1. **Maternal Mortality Rate: As per the** Union Health Minister, India has achieved the National Health Policy (NHP) target of MMR of 100 deaths per 1 lakh live births, between 1990 - 2020, India's MMR declined by 83%, much higher than the global decline.
   - **About Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR):** It is the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in a given time period. It's a measure of the risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth.
   - **Key Achievements under National Health Mission (NHM):** Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) declined by 69% compared to 55% globally.
     - Under-5 Mortality Rate saw a 75% reduction, surpassing the global decline of 58%.
     - **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** reduced from 3.4 (1992-93) to 2.0 (2019-21); 31 states achieved replacement level fertility (NFHS-5).
     - Out-of-pocket health expenditure declined from 69.4% (2004-05) to 39.4% (2021-22), while government health expenditure increased to 48% of THE.
     - Health Human Resources under NHM increased from 23,000 (2006-07) to 5.23 lakh (2023-24).
   - **About Mission Steering Group (MSG):**
     - Established under NRHM (2005), later subsumed into NHM.
     - Provides broad policy direction and governance for NHM.
     - Fully empowered to approve financial norms & advise the Empowered Programme Committee (EPC).
     - This was the 9th NHM MSG meeting, last held on January 11, 2023.
   - The **MSG is the highest policy-making body** under **National Health Mission (NHM)**, guiding policy direction and governance in the health sector.
2. **Wallace line:** In the 19th century, Alfred Russel Wallace noticed a shift in the composition of organisms between **Asia and Australia**.
   - **About Wallace line: :** Wallace proposed an invisible barrier in the ocean, later termed the **Wallace Line, running between Bali and Lombok, north between Borneo and Sulawesi,** and curving south of Mindanao. The line separates the **distinct biodiversity of Asia and Australia.**
     - The line acted as a **biogeographic boundary**, explaining the **separate greatness** of both continents' biodiversity.



- The Wallace Line is linked to **evolutionary theory**, showing a **sharp species transition over a narrow region**.
- **Geological and Evolutionary Insights:**
  - The Malay Archipelago is geologically complex, with over 25,000 islands.
  - Wallace proposed that some islands were once connected to Asia and later drifted apart, isolating species.
  - Over millions of years, Australia moved northward, forming Indonesia's volcanic islands.
  - Sea-level changes, monsoons, and aridity influenced species' adaptation and diversification.
- **Species Dispersal Patterns:** Research on 20,000 species found that Malay islands remained warm and wet, aiding Asian fauna migration to Australia.
  - Australian species, adapted to cooler climates, struggled to migrate to Asia.
  - Northern route (rainforest-rich) helped Asian species migrate, whereas southern route (via Timor) was challenging for Australian species.

3. **India Financial System Stability Assessment:** The **IMF report** titled "India Financial System Stability Assessment" highlighted **stress in the NBFC sector** due to **overexposure to power and infrastructure loans** and interconnectedness with other markets.
   - **About India Financial System Stability Assessment:** It is an evaluation of India's financial system that assesses its stability and vulnerabilities.
     - 63% of power sector loans were from the three largest Infrastructure Financing Companies (NBFCs) in fiscal 2024, up from 55% in 2019-20.
     - **State-owned NBFCs like IREDA** face higher risks.
     - In case of **stagflation**, **Public Sector Banks (PSBs) may struggle** to maintain a **Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 9%**, the **minimum required by RBI for Scheduled Commercial Banks**.
     - The **IMF recommends** that PSBs should **strengthen their capital base** by **retaining earnings** instead of **paying dividends** to the government.

- **About IMF: Established in 1944**, headquartered in **Washington D.C.**
  - Publishes reports like **World Economic Outlook, Global Financial Stability Report**, and **Financial System Stability Assessment**.
  - **Functions:** Provides financial assistance, policy advice, and economic surveillance to member countries.

4. **Navratna & Miniratna Status:** The Centre has recently approved the upgradation of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) as the 25th and 26th Navratna companies.
   - **About Navratna & Miniratna Status:**
     - Navratnas are central government-owned CPSEs, positioned between Maharatnas and Miniratnas, based on financial performance and autonomy.
     - Miniratnas are divided into Category I and Category II, with lower autonomy than Navratnas.
     - The **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE)** under the Ministry of Finance grants Navratna status to eligible CPSEs.
   - **Navratna Status eligibility:** Must be a **Miniratna I** and **Schedule A** company.
     - Must have an **'Excellent' or 'Very Good'** rating in **three of the last five** MOUs.
     - **Must score 60 or more based on six parameters:** Net Profit to Net Worth – 25% → Manpower Cost to Cost of Production/Services – 15% → PBDIT to Capital Employed – 15% → PBDIT to Turnover – 15% → Earnings Per Share (EPS) – 10% → Inter-Sectoral Performance – 20%.
   - **Miniratna Status Criteria:**
     - **Miniratna Category-I:** Profitable for three consecutive years, pre-tax profit of ₹30 crore or more in at least one of these years, must have a positive net worth.
     - **Miniratna Category-II:** Profitable for three consecutive years, must have a positive net worth.

5. **India's agriculture trade surplus:** Farm exports have posted above-average growth, with basmati rice, spices, coffee, and tobacco exports expected to reach new highs in 2024-25.
   - However, imports, particularly pulses and edible oils, have surged, narrowing India's agriculture trade surplus.

- **About Trade Surplus:** It occurs when the **value of exports exceeds the value of imports.**
  - India is traditionally a net exporter of agricultural commodities, meaning its outward shipments have been consistently higher than imports.
- **About India's Agriculture Trade Surplus**: India's agriculture exports increased by **6.5%** (April-Dec 2024). However, agricultural imports surged by **18.7%** during the same period.
- **Drivers of Exports:** Marine products remain India's top export (2023-24).
  - Sugar exports halved due to government restrictions.
  - Rice exports continue to grow, with non-basmati exports stabilizing and basmati rice set to reach a new record.
  - Spices, coffee, and tobacco exports are benefiting from supply shortages in Brazil, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

6. Cyclone Alfred: Tropical Cyclone Alfred is intensifying as it approaches southern Queensland and northern New South Wales.

- It may reach **Category 3** before landfall, bringing **destructive winds, storm surges, and flooding**.
- **About Cyclone:** It is a large-scale **air mass** that rotates around a **strong center of low atmospheric pressure**.
  - Cyclones form over **warm ocean waters** and are fuelled by **moist air rising**.
  - **Conditions for cyclone formation:**
    - ✓ Latitude: 5 degrees of latitude away from the Equator and very few occur near the Equator.
    - ✓ Temperature of the Sea Surface: 27 °C or warmer.
    - ✓ Pre-existing weak low-pressure area
    - ✓ Upper divergence above the sea level system
    - ✓ Presence of Coriolis Force:
    - ✓ Small Variation in the Vertical Wind Speed Etc.
- **The Eye:** A **central region** of **clear skies, warm temperatures, and low atmospheric pressure**.
- **Eyewall:** Here **winds are strongest**, **rainfall is heaviest**, and **deep convective clouds rise** from close to Earth's surface to a height 15,000 metres.

7. **Organic farming:** Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh is gearing up to transition fully to organic farming.
   - **About:** Over 10,000 farmers from 110 villages have received organic certification under the Large Area Certification (LAC) scheme in 2023-24.
   - LAC scheme is a Union government initiative launched in 2020-21 to certify large contiguous areas that have been traditionally organic.
   - Chhattisgarh is the first state to have an area certified under LAC.
   - **About Organic Farming in Dantewada (Case Study):** Farmers like Channu Kunjam from Aalnar village practice organic farming using dried leaves and cow dung.
     - Jeevamrit, an organic fertilizer made from cow dung, urine, jaggery, gram flour, and soil, is widely used. Farmers like Rita Modiyam from Masoodi village have increased productivity using Jeevamrit.
   - **Initiatives for Organic Farming Expansion:** System of Rice Intensification (SRI) was introduced to improve crop yield and soil quality.
     - Mocho Badi scheme, supported by NMDC, provided fencing, solar pumps, and tools, increasing farmers' incomes by 600%.
8. **National Board for Wildlife:** Prime Minister has recently chaired the 7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) at Gir National Park, Gujarat.
   - **About National Board for Wildlife (NBWL):** Apex body for **wildlife conservation and protection** in India, chaired by the **Prime Minister**.
   - Reviews and approves projects affecting protected areas and recommends conservation strategies.
   - **About Wildlife Conservation & Initiatives announced:**
     - **First-ever riverine dolphin estimation** report released, estimating 6,327 dolphins across 28 rivers in eight states. **16th Asiatic Lion Population Estimation** to be conducted in 2025.
     - **National Referral Centre for Wildlife foundation** stone laid in Junagadh. Centre of Excellence at SACON, Coimbatore for managing human-wildlife conflict.
     - **Expansion of Cheetah introduction to Gandhisagar Sanctuary (MP) and Banni Grasslands** (Gujarat). New Project for Gharials announced for their conservation. National Great Indian Bustard Conservation Action Plan initiated.
     - **Tiger Conservation outside Tiger Reserves** to address human-tiger conflicts.