

P2. NATIONAL



Keralam launches scheme to assess services for elderly as state rapidly ages - How Kerala's ageing population is driving a shift towards public institutions that are physically accessible, service-oriented and responsive to the needs of senior citizens.

P3 WORLD



Houthis claim major advance in Yemen as group reportedly seizes island in key shipping route - How the Houthi conflict in Yemen has acquired wider significance by threatening a strategic maritime chokepoints.

P4. ECONOMICS



Does India need BRICS? - How increasingly powerful AI systems can lower the barrier to cyber, biological and other malicious activities, creating new challenges for AI safety and global governance.

P7. SCIENCE



What happens when AI becomes the first confidant in a mental health crisis?
: How increasingly powerful AI systems can lower the barrier to cyber, biological and other malicious activities, creating new challenges for AI safety and global governance.

Editor's Note

With 300 editions completed, Pala Civil Times is entering new frontiers, moving beyond reporting the latest developments to decoding their wider national and international significance. In this edition, we bring together a set of issues that have found prominence in leading newspapers, presenting them with clarity, balance and critical assessment. Our analysis of BRICS explores how India can use the grouping to protect its trade interests, diversify economic partnerships and strengthen its geopolitical position. The Decoded Editorials examine the Bihar floods to understand how erratic rainfall, river flows, drainage constraints and weaknesses in river-basin management can turn a natural hazard into a major disaster. On the Science page, we examine the broader challenges of cybersecurity and AI safety, including Anthropic's efforts to prevent the misuse of advanced AI systems. Our International section turns to the Red Sea, where Houthi advances highlight the wider geopolitical and maritime-security implications of developments in Yemen. These notes are meant to be more than material to read and forget. Use them to understand the core issue, connect it with broader themes, identify the underlying causes and implications, and build arguments that can be carried into UPSC answers. Read the factual details for Prelims, but focus on the analytical connections for Mains. As these themes develop in the coming editions, revisit them and build your understanding progressively. Happy reading, and make every page count.

Editorials Decoded



Eyes on the road: On India and road traffic fatalities



Why reducing India's high road mortality requires moving beyond individual responsibility towards safer roads, vehicles, speed management, enforcement and post-crash care.



Bihar floods underline need for basin-wide cooperation



Why severe flooding can occur even during below-normal rainfall, highlighting the role of upstream flows, embankments and weak river-basin management

Keralam launches scheme to assess services for elderly as state rapidly ages

Kerala has launched the Elder-Friendly Office Certification (EFOC) to assess whether public offices and other institutions are genuinely accessible and usable for senior citizens. The initiative comes against the backdrop of Kerala's rapid demographic ageing and seeks to move elder welfare from schemes alone towards age-friendly public-service delivery.



Cooperation

Certification System: EFOC assesses institutions across building accessibility, service delivery, staff training and conduct, communication and participation.

Beyond Physical Access: The scheme examines accessible ramps and toilets as well as queues, seating, service counters, staff behaviour and communication with elderly.

Mandatory Conditions: Step-free access, a ground-floor toilet, a priority queue and a designated officer for senior citizens are mandatory. Failure to meet any of these prevents certification irrespective of the overall score.

Three-Level Certification: Government, quasi-government and voluntarily participating private institutions can receive certification under three categories.

Phased Expansion: The first six months will pilot the scheme in 14 offices, one in each district, followed by expansion to village, taluk and collectorate offices, treasuries, RTOs and government hospitals.

Supreme Court demands clear timeline for FSSAI's food warning labels

The Supreme Court has directed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to establish a scientifically justified and clearly defined timeline for implementing the second phase of Front-of-Package Labelling (FoPL).

What is Front-of-Package Labelling?

Warning at the Point of Purchase: FoPL places a warning on the front of packaged food to alert consumers when products contain high levels of fat, sugar or salt (FSS).

Two-Phase Approach: Phase I proposes warnings for products high in at least two specified nutrients and for Highly Sweetened Beverages, while Phase II would extend warnings to products high in any one of the specified nutrients.

Transition Period: FSSAI proposed the phased approach to improve consumer acceptability and give manufacturers time for product reformulation.

Core issue

Visibility: FSSAI proposed a font size one point larger than the nutritional information table, but concerns were raised that this may not make the warning sufficiently prominent.

Relative Size: The Supreme Court has asked whether the warning should be standardised according to the overall front area of the package, with the petitioner suggesting labels occupying around 15–20% of the principal display area.

Literacy and Accessibility: A predominantly word-based warning assumes a certain level of literacy and reading ability, which may not reflect India's diverse linguistic, educational and age profiles.

Pictorial Information: Combining words with nutrient-specific pictorial representations could make warnings easier to recognise across different consumer groups.

Changing Consumption Patterns: FoPL design must also account for the growing role of digital purchasing, where consumers may encounter food information differently from physical retail settings.

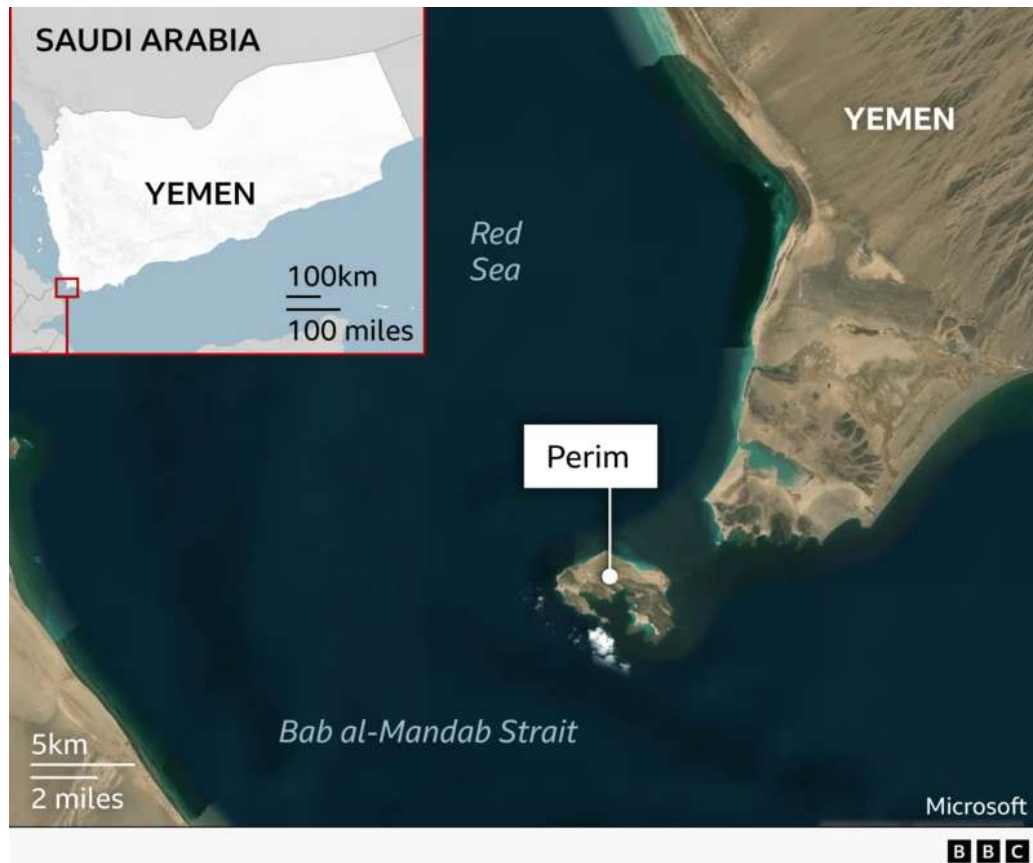
PYQ Compass



Q. Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at the local level and bring out the pros and cons of merging rural local bodies with urban local bodies. (GS II - 2024)

Houthis claim major advance in Yemen as group reportedly seizes island in key shipping route

The Houthi movement has reportedly captured Perim Island and expanded its control along Yemen's Red Sea coast, including territory around the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The escalation has displaced tens of thousands of people and raised concerns over the security of a major maritime corridor linking Asia and Europe.



BBC

Who are the Houthis?

Origins: The Houthis are a movement originating in Saada province in northwestern Yemen and are rooted in the Zaydi branch of Shia Islam.

Rise of the Movement: From the 1980s, the Houthi movement sought to revive Zaydi traditions and opposed the growing influence of state-supported Salafist groups in its areas.

Political Expansion: Although initially rooted in Zaydi identity, the movement expanded after 2011 into a broader political and armed movement opposing Yemen's central government and also became known as Ansarullah.

Territorial Expansion: The Houthis captured Sana'a in September 2014 and had established control over large parts of northern Yemen by 2016.

PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)
 Sea Bordering country

1. Adriatic Sea : Albania
2. Black Sea : Croatia
3. Caspian Sea : Kazakhstan
4. Mediterranean Sea : Morocco
5. Red Sea : Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

Why is Bab el-Mandeb strategically important?

Geographical Chokepoint: The Bab el-Mandeb Strait connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden, making it a gateway between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean-linked maritime route.

Global Shipping: Control or disruption of the strait can affect shipping between Asia and Europe, particularly vessels using the Red Sea and the Suez Canal route.

Perim Island: Perim Island, located in the strait, has strategic significance because of its position close to this maritime chokepoint.

Energy Security: Any threat to shipping through the Red Sea can increase transportation risks and put pressure on global energy markets, particularly when combined with threats to Saudi oil infrastructure.

Why has the conflict escalated?

Houthi-Government Conflict: The Houthi-Yemen government conflict has been going on for more than a decade.

Regional Rivalry: The conflict presently has a wider regional dimension involving the competition between Houthis backed by Iran against Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces.

What is the humanitarian impact?

Mass Displacement: The renewed fighting has displaced more than 80,000 people since the beginning of September.

Concentration of Displacement: The west coast and Taiz areas have been particularly affected, with Taiz alone accounting for nearly 56,000 displaced people.

Wider Crisis: Continued territorial fighting risks pushing Yemen towards another phase of civil war and deepening an already severe humanitarian crisis.

The Houthi conflict extends beyond Yemen, threatening maritime security through the Bab el-Mandeb, creating risks for global energy supplies and prices, and increasing regional geopolitical leverage.

ECONOMICS

Does India need BRICS?

India is hosting the BRICS Summit amid growing tensions between major BRICS members and the Western economic order. The debate has renewed attention on whether BRICS can help India reduce excessive dependence on Western markets, finance, technology and intellectual-property systems while India continues to benefit from strong economic ties with the West.



Why is Western economic dependence both important and a vulnerability?

Economic Dependence: The US and EU remain major markets and sources of investment for India, while Western integration supports India's services sector and modern employment.

Strategic Vulnerability: This dependence can expose India to sanctions, financial restrictions and secondary sanctions when geopolitical interests diverge.

Chabahar Example: US sanctions on Iran have affected the pace of India's engagement with Chabahar Port, showing how external sanctions can constrain Indian economic interests.

Why are trade and climate policies becoming contentious?

Green Trade Barriers: Measures such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) link trade with carbon emissions and can impose additional costs on exporters from developing countries. Such measures can penalise economies that lack the financial and technological capacity to transition rapidly to low-carbon production.

Industrial Policy: The use of tariffs, subsidies and technology controls by developed economies to strengthen their own strategic industries raise concerns about unequal competition.

Global South Perspective: BRICS countries have criticised CBAM and similar measures as potentially shifting the costs of climate transition onto developing economies.

Why does BRICS matter to India?

Growing Economic Weight: The share of global GDP held by BRICS countries increased from 17% in 1995 to 35% in 2024, surpassing the G7, giving the grouping greater potential economic influence.

South-South Cooperation: Greater trade and investment among developing economies could help India diversify markets and reduce excessive dependence on a few Western economies.

Critical Minerals: The geographical concentration of critical minerals within BRICS countries creates scope for cooperation in areas important for future industrial and technological development.

Alternative Development Finance: Institutions such as the BRICS New Development Bank could provide additional sources of development finance, although they do not yet constitute a full alternative to the Western financial system.

PYQ Compass

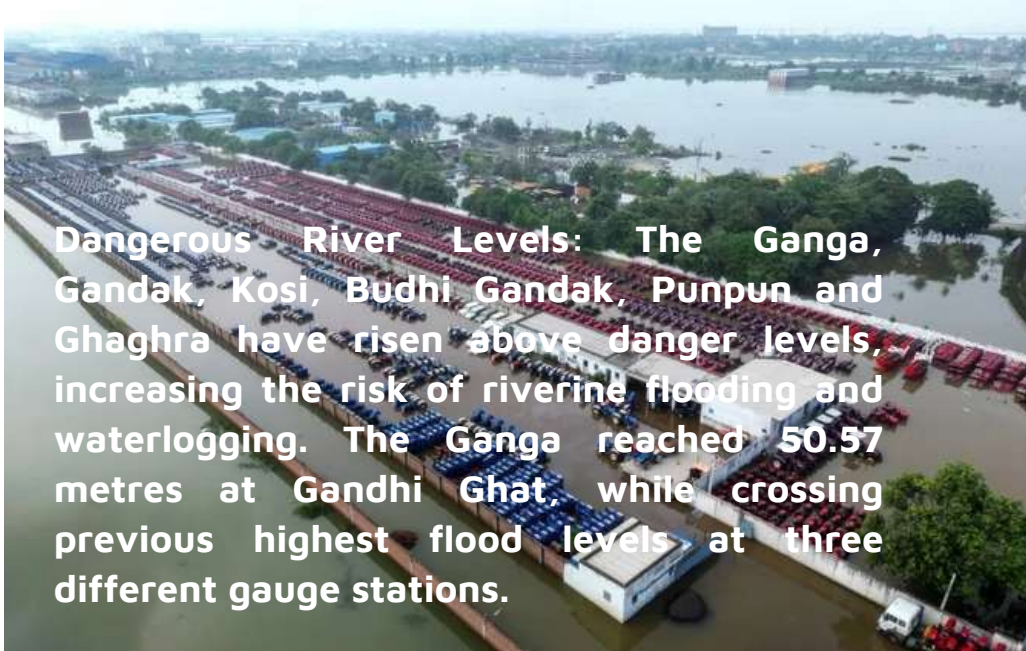


Q. BRICS acts as a powerful counterweight in global governance, actively amplifying the voice and influence of the Global South." Explain the role of BRICS in projecting itself as an alternative to other groupings (GS II - 2026)

India's approach is likely to be one of diversification rather than decoupling. Stronger BRICS cooperation can reduce vulnerabilities and expand India's strategic options, while continued engagement with the US and EU remains essential for markets, investment and technology. The broader objective is to build a more balanced global economic order that gives developing countries greater strategic and policy space.

Bihar floods underline need for basin-wide cooperation (I.E : 12-09-2026)

Bihar is experiencing severe flooding in 2026 despite receiving 27% below-normal rainfall. The Ganga, Gandak, Kosi, Budhi Gandak, Punpun and Ghaghra crossed danger levels at different stretches, while the Ganga itself breached previous all-time high-water marks at three gauge stations simultaneously.



Why is Bihar experiencing severe floods?

Erratic Rainfall: Heavy and localised rainfall can generate intense runoff even when the overall seasonal rainfall remains below normal.

Upstream Discharge: Rivers originating in the Himalayan region, particularly Nepal, can bring high volumes of water into Bihar. Furthermore, extreme flood events in Nepal can add substantial flows to river systems.

Backwater Effect: The unusually high Ganga level can obstruct the discharge of tributaries such as the Gandak and Punpun, causing water to back up and increasing flooding.

Sedimentation: Continuous silt deposition can raise riverbeds and reduce channel capacity.

Embankment Constraints: Bihar's extensive embankment network confines rivers and separates them from floodplains. Despite increasing embankment length from 160 km in 1954 to over 3,731 km, Bihar's estimated flood-prone area increased from 2.5 million hectares to 7.295 million hectares by 2016.

Transboundary Management: The Ganga river management plan involves India-Bangladesh water-sharing arrangements, making Bihar's concerns over flood management relevant to discussions on the 1996 Ganga Water Sharing Treaty.

What should Bihar's flood management focus on?

Give Rivers Space: Floodplain protection is crucial because it provide space for rivers to spread during high discharge.

Restore Natural Drainage: Restoring drainage channels and wetlands can improve the movement and temporary storage of excess water, reducing prolonged waterlogging.

Manage Sedimentation: Continuous silt deposition can raise riverbeds and reduce channel capacity, requiring sediment management alongside embankment maintenance.

Plan for the Basin: Flood management should consider the interconnected nature of upstream flows, reservoirs, main rivers, tributaries and floodplains.

Strengthen Coordination: Coordination among riverine States and with neighbouring countries is essential for sharing hydrological information and managing upstream flows.

Plan for Climate Extremes: Increasingly erratic and intense rainfall makes it necessary to design flood-management systems for extreme events rather than relying only on historical averages.

Use Early Warning and Land-use Planning: Early-warning systems and flood-sensitive land-use planning can reduce exposure and enable communities to prepare before floodwaters reach vulnerable areas.

States sharing rivers need greater coordination over reservoir releases, river flows and flood-management measures, while transboundary rivers require cooperation between the countries concerned.

PYQ COMPASS



Q. With reference to the Himalayan rivers joining the Ganga downstream of Prayagraj from West to East, which one of the following sequences is correct? (2024)

- Ghaghara - Gomati - Gandak - Kosi
- Gomati - Ghaghara - Gandak - Kosi
- Ghaghara - Gomati - Kosi - Gandak
- Gomati - Ghaghara - Kosi - Gandak

Eyes on the road: On India and road traffic fatalities (The Hindu : 12-09-2026)

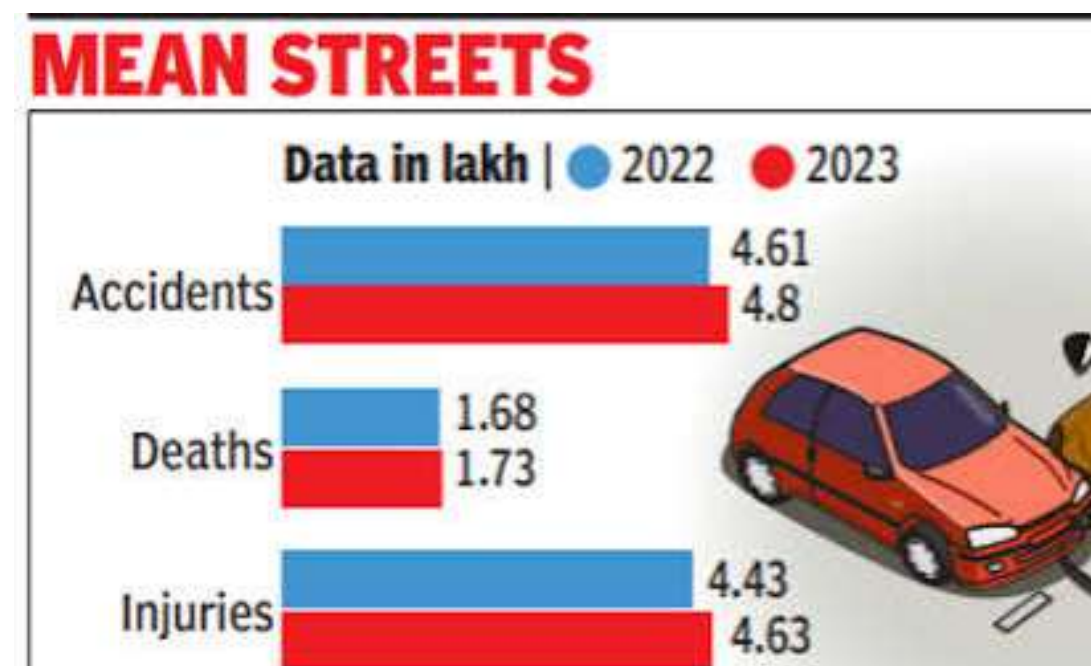
The Supreme Court has asked the Road Transport Ministry to examine measures to improve compliance with seat belts, helmets and child safety restraints. The issue highlights a wider concern: reducing India's high road mortality requires more than enforcing individual safety behaviour.

What is the scale of the problem?

Disproportionate Mortality: India has around 1% of the world's vehicles but accounts for about 11% of global road traffic fatalities, indicating a major road-safety challenge.

Who is Dying? In 2024, two-wheeler riders accounted for 46.2% and pedestrians 20.6% of road deaths, showing that road safety cannot focus only on occupants of cars and other enclosed vehicles.

Seat Belts and Restraints: Poor use of seat belts and child restraints can result in vehicle ejection or lethal secondary collisions with the vehicle interior, but these measures address only a portion of total road deaths.



Why is enforcement alone insufficient?

Speeding: Speeding is the dominant recorded violation associated with fatalities, making speed management a potentially more powerful intervention than focusing primarily on seat-belt compliance.

Weak Enforcement: Shortages in traffic police cadres and inadequate policing weaken compliance with existing safety rules.

Vehicle Safety: Manufacturers can be required to strengthen safety features such as tamper-proof seat-belt reminders, while post-purchase modifications that undermine safety should also be constrained.

Existing Framework: The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 introduced several mechanisms for improving road safety, but available national data have not demonstrated improvement on the scale required.

What is the Safe System approach?

The Safe System approach recognises that road users will inevitably make mistakes and therefore seeks to ensure that such mistakes do not result in death or serious injury.

Safer Roads: Governments should identify and correct accident-prone locations and design road environments that reduce both the probability and severity of crashes.

Human Error: Road infrastructure should compensate for predictable human mistakes rather than assume perfect compliance from every road user.

Vulnerable Users: Greater attention is needed to pedestrians, two-wheeler users and children, who remain highly exposed to serious injury.

Post-Crash Care: Timely access to trauma care can reduce the severity of injuries even when crashes cannot be completely prevented.

What should India's road-safety strategy focus on?

India needs a multi-layered approach combining enforcement with safer infrastructure, vehicle safety, speed management, protection of vulnerable road users and rapid trauma care. Building a public culture that reinforces safe behaviour is equally important, but road safety cannot be reduced to individual responsibility alone.

PYQ Compass



Q. Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy. (GS II - 2014)

HEALTH

Anthropic 'blocks' AI misuse attempts targeting bioweapons

Anthropic reported that it had identified and disrupted attempts to misuse its AI models for cyberattacks, surveillance and biological research with potential weapons applications. The report highlights a growing concern that increasingly capable AI systems can lower the technical barrier for sophisticated malicious activity



Why is AI becoming a security concern?

Capability Amplification: AI can amplify the capabilities of individuals by providing technical assistance and reducing the time required to perform complex tasks.

Convergence of Risks: AI capabilities can have applications across cybersecurity, surveillance, biological research and information operations, making AI safety a broader international security issue.

Rapid Capability Growth: Concerns are increasingly shifting towards the possibility that future systems could become sufficiently autonomous and capable to create systemic or existential risks.

How are AI companies responding?

Stronger Safeguards: Anthropic said it has introduced stronger safeguards in its latest models to restrict biological research that could potentially facilitate weapons development.

Threat Intelligence: AI companies are increasingly publishing threat intelligence reports to identify patterns of misuse and encourage other developers and governments to detect similar activities.

Model Restrictions: Companies face the challenge of balancing useful access to powerful models with restrictions that prevent their exploitation for harmful purposes.

What are the larger governance concerns?

Need for International Cooperation: The cross-border nature of AI development and misuse makes purely national regulation insufficient for addressing advanced AI risks.

Independent Safety Assessment: Concerns have emerged over whether powerful AI models should be independently evaluated by specialised government safety institutions before or alongside deployment.

AI Governance vs AI Race: Calls for stronger safety measures have created a policy tension between controlling risks from advanced AI and maintaining technological competitiveness.

Multilateral Framework: The growing debate leads to calls for a common framework governing highly advanced AI systems.

What is the emerging concern?

Lower Barrier to Malicious Activity: More capable AI models can help individuals with limited technical expertise carry out complex cyber operations that previously required specialised skills.

Dual-Use Biology: AI can support legitimate biological research while also potentially assisting activities that could contribute to the development of biological weapons.

Gain-of-Function Research: The reported case involved research aimed at genetically altering chikungunya virus to study properties such as transmissibility and immune evasion, illustrating the dual-use nature of advanced biological research.

Broader Misuse: Anthropic reported that its Claude model had also been used by actors linked to a Russia-based cyber espionage campaign and an Iranian propaganda institution.

PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following statements with respect to the AI Impact Summit, 2026 held in New Delhi:

1. The Summit's intellectual framework was based on three foundational Sutras: People, Planning, and Progress.
 2. The Preamble of the Summit stresses Democratising AI Resources, which acknowledges the Charter for Democratic Diffusion of AI as a binding framework to support locally relevant innovation and strengthen resilient AI ecosystems while respecting national laws.
 3. The New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact was structured around seven Access Chakras (Pillars), which included Access for Social Empowerment, AI for Science, and Secure and Trusted AI.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 3 only

Navier–Stokes problem

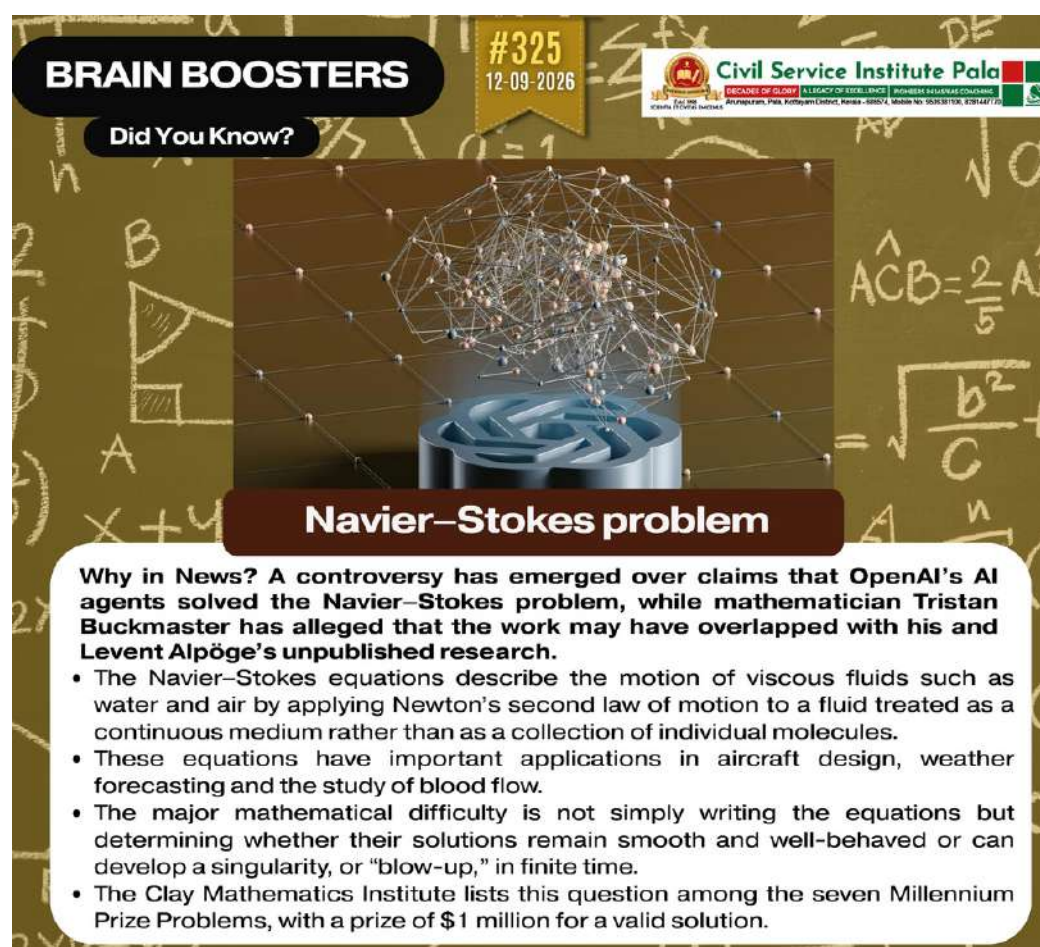
A controversy has emerged over claims that OpenAI's AI agents solved a specific forced blow-up formulation of the Navier–Stokes problem, while mathematician Tristan Buckmaster has alleged that the work may have overlapped with his and Levent Alpöge's unpublished research and raised concerns about data privacy, academic credit and the role of AI in mathematical discovery.

What is the Navier–Stokes Problem?

- The Navier–Stokes equations describe the motion of viscous fluids such as water and air by applying Newton's second law of motion to a fluid treated as a continuous medium rather than as a collection of individual molecules.
- These equations have important applications in aircraft design, weather forecasting and the study of blood flow.
- The major mathematical difficulty is not simply writing the equations but determining whether their solutions remain smooth and well-behaved or can develop a singularity, or "blow-up," in finite time.
- The Clay Mathematics Institute lists this question among the seven Millennium Prize Problems, with a prize of \$1 million for a valid solution.

What is the "Blow Up" problem?

- A blow-up refers to a situation where a mathematical solution becomes infinite or undefined within a finite period of time.
- In the Navier–Stokes problem, researchers are trying to determine whether such a breakdown can occur in the mathematical description of fluid motion.
- The Millennium Prize allows different routes to prove this, including cases involving an external force acting on the fluid.
- Diego Córdoba and Luis Martínez-Zoroa developed an approach that attempts to create a blow-up by repeatedly introducing small, concentrated changes into fluid motion.



What Was the Latest Research?

- Diego Córdoba and Luis Martínez-Zoroa developed an approach that attempts to create a blow-up by repeatedly introducing small, concentrated changes into fluid motion.
- Their earlier work showed that this approach could produce blow-ups under irregular external forcing.
- Tristan Buckmaster and Levent Alpöge used LLMs as research assistants to push this approach further.
- By August 2026, they had reportedly achieved smooth-forcing blow-up results in several related equations bringing the approach closer to the much harder Navier–Stokes problem.
- Their work demonstrated how AI-assisted mathematical research could accelerate a highly specialised research programme.

Why Did the Piracy/Privacy Allegation Arise?

- The controversy began when OpenAI claimed that its AI system had produced a Navier–Stokes result using the same highly specific research approach that Buckmaster and Alpöge had been developing.
- Buckmaster therefore questioned whether OpenAI's internal AI system had accessed or been trained using their private research material.
- This led to the allegation that unpublished academic research might have been used to help develop or guide an AI system that later claimed the same mathematical breakthrough.

PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

Sea Bordering country

1. Adriatic Sea : Albania

2. Black Sea : Croatia

3. Caspian Sea : Kazakhstan

4. Mediterranean Sea : Morocco

5. Red Sea : Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

a) 1, 2 and 4 only

b) 1, 3 and 4 only

c) 2 and 5 only

d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans : b

Countries bordering Adriatic sea: The Adriatic Sea is a part of the Mediterranean Sea positioned between the eastern coastline of Italy, and countries of the Balkan Peninsula, from Slovenia, south through Croatia, Montenegro, and to Albania. The southern boundary of the sea ends in the Strait of Otranto between Albania and Italy's Salento Peninsula. Immediately south of that strait the Ionian Sea begins.

Countries bordering Black sea: The Black Sea lies between southeastern Europe and Asia Minor. Excluding its northern arm, the Sea of Azov, the Black Sea occupies about 168,500 square miles (436,400 square kilometers). It is connected to the Aegean Sea through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles, and has been of critical importance to regional commerce throughout the ages. This major inland sea is bordered by six countries — Romania and Bulgaria to the west; Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia to the north and east; and Turkey to the south.

Countries bordering Caspian sea: The five countries Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Iran share their boundary with the Caspian Sea

Countries bordering Mediterranean sea: The countries surrounding the Mediterranean in clockwise order are Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; Malta and Cyprus are island countries in the sea.

Countries bordering Red sea: There are six countries (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti) bordering the Red Sea.

PYQ Compass



Q. With reference to the Himalayan rivers joining the Ganga downstream of Prayagraj from West to East, which one of the following sequences is correct? (2024)

- a) Ghaghara – Gomati – Gandak – Kosi
- b) Gomati – Ghaghara – Gandak – Kosi
- c) Ghaghara – Gomati – Kosi – Gandak
- d) Gomati – Ghaghara – Kosi – Gandak

Ans : b

Downstream of Prayagraj, the correct sequence of Himalayan rivers joining the Ganga from west to east is:

Gomati: Joins the Ganga near Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh).

Ghaghara: Joins the Ganga near Chhapra (Bihar).

Gandak: Joins the Ganga near Hajipur (Bihar).

Kosi: Joins the Ganga near Kursela (Bihar). Thus, option (b) is correct.

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to the AI Impact Summit, 2026 held in New Delhi:

1. The Summit's intellectual framework was based on three foundational Sutras: People, Planning, and Progress.
2. The Preamble of the Summit stresses Democratising AI Resources, which acknowledges the Charter for Democratic Diffusion of AI as a binding framework to support locally relevant innovation and strengthen resilient AI ecosystems while respecting national laws.
3. The New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact was structured around seven Access Chakras (Pillars), which included Access for Social Empowerment, AI for Science, and Secure and Trusted AI.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans : d

The AI Impact Summit 2026, held in New Delhi introduced the New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact, which was organized around seven thematic Chakras or pillars addressing key areas of AI development and governance. The summit framework was built around the three guiding principles of People, Planet, and Prosperity rather than People, Planning, and Progress. Hence, statement 1 is not correct. While the preamble emphasizes the democratization of AI resources, the Charter for Democratic Diffusion of AI was envisaged as a voluntary and non binding framework rather than a legally binding arrangement. Hence, statement is incorrect. The New Delhi Declaration was structured around seven Chakras including Access for Social Empowerment, AI for Science, and Secure and Trusted AI: The declaration incorporated seven thematic pillars covering areas such as Access for Social Empowerment, AI for Science, and Secure and Trusted AI as part of its broader framework. Hence, this statement 3 is correct.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to BRICS and India's economic interests:

1. BRICS can help India diversify its economic partnerships and reduce excessive dependence on any single economic bloc.
2. India's engagement with BRICS necessarily implies a strategic decoupling from the United States and the European Union.
3. Greater cooperation among BRICS countries can provide India with additional avenues for development finance, trade and strategic economic cooperation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

BRICS can provide India with additional economic and strategic options and reduce vulnerabilities arising from excessive dependence on any one system. However, India's approach is one of diversification rather than decoupling. The United States and European Union remain important markets, sources of investment and technology. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.

Q. Which one of the following best explains the need for a river-basin approach to flood management in Bihar?

- (a) Flooding is caused exclusively by rainfall within Bihar and can therefore be managed through local drainage projects.
- (b) Rivers operate across administrative boundaries, making upstream flows, sedimentation, drainage, embankments and basin-level coordination important for flood management.
- (c) River-basin management primarily seeks to prevent all rivers from overflowing by constructing embankments along their entire course.
- (d) Flood management mainly depends on increasing reservoir storage within the state.

Answer: (b)

Flooding in Bihar cannot be understood only through rainfall within the state. Major rivers such as the Ganga, Kosi, Gandak and other river systems receive water from upstream areas, making river flows dependent on conditions beyond Bihar's administrative boundaries. Sedimentation, restricted drainage, embankments and backwater effects can further influence how water spreads and remains in flood-prone areas.

Therefore, effective flood management requires a river-basin approach that considers the entire river system, coordinates upstream and downstream regions, improves drainage and sediment management, and integrates structural and non-structural measures.