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WHAT IS GILOY?



amrita, among other names.

- **Habitat and Distribution:**

- It is **native to India** but also found in **China** and **tropical areas of Australia and Africa**.
- It grows well in almost **all types of soils** and under varying climatic conditions.
- The plant is cultivated by stem cutting in the months of May-June.

- It's considered an essential herbal plant in **Ayurvedic and folk medicine**, where people **use it as a treatment** for a wide range of health conditions.

- **All parts** of the plant are **used in Ayurvedic medicine**. However, the **stem** is thought to have the **most beneficial compounds**.

- **Nutritional Value:**

- Giloy contains several essential nutrients such as **copper, iron, manganese, zinc**, calcium, and phosphorus.
- It also has **alkaloids, steroids**, glycosides, sesquiterpenoids, **essential oils, fatty acids**, and aliphatic compounds.

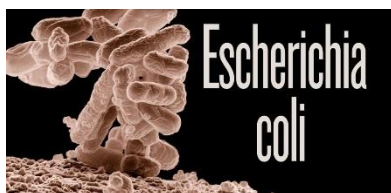
- Traditionally, giloy is **used to treat**

- **fever**
- urinary problems
- **asthma**
- dysentery
- diarrhea

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- skin infections
- Hansen's disease (formerly called leprosy)
- diabetes
- gout
- jaundice
- anorexia
- eye conditions

ESCHERICHIA COLI



- It is commonly known as **E. coli**, is a type of **bacteria** that can be found in the intestines of humans and animals.

- It is a **rod-shaped bacterium** of the **Enterobacteriaceae** family.
- While most strains of **E. coli** are harmless and even beneficial, some strains can cause illness and infections.
- **Transmission:** It can be transmitted to humans **through contaminated food, water**, or contact with fecal matter from infected individuals or animals.
- **Impact on Health:** Some kinds of **coli can cause diarrhea**, while others cause **urinary tract infections**, respiratory illness and pneumonia, and other illnesses.
 - The most familiar strains of **E. coli** that make sick by producing a **toxin called Shiga**.
 - This toxin damages the lining of small intestine and causes diarrhea.
 - These strains of **E. coli** are also called **Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC)**.
- **Symptoms:** The most common symptoms of **E.coli** infection include **fever, persistent diarrhoea, bloody diarrhoea, and vomiting**.
- **Treatment:** Most **E. coli** infections are **self-limiting** and resolve on their own without treatment. However, it's essential to stay hydrated during the course of the illness.

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KEY FACTS ABOUT REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBS)



- RRBs are financial institutions established to **provide financial services to rural areas.**
- They are formed in collaboration by the **Central Government, State Governments, and Sponsoring Commercial Banks** to give loans to rural areas.
- The main objectives of setting up the RRB is to **provide credit and other facilities**, especially to the **small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans, and small entrepreneurs in rural areas.**
- **Origin:**
 - RRBs were set up on the basis of the **recommendations** of the **Narasimham Working Group (1975)** and after the legislation of the **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976.**
- **Ownership:** The **equity** of an RRB is held by the **Central Government, concerned State Government** and the **Sponsor Bank** in the proportion of **50:15:35.**
- The **area of operation** of RRBs is **limited to the area as notified by the Government of India**, covering one or more districts in the State.
- **Sources of Funds:** It comprises **owned funds, deposits, borrowings** from **NABARD, sponsor banks** and other sources, including **SIDBI** and the **National Housing Bank.**
- **Regulation:** RRBs are **regulated by the RBI** and **supervised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).**
- **Management:** The **Board of Directors** manages these banks, overall affairs, which consists of **one Chairman, three Directors** as **nominated by the Central Government**, a **maximum of two Directors** as nominated by the concerned **State Government**, and a **maximum of three Directors** as nominated by the **sponsor bank.**

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INDIA'S SHANTI ACT RULES: WHY THE SMALL MODULAR REACTOR RACE MAY TILT TOWARD RUSSIA

Draft rules issued by the Department of Atomic Energy under the SHANTI Act could give Russia a significant advantage in India's nuclear sector, particularly in the emerging field of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

What Are SMRs?

- Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are advanced nuclear reactors with about a third of the generating capacity of conventional nuclear plants, yet capable of producing substantial low-carbon electricity.
- They are particularly suited to remote regions with limited grid infrastructure and to localised industrial applications.

Russia's Global SMR Lead

- Currently, only two SMR projects are operational worldwide:
 - Russia's Akademik Lomonosov floating power unit (two 35 MWe modules), commercially operational since May 2020 — the world's northernmost nuclear power plant, based in Pevek, Russia.
 - China's HTR-PM demonstration project, grid-connected in December 2021 and commercially operational since December 2023.
- Other global SMR developers — Holtec International, Rolls-Royce SMR, NuScale's VOYGR, Westinghouse's AP300, and GE-Hitachi's BWRX-300 — remain in the design certification stage, with none yet operational.
- Under the draft SHANTI rules, this could disqualify them from entering India's market in the near term.
- Russia is the only country in the world with proven expertise in floating nuclear power solutions, having presented India with details of this technology in April 2024.

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Conclusion

As India expands its nuclear ambitions through the SHANTI Act framework, the "proven and operational" technology requirement — combined with Russia's existing SMR expertise and cost competitiveness — positions Moscow favourably over Western players.

This could shape the geopolitics of India's clean energy transition, reinforcing Russia's role as a key nuclear partner even as India pursues technological diversification.

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS

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- The National Sports Awards are **given every year** to recognize and **reward excellence in sports**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- **Arjuna Award:**
 - It is given for good **performance over a period of the previous four years** and for showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.
- **Arjuna Awards (Lifetime):**
 - It is given to honour and motivate those **sportspersons** who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to promotion of **sports even after their retirement from active sporting careers**.
- **Dronacharya Award**
 - It is given to **coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious** work on a consistent basis and for enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar**
 - The 'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar' is given to **corporate entity (Public/Private), non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**, who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.

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LEGAL AID DEFENCE COUNSELS (LADCS) - STRENGTHENING INDIA'S PUBLIC DEFENCE SYSTEM

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) recently directed the **non-renewal of contracts** of Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCs) engaged by legal services institutions across India.

What is the LADC System?

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** that provides an institutional model of **public defence** aimed at providing competent and dedicated legal representation to accused persons who cannot afford private lawyers.
- Officially launched by the NALSA, it aims to provide legal aid with regard to **criminal cases only** under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- Unlike the traditional system, where individual private advocates are empanelled for legal-aid work, LADCs function within a more structured framework with -
 - Dedicated defence lawyers;
 - Institutional supervision and accountability;
 - Greater continuity in handling cases;
 - Focus on criminal defence, including bail, remand, trials and appeals.
- The system seeks to make legal aid a meaningful component of the **right to a fair trial**, rather than merely a formal entitlement.

Why LADCs Have Gained Importance?

- The popularity of LADCs is partly attributed to their **dedicated approach**.
- Many undertake - Prompt appearances during production and remand hearings; timely filing of applications and petitions; challenges to violations of procedural safeguards; and protection of the accused's legal and constitutional rights.
- By comparison, the traditional assigned-counsel model has faced criticism over missed hearings, delayed applications and inadequate engagement, besides concerns regarding state-paid fees.

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Need for Evidence-Based Reform:

- The strongest argument against abruptly discontinuing or stalling the LADC system is the absence of a comprehensive national assessment of its performance.
- Before dismantling or substantially altering a statutory scheme, authorities should **examine** -
 - Its impact on quality of legal representation;
 - Case outcomes and procedural compliance;
 - Client satisfaction and accessibility;
 - Effectiveness of institutional supervision;
 - Impact on pending criminal cases;
 - Whether LADCs complement or genuinely displace private legal practice.
- **Article 39A** of the Constitution directs the State to ensure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and provides free legal aid.
- The Supreme Court has also recognised free legal aid as integral to a fair procedure under **Article 21**.

Way Forward:

- The debate should not be framed as LADCs versus private lawyers.
- The central question is whether India can guarantee **effective, competent** and **accountable** criminal defence to every accused, irrespective of economic status.
- NALSA should undertake an **independent** national performance **evaluation** before making structural changes.
- The system can be improved through professional standards, training, performance audits and clear accountability mechanisms.

Conclusion:

- A mature justice system must **balance** the legitimate interests of the legal profession with the more fundamental constitutional commitment to access to justice, equality before law and the accused's right to a fair trial.

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EDUCATION MUST CHANGE TO ACCOUNT FOR AI

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is **rapidly transforming the nature of work**, creating uncertainty about the skills required in the near future.

The AI-Driven Overhaul of Work

- Intelligent agents can make even sophisticated tasks routine, reducing the demand for large numbers of employees while increasing the importance of human oversight and specialised expertise.
- In pharmaceuticals, **AI is reshaping molecule screening** and formulation, while robotics and machine vision can undertake synthesis and quality control.
- Vaccine development can benefit from AI-assisted antigen design and immune-response prediction.
- Automated bioreactors**, fill-finish systems and AI-managed logistics can further make production faster, cleaner and more precise.
- Consequently, companies may prosper while their workforce structures change dramatically. Entry-level jobs are **particularly vulnerable**, as many tasks traditionally assigned to inexperienced workers can be automated.

The Way Forward

- India's education system should prioritise:
 - Reducing unnecessary curricular overload while strengthening foundational and conceptual knowledge.
 - Expanding experiential learning through apprenticeships, internships, research and industry collaboration.
 - Introducing problems beyond the syllabus to develop independent thinking and adaptability.
 - Building AI literacy so students understand both AI's capabilities and limitations.
 - Promoting lifelong learning to enable workers to continuously acquire new skills.

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- The objective should be to produce graduates capable of learning, adapting and exercising judgement throughout their careers, rather than merely possessing predetermined information.

Conclusion

- India must combine **foundational knowledge** with practical experience, research, apprenticeship and continuous learning.
- The aim should not be to compete with machines in storing information or performing predictable tasks, but to develop individuals capable of **asking meaningful questions**, exercising judgement, acquiring new knowledge and solving unfamiliar problems.
- In an AI-driven economy, **the ability to learn, unlearn and adapt** may become the most valuable qualification of all.

KEY FACTS ABOUT THAMES RIVER



A traditional Ganga Aarti, a ritual associated with the ghats of Varanasi, Haridwar, and Rishikesh, will be held on the banks of the River Thames in London in September.

- It flows through **southern England**.
- It is the **longest river in England** and the **second longest in the United Kingdom**, after the River Severn.
- **Course:**
 - **Origin:** Its **source** is at **Thames Head**, near Kemble in the Cotswold Hills, Gloucestershire County.
 - It **flows into the North Sea** via the **Thames Estuary**.
 - The **Nore** is the **sandbank that marks the mouth of the Thames Estuary** and the confluence point of the Thames and the North Sea.
- **Main Tributaries:** Lea, Leach, Churn, Coln, Windrush, Kennet, Evenlode, Ock, and Loddon.