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Current Affairs - 25 June 2025

EMERGENCY AND ITS LESSONS

- Indira Gandhi won a landslide victory in 1971, but her government soon faced multiple crises:
 - Economic strain from the 1971 India-Pak war, droughts, and the 1973 oil crisis
 - Rising corruption, misgovernance, and state excesses
- These factors triggered widespread public dissatisfaction.
- **The Rise of Student Movements and Jayaprakash Narayan**
 - In February 1974, Gujarat's Navnirman Movement led to the resignation of CM Chimanbhai Patel over corruption.
 - This inspired a student-led protest in Bihar, uniting socialist and right-wing groups under the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti.
 - Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), a Gandhian and Quit India Movement veteran, took charge of the movement.
 - On June 5, 1974, from Patna's Gandhi Maidan, JP gave the iconic call for "**Sampoorna Kranti**" (Total Revolution), mobilising mass support across Bihar and beyond.
- **Nationwide Agitation and the Call for Change**
 - In May 1974, George Fernandes led a railway workers' strike, paralysing Indian Railways.
 - Through 1974 and early 1975, the JP Movement gained national momentum.
- **Trigger: Court Verdict Against Indira Gandhi**
 - On June 12, 1975, the Allahabad High Court convicted Indira Gandhi of electoral malpractice, invalidating her Lok Sabha election from Raebareli.
 - This intensified calls for her resignation.
- **Declaration of Emergency: June 25, 1975**
 - As dissent peaked, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the Emergency proclamation late on June 25, 1975.

Emergency Rule by Decree (1975–1977)

- From June 25, 1975, to March 21, 1977, Indira Gandhi's government exercised extraordinary constitutional powers, drastically altering India's democratic structure.
- **Centre Tightens Control: Federalism Undermined**
 - India's federal structure became de facto unitary.
 - State governments remained in place but were effectively controlled by the Centre.
 - Parliament legislated on State List subjects, and constitutional provisions on Union-State financial allocation were altered with parliamentary approval.
- **Mass Arrests and Suppression of Dissent**
 - Over 1.12 lakh people were detained under harsh laws:
 - MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act)
 - Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA)
 - Defence of India Act and Defence & Internal Security of India Rules (DISIR)
- **42nd Constitutional Amendment: Judicial Powers Curtailed**
 - Passed in 1976, the 42nd Amendment:
 - Stripped the judiciary of the power to hear election petitions
 - Expanded Union powers to override state matters
 - Gave Parliament absolute authority to amend the Constitution
 - Made laws implementing Directive Principles immune to judicial review
- **Censorship and Attack on the Press**
 - Article 19(1)(a) — the right to freedom of speech — was curtailed.
 - Newspapers were placed under pre-censorship.
- **Extension of Lok Sabha Tenure**
 - In 1976, when elections were due, Parliament extended its term by one year, delaying democratic restoration.

TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) PROGRAMME



- It is aimed at strengthening the **financial autonomy of Panchayats**.
- It focuses on enhancing the **capacity of Panchayats** to generate their **Own Source Revenue (OSR)**.
- This initiative is being implemented under the **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** in collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad**.
- This Training of Trainers on OSR marks a structured and forward-looking initiative to build **robust, responsive, and financially capable Panchayats** across the country.

Key Facts about Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

- It was launched on **24th April 2018** as an umbrella scheme of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India**.
- It is a unique scheme proposed to **develop and strengthen the Panchayati Raj System** across India in the rural areas implemented during 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- The scheme was revamped and the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) was approved for the implementation from financial year **2022-23 to 2025-26** for capacity building of elected representative of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- The primary objective of Revamped RGSA is to **develop the governance capabilities** of the Panchayats to **deliver on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which covered within the purview of Panchayats.
- The Revamped RGSA extends to all **States and Union Territories (UTs)** of the country including institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas, where Panchayats do not exist.

WHAT IS EVAPORATIVE DEMAND?



- Evaporative demand is a measure of how thirsty the atmosphere is.
- It determines the near-maximum of how much water will evaporate from a given piece of land if sufficient water is available.
- It does **not necessarily relate to actual evaporation rate**, as if there is little water supply there can only be a small evaporation rate, no matter how large the demand.
- It is **driven by atmospheric factors** including **temperature, wind speed, humidity and cloud cover**.
- Periods of **high evaporative demand** are connected to **droughts and increased fire danger**.
- Tracking extended periods with above normal evaporative demand can be a useful way to detect drought onset, drought intensification, and elevated fire danger.
- **Above normal temperatures, clear skies, and wind speed, and below normal humidity** all drive **evaporative demand up** and lead to quicker drying at the surface.
- **Soil moisture is reduced** which leads to less water available for plants and **vegetation becomes stressed and more flammable**.
- When extended periods of below normal precipitation overlap with extended periods of above normal evaporative demand fuels become critically dry favoring rapidly spreading wildfires.

What is a Thirstwave?

- It denotes **three or more contiguous days of intense evaporative demand**.
- While heat waves are caused by particular temperature and wind patterns, a thirstwave is the **product of temperature, humidity, solar radiation, and wind speed**.

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- When temperatures rise, the consequences include more heat as well as the mechanics of water exchange between land and atmosphere, which in turn alters humidity, wind, and solar radiation.
- **In a warming world**, the researchers found that **thirstwaves have grown more intense**, are more **frequent**, and are **lasting longer**.

DIGITAL PAYMENT INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM



- It seeks to **bolster fraud risk management** by facilitating **real-time intelligence sharing** and gathering, thereby preventing fraudulent digital transactions.
- The institutional structure of the proposed entity would be created with **the help of both public sector and private sector lenders**.
- It will **collect and analyse data from various sources** to identify potential threats and prevent fraudulent activities.
- By enabling real-time data sharing, the platform will help prevent scams and ensure secure transactions.
- The **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)** has been assigned to build a prototype of DPIIP in consultation with 5-10 banks.
- It is going to leverage advanced technologies to curb payment-related frauds.
- RBI formed a **committee, chaired by AP Hota** to examine various aspects of establishing this **digital public infrastructure**.

Why is it needed?

- The **volume of frauds also rose** to 15.51 lakh during the March 2024 period from 11.5 lakh in the previous six-month period.
- The alarming increase coincides with India's **rapid transformation into a digital payments powerhouse**, fuelled by the widespread adoption of the unified payments interface (UPI) since its launch in 2016.

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A RESET IN WEST ASIA, A 'DE-ESCALATION' FOR THE WORLD

- The **geopolitical landscape of West Asia** has undergone a seismic shift following the bombing of Iran by Israel and the United States.
- It **effectively dismantles Iran's strategic influence**, leaving Israel as the unchallenged military hegemon in the region.
- The **silence of traditional allies like Russia and China**, despite their strategic agreements with Iran, **signifies a calculated withdrawal rather than helplessness**.
- These **global powers made a conscious choice to let Iran be isolated**, a development that recasts alliances, power balances, and future conflict trajectories across West Asia.

The Trajectory of West Asia Post Israel-Iran Conflict

- **The Uncontested Dominance of Israel**
 - With Iran's nuclear capabilities neutralised, Israel now stands as the **sole dominant nuclear power** in West Asia.
 - This **new order is reinforced by the presence of 40,000 U.S. troops** and an expansive network of American military assets throughout the region.
 - **The aim is clear: prevent any resurgence of military threats to Israel**, thereby sealing a new regional architecture.
 - Initially, **Iran's assertive ideological and military posturing had alarmed both Israel and the Gulf countries**.
 - **The latter, in response, often compromised on broader regional issues**, such as the Palestinian cause, while quietly strengthening ties with both Israel and the U.S.
 - The **Abraham Accords**, facilitating normalisation between Israel and Gulf states, were a byproduct of this tactical alignment.
- **Iran's Existential Crisis and Dangerous Escalation**
 - The airstrikes on Iran have pushed its **leadership to the brink**.

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- The response, targeting U.S. military bases in Qatar and Iraq, represents not just a retaliatory act, but a **desperate signal of resilience**.
- **Iran claims it acted proportionately**, mirroring the number of bombs used by the U.S. on its nuclear sites.
- However, **this response also involved violating the territorial sovereignty of a 'brotherly' Gulf nation, Qatar**, thereby heightening regional instability.
- For Iran, **the stakes are existential**. Its leadership believes that **the ultimate goal of the U.S.-Israel alliance is regime change**, an end to its theological system of governance and the suppression of its ideological influence in the region.
- The **vacuum that could emerge from an Iranian collapse threatens to mirror the chaos of Iraq and Libya**, spawning terrorism, civil wars, and global insecurity.
- **The Gulf countries, now partly complicit in isolating Iran, must act decisively to prevent a wider regional breakdown** that could spiral into another wave of extremism and instability.

The Illusion of Stability and Next Brewing Conflict

- **A Ceasefire and the Illusion of Stability**
 - In a surprising turn, **the U.S. called for a ceasefire between Iran and Israel**, a move seen by many as a rare moment of strategic restraint.
 - This **pause allows Iran to de-escalate without appearing weak**, and also reveals that even American and Israeli assets are not invincible.
 - The **Iranian strike on American bases likely triggered U.S. pressure on Israel** to pause its offensive.
 - It is a timely reminder to Gulf states that **proximity to power does not translate to immunity**.
 - This **temporary cessation in hostilities also revives focus on the Iran nuclear deal**. Both Tehran and Washington may now be willing to re-engage diplomatically.

FRESH VOTER ROLLS IN BIHAR: NO ENTRY WITHOUT BIRTH PROOF

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) regards the creation, maintenance, and purification of the Electoral Roll (ER) as a core constitutional duty.
- This duty is rooted in **Article 324, the Representation of the People Act, 1950**, and the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (RER)**.
- The ER's credibility is anchored in continuous updates and decades of revisions, carried out through a rule-based, transparent statutory process.
- **Special Summary Revision (SSR)**
 - SSR involves reviewing the voter list and unveiling a draft electoral roll. It is often held prior to elections.

EC Begins Special Revision of Electoral Rolls in Bihar

- The EC has ordered a special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections.
- Voters not listed in the 2003 rolls must now submit fresh proof of eligibility.
 - The last intensive revision in Bihar was in 2003, with the qualifying date of January 1, 2003.
- **Proof of Birth and Parental Origin Now Mandatory**
 - **Born Before July 1, 1987:** Must provide proof of their own date and/or place of birth.
 - **Born Between July 1, 1987 – December 2, 2004:** Must furnish proof of date/place of birth of either parent.
 - **Born After December 2, 2004:** Must provide date/place of birth proof of both parents.

These categories align with the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, according to EC sources.

- **Legal Basis and Historical Context**

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- This revision is being conducted under powers granted by the **Representation of the People Act, 1950** (Section 21), which allows the EC to prepare electoral rolls afresh.
- The Commission has invoked this power 13 times before, between 1952 and 2004.
- **Process**
 - **Booth Level Officers (BLOs)** will conduct **house-to-house surveys**, distribute pre-filled enumeration forms, and collect them with supporting documents.
 - Forms can also be submitted via the **ECINET app or ECI website**.
 - Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) verify voter eligibility under **Section 23 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950**.
 - If any claims or objections arise, the AERO will investigate before final approval.
 - Under **Section 24**, appeals against ERO decisions can be made to the District Magistrate or Chief Electoral Officer.
- **Need for intensive revision**
 - The last intensive revision in Bihar was done in 2003.
 - Due to rapid urbanisation, migration, new eligible voters, unreported deaths, and inclusion of foreign illegal immigrants, the EC has now ordered a fresh revision to ensure accurate and error-free electoral rolls.

EC Revises Protocol for Handling EVMs and VVPATs with Mock Poll Data

- Earlier, EVMs and VVPATs where mock poll data wasn't deleted or slips weren't removed were set aside and not counted if the **margin of victory exceeded the number of such votes**.



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