



Balalatha's
CSB IAS ACADEMY
The Road Map to Mussoorie...

PRELIMS EDGE 2025

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SOMNATH TEMPLE

Context: President Droupadi Murmu, on a three-day visit to Gujarat, offered prayers at the historic Somnath Mahadev temple in Gir Somnath district on Friday.



About Somnath Temple:

- It is a Hindu temple dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- It is located in **Prabhas Patan** near Veraval in **Saurashtra** on the western coast of Gujarat.
- It is the **first of the 12 jyotirlinga shrines** in India that are regarded as the manifestation of the Lord Shiva Himself.
- The site of Somnath has been a pilgrimage site from ancient times on account of being a **Triveni Sangam**: the confluence of three rivers, namely **Kapila, Hiran, and Saraswati**.
- The ancient temple's timeline can be traced from 649 BC but is believed to be older than that.

- It is believed that first this holy temple was built by the Moon God with gold, by Ravana in silver, by Krishna in wood, and by Bhimdev in stone.
- The temple was **reconstructed several times in the past** after repeated destruction by multiple Muslim invaders and rulers, notably starting with an attack by **Mahmud Ghazni in the 11th century (1025 AD)**.
- The present temple was reconstructed in the **Chalukya or Solanki style** of Hindu temple architecture and completed in May 1951.
- The reconstruction was completed by **Vallabhbhai Patel**.

Source: President Murmu offers prayers at Somnath Temple, visits Gir National Park (The Hindu)

INDIA-UK CONNECTIVITY AND INNOVATION CENTRE

Context: India and the UK announce a landmark strategic partnership to advance digital inclusion and shape the future of secure and innovative communications.

About India-UK Connectivity and Innovation Centre:

- It is a strategic partnership between **India and the United Kingdom** launched at **India Mobile Congress 2025**.
- The initiative aims to **advance digital inclusion** and shape the future of secure,

innovative, and resilient communications between the two nations.

- It will be implemented under the **UK-India Technology Security Initiative**, jointly delivered by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and India's Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- The Centre will bring together the complementary strengths of India and the UK in advanced connectivity – linking cutting-edge university research with lab testing, field trials, and pathways for market deployment.
- Over the next four years – a critical phase for shaping the **technological and commercial contours of 6G** – the Centre will focus on three strategic areas:
 - **Transforming Telecom with AI:** Using advanced artificial intelligence tools to optimise networks, enhance efficiency, and enable new digital services.
 - **Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTNs):** Developing satellite and airborne systems to deliver high-speed, reliable connectivity to rural and remote regions.
 - **Telecoms Cybersecurity:** Strengthening network resilience through open, interoperable, and secure communication systems for businesses and consumers.

Funding:

- Both nations have jointly committed an initial £24 million (approximately ₹250 crore) over four years to drive the initiative.
- The funding will support applied research through collaborations between academic and industry partners, establishment of joint testbeds, and participation in global standards

development for emerging telecommunications technologies.

Source: India and UK Forge Strategic Partnership with the Launch of the India-UK Connectivity & Innovation Centre (PIB)

TERMS IN NEWS

Mission Mausam



- It was launched by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** in 2024.
- It is implemented by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, the **National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)**, and the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**.
- It aims to **improve weather and climate services**, ensuring timely and precise observation, modeling, and forecasting information for multiple sectors, including agriculture, disaster management, and rural development.
- **Focus Areas:** It includes accuracy, modelling, radars, satellites, and accurate agromet forecasts.
- Components of the Mission:
 - Deployment of **next-generation radars and satellite systems** with advanced sensors

- Development of enhanced **Earth system models**
- A GIS-based automated decision support system for real-time data sharing

AUSTRAHIND 2025

- It is a **joint military exercise** between **India and Australia**.
- The fourth edition of India-Australia joint military Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2025 will begin in Perth, Australia.
- The exercise, **conducted annually**, alternates between India and Australia, aiming to enhance military cooperation and interoperability in joint operations.
- The exercise supports joint planning and sub-conventional operations in semi-urban, semi-desert terrain, focusing on counterterrorism, physical fitness, tactical drills, and high-level coordination as mentioned under **Chapter VII of the UN mandate**.
- The exercise will be conducted in two phases – **combat conditioning and tactical training phase and validation phase**.
- The Exercise reflects growing defense cooperation under the **India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020)**.
- Other Exercises between India and Australia are **AUSINDEX**, and **PITCHBLACK**.

Defence Cooperation between India and Australia:

- Mutual Logistics Support Agreement
- Both are members of the Quad, Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean

Development, and have participated in the East Asia Summits.

PLACES IN NEWS

South China Sea



- The South China Sea is an arm of **western Pacific Ocean** in Southeast Asia.
- It is **south of China**, east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo.
- **Bordering states:** China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.
- It is **connected by Taiwan Strait** with the **East China Sea** and by **Luzon Strait** with the **Philippine Sea**.
- It contains numerous shoals, reefs, atolls and islands. The **Paracel Islands**, the **Spratly Islands** and the **Scarborough Shoal** are the most important.

Importance:

- It holds major strategic importance for its location as it is the connecting link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, through Strait of Malacca.
- **One-third of the global shipping** passes through it, carrying an estimated USD 3.4 trillion in commerce each year, including energy supplies to U.S., Japan and South Korea.
- It has **one-third of the entire world's marine biodiversity** and contains lucrative fisheries providing food security to the Southeast Asian nations.
- The SCS is believed to have huge **oil and gas reserves beneath its seabed**.

Madagascar



- Located off the coast of **East Africa** in the Indian Ocean, Madagascar is the **second-largest island country** in the world.
- It covers an area of 592,800 sq. kilometers.

Geography:

- The country can be divided into three parallel longitudinal physiographic regions.
- The coastal strip in the east, the central plateau, and the western regions of low plateaus and plains.
- The **Tsaratana Massif** region at the northern end of the island is home

to Madagascar's highest point, **Maromokotro**, at 2,876 m.

History:

- France invaded the island in 1883. France officially declared Madagascar a **French colony** in 1896.
- After World War II, in 1947, locals fought for their independence from France in what became known as the **Malagasy Uprising**.
- In 1960, Madagascar finally became an independent nation.
- **Capital:** Antananarivo
- **Languages:** Malagasy, French
- **Government:** It is a **semi-presidential republic**. The public elects a president, who in turn appoints a prime minister to put together a cabinet to advise the president.
- **Economy:** 80% of Madagascar's economy is fueled by agricultural industries, including forestry and fishing.
 - Among the island's most frequently sold agricultural products are **coffee, vanilla, and sugarcane**.

Biodiversity:

- Almost 90% of the plants and animals living on Madagascar aren't found anywhere else in the world.
- This is because strong ocean currents have isolated the island from the African continent, so the species living there haven't traveled beyond the island's borders.
- Recently the island has been in the news for Gen Z protests (Malagasy protests) and a coup attempt by the army.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Who attacked and looted the famous Somnath temple in 1025 AD?

- (a) Muhammad Ghori
- (b) Mahmud of Ghazni
- (c) Nadir Shah
- (d) Genghiz Khan

Q2. How many of the following are possible outcomes from the India-UK Connectivity and Innovation Centre, set up recently?

1. It will advance digital inclusion in India and the UK.
2. India and UK can together bypass China to become the largest digital innovation hubs in the world.
3. It will promote research collaborations between industry and academic partners.

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q3. Consider the following countries located in East Asia:

1. Vietnam
2. Cambodia
3. Philippines
4. Japan
5. Brunei
6. Laos
7. Malaysia

How many of these nations share a border with the South China Sea?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) Only five

Q4. Which of the following statements about Exercise Austrahind 2025 are correct?

1. This was a joint military exercise between India and Australia.
2. It commenced in Pune, Maharashtra.
3. Interoperability in joint operations is a goal of this exercise.
4. Indian Navy is a part of this exercise.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

Q5. Malagasy uprisings are associated with which of the following countries?

- (a) Malaysia
- (b) Maldives
- (c) Madagascar
- (d) Fiji

Answers:

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. C