

Mains Exam Practice (MEP): Questions of the Day

1. The rise of regional political parties in Bihar has significantly influenced the state's socio-political landscape, particularly in the context of caste-based politics. Discuss the historical background, key factors leading to the emergence of these regional parties, and their role in shaping Bihar's political framework. How has caste remained a determining factor in electoral outcomes and political alliances? Illustrate with examples from recent political developments. [BPSC GS II Section I: 19+19 marks]
2. Discuss the principles of biotechnology and its applications in agriculture, healthcare, and environmental management. Highlight its role in enhancing productivity, addressing health challenges, and promoting sustainable development. What are the ethical and safety concerns associated with biotechnology, and how can they be addressed? [BPSC GS II Section III: 19+19marks]

Bihar Special

Justice K Vinod Chandran

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the appointment of Patna High Court Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran as a judge of the Supreme Court on 7th January, 2024.

About him:

- ❖ He was born on 25-04-1963 and obtained a Law Degree from Kerala Law Academy Law College, Thiruvananthapuram.
- ❖ He started practice in 1991 and served as Special Government Pleader (Taxes) of the Government of Kerala from 2007 to 2011.
- ❖ He was sworn in as Additional Judge of the High Court of Kerala on 08-11-2011.
- ❖ He was appointed as Permanent Judge of the High Court of Kerala with effect from 24-06-2013.
- ❖ He was elevated as Chief Justice of Patna High Court and took oath in such capacity on 29-03-2023.



National Affairs

Pravasi Bharatiya Express

Why in the news?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Pravasi Bharatiya Express, a special tourist train for the Indian diaspora.

- ❖ It commenced its journey from Safdarjung Railway Station in New Delhi and carries around 156 travellers; the train will complete the journey in three weeks.
- ❖ The NRI travellers were selected through an application process by their respective Indian embassies or consulates for the inaugural journey.
- ❖ Under the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) scheme, the Centre will bear all expenses related to the conducted train tour.
 - Additionally, the government will cover 90 percent of the airfare from the participant's country of origin to India. Participants will have to bear only 10 percent of their return airfare.

About the train:

- ❖ The train has been exclusively designed for Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) aged between 45 and 65 years and belonging to low-income categories. It aims to reconnect them with their cultural roots.

❖ Significance:

- The launch of the Pravasi Bharatiya Express commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on January 9 1915.
- ❖ It has been introduced by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).
- ❖ The train will cover multiple destinations of touristic and religious significance, including Ayodhya, Patna, Gaya, Varanasi, Mahabali-puram, Rameshwaram, Madurai, Kochi, Goa, Ekta Nagar (Kevadia), Ajmer, Pushkar and Agra.

- ❖ The 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention was held in Bhubaneswar from January 8 to 10, 2025.
- ❖ Theme 2025: Diaspora's Contribution to a Viksit Bharat.



Index and Report

Henley Passport Index 2025

Why in the news?

India has been ranked **85th** in the latest Henley Passport Index, 2025.

- ❖ As of the latest standings, Indian passport holders can travel visa-free to **57 destinations**, sharing the **85th** rank with Equatorial Guinea and Niger.
- ❖ India's ranking in the Henley Passport Index for 2024 was 80th globally.

About the index:

- ❖ The ranking is based on the number of destinations that can be accessed visa-free, using exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- ❖ **Singapore** has maintained its top spot, with its passport holders enjoying visa-free access to an impressive 195 destinations worldwide.
- ❖ Japan is in 2nd position with access to 193 destinations.
- ❖ France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, and South Korea with access to 192 destinations are at 3rd position
- ❖ Afghanistan is at the bottom of the Henley Passport Index 2025.



Important Days/ Dates

World Hindi Day 2025

Why in the news?

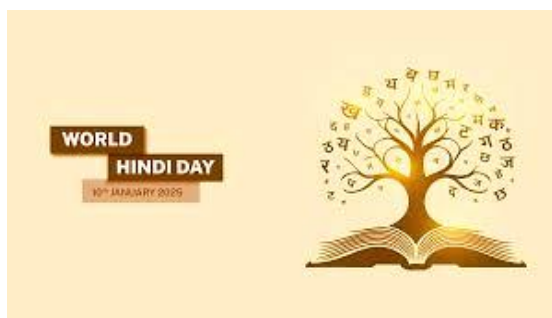
World Hindi Day (Vishwa Hindi Diwas) is celebrated annually on January 10.

❖ Objective:

- It aims to raise awareness about the language, promote its use, and celebrate the contributions of scholars and writers in this language.

❖ History:

- World Hindi Day was first celebrated on January 10, 2006, following an initiative by the Government of India.
- The date marks the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference held in Nagpur in 1975, which brought Hindi to the global stage.



- ❖ **Theme:** The theme for World Hindi Day 2025 is "The Global Voice of Unity and Cultural Pride."
- This theme highlights the importance of Hindi as a tool for global communication and cultural exchange.
- It aims to encourage the use of Hindi in international forums and celebrate its potential to foster unity across diverse cultures.

What is the difference between National and World Hindi Day?

- ❖ Hindi Day is celebrated twice a year, National Hindi Day on 14 September and World Hindi Day on 10 January.
- ❖ National Hindi Day is a celebration of the recognition of Hindi as the official language of India, which is celebrated to commemorate the declaration of Hindi as the official language by the Constituent Assembly in 1949.
- ❖ At the same time, the purpose of World Hindi Day is to promote Hindi internationally.

Obituary

Bim Bissell



Why in the news?

Bim Bissell, a visionary who played a significant role in **shaping FabIndia** passed away on 9th January, 2025.

- ❖ She was born as **Bimla Nanda** and was of **Punjabi** origin.
- ❖ She married **John Bissell**, an American who founded **FabIndia** in 1960.

News in Short

- ❖ Multiple Olympic and world champion **Mo Farah** has been announced as the international event ambassador for the **Tata Mumbai Marathon**, which will see a record-breaking 60,000 runners taking part on January 19.
- ❖ **Madhya Pradesh** has launched an innovative scheme called **PARTH Yojana** (Police Army Recruitment Training & Hunar) to prepare its youth **both physically and mentally for careers** in the Indian Army, police, paramilitary forces, and other such services.

❖ **Har Ghar Connectivity (Fibre to Family) initiative:**

- Launched by the Gujarat government.
- It aims to transform rural homes into 'Smart Homes' by delivering high-speed internet and value-added services at rates more affordable than those available in the market.

❖ **SNACC Application:**

- Food and grocery delivery service platform Swiggy has introduced a new app, SNACC, promising delivery of quick bites, beverages, and meals within 15 minutes.

❖ India is all set to participate with its largest-ever contingent at the India Open Super 750 badminton tournament, starting on the 14th January, 2025 at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall of Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi.

- The contingent includes star shuttlers Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu. A total of 21 Indian players, including three men's singles, four women's singles, two men's doubles, eight women's doubles, and four mixed doubles pairs, will compete in the tournament.



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