accelerator Programme

- 1. It aims to close these gaps through inclusive upskilling and reskilling, mobilizing investment in lifelong learning, and fostering government-industry collaboration.
- 2. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF).

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2
- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

#### Answers

- 1. A
- 2. A
- 3. B
- 4. D