1. **SASCI Scheme :** Recently, the Ministry of Tourism released the operational guidelines for the **Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI)** – a flagship initiative aimed at transforming iconic tourist destinations into world-class centres.
   - **About SASCI Scheme :** This scheme operates under the broader umbrella of the **Union Government's infrastructure push**, specifically aimed at **economic revival through tourism-led development**.
     - **Aim:** To create globally competitive, iconic tourist centres by enhancing infrastructure, branding, marketing, and sustainable operations.
     - **Key Features : End-to-End Development**: Holistic improvement of tourist sites, from entry to exit experience.
       - ✓ **Funding Assistance**: Financial support to state-identified and Centre-approved proposals.
       - ✓ **Tourist Value Chain Strengthening**: Focus on accommodation, transport, local experiences, and digital connectivity.
       - ✓ **Design Expertise**: Involvement of reputed agencies for planning and execution.
       - ✓ **Sustainability Focus**: Emphasis on environmental safeguards and long-term viability.
       - ✓ **Strict Timelines**: All projects must be completed within **2 years**, and Central funding is available **until 31st March 2026**.
2. **Meri Panchayat App** : Recently, India's **Meri Panchayat** mobile application was honoured with the prestigious **WSIS Champion Prize 2025** at the **WSIS+20 High-Level Event** held in Geneva, Switzerland.
     - The award, conferred under the **Action Line Category: Cultural Diversity, Linguistic Identity & Local Content**, signifies a major global recognition of India's model for rural digital empowerment.
   - **About Meri Panchayat App :** Launched by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** in collaboration with the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
     - A mobile governance (m-Governance) platform developed to digitally empower India's rural local bodies and citizens.
     - **Key highlights:** Designed to digitally empower **2.65 lakh Gram Panchayats** across India.

- ✓ Aims to benefit **25 lakh elected representatives** and over **950 million rural citizens**.
- ✓ Promotes **transparency**, **accountability**, and **citizen engagement** in local governance.
- ✓ Serves as a **scalable digital governance model**, decentralizing information and enhancing access to Panchayat-level services.
- ✓ Provides Panchayat-level weather data for better local planning.
- ✓ Citizens can submit project ideas, rate works, and view Gram Sabha outcomes.
- ✓ Enables **bottom-up governance** by placing information directly in the hands of rural citizens.

- **Global Recognition at WSIS 2025:** The **WSIS Forum 2025** was co-hosted by major global institutions including **ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD**, and the **Swiss Confederation**.
  - The forum marked **20 years** of global efforts to create **inclusive and equitable information societies**.
  - It celebrated **digital innovations** that address cultural, linguistic, and accessibility divides.
  - This recognition highlights **India's commitment** to rural digital empowerment and **participatory local governance**.

3. Meghna River : Recently, experts, policymakers, civil society groups, and indigenous organisations from **India and Bangladesh** are set to convene for a **multi-stakeholder dialogue** to address **climate change risks** and strengthen **community resilience** in the **Meghna River Basin**.

- Themed **"Building Community and Ecosystem Resilience to Climate Change"**, the event will be facilitated by the **Meghna Knowledge Forum II**, with support from the **IUCN**, **South Asian University**, and the **Asian Institute of Technology**.

- **About Meghna River :** Formed by the confluence of the **Surma** and **Kushiyara** rivers in Bangladesh.
  - **Indian Connection**: In **Karimganj district** of **Assam, India**, the **Barak River** splits into the **Surma and Kushiyara** streams, which later reunite at **Kishoreganj district** in Bangladesh to form the **Meghna**.
  - **Upper and Lower Meghna**: From Kishoreganj to **Chandpur**, it is called the **Upper Meghna**.
    - ✓ After meeting the **Padma River** at Chandpur, it becomes the **Lower Meghna**.
  - **Major Watercourse**: Principal distributary in the **Padma (Ganga) River** delta in Bangladesh.

- **Course**: Flows almost **due south** from **Bhairab Bazar** after receiving the Old **Brahmaputra** channel.
  - ✓ Joins with the **Padma** and **Jamuna (Brahmaputra)** rivers near **Chandpur**.
  - ✓ Travels about **164 miles (264 km)** before emptying into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- **Ecological and Economic Role**: Supports **fisheries**, **navigation**, and local **livelihoods**.
  - ✓ Plays a vital role in the **regional ecosystem**.

4. **Bima Sakhi Scheme :** Recently, the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Department of Rural Development** under the **Union Ministry of Rural Development** to scale up the **Bima Sakhi Yojana** across rural areas.
   - **About Bima Sakhi Yojana** : Launched by the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** to promote **financial inclusion and women's empowerment** .
     - The scheme targets **women aged 18 to 70 years** who have completed at least **Class 10** education.
     - Selected candidates receive **specialised training** and a **monthly stipend** over three years to promote **financial literacy** and **insurance awareness**.
     - **Stipend Structure**: ₹7,000 per month in the **first year**
       - ✓ ₹6,000 per month in the **second year**
       - ✓ ₹5,000 per month in the **third year**
   - **Additional Income**: Bima Sakhis are also eligible for **commissions**, with up to **₹48,000 (excluding bonuses)** in the first year.
     - The scheme aims to appoint **two lakh Bima Sakhis** over a span of **three years**.
     - After completing training, Bima Sakhis can work as **LIC agents**, and those with graduation qualifications may also be considered for roles as **development officers** in LIC.
   - **Relatives of existing LIC agents or employees**, as well as **retired LIC employees**, are **not eligible** to apply under this scheme.
5. **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India** : Recently, the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India** highlighted major **financial irregularities and operational inefficiencies** in **Indian Railways**, with total lapses amounting to **₹570+ crore**.
   - **About CAG :** Established under **Article 148** of the Constitution.

- Acts as the **guardian of the public purse** and oversees the **entire financial system** of the Centre and States.
- Ensures adherence to the **Constitution and laws** enacted by Parliament in matters of financial administration.
- Serves as a **bulwark of India's democratic system** by ensuring financial accountability and transparency.

- **Audits all expenditures from**: Consolidated Fund of India, State, and Union Territories.
  - Contingency Fund and Public Account of both Centre and States.
- **Article 148:** CAG appointed by the **President** through a warrant under his hand and seal.
  - **Ineligible** for any further appointment to any office under the **Central or State Government** after completing their tenure.
  - All **expenditures** related to the CAG's office, including **salaries, allowances, and pensions**, are **charged on the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)**.
- **Term of Office**: The **CAG holds office** for a term of **six years** or until attaining the **age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.
- **Resignation**: The CAG may **resign at any time** by submitting a **written resignation to the President** of India.
- **Removal**: The CAG can be **removed by the President** in the **same manner and on the same grounds** as a **judge of the Supreme Court**, ensuring a high level of protection and independence.

6. **National List of Essential Diagnostics (NLED) 2025 :** Recently, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** released the revised **National List of Essential Diagnostics (NLED) 2025**, marking a major step forward in **decentralising healthcare testing** across the country.
   - **About NLED :** The ICMR introduced the **first NEDL in 2019**, recognising diagnostics as a **core component** of the healthcare system.
     - Specifies the **most basic and essential diagnostic tests** that should be accessible at all levels of healthcare, right from **village-level sub-health centres and health & wellness centres** to **primary health centres** and beyond.
     - **India : First country** in the world to formally release a national list of essential diagnostics.

- **List includes :** General laboratory tests for a wide range of common conditions.
  - **Disease-specific tests** for major communicable and non-communicable diseases such as **HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, dengue, malaria**, and **region-specific diseases**.
- Since **2018**, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has recommended that countries develop and adopt their own NEDL to ensure access to **In-Vitro Diagnostics (IVDs)** at various levels of the healthcare system, including **facilities without on-site laboratories**.
- **Key additions to the 2025 NLED** include diagnostics for sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia, hepatitis B, syphilis, dengue, tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension, and latent TB infections.

7. Pale-Capped Pigeon : Recently, in a significant development for birdwatchers & conservationists, the elusive Pale-capped Pigeon was photographed in Dehing Patkai National Park, Assam.



- **About Pale-Capped Pigeon :** Also known as the **purple wood pigeon**. this large, dark purplish-maroon bird is a rare species.
  - **Distribution**: Northern and northeastern India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
  - **Habitat**: Prefers **primary and secondary evergreen forests**, bamboo groves, and nearby agricultural fields. Found from lowlands up to **1,600 meters elevation**.
  - **Diet**: **Frugivorous**, often seen in small flocks foraging in tree canopies
  - **Conservation Status**: **'Vulnerable'** on the **IUCN Red List.**
- **About Dehing Patkai National Park:** Located in **Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts** of Assam, lies at the foothills of the Patkai Range, alongside the **Dehing River** and near **Namdapha Wildlife Sanctuary**. Nicknamed the **"Amazon of the East"**, it contains India's **longest stretch of tropical lowland rainforest**.
  - **Climate**: Tropical with over **4,000 mm annual rainfall**
  - **Vegetation**: Deciduous rainforest with semi-evergreen and dense flora
  - **Flora**: Includes **Hollong, Nahor, Mekai, Paroli, Simul**, orchids, ferns, cane, and bamboo
  - **Fauna**: Rich wildlife including **Asian elephant, Royal Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, clouded leopard, gaur, Chinese pangolin, slow loris**, and multiple macaque species
  - **Communities**: Home to diverse ethnic groups like the **Tai Phake, Singpho, Ahom etc**.