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P2. NATIONAL

CBI conducts searches over digital arrests - Operation Chakra-VI highlights India's efforts to dismantle the financial and digital infrastructure supporting organised cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.

P3. NATIONAL

More drugs to get QR codes amid fight against fake products - The Health Ministry has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945 to ensure QR code/barcode-based identification mandatory for all vaccines, antimicrobials, anti-cancer medicines, and narcotic & psychotropic drugs

P4. CONTOURS

Sustaining India's low-fertility future - India has entered a low-fertility phase, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of population ageing, regional demographic disparities and the need for stronger social security systems.

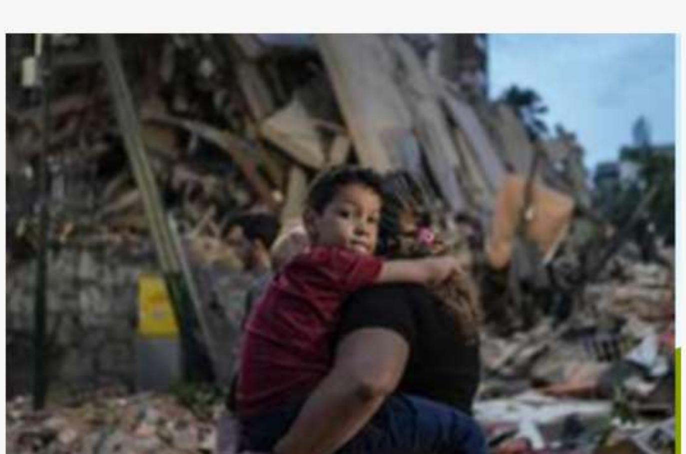
Editor's Note

In today's edition of the Pala Civil Times, we explore a diverse set of developments spanning healthcare, economic growth, geopolitics and national security. We begin with the Central Bureau of Investigation's ongoing crackdown on digital arrest scams, followed by the expanded scope of India's QR code-based drug track-and-trace mechanism, now covering vaccines and anti-cancer medicines. Together, these developments highlight the growing emphasis on safeguarding citizens and strengthening institutional mechanisms against cyber fraud, counterfeit medicines and other emerging threats.

In the Contours section, we take a deep dive into India's transition towards a low-fertility, ageing society and examine the policy measures needed to manage its long-term social and economic implications. The Decoded Editorials explore the rapidly expanding AI investment cycle and its impact on global financial markets, alongside the evolving role of NGOs under the revised FCRA framework. We also examine the devastating twin earthquakes in Venezuela, a tragedy that, besides its immense human cost, offers important lessons on disaster resilience, earthquake-resistant infrastructure and the geophysical processes governing tectonic plate movements. We encourage readers to engage with each article thoughtfully, identify the key takeaways and use them to strengthen their preparation. Happy reading!

Editorials Decoded

P7. INTERNATIONAL



Earthquakes hit Venezuela - A rare seismic doublet struck Venezuela, triggering one of the country's deadliest earthquake disasters and highlighting the causes, impacts and science of twin earthquakes.

The Indian EXPRESS

Silicon Valley to Seoul, watch AI exuberance

The global AI investment boom is reshaping financial markets, raising opportunities for technological growth alongside concerns over asset bubbles and investment sustainability.

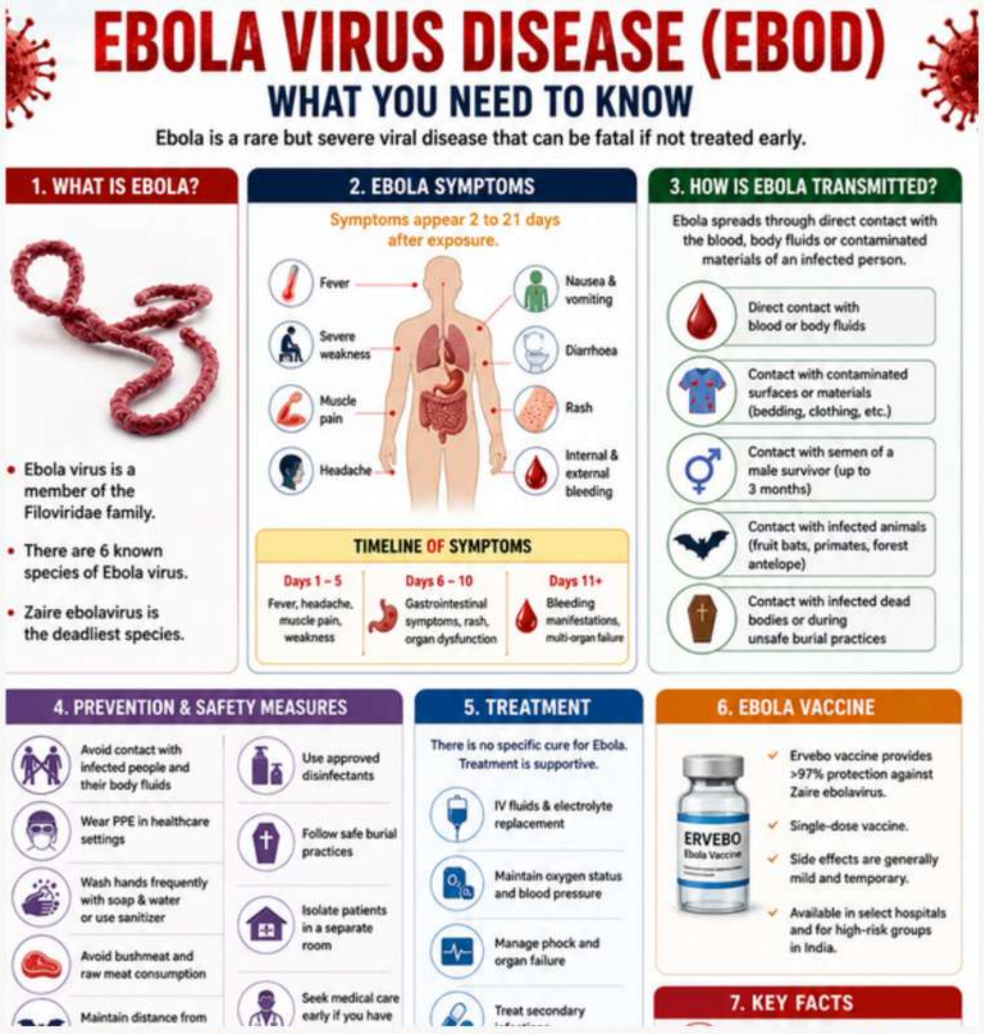
THE HINDU

Onerous rules

The rollout of the latest FCRA Amendment Rules has raised concerns over increased regulatory oversight, compliance burdens and their implications for the functioning of civil society organisations.

Air Suvidha 2.0 portal launched for Ebola screening

The Air Suvidha 2.0 portal has been launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in collaboration with Delhi International Airport Limited to strengthen contactless health screening and public health surveillance for international arrivals. The upgraded digital platform enables passengers to submit a mandatory self-declaration form up to 24 hours before arrival, covering their 21-day travel history, exposure to Ebola-affected regions and related symptoms. The data is shared in real time with airport health officers, immigration authorities and state surveillance teams, enabling early identification and management of at-risk travellers while eliminating physical paperwork.



Why has India introduced this now?

The portal was introduced following the World Health Organization>'s declaration of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The outbreak involves the Bundibugyo virus, a rare Ebola strain with no approved vaccine or specific treatment, raising concerns about cross-border transmission. Air Suvidha 2.0 reflects India's risk-based border health surveillance strategy, leveraging digital technology for early disease detection, rapid public health response and enhanced pandemic preparedness in accordance with international health regulations.

RELEVANCE ***GS III : Science and Technology; GS II : Indian Polity***

CBI conducts searches over digital arrests

The Central Bureau of Investigation has intensified its nationwide crackdown on 'digital arrest' scams through Operation Chakra-VI, conducting coordinated searches at over 80 locations across multiple States in connection with more than 200 cyber fraud cases. The investigation targets the organised cybercrime infrastructure supporting these scams, including shell companies, mule bank accounts used for laundering proceeds of crime, and fraudulent websites impersonating trusted institutions such as the Supreme Court of India. The CBI has also employed advanced digital forensic techniques to identify criminal networks operating both within India and abroad, highlighting the increasingly transnational nature of cyber-enabled financial fraud.

The operation follows the Supreme Court's direction granting the CBI a wider mandate to investigate digital arrest scams, including probing the role of bankers involved in opening mule accounts linked to cybercrime. The case underscores the growing emphasis on inter-agency coordination, cyber forensics, financial intelligence, international cooperation and regulation of digital financial infrastructure to combat organised cyber fraud.

Key Scientific Concepts

- **Mule Account**: A bank account used by cybercriminals to receive, transfer or launder illegally obtained money, with or without the account holder's knowledge.
- **Digital Arrest**: A cyber fraud in which scammers impersonate law enforcement officials and use fabricated legal threats to coerce victims into transferring money.
- **Coercion (in Digital Arrest Scams)**: The use of fear, intimidation and false legal consequences such as arrest, account freezing or passport cancellation to force victims into making fraudulent payments.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)
1. Service providers
2. Data centers
3. Body corporate

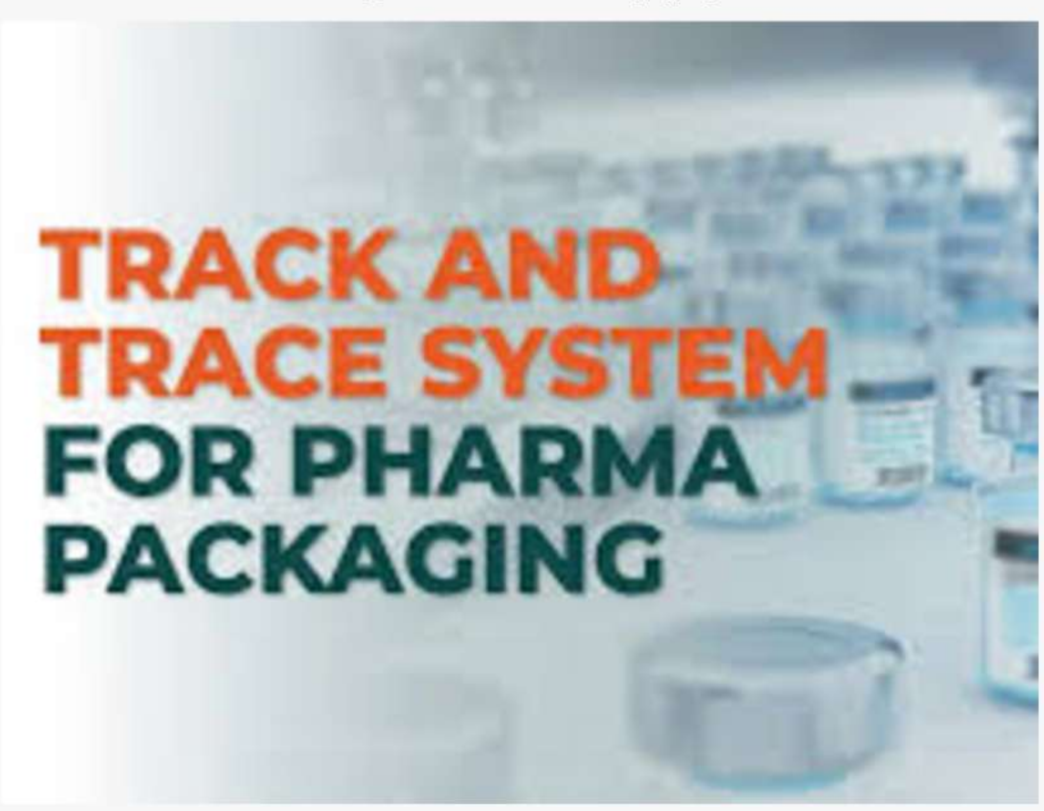
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

More drugs to get QR codes amid fight against fake products

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has amended the Drugs Rules, 1945 to expand the scope of Schedule H2, making QR code/barcode-based identification mandatory for all vaccines, antimicrobials, anti-cancer medicines, and narcotic & psychotropic drugs covered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. Earlier, the track-and-trace requirement was limited to India's top 300 pharmaceutical brands; the amendment significantly broadens its coverage across critical medicines.

What is the QR Code-Based Track-and-Trace Framework?

The framework creates a digital authentication and traceability system by requiring manufacturers to print or affix a QR code/barcode on the primary packaging (or secondary packaging where necessary). The code stores essential product information—including the unique product identification code, generic and brand names, manufacturer details, batch number, manufacturing and expiry dates, manufacturing licence number, and excipient information—allowing regulators, healthcare providers and consumers to verify the authenticity of medicines throughout the supply chain.



Why Was This Expansion Necessary?

The amendment aims to strengthen medicine safety and supply chain integrity by improving the detection of counterfeit, spurious and substandard medicines. Enhanced traceability is particularly important for vaccines, which pass through complex public health supply chains. Similarly, anti-cancer medicines are high-value and vulnerable to counterfeiting. Narcotic and psychotropic drugs require strict regulatory oversight. In the case of antimicrobials, counterfeit drugs contribute to the growing challenge of **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).**

RELEVANCE

GS II : Health; GS III : Science and Technology

Implementation and Expected Impact

The revised provisions will be implemented in phases to facilitate industry compliance. The QR code requirement for vaccines, anti-cancer medicines, and narcotic & psychotropic drugs will come into force from 1 July 2026, while antimicrobials will be covered from 1 July 2028. The phased approach provides manufacturers time to upgrade packaging and digital systems while ensuring minimal disruption to pharmaceutical supply chains.

Significance

The expansion of the Schedule H2 track-and-trace mechanism represents an important step towards digital pharmaceutical governance, strengthening drug authentication, patient safety, regulatory oversight and public confidence in India's healthcare system. By improving end-to-end medicine traceability, the initiative supports efforts to curb counterfeit medicines, strengthen immunisation programmes, improve monitoring of controlled substances and contribute to India's strategy for combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Q. Which of the following are the reasons for the occurrence of multi-drug resistance in microbial pathogens in India? (2019)
1. Genetic predisposition of some people
2. Taking incorrect doses of antibiotics to cure diseases
3. Using antibiotics in livestock farming
4. Multiple chronic diseases in some people

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
a) 1 and 2
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1, 3 and 4
d) 2, 3 and 4

Sustaining India's low-fertility future

India has entered a new demographic phase, with the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) falling to 1.9 children per woman, below both the replacement level of 2.1 and the global average of 2.2, according to the Sample Registration System (SRS). However, the transition is highly uneven across the country. While Delhi (1.2), Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (1.3) have entered ultra-low fertility, States such as Bihar (2.9), Uttar Pradesh (2.6), Madhya Pradesh (2.4) and Rajasthan (2.3) continue to record relatively high fertility, creating divergent demographic trajectories within India.

Why is this Transition Significant?

Low fertility marks the beginning of population ageing, where the share of elderly people rises while the proportion of working-age individuals gradually declines. Unlike many developed countries including Western Europe and Japan aged after achieving high incomes, widespread formal employment and comprehensive welfare systems, India is entering this phase with low per-capita income, a narrow tax base, high labour informality and limited social security coverage. Consequently, ageing States such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, which have already reached very low fertility levels, must prepare for rising healthcare, pension and elderly care needs, while younger States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which continue to have higher fertility rates, must create productive employment opportunities for their expanding workforce.

Emerging Socio-Economic Challenges

India's ageing population exposes weaknesses in its existing social protection system. Most workers remain in the informal sector, limiting access to contributory pension schemes such as the Atal Pension Yojana, while assistance under the National Social Assistance Programme remains inadequate for ensuring old-age income security. Simultaneously, the traditional family-based support system is weakening due to urbanisation, migration, nuclear families and increasing female workforce participation, leaving many elderly people economically dependent and socially isolated. The healthcare burden is also shifting from infectious diseases towards chronic illnesses, geriatric care, dementia, disability and long-term care services.

RELEVANCE ***GS I : Indian Society***

Federal and Labour Market Dimensions

India's demographic transition will increasingly require labour mobility between younger and ageing States. Younger States must invest in education, healthcare and skill development so that migration results in productive employment rather than low-wage informal work. At the same time, ageing States need to recognise migrant workers as long-term contributors to their economies by ensuring portable social security, healthcare and welfare benefits, thereby supporting the development of an integrated national labour market.

Way Forward

India's demographic dividend is gradually evolving into a demographic responsibility. Sustaining growth in a low-fertility future will require stronger pension systems, inflation-indexed minimum old-age income support, expanded geriatric healthcare, higher formal employment, broader tax mobilisation, and portable welfare systems, alongside continued investments in education and human capital. While low fertility itself is not a crisis, its long-term success depends on building robust public institutions capable of replacing the social and economic support that was traditionally provided by large families.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Q. Consider the following countries :

1. Italy
2. Japan
3. Nigeria
4. South Korea
5. South Africa

Which of the above countries are frequently mentioned in the media for their low birth rates, aging population or declining population ?

a) 1, 2 and 4
b) 1, 3 and 5
c) 2 and 4 only
d) 3 and 5 only

Silicon Valley to Seoul, watch AI exuberance (Indian Express : 26-06-2026)

Global financial markets have witnessed increased volatility as investors reassess the sustainability of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) investment cycle. Asian markets were particularly affected, with South Korea's Kospi falling nearly 10% and Japan's Nikkei 225 declining sharply, while the Nasdaq also weakened. The correction reflects growing concerns over whether the massive investments being made in AI infrastructure can generate sufficient long-term returns, prompting comparisons with the Dot-com Bubble of the late 1990s.

What is Driving the AI Investment Boom?

The rapid expansion of Generative AI has triggered unprecedented global investment in semiconductors, AI infrastructure and data centres, with Goldman Sachs estimating that AI hyperscalers could invest over US$5 trillion by 2030. This optimism has fuelled strong investor interest in companies such as SK Hynix and Samsung in South Korea, Advantest, Tokyo Electron and Kioxia in Japan, while U.S. AI leaders such as OpenAI and Anthropic are preparing for public listings, following the success of SpaceX's mega IPO. These developments reflect expectations that AI will become the next major driver of global productivity and economic growth.

Why are Investors Becoming Concerned?

Despite strong long-term prospects, investors are increasingly questioning whether the enormous capital expenditure on AI can be effectively monetised, and whether current market valuations accurately reflect future earnings. These concerns mirror the Dot-com Bubble, where excessive optimism inflated technology stocks before a sharp correction. Rising inflation in the United States has also revived expectations that the ***U.S. Federal Reserve may tighten monetary policy through higher interest rates, reducing liquidity and making high-growth technology investments less attractive.***

India's Position in the AI Investment Cycle

Unlike several advanced economies, India has remained largely outside the global AI investment rally. The country experienced significant Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) outflows—about US$18.9 billion in 2025 and nearly US$30 billion so far in 2026—while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows also weakened. Combined with elevated crude oil prices, these outflows exerted pressure on the rupee. Although easing oil prices and recent policy measures have improved stability, enhancing India's attractiveness as a destination for technology, manufacturing and long-term capital investment remains an important policy priority.

Way Forward

The AI investment cycle presents significant opportunities for technological innovation, productivity growth and economic transformation, but it also highlights the risks of speculative asset bubbles driven by excessive investor optimism. India can benefit from this transition by strengthening its AI ecosystem, semiconductor manufacturing, digital infrastructure and innovation capacity, while maintaining macroeconomic stability and a favourable investment climate. Sustainable long-term growth will ultimately depend on balancing technological ambition with sound economic fundamentals.

PYQ Compass
UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Consider the following statements: (2023)
Statement-I: In the post-pandemic recent past, many Central Banks worldwide had carried out interest rate hikes.
Statement-II: Central Banks generally assume that they have the ability to counteract the rising consumer prices via monetary policy means.
Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
(a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement 1
(b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-1
(c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
(d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

RELEVANCE
GS III : Indian Economy

Onerous rules (The Hindu : 26-06-2026)

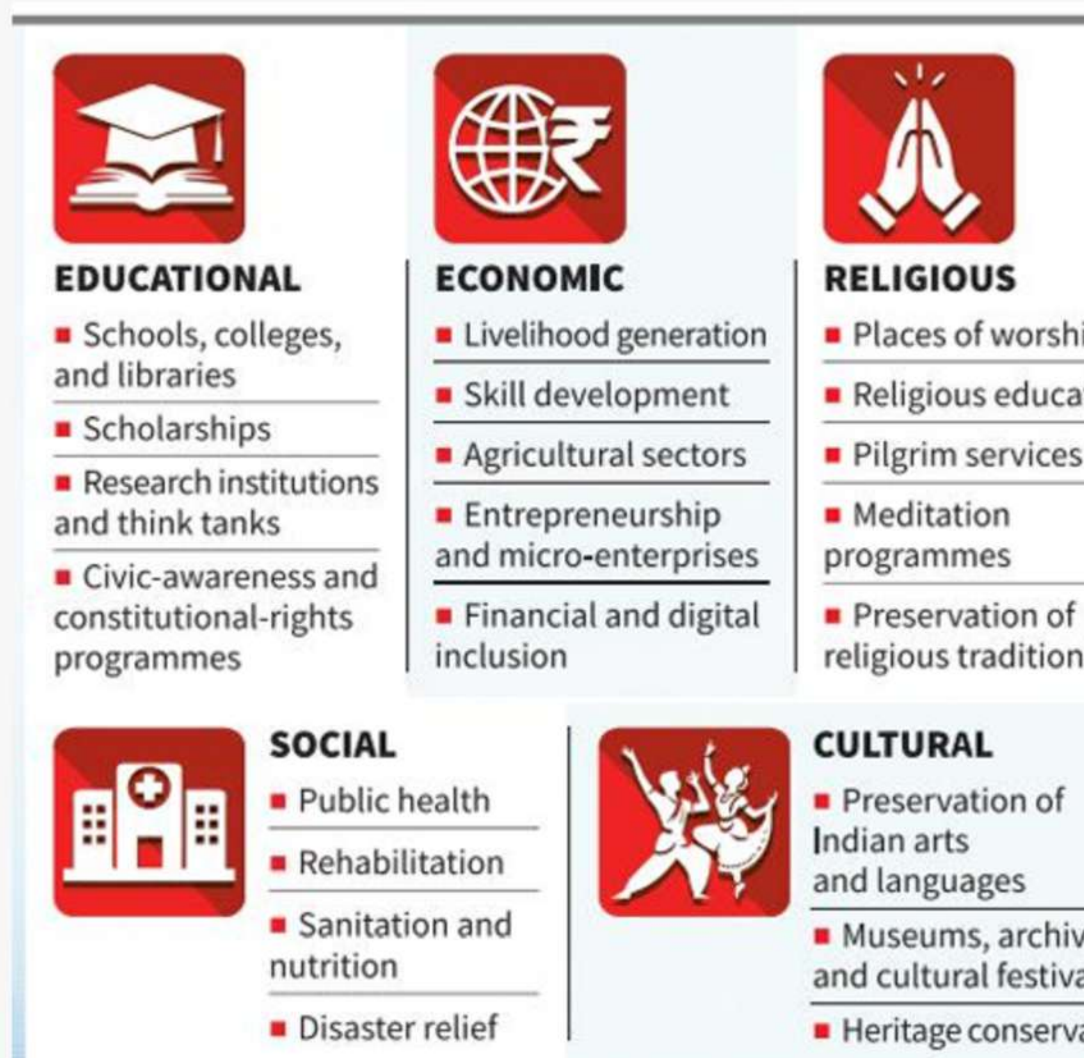
Civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs play an important role in supplementing the State by providing services in areas such as healthcare, education, disaster relief, human rights and community welfare. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010 regulates the receipt and utilisation of foreign contributions by such organisations with the objective of ensuring transparency, accountability and protection of national interests. While the government considers the recent FCRA Amendment Rules, 2026 as measures to improve regulatory oversight, critics argue that the new framework substantially increases compliance requirements and operational restrictions for organisations receiving foreign funding.

Key Concerns Raised Over the Amendments

The FCRA Amendment Rules, 2026 require NGOs receiving foreign contributions to restrict their activities to the categories and geographical areas specified in their registration. Organisations must disclose additional information, including their websites, publications and social media accounts, while ensuring that their activities remain within the approved regulatory framework. The amendments also introduce separate registration fees for different categories of work and for each State or Union Territory of operation, replacing the earlier system of a single registration fee. According to the government, these measures are intended to improve transparency, accountability and uniform regulation of foreign-funded organisations.

Compliance Burden and Enforcement Concerns

The amended rules prescribe stricter penalties for utilisation of foreign contributions beyond approved purposes and expand compliance obligations for registered organisations. Critics argue that restrictions relating to "political content", higher registration costs and increased reporting requirements could disproportionately burden smaller organisations and discourage advocacy-based civil society work. Concerns have also been raised over the transparency of FCRA registration cancellations and non-renewals, with allegations that broad regulatory discretion may create uncertainty and have a chilling effect on the functioning of legitimate NGOs.



The Need for Structural Reforms

The constitutional debate surrounding the FCRA reflects the need to balance national security with the freedoms enjoyed by civil society organisations. In Noel Harper (2022), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the 2020 amendments, recognising the State's interest in regulating foreign contributions. At the same time, earlier judicial observations had distinguished legitimate social advocacy and public welfare activities from partisan political activity. Going forward, the challenge lies in maintaining transparency and accountability in foreign funding while ensuring that regulatory measures remain proportionate, predictable and do not unnecessarily constrain the functioning of genuine civil society organisations.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

PYQ COMPASS

Q. In dealing with socio-economic issues of development, what kind of collaboration between government, NGOs, and private sector would be most productive? (GSI - Indian Society - 2024)

RELEVANCE

GS III : Indian Economy; GS II : Indian Polity

Venezuela earthquakes

Venezuela experienced one of its most devastating seismic disasters when two powerful earthquakes (Mw 7.2 and Mw 7.5) struck 39 seconds apart west of Caracas. The United States Geological Survey classified the event as a seismic doublet, an uncommon phenomenon in which two earthquakes of nearly equal magnitude occur in close succession due to separate but related fault ruptures. The preliminary death toll estimate ranges from 10,000 to 100,000, making it potentially the deadliest natural disaster in modern Venezuelan history.

Why Did It Happen?

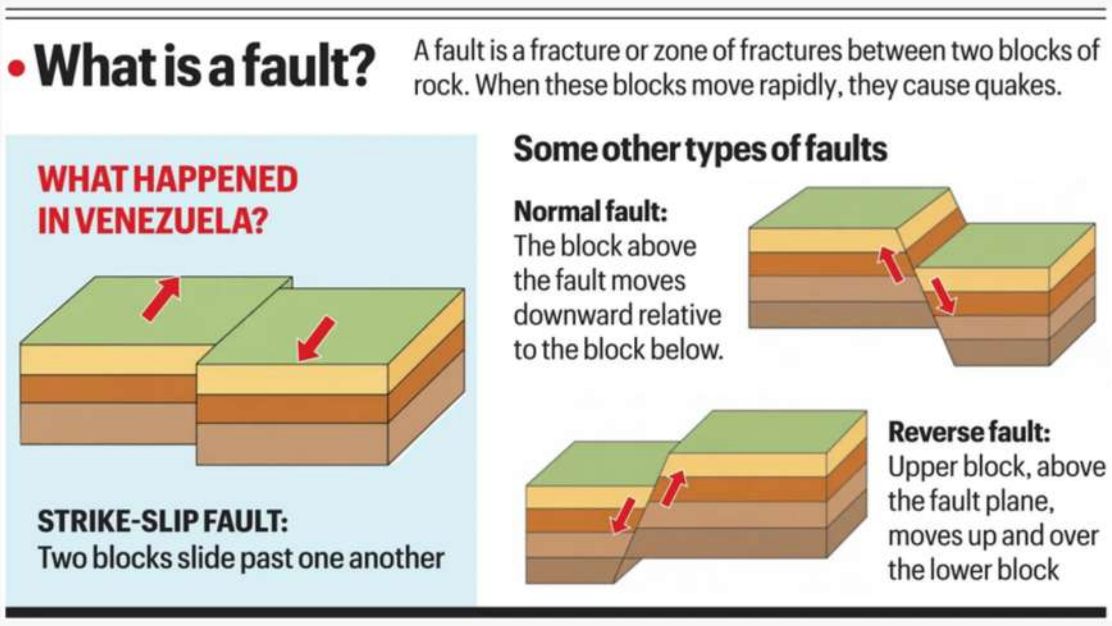
- Venezuela lies along the active boundary between the Caribbean Plate and the South American Plate, where horizontal movement along strike-slip faults frequently generates earthquakes. The main earthquake originated from **shallow strike-slip faulting** at 10 km depth, allowing seismic waves to reach the surface with exceptional intensity.
- The Mw 7.2 earthquake acted as a foreshock, while the Mw 7.5 event became the mainshock. Since both earthquakes were of similar magnitude and occurred within seconds due to separate but related fault ruptures, the USGS classified the event as **a seismic doublet**, indicating a complex rupture interaction rather than a routine aftershock sequence.

Key Scientific Concepts

- Seismic Doublet: Two independent earthquakes of similar magnitude occurring within seconds or minutes due to separate but related fault ruptures.
- Foreshock: Smaller earthquake preceding the largest event.
- Mainshock: Largest earthquake in an earthquake sequence.
- Aftershock: Smaller earthquakes caused by stress redistribution after the mainshock.
- Strike-slip Fault: Fault in which tectonic plates move horizontally past one another.
- Moment Magnitude (Mw): Measures the total energy released by an earthquake; the modern replacement for the Richter Scale.

Why Was the Destruction So Severe?

- The disaster was intensified by the combination of shallow depth and the doublet phenomenon. Buildings weakened by the first earthquake had virtually no time to recover before the second major shock, resulting in prolonged ground shaking, widespread structural collapse and significant challenges for rescue operations.
- Experts also attribute the scale of destruction to limited earthquake-resistant construction, inadequate structural design, poor construction quality and lower preparedness, factors influenced partly by Venezuela's economic constraints.
- Countries such as Japan experience lower losses because of strict earthquake-resistant building standards and stronger emergency response systems.



Venezuela has experienced nearly 1,000 earthquakes of magnitude 4.0 or higher during the past decade, highlighting its long-term seismic vulnerability despite not being part of the Pacific Ring of Fire. The twin earthquakes demonstrate that disaster severity depends not only on earthquake magnitude but also on rupture characteristics, focal depth, local geology, construction quality and preparedness.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Q. The frequency of earthquakes appears to have increased in the Indian subcontinent. However, India's preparedness for mitigating their impact has significant gaps. Discuss various aspects. (GS III – 2015)

RELEVANCE *GS I : Geographical Phenomena; GS III : Disaster Management*

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)
1. Service providers
2. Data centers
3. Body corporate
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : d
In India, it is legally mandatory for service providers, data centers, and body corporates to report cybersecurity incidents under the provisions of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 and related guidelines issued by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).
1. Service providers: Service providers such as telecom companies, internet service providers (ISPs), and cloud service providers are required to report cybersecurity incidents as part of maintaining the integrity and security of their services.
2. Data centers: Data centers, which host and manage data storage and processing, are mandated to report incidents that may affect the security of the data they handle or the systems they operate.
3. Body corporate: As defined under the IT Act, body corporates include companies and other organizations that handle sensitive data. They are required to ensure the security of personal and sensitive information and report breaches or incidents.
CERT-In Guidelines: CERT-In mandates reporting of cybersecurity incidents such as:
- Unauthorized access to IT systems.
- Denial-of-service attacks.
- Malware infections.
- Data breaches and leaks.
- Failure to report can lead to penalties under the IT Act.

Q. Which of the following are the reasons for the occurrence of multi-drug resistance in microbial pathogens in India? (2019)
1. Genetic predisposition of some people
2. Taking incorrect doses of antibiotics to cure diseases
3. Using antibiotics in livestock farming 4. Multiple chronic diseases in some people
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
a) 1 and 2
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1, 3 and 4
d) 2, 3 and 4

Ans : b
The occurrence of multi-drug resistance (MDR) in microbial pathogens, especially in India, is influenced by several factors, with the following being significant contributors:
1 is incorrect. While genetic factors can influence how an individual responds to infections or antibiotics, genetic predisposition is not a major direct cause of multi-drug resistance in microbial pathogens.
2 is correct. One of the primary causes of MDR is the misuse and overuse of antibiotics. Taking incomplete or incorrect doses leads to the survival of partially resistant bacteria, which can develop resistance to multiple drugs over time.
3 is correct. The widespread use of antibiotics in livestock farming, often for growth promotion or disease prevention, contributes to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
4 is incorrect: While chronic diseases can increase the need for antibiotics, they are not a direct cause of the development of multi-drug resistance. It is the misuse or overuse of antibiotics that leads to resistance.

PYQ Compass

UPSC questions previously asked from the themes discussed on this page.

Q. Consider the following countries :
1. Italy
2. Japan
3. Nigeria
4. South Korea
5. South Africa

Which of the above countries are frequently mentioned in the media for their low birth rates, aging population or declining population ?
a) 1, 2 and 4
b) 1, 3 and 5
c) 2 and 4 only
d) 3 and 5 only

Ans : a
The phenomenon of low birth rates, aging populations, and declining populations is particularly noted in several developed countries.
Italy : The country has one of the lowest fertility rates in Europe and a significant proportion of elderly citizens, which has raised concerns about the sustainability of social services.
Japan : country with an extremely low birth rate and a rapidly aging population. It faces significant challenges including labor shortages and the pressure on pension systems.
Nigeria : It has one of the highest birth rates in the world and a very young population. Concerns in Nigeria are more often related to managing population growth.
South Korea : It has one of the lowest fertility rates globally, prompting the government to implement various policies to encourage higher birth rates.
South Africa : South Africa does not typically face issues related to low birth rates or a significantly aging population compared to the other countries listed. It has a relatively young population, though it faces other demographic challenges.
Based on the descriptions, the correct answer is a) 1, 2, and 4 (Italy, Japan, and South Korea),

Q. Consider the following statements: (2023)
Statement-I: In the post-pandemic recent past, many Central Banks worldwide had carried out interest rate hikes.
Statement-II: Central Banks generally assume that they have the ability to counteract the rising consumer prices via monetary policy means. Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
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(c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
(d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Ans : a
1) Statement-I is correct. After the COVID-19 pandemic, economies faced high inflation due to disruptions in supply chains, increased fiscal spending, and pent-up demand. Central Banks, such as the Federal Reserve (USA), European Central Bank, and the Reserve Bank of India, resorted to interest rate hikes to control inflation by reducing money supply and curbing demand.
2) Statement-II is also correct. Central Banks primarily use monetary policy tools like increasing interest rates, adjusting the cash reserve ratio (CRR), and open market operations to counteract inflation. By raising interest rates, borrowing becomes expensive, which reduces spending and investment, thus curbing demand and stabilizing prices. Statement-II explains the rationale behind such actions, as Central Banks believe monetary policy interventions can influence inflation levels effectively.

Practice Questions and answers

Q. With reference to digital arrest scams, consider the following statements:
1. Digital arrest scams involve fraudsters impersonating law enforcement agencies to extort money.
2. Mule accounts are bank accounts used to transfer or launder illegally obtained money.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)
Why in news? The CBI's Operation Chakra-VI targeted the organised infrastructure supporting digital arrest scams, including shell companies and mule accounts.
Statement 1 – Correct - Fraudsters impersonate police, CBI, ED or courts, creating fake legal proceedings to intimidate victims into transferring money.
Statement 2 – Correct - Mule accounts help criminals move illicit money through the banking system, sometimes without the account holder's knowledge.

Q. With reference to the recent amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945, consider the following statements:
1. The amendment expands the scope of Schedule H2 by bringing all vaccines, antimicrobials, anti-cancer medicines, and narcotic & psychotropic drugs under a QR code-based track-and-trace framework.
2. The QR code-based mechanism seeks to improve the authentication and traceability of medicines across the pharmaceutical supply chain by providing product-specific information.
3. Under the amended provisions, the QR code requirement applies exclusively to vaccines supplied under government immunisation programmes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
Ans : a
Statement 1 – Correct Previously, the QR code requirement was applicable only to the country's top 300 pharmaceutical brands. The amendment substantially widens its scope to include ***Vaccines, Antimicrobials, Anti-cancer medicines, Narcotic and psychotropic drugs covered under the NDPS Act, 1985***
Statement 2 – Correct Manufacturers are now required to print or affix a QR code (or barcode) on the medicine package. The code enables authentication throughout the supply chain by storing information such as:
- Unique Product Identification Code (UPIC)
- Generic and brand names
- Manufacturer details
- Batch number
- Manufacturing and expiry dates
- Manufacturing licence number
- Details of excipients (where applicable)

This enhances traceability, transparency and consumer confidence, while helping regulators detect counterfeit and spurious medicines.
Statement 3 – Incorrect The QR code requirement is not limited to vaccines or government immunisation programmes. It applies broadly to all notified categories under the expanded Schedule H2, including vaccines, antimicrobials, anti-cancer medicines, and narcotic & psychotropic drugs, irrespective of whether they are supplied through public or private healthcare channel.