12 February 2024

National and International News

White Paper in Parliament	Context:
Key Claims: ● **UPA mismanaged a once robust economy over a decade.** ● Neglected economic reforms caused macroeconomic instability. ● **Post-2008,** high economic growth led to inflation and **fiscal deficit.** ● Unproductive borrowing led to decreased capital expenditure and neglected infrastructure. ● Capital expenditure as a percent of total expenditure (excluding interest payments) **halved from 31% in FY04 to 16% in FY14** (this ratio stands at 28% in the current year). ● **Health expenditure minimally improved during UPA's tenure.** ● Policy paralysis caused defense preparedness shortages **by 2012.** ● UPA's tenure was marred by scandals and policy missteps.	Recently, the government presented a **White Paper on the Indian economy in Parliament.** **Background:** ● The Modi government, during the Union Interim Budget on February 1, 2024, announced its intention to release a **'White Paper.'** ● This document aims to compare the economic performances of the **Congress-led UPA government over ten years with that of the BJP-led NDA government.** **Definition of White Paper:** ● A White Paper is a **governmental publication designed to showcase new policies and achievements,** seeking support and public feedback. ● Typically, it's bound in a white cover. This White Paper is **expected to analyze the Indian government's economic policies, including fiscal, monetary, trade, and exchange rate policies, over the years.**
Dayananda Saraswati	Context: ● The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, delivered a message via video at an event commemorating the 200th birth anniversary of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. ● The event was held at Swami Dayananda's birthplace in **Tankara, Morbi, Gujarat.** **About:** ● **Dayanand Saraswati,** an Indian philosopher and social reformer, founded the **Arya Samaj,** a movement aimed at reforming Hinduism. ● His influential work, **"Satyarth Prakash,"** elucidates Vedic philosophy and human responsibilities. ● In 1876, he advocated for **"India for Indians,"** a precursor to the Swaraj movement championed

by **Lokmanya Tilak.**
- He vehemently opposed idolatry and ritualistic practices, striving to **revive Vedic principles.**

Key points:
- Renowned figures such as **S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo hailed him as a key figure in shaping modern India.**
- Dayanand Saraswati campaigned against social injustices like the **caste system, Sati practice, child marriage, and idol worship, aligning his teachings with the principles of the Vedas.**
- He championed the slogan **"Go Back to Vedas,"** emphasizing the importance of Vedas as repositories of essential knowledge and spiritual truths for society.
- Swami Dayanand Saraswati's **ascetic lifestyle underscored his deep reverence for the Vedas and his commitment to their teachings.**

Brumation

- **Alligators and other reptiles** may appear dormant during colder months, leading to confusion about whether they are alive or dead.
- This state is called **brumation, akin to hibernation in mammals,** which allows reptiles to conserve energy and endure harsh environmental conditions.

Characteristics of Brumation
- **Dormancy:** Reptiles experience a period of dormancy or slowed activity.
- **Environmental Triggers:** Brumation is prompted by colder temperatures and limited food availability.
- **Metabolic Slowdown:** Reptiles' metabolism significantly decreases, enabling them to go without food for weeks or even months.

Examples Across Species
- **Box Turtles and Painted Turtles:** These turtles burrow into mud at the bottom of ponds or lakes.
- **Snakes:** Seek refuge in underground dens or caves.
- **Lizards:** Hide under rocks or within vegetation.

Importance of Brumation
- **Survival:** Crucial for reptiles to endure cold climates and challenging environmental conditions.
- **Reproduction:** Allows them to reemerge in more favorable conditions for feeding and reproduction.

Behavior During Brumation
- **Seeking Shelter:** Reptiles retreat to underground burrows, rock crevices, or other sheltered areas with stable temperatures.
- **Reduced Activity:** Activity levels decrease to conserve energy.
- **Resource Conservation:** Reptiles minimize resource requirements during this period.

Understanding Global Warming Patterns

Context:

Assessment of 2023
- **Many warming records were broken in 2023, accompanied by climate disasters like wildfires, cyclones, droughts, and floods.**
- **Public focus often centers on whether the 1.5 degrees C warming threshold was crossed.**

- Global warming's impact is influenced by its patterns, not just its overall levels.
- Local conditions can moderate or amplify global warming effects.

Role of El Niño
- El Niño events impact global warming patterns, influencing phenomena like monsoons.
- The location and intensity of El Niño affect its global consequences.

Need for accurate predictions
- It is hardly possible to **over-emphasise our need for accurate predictions of warming patterns to manage the climate change impacts that have already landed.**
- We need such predictions not only on an event-to-event basis but also in order to **adapt to the changing seasons and the unavoidable harm** they are rendering to lives, livelihoods, and economies.

PM SVANidhi : Findings of recent Study

Context:
- PM-SVANidhi boosted annual income of street vendors by Rs 23,000.
- Study was commissioned by **Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**

About:
- Central Sector Scheme
- Provides affordable working capital loans to street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Implementation until March 2022.
- Initial working capital of up to Rs. 10,000 for vendors.
- Interest subsidy of 7% for early or timely loan repayment.
- Monthly cash-back incentives for digital payments, ranging from Rs. 50-100.
- Higher loan eligibility upon timely repayment of the first loan.
- No requirement for collateral security.

Kerala Regional News

National Productivity Day	**Context:**
	National Productivity Day is celebrated in India every year on **February 12th.** - It marks the f**oundation day of the National Productivity Council (NPC)**, an autonomous organization **established in 1958** to **promote productivity consciousness and culture in the country.** - The day is recognized as part of **a week-long National Productivity Week**, observed from **February 12th to 18th.** - This year's **theme is "Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Productivity Engine for Economic Growth."** - It highlights the crucial role of AI in driving a country's economic growth and productivity. **About:** - This date **marks the anniversary of the foundation of the International Labour Organization (ILO)**. - The **first NPD was celebrated in 1962**
Five-year strategic plan to reduce by 50% the number of children living in institutions	**Context:** - The **State's efforts to reduce deinstitutionalisation** and **develop alternative care mechanisms for children** are **set to get a boost with a five-year strategic plan of the Women and Child Development department.** - The State plan, being implemented with technical **support of UNICEF, aims at a 50% reduction in the number of children living in child care institutions (CCIs) and a 70% drop in new entries to CCIs by 2029**.
Civic body set to procure 237 e-carts for garbage movement	- The **Kerala State Waste Management project (KSWMP) plans to procure 237 e-carts (electric tricycles) and 41 tipper auto rickshaws** for garbage movement in corporation limits. - Though the initial plan was to buy 808 e-carts and 71 tipper autorickshaws, the number was cut short as there is shortage of parking. - There has already been a procurement of around 120 e- carts by the Kochi Corporation in 2022.
21 startups in state got 3.47cr last year	**Context:**

- As many as 2**1 incubators and startups got approval for Rs 3.47 crore funding under the Startup India seed fund scheme** in the state last year.
- In **2022**, this amount was **Rs 3.87 crore for 19 incubators**, and it was **Rs 50 lakh for seven startups in 2021.**
- **This year, of the 198 startups chosen from across the country, five are from Kerala.**

About:

- Th**e Startup India seed fund scheme (SISFS) provides financial assistance** to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization through eligible incubators.
- An **experts advisory committee (EAC) evaluates and selects incubators** for allocation of funds under the scheme.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Context:

- The **International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS)**, celebrated annually on **February 11th**
- **It** aims to **recognize the critical role women and girls play in science and technology**, and promote their full and equal access and participation in these fields.
- This year's **theme, "Closing the Gender Gap in Science: Accelerating Action",** underscores the **urgent need to address the barriers that hinder women** and **girls** from **pursuing and thriving in STEM careers**

About:

- On **22 December 2015**, the **General Assembly** decided to **establish an annual International Day to recognize the critical role women and girls play in science and technology, through Resolution A/RES/70/212.**