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## Current Affairs - 23 November 2025

### E-KYC HURDLES FOR MGNREGA WORKERS

- The Union Ministry of Rural Development has stated that verifying MGNREGA workers is an ongoing exercise, and e-KYC is an additional step to enhance transparency and efficiency.
- According to the Ministry, the **digital verification** process is intended to improve service delivery and reduce inclusion errors.
- So far, over 56% of active workers have completed e-KYC across States, indicating steady progress in the verification drive.

### Methods of Worker Verification

- Before the introduction of e-KYC, the government relied on multiple digital and Aadhaar-linked verification measures to prevent ineligible beneficiaries under MGNREGA:
  - **Digital Attendance (NMMS App):** After a year-long pilot from May 2022, workers' attendance had to be captured via the National Mobile Monitoring System. Mates/supervisors uploaded geotagged photos twice daily from worksites.
  - **Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS):** Made mandatory in January 2023, ABPS required workers' Aadhaar to be linked with job cards and bank accounts.
  - **NPCI Mapping Requirements:** Workers' Aadhaar numbers and banks' IINs had to be mapped with the NPCI database to enable Aadhaar-based payments.
- These steps aimed to tighten verification, reduce duplication, and ensure payments reached genuine workers.
- **e-KYC Process**
  - Under the e-KYC system integrated into the NMMS app, supervisors photograph each MNREGA worker at the worksite.
  - This image is then digitally matched with the worker's Aadhaar database photo to verify identity instantly.

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### Link Between e-KYC Drive and MNREGA Worker Deletions

- Earlier digital measures — NMMS for attendance and Aadhaar-Based Payment System were introduced to improve transparency but instead caused widespread exclusion.
  - Issues included poor network connectivity, limited digital literacy, and technical failures that prevented attendance capture, leading to wage loss.
  - **Aadhaar Seeding and Data Mismatch Problems**
    - ABPS required perfect matching of Aadhaar details with job cards and bank accounts.
    - Minor spelling differences in names or demographic discrepancies frequently caused workers' records to be rejected.
    - During ABPS rollout, deletions surged by 247% between 2021-22 and 2022-23.
  - **Failures in NMMS Implementation**
    - NMMS did not deliver the intended transparency. Problems included:
      - Uploading irrelevant or fake photos
      - Photo-to-photo capturing instead of live images
      - Large mismatches between actual and recorded attendance
    - To fix this, the government introduced a multi-level verification system, with 100% verification at gram panchayat level and reduced checks at higher levels.
  - **Introduction of e-KYC Due to NMMS Shortcomings**
    - e-KYC was introduced partly because NMMS verification was unreliable.
    - The new system seeks to validate identity using live photo matching with Aadhaar.
  - **Overall Assurance**
    - The Ministry affirms its dedication to:
      - Protecting the rights of every genuine MGNREGA worker
      - Ensuring uninterrupted wage employment
      - Maintaining transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in scheme implementation
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### JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARD



Juvenile Justice and Children in Conflict with the Law: A Study of Capacity at the Frontlines', by the India Justice Report (IJR) highlighted that more than half (55%) of the cases before 362 Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) remained pending as of October 31, 2023.

- It is formed under section-4 of the **Juvenile Justice Act, 2015** which functions relating to **children in conflict with law under this Act.**
- It states that, the **State Government shall constitute** for every district, **one or more Juvenile Justice Boards.**
- **Composition of Juvenile Justice Board:**
  - A board shall consist of:
    - **Metropolitan Magistrate** or
    - A **Judicial Magistrate** of first class not being Chief Metropolitan Magistrate or
    - **Chief Judicial Magistrate** referred to as Principal Magistrate with at **least three years' experience**
    - **Two social workers** selected in such a manner as may be prescribed, of whom at least one shall be a woman.
  - **Powers of Juvenile Justice Board:**
    - **Under Section 15**, special provisions have been made to tackle child offenders committing heinous offences in the age group of 16-18 years.
    - The Juvenile Justice Board is given the option to transfer cases of heinous **offences by such children to a Children's Court** (Court of Session) after conducting preliminary assessment.



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- **Functions of Juvenile Justice Board:**
  - To ensure that **the child's rights are protected throughout** the process of apprehending the child, inquiry, aftercare and rehabilitation.
  - It also ensures the **availability of legal aid** for the child through the **legal services institutions**.
  - The board undertakes at **least one inspection** visit **every month** of residential facilities for children in conflict with law and recommends action for improvement in quality of services to the **District Child Protection Unit** and the state government.

### FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (FSSAI)



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently issued an order to all the States/UTs Commissioners of food safety asking them to remove all non-compliant ORS products from shops immediately.

- It is an **autonomous body** established under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India.
- It has been established under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India.
- FSSAI is responsible for **setting food standards, regulating the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food, and ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food** for human consumption.
- It **lays down the science-based standards for food articles** and regulates their manufacturing and distribution processes.
- **Functions:**
  - **Standards Development:** FSSAI formulates standards for various food products, ensuring they are safe for consumption.



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- **Food Safety Management Systems:** It provides guidelines for businesses to implement effective food safety management practices.
  - **Licensing and Registration:** FSSAI manages the licensing process for food businesses, ensuring they comply with food safety regulations.
  - **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Regular inspections and audits are conducted to assess compliance with food safety standards.
  - **Consumer Awareness:** Initiatives to educate the public about food safety, hygiene, and nutrition are a key focus area.
- **Anyone selling or importing food in India needs a food licence issued by FSSAI.**
  - FSSAI also directly **monitors compliance of food regulations**, especially in the area of **food imports to India.**
  - FSSAI officers carry out **food import controls** and **ensure that they contain no harmful ingredients.** To do this, they send selected test products from the import to accredited laboratories for inspection.
  - The FSSAI is also responsible for the **accreditation of food testing laboratories throughout India.**
  - FSSAI has notified 14 referral labs, 72 State/UT labs across India, and 112 NABL approved commercial labs, all of which are situated throughout the country.

### SANGAI FESTIVAL



- It is celebrated in the state of **Manipur.**
- It is an **annual festival**, started in the year 2010, which is named after the state animal, the Sangai.
- It aims to showcase **Manipur's rich cultural heritage** and indigenous tradition.
- The festival promotes the cultural extravaganza of Manipur through **music, dance and various native art forms** that are part of the Manipuri tribes and people.



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- The state's classical dance form, 'Ras Leela,' renowned for its distinctiveness, takes centerstage during the festival.
- **Theme of 2025:** Where blossoms breathe harmony

### Key Facts about Sangai:

- It is subspecies of Eld's deer **endemic to Manipur.**
- It also has immense **cultural relevance to Manipur.**
- **Distribution:** It is found only in **Keibul Lamjao National Park** – the largest single mass of phumdi is in the Loktak Lake – in Manipur's Bishnupur district.
- **Appearance:** It is a medium-sized deer, with uniquely distinctive antlers, with extremely long brow tine, which form the main beam.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN:**Critically Endangered
  - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule-1

### WHAT ARE MICROPLASTICS?



- Microplastics are **small pieces of plastics**, usually **smaller than 5 mm.**
- They are **present in a variety of products**, from **cosmetics to synthetic clothing to plastic bags** and bottles. Many of these products readily enter the environment as wastes.
- Microplastics consist of **carbon and hydrogen atoms bound together in polymer chains.**
- **Other chemicals**, such as **phthalates**, polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), and **tetrabromobisphenol A (TBBPA)**, are typically **also present in microplastics**, and many of these chemical additives leach out of the plastics after entering the environment.
- They are **persistent**, very **mobile**, and **hard to remove from nature.**
- There are **two categories** of microplastics: **primary and secondary.**



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- **Primary microplastics** are tiny particles **designed for commercial use**, such as cosmetics, as well as microfibers shed from clothing and other textiles, such as fishing nets.
  - They **enter the environment directly through any of various channels**—for example, product use, unintentional loss from spills during manufacturing or transport, or abrasion during washing.
  - **Secondary microplastics** are particles that result from the **breakdown of larger plastic items**, such as water bottles.
  - This **breakdown is caused by exposure to environmental factors**, mainly the **sun's radiation and ocean waves**.
  - **Impacts:**
    - Once in the environment, microplastics **do not biodegrade** and **tend to accumulate and persist**.
    - They can be **ingested by marine organisms**, leading to potential harm to aquatic life and **bioaccumulation** along the food chain.
    - They can also **carry toxic chemicals and pollutants**, posing additional risks to organisms and ecosystems.
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### SUKHNA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- It is a protected area located in **Chandigarh, near the famous Sukhna Lake** at the foothills of the Shivalik range.
- The **lake was created by the architect Le Corbusier in 1958** by diverting the Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream that flows down from the Shivalik hills.
- The **sanctuary was developed as a result of afforestation done for soil conservation around Sukhna Lake**.
- Spreading over an area of 2600 hectares, Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1998.



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- The place is quite **unstable geographically** and becomes **prone to soil erosion by surface runoff during rains**.
- It has **sandy soil** of Shivalik with **pockets of clay embedded at places**.
- Apart from the Sukhna Lake, there are around 150 small and large water bodies in the sanctuary that form its catchment area.
- **Vegetation:** It is characterized by a mix of **forests, grasslands, and wetlands**, with the Sukhna Lake forming an important part of the ecosystem.
- **Flora:** The common flora of the sanctuary includes **Khair, Phulai, Kikar, Shisham, Moonj, Amaltas, Jhingan, Amla, Rati, Vasaka**, and many more.
- **Fauna:**
  - **Squirrels, Common-Mongoose, Indian Hare, Porcupine, Jungle Cat, Jackal, Wild boar**, etc, are the mammals found in the sanctuary.
  - It is known to have the **most number of sambar** (a type of antelope) **found in a group or cluster** than anywhere else in the country.
  - **Peacock, Hill myna, Jungle crow, Black drongo, Parrots, Doves**, and others are the common birds of this region. Migratory birds also flock around this place.

### KEY FACTS ABOUT MAHI RIVER



India's Mahi River, originating in Madhya Pradesh, uniquely flows west and crosses the Tropic of Cancer twice due to a significant U-shaped loop in Rajasthan.

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- It is one of the **major west-flowing interstate rivers** of India.
- It flows through the states of **Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat**.
- The river is popularly **described as “Mahisagar”** due to its vastness.
- **Course:**
  - It **originates** in the northern slope of the **Vindhya Mountain Range in Madhya Pradesh**, at an average altitude of about 500 m above mean sea level.



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- After its birth, the river **flows in the southerly direction of Madhya Pradesh** for about 120 km.
  - It **enters** the southeastern portion of **Rajasthan**, which is the **Vagad region**.
  - **Before entering Gujarat**, the river makes a 'U'-shaped loop in Rajasthan.
  - Finally, the river **surrenders itself to the Arabian Sea** by a wide estuary near **Khambat**.
  - The total length of Mahi is **583 km**.
  - The Mahi basin extends over the states of **Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat**, having a total area of 34,842 sq.km.
  - It is **bounded by the Aravalli hills** on the north and the northwest, by the **Malwa Plateau** on the east, by the **Vindhya**s on the south, and by the **Gulf of Khambhat** on the west.
  - The **silt brought down by the Mahi River** has contributed to the **thinning of the Gulf of Khambhat** and the abandonment of its once-rich ports.
  - The **riverbed lies considerably lower than the land level** and is of little use for irrigation.
  - **Geological Features:** Rocky stretches, rapids, waterfalls, canyons, and gorges define the river's course.
  - **Tributaries:** The **Som** is its principal tributary, which joins from the right, and the **Anas** and the **Panam** joins the river from the left.
  - **Dams:** **Mahi Bajaj Sagar Dam, Kadana Dam, and Panam Dam**
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