

2024

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS





## Daily Current Affairs from *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* & *The Assam Tribune*

**26<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024**

### CONTENT LIST

#### GS 1: ART & CULTURE, HISTORY, INDIAN SOCIETY AND GEOGRAPHY

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
1	How the 2004 Indian Ocean quake transformed tsunami science	World geography	7

#### GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
2	₹45,000-cr. Ken-Betwa link project launched	Governance (TH)	1
3	Centre yet to formally scrap FMR with Myanmar	International relations (TH)	4
4	A boost to Assam-Bhutan friendship	International relations (AT)	

#### GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

	Topics	Syllabus	Page No:
5	2 lakhs primary agri credit societies to come up in 5 years	Growth & development (IE)	6

#### GS 1: ART & CULTURE, HISTORY, INDIAN SOCIETY AND GEOGRAPHY

##### 1. How the 2004 Indian Ocean quake transformed tsunami science

**Context:** December 26, 2024, marks the 20th year since the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. The tsunami generated by the quake of magnitude 9.1 was sourced off the Sumatran coast and was the third largest (by magnitude) in the world since 1900. The source was 30 km below the ocean floor, in the Sunda trench, where part of the Indo-Australian plate subducts beneath the Burma microplate, which is a part of the Eurasian plate. The 2004 earthquake ripped through 1,300 km of the plate boundary, the fault tearing from Sumatra in the south to Coco Islands in the north. The quake was felt in Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, the overall death toll was around 227,000 and more than 1.7 million people displaced.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** A magnitude 9.1 earthquake near Sunda Trench (Indonesia) in 2004 triggered Indian Ocean tsunami that devastated almost 14 countries. Sunda Trench is situated on Pacific "Ring of Fire" (Arc of intense seismic activity stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia and across Pacific basin).
- **Tsunami:** Series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance caused by violent seafloor movement associated with earthquakes, landslides, lava entering sea, seamount collapse, or meteorite impact.
- **Features of Tsunami Waves:** Not noticed by ships in deep oceans because their amplitude is negligible when compared with their wavelength. Their speed depends on ocean depth, not distance from wave's source.
- **UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme:** Voluntary, international community-based effort to bolster risk prevention across global coastal zones.
- **Tsunami United Programme:** Flagship initiative of UNESCO to increase preparedness.
- **Global Tsunami Early Warning and Mitigation Programme:** IOC-UNESCO Programme supports Member States in assessing tsunami risk, implementing Early Warning Systems etc.
- **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC):** Established at Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Sciences, Hyderabad is national authority to issue tsunami advisories.
- **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information System (INCOIS):** INCOIS was established in 1999 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences. INCOIS through Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) is the nodal agency to provide tsunami advisories to India. It is coordinating with the Disaster Management Officials (DMOs) for implementation of Tsunami Ready programme in India.
- **Recent Focus in Tsunami Warning Capability:** The focus in recent times has been on enhancing community awareness and response through several capacity building activities, biennial Indian Ocean wide tsunami drills and piloting of the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready initiative.
  - Tsunami Ready is a community performance-based programme to promote tsunami preparedness through active collaboration of public, community leaders, and national and local emergency management agencies.
  - The main objective of this programme is to improve coastal community's preparedness for tsunami emergencies, to minimize the loss of life and property and to ensure a structural and systematic approach in building community preparedness through fulfilling the best-practice indicators.
  - Two villages of Odisha, Venkatrapur in Ganjam district and Nolasahi in Jagatsinghpur district are now 'Tsunami Ready'.
- **Way Forward:** Initiatives like Tsunami Ready must be replicated in other vulnerable coastal communities as it enhances ability to respond to cyclones and storm surges too. The best of warning systems could fail, if communities are not prepared, if they do not understand the official and natural warning signs of a tsunami, and if they do not take appropriate and timely response.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 2. ₹45,000-cr. Ken-Betwa link project launched

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the Ken-Betwa river-linking project in Madhya Pradesh's Khajuraho, aimed at solving the water woes of the Bundelkhand region, spread across parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The project is estimated to cost around

₹45,000 crore. The Ken-Betwa River linking project is expected to address drinking and irrigation water needs of at least 10 districts of Madhya Pradesh and various districts of Uttar Pradesh. The project is also aimed at generating more than 100 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar energy. Apart from the Ken-Betwa project, the Prime Minister also virtually inaugurated a floating solar energy project in Madhya Pradesh's Omkareshwar, the State's first solar power plant.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** In December 2021, the Union Cabinet approved KBLP at a total cost of Rs 44,605 crore. In this project, the national and the Madhya Pradesh governments will link the Ken River with the Betwa river so that the latter can water the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Ken-Betwa link:** The Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers. Under this project, water from the Ken River will be transferred to the Betwa river. Both these rivers are tributaries of river Yamuna. The link will be in the form of a canal that will be fed by the new Daudhan Dam on the Ken, to be built within Panna Tiger Reserve. The Ken-Betwa Link Project has two phases-
  - Under Phase-I, one of the components — Daudhan dam complex and its appurtenances like Low Level Tunnel, High Level Tunnel, Ken-Betwa link canal and Power houses — will be completed.
  - Phase-II, three components — Lower Orr dam, Bina complex project and Kotha barrage — will be constructed.
- **Significance of the project:** According to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry, the project is expected to provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectares, drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and generate 103 MW of hydropower. Few are of the view that the introduction of dams inside the water scarce regions of panna tiger reserve (MP), will rejuvenate the forests of the reserve that in turn will pave the way for Rich Biodiversity in the region. It will curb the rate of farmers suicide and will ensure them stable livelihood by providing sustainable means of irrigation and reducing excessive dependence on groundwater.
- **Related concerns:** *Environmental* - According to Environmental activists the project will be very harmful to the Panna Tiger reserve, which is located in Madhya Pradesh (result into submergence of 10% of critical tiger habitat) and endangered vulture species like the white-rumped vulture (Height of the dam will affect the nesting sites of vulture) .  
*Economic* - There is a huge economic cost attached with the project implementation and maintenance, which has been rising due to delays in project implementation.  
*Social* - Cut down of million trees for the project which will adversely affect the rain in the already dry Bundelkhand region which may led to displacement of people of bundelkhand region and give rise to rehabilitation issues.
- **Way ahead:** The government is developing a larger 'Panna Tiger Landscape', which should be created in any case for Panna's tigers. Restoration of Bunderlkhand's erstwhile Chandel-period lakes and ponds. The developmental project should not destroy the ecology of fragile ecosystems and important tiger habitats in the country. The approach should be eco-centric and not anthropocentric.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 3. Centre yet to formally scrap FMR with Myanmar

**Context:** Home Minister Amit Shah had announced on February 8 that the FMR had been scrapped to ensure internal security of the country and to maintain the demographic structure of the northeastern States. However, the new guidelines indicate that the regime has not been done away with but stricter regulations, such as reducing the range of free movement to 10 km from the earlier 16 km, have been introduced. The scrapping of the FMR was opposed by Nagaland and Mizoram. The Nagaland government, led by the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party, an ally of the BJP, has passed a resolution in the Assembly against scrapping the FMR.

### Key points

- **Free Movement Regime:** Initiated in the 1970s, the FMR allowed people living within 16 km of the India-Myanmar border to travel up to 16 km into the other country without a visa. India shares a 1,643 km-long border with Myanmar, which passes through the States of Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km), and Mizoram (510 km). This regime recognized the deep-rooted familial and ethnic connections between communities on either side of the unfenced border. The FMR was last revised in 2016, aligning with India's Act East policy. However, it was suspended in Manipur since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Geopolitical Perspective:**
  - Border sharing* - India and Myanmar share a significant land border of over 1600 km and a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal, emphasizing the importance of stability in Myanmar for India.
  - Geostrategic Location* - Myanmar's location is pivotal for India's "Act East" policy and the development of the Northeast region, acting as a vital link between South Asia and Southeast Asia.
  - Chinese Influence* - India sees Myanmar as a strategic partner to counterbalance China's expanding influence in the region, emphasizing the need for enhanced bilateral engagement.
- **Socioeconomic Perspective:**
  - Indian Diaspora* - Myanmar is home to a sizable population of Indian origin, estimated at around 2.5 million, strengthening people-to-people ties between the two nations.
  - Bilateral Trade* - India ranks as Myanmar's fifth-largest trading partner, registering bilateral trade at USD 1.03 billion in 2021-22.
- **Reasons for the Policy Shift:**
  - Drug Trafficking and Insurgency* - Myanmar's status as an opium producer fuels drug trafficking and supports insurgent groups in India's northeastern states.
  - Refugee Influx Post-Coup* - Following Myanmar's military coup in February 2021, over 40,000 refugees entered Mizoram, and around 4,000 entered Manipur, exacerbating security concerns.
  - Local Government Stance* - Manipur's Chief Minister urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to cancel the FMR and complete border fencing, linking ethnic violence in the state to the free movement across the border.
- **Way forward:**
  - Border Fencing* - The government plans to fence about 300 km of the border, with a tender expected soon.
  - Regulatory Revisions* - Experts suggest refining the FMR to better regulate movement while maintaining cross-border ties.
  - Community Engagement* - Involving border communities in decision-making is crucial for effective and sensitive border management.
  - Infrastructure and Trade* - Enhancing infrastructure and formalizing trade at designated entry points could mitigate some negative impacts.



## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 4. A boost to Assam-Bhutan friendship

**Context:** The recent three-day official visit of Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, the first by an Assam Chief Minister to Bhutan, at the invitation of the Royal Bhutan government, is expected to further strengthen the bond of friendship. The visit will potentially inspire Assam and Bhutan to explore new ideas and initiatives to enhance cooperation in several key areas for mutual growth and progress. Dr Sarma, during his meetings with the Bhutanese leadership, stressed the importance of hydropower energy to boost Assam and Bhutan's mutual partnership. Moreover, Dr Sarma's discussion on water resource management is another initiative that augurs well for both Assam and Bhutan.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** Assam shares around 267 km of its borders with Bhutan. Both share an enduring bond, a relationship that has been nurtured over centuries through cultural, historical, and economic exchanges.
- **New initiative:** Assam's plans for a Multi-Village Drinking Water Supply Project in the Bodoland Territorial Region using clean water from the Nonai river, which is just 2 km within Bhutan, represent yet another area of cooperation.
- **Tourism & cultural exchange:** Dr Sarma emphasized the importance of collaborative tourism circuits linking Bhutan's pristine landscapes with Assam's iconic sites such as Kaziranga and Manas National Parks as well as Majuli, to enhance eco-tourism and promote conservation.
- **Education & skill development:** The visit is expected to strengthen cooperation in education and skill development, as Dr Sarma welcomed Bhutanese students by offering the reservation of five seats in government medical colleges and by specifying specialised programmes for Bhutanese students in Auxiliary Nursing and Midwifery (ANM) training.
- **Agri-sector:** Presenting the potential areas such as burgeoning ethanol and agro-industrial sectors in Assam and the opportunities for Bhutan's agricultural products, including maize and bamboo, the visit underscored the importance of encouraging Bhutanese enterprises to explore Assam's markets in sectors like food and beverages, poultry, and minerals.
- **Infrastructure & development:** Reiterating the Assam government's desire to expand cooperation in innovation and urban development, the visit is likely to materialize a proposal for a sister-City Agreement between Gelephu Mindfulness City and Jago Road Electronics City. This partnership, once materialized, is expected to foster sustainable urban development and shared innovation.
- **Boost in the economy:** It is a fact that Assam's economy is on a growth trajectory. There is optimism and excitement because Assam is one of the fastest-growing States in the country, with vibrancy in infrastructure, investments, technology, and startups. Therefore, both Assam and Bhutan can forge partnerships and leverage the State's strengths in sectors of interest to Bhutan.
- **Conclusion:** Assam is presumed to be one of the biggest trading partners of Bhutan. There are seven trading routes between Assam and Bhutan – four road routes and three riverine routes. The Assam government assures full cooperation in boosting the trade infrastructure at the border and formalizing additional routes for trading as per the demand of the Bhutanese traders.

## GS 3: ECONOMY, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE, SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### 5. 2 lakhs primary agri credit societies to come up in 5 years

**Context:** Union Home minister Amit Shah inaugurated 10,000 newly established Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (MPACS), along with Dairy and Fisheries Cooperative Societies. NABARD will establish 22,750 PACS in the first phase and 47,250 in the second. Similarly, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) will establish 56,500 new societies while strengthening 46,500 existing ones, and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) will create 6,000 new fisheries cooperative societies and empowering the existing 5,500 ones and an additional 25,000 PACS will be contributed by the state cooperative departments. Till date, 11,695 new PACS have been registered, most of these new PACS have been established in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

### Key points

- **Overview:** Recently Government of India approved a plan to establish two lacks new multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) /dairy/fishery primary cooperative societies for covering all the remaining Panchayats/ villages in the country.
- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS):** PACS is an association of borrowers and non-borrowers residing in a particular locality. The funds of the society are derived from the share capital and deposits of members and loans from a central cooperative bank. The first PACS was established in 1904.
- **Regulations:** PACS are registered under the Co-operative Societies Act which means they are regulated by the State government (specifically administrative aspects) and regulated by the RBI. NABARD is a nodal refinancing agency for PACS including other cooperative banks. They are governed by the “Banking regulation Act-1949” and Banking Laws (Co-operative societies) Act 1965.
- **Cooperatives:** International Labour Organization (ILO) defines a cooperative as a group of people or organizations who work together to achieve their common economic, social, and cultural goals and objectives through a democratically governed company/enterprise.
  - *Cooperatives In India: Constitutional Provisions* - The Constitution (97th Amendment) Act of 2011 created a new Part IXB (Cooperatives) following Part IXA (Municipalities) regarding cooperatives in India. In Part III of the Constitution, Article 19(1)(c), the word "cooperatives" was added after "unions and associations" which enabled citizens the right to form cooperative societies as their Fundamental Right. The Act protected cooperatives by inserting Article 43 B and Part IX B related to them.
  - *Features* - It is a non-capitalist association of people. It is a business, not a charitable organization. Members not only share the profit, but they also share the risk. It is a non-profit organization with democratic management.
- **Objectives of PACS:** To raise the capital to meet the demands of its members. To collect the deposits from its members. They also supply agricultural inputs and other services (in the form of money or in-kind) to their members. They can also provide a storage facility to produce its members.
- **Significance of PACS:** PACS accounts for 41% of all KCC loans provided by all entities in the country. PACS is the main source of credit for rural marginal farmers because 95% of beneficiaries of PACS are small and marginal farmers.
- **Approach and period of Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies:** The scheme will be implemented through the convergence of various existing schemes of the Government of India and by leveraging the ‘whole-of-Government’ approach in the next five years.