



For success in a changing world

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 17-12-2025

GS-1

1. Ponduru Khadi
2. Ratle Hydroelectric Project

GS-2

3. Pax Silica Initiative

GS-3

4. Gonorrhoea
5. CoalSETU Policy

Ponduru Khadi

Syllabus – GS- 1; Indian Culture and GS -3; Inclusive Growth

Context

- Ponduru Khadi recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

About Ponduru Khadi



HERITAGE WEAVE EARNS TAG

• Produced from one of three types of cotton – hill cotton, punasa cotton, or red cotton

• Cotton used is indigenous to Srikakulam district and is grown in and around Ponduru

• The khadi is unique as the entire process, from cotton to fabric, is carried out manually

• Process of cleaning the cotton with the jawbone of Valuga fish is unique to Ponduru khadi and is not practised anywhere else in the world

• Ponduru is the only place in India where spinners still use single-spindle charkhas with 24 spokes, also known as the 'Gandhi Charkha'

• The final textile has a very high yarn count, around 100-120 counts

• Spinning thin yarn to 100-120 counts is a difficult process requiring special skill, which very few spinners possess

Location

- Ponduru village, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh

Local Name

- Patnulu

Raw Material

- Hill cotton, punasa cotton or red cotton grown locally

Production Process

- Entirely manual, from cotton cleaning to weaving

Unique Features

- Cotton cleaned using **Valuga fish jawbone**
- Use of **single-spindle Gandhi Charkha** with 24 spokes

- Very fine yarn count (100-120)

Historical Importance

- Praised by Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India* during the freedom movement

Associated Scheme

- One District One Product (ODOP) – Srikakulam

Significance

- Preservation of **traditional handicrafts**
- Promotion of **local employment and sustainable livelihoods**
- Cultural heritage conservation

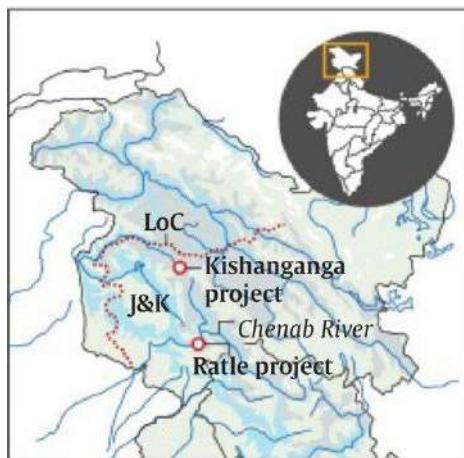
Ratle Hydroelectric Project

Syllabus – GS- 1; Geography and GS-3; Infrastructure, Energy Security

Context

- Concerns arose after the contractor raised issues over political interference in the project.

About Ratle Hydroelectric Project



Location

- Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir

River

- Chenab

Project Type

- Run-of-the-river hydroelectric project

Implementing Authority

- Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited

Technical Features

- 133 m high concrete gravity dam
- Underground powerhouse on right bank
- Four 205 MW Francis turbines
- One 30 MW auxiliary unit

Significance

- Helps India utilise its **Indus Waters Treaty** entitlements
- Strengthens **energy security** in Jammu and Kashmir
- Strategic relevance vis-à-vis **regional geopolitics**

Pax Silica Initiative

Syllabus – GS- 2; International Relations

Context

The issue of India's exclusion from the **US-led Pax Silica Initiative** was recently raised in political discourse.

About Pax Silica Initiative



Nature

- A **US-led strategic initiative** to create a secure and trusted global **silicon and semiconductor supply chain**.

Meaning

- 'Pax' means peace and stability.
- 'Silica' refers to silicon, a foundational element for chips and AI infrastructure.

Objective

- Reduce coercive dependencies
- Protect AI-critical materials and technologies
- Enable large-scale deployment of advanced technologies

Member Countries

- Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Israel, UAE and Australia

Focus Areas

- Critical minerals and semiconductor ecosystem
- AI infrastructure and advanced manufacturing
- Logistics, transport and energy grids

- Joint ventures and strategic co-investments
- Protection of sensitive technologies
- Trusted digital and ICT ecosystems

India's Position

- India is **not a member**, despite participation in Quad critical minerals initiatives and strategic technology partnerships with the US.

Significance

- Highlights **geopolitics of technology and supply chains**
- Raises concerns over **India's role in global semiconductor governance**

Gonorrhoea

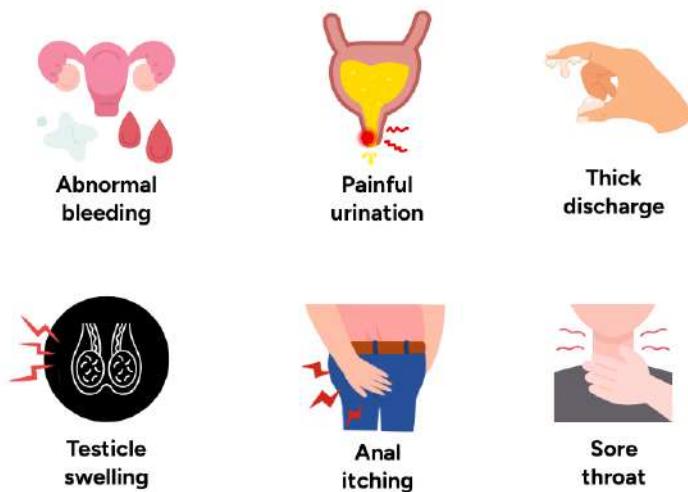
Syllabus – GS- 3; Science and Technology, Health

Context

- The US FDA approved **two new oral medicines** to treat gonorrhoea.

About Gonorrhoea

Common gonorrhoea symptoms



Nature

- A **sexually transmitted infection** that is preventable and curable.

Causative Agent

- Bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*

Affected Areas

- Urethra, rectum, female reproductive tract, throat, mouth and eyes

Transmission

- Through vaginal, oral or anal sex
- Can be transmitted from mother to baby during childbirth

Symptoms

- Often asymptomatic
- Possible symptoms include discharge, sore throat, conjunctivitis, pelvic pain

Vulnerable Groups

- Common among adolescents and young adults aged 15–24

Prevention and Treatment

- Prevented through safe sexual practices
- Treated using antibiotics
- Rising **antimicrobial resistance** is a global concern

Significance

- Highlights the challenge of **antibiotic resistance**
- Important for public health preparedness

CoalSETU Policy

Syllabus – GS-3; Energy, Infrastructure, Economic Development

Context

- The Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the **CoalSETU Policy** by creating a new auction window under the **Non-Regulated Sector (NRS) Linkage Policy**.

About CoalSETU Policy

- **Full form:** Coal Linkage for Seamless, Efficient and Transparent Utilisation

Nature

- A new **auction-based coal linkage window** under the NRS Linkage Policy for long-term allocation of coal.

Objective

- To allow **long-term coal linkage allocation through auction** for industrial use and export.

Nodal Ministry

- Ministry of Coal, Government of India

Eligibility

- Any domestic industrial buyer can participate.
- Traders are not allowed.
- Coal resale within India is prohibited.

Key Features

- New CoalSETU window added to NRS Policy (2016)
- Existing NRS auctions for cement, steel, sponge iron, aluminium and CPPs will continue
- No end-use restrictions for own consumption, washing or export
- Export permitted up to 50 percent of allotted coal
- Coal can be shared across group companies

- Coking coal excluded from this window
- Aligned with commercial coal mining reforms (2020)

Significance

- Enhances **transparency and efficiency** in coal allocation
- Reduces **coal import dependence**
- Improves **ease of doing business**
- Supports **washed coal availability and exports**
- Strengthens India's **energy security**