1. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS):** Recently, the Central government has capped spending under **MGNREGS at 60% of the annual allocation** for the **first half of FY25- 26.**
   - **About MGNRES:** Launched under the **MGNREGA Act in 2005,** the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Ministry of Rural Development.
   - **Aim:** Providing **100 days** of guaranteed employment (**Right to work**) under **Article 41.**
   - **Budget Allocation:** MGNREGS budget for FY26 is about **Rs. 86000 crore**.
   - **Rationale behind MGNREGS spending cap:**
     - **Objective of the Spending Cap:** To regulate cash flow through the MEP/QEP mechanism to prevent early exhaustion of funds and avoid mid-year supplementary allocations.
     - **Chronic Budget Overruns:** Historically, over 70% of the MGNREGS budget gets exhausted by September, prompting supplementary allocations in December, which are usually depleted by January.
     - **Mounting Pending Dues:** In the past five years, year-end pending dues have ranged between ₹15,000 crore and ₹25,000 crore. On average, 20% of the next year's budget goes toward clearing these dues.
2. **Flue Gas desulphurization (FGD**): Recently a committee of expert chaired by Principal Scientific Advisor(PSA) recommended **to do away with decade long policy of (FGD).**
   - **Flue gas:** It is the emitted material produced when fossil fuels such as coal, oil, natural gas, or wood are burned for heat or power.
     - **It contains:** Carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO_2), water vapor, nitrogen oxides (NO & NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), other trace pollutants.
   - **About Flue Gas desulphurization (FGD):** It is a process of removing Sulphur dioxide from fuel gas.
   - **FGD Process**: it is done through the **addition of absorbents (ammonia or sodium sulphite + lime or limestone slurry**), which can remove up to 95% of the sulphur dioxide from the flue gas.
   - The uncleaned flue gas is sprayed in a scrubber tower (absorber tower) with a mixture of water and limestone (scrubbing slurry), whereby most of the sulphur dioxide is bonded by chemical reaction.

3. **Special Economic Zone (SEZs):** Recently Govt **relaxes SEZ rules for semiconductor, electronics manufacturing.**
   - **About SEZs:** The Special Economic Zones Act was passed **in 2005** and came into force along with the SEZ Rules in 2006.
   - **What is SEZs?:** It is a territory within a country that is typically duty-free (Fiscal Concession) and has different business and commercial laws chiefly to encourage investment and create employment.
   - **Asia's first EPZ (Export Processing Zones)** was established in 1965 at Kandla, Gujarat.
   - **Major Incentives and Facilities Available to SEZ**: Duty free import/domestic procurement, Exemption from various taxes, External commercial borrowing, Single window clearance etc.
   - The **Board of Approval** is the apex body and is headed by the Secretary, Department of Commerce (Ministry of Commerce and Industry).
   - The **Baba Kalyani led committee** was constituted to study the existing SEZ policy of India and had submitted its recommendations in November 2018.
   - **Key changes in recent SEZ rules:**
     - **Reduction in Land Requirement:** The minimum land requirement slashed from 50 hectares to just 10 hectares.
     - **Easing of Encumbrance Norms**: SEZs no longer need to have "encumbrance-free" land if the land is mortgaged or leased to Central/State governments or their agencies.
     - **Domestic Sales Permitted**: Units in semiconductor and electronics SEZs are now allowed to sell in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) after paying applicable duties.
     - **Revised Net Foreign Exchange (NFE) Calculations**: Goods received and supplied on a free-of-cost basis can now be included in NFE calculations and assessed using customs valuation rules.This is particularly helpful for industries like semiconductor manufacturing that often involve high-cost prototypes and design iterations.
4. **AI and biomanufacturing:** India play a pivotal role to harness artificial intelligence (AI) for biotechnology innovation through initiatives like the **BioE3 Policy and IndiaAI Mission. These** reflect a bold vision to position the country as a global leader in **AI-driven biomanufacturing** and **ethical AI development.**

- **About Biomanufacturing:** It refers to the use of cells or other living microorganisms to produce commercially viable products. Vaccines, monoclonal antibodies, and proteins for medicinal use are all produced using biomanufacturing.
- India's **First Biomanufacturing Institute, BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute (BRIC-NABI)**, inaugurated in Mohali.
- **BioE3 Policy:** It will explore **biomanufacturing applications in agriculture**, food, pharmaceuticals, and energy sectors, aligned with the eco-friendly goals.
  - It will scale up efforts in **high-performance biomanufacturing** with a stated ambition of achieving a **US $300 billion** bioeconomy by 2030.
  - **Implementation**: **Department of Biotechnology (DBT).**
  - **Salient Features:**
    - ✓ It includes innovation-driven support to **R&D** and entrepreneurship across **thematic sectors.**
    - ✓ Through this Policy, the government will delineate an ambitious vision to achieve technology leadership and tackle major challenges with focused mission in **six thematic sectors.**

5. **United Nation Ocean Conference (UNOC3):** Recently, Nations adopt declaration to support implementation of goal to conserve, sustainably use oceans.
   - **About UNOC3:** France and Costa Rica are co-organizing the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice from June 9 to 13, 2025.
   - **Focus:** To conserve and sustainably use the ocean and to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.
   - **India's Call :** For urgent global action on ocean health and unveiling major strides in deep-sea exploration, marine plastic clean-up, and sustainable fisheries.
   - **Initiative:** Deep Ocean Mission's Samudrayaan project, India's first manned submersible by 2026, exploring ocean depth upto 6000m.
   - **Campaign:** Swachh Sagar Surakshit Sagar'.
   - **Portal:** SAHAV, in promoting transparent, science-based ocean management.

6. **State of India's Environment:** Recently, On the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, the Centre for Science and Environment released its annual report, 'State of India's Environment in Figures 2025'.
   - **About the Report:** It highlights the serious crises facing India in areas such as environment, agriculture, public health and human development which is based on 48 indicators.
   - **Key Findings:** 2024 was India's warmest year on record, Extreme weather events occurred on 88% of days in 2024.
     - **Greenhouse Gas Emission:** India's share of global emissions reached 7.8% in 2023, the highest since 1970 .
     - **Loss of Forest Cover**: 29000 hectare diverted, mostly in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
     - **Toxic heavy metals** found in approx 50% of monitored river sites (2022).
     - **E-waste surged** by 147% in 7 years while plastic waste hit 4.14 million tonnes (2022–23).
     - **Sikkim Leads in organic farming**.
   - **World Environment Day 2025:** Established in 1972 in Stockholm and the first celebration took place in 1973 with the theme "Only One Earth,". It is Hosted by South Korea and led by UNEP under the Theme- Beat Plastic Pollution.
7. **Food Planet Prize 2025:** Recently, a green fertiliser developed by Sweden's NitroCapt has claimed the 2025 Food Planet Prize.
   - **Method:** Using plasma and green energy to extract nitrogen from the air which led to fossil fuel dependence in fertiliser production.
   - **Prize:** The $2 million prize, for its potential to disrupt the global nitrogen fertiliser industry.
   - **Significance:** reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from the fertiliser industry. Fertilisers contribute to 50% of the world's food production, making sustainable alternatives essential.
   - **Benefits:** Emission reduction, Energy efficient, Food security, enhance resilience.
   - **About Food Planet Prize:** Founded by Curt Bergfors Foundation in 2019, Stockholm.
   - Recognises future-impact innovations aimed at reducing the environmental impact of food systems.
   - **Prize:** $2 million (world's largest environmental award).