



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY, 2025

Week-3

15-21 Jan., 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

15th JANUARY 2025

Israel-Hamas Draft Ceasefire Deal

- **Context:** Hamas has accepted a draft agreement for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of dozens of hostages.

Key Highlights

- The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent the past year trying to mediate an end to the 15-month war.
- The plan would need to be submitted to the Israeli Cabinet for final approval.
- It is a three-phase agreement — based on a framework laid out by US President Joe Biden and endorsed by the UN Security Council.
- First Phase: It would begin with the gradual release of 33 hostages over a six-week period in exchange for Palestinian women and children imprisoned by Israel. It will be a 42-day phase, Israeli forces would withdraw from population centers.
- In the second phase, Hamas would release the remaining living captives, mainly male soldiers, in exchange for more prisoners and the “complete withdrawal” of Israeli forces from Gaza.
- In a third phase, the bodies of remaining hostages would be returned in exchange for a three- to five-year reconstruction plan to be carried out in Gaza under international supervision.

About Hamas

- Hamas is the largest Palestinian militant Islamist group and one of the two major political parties in the region. Currently, it governs more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.
- The group was founded in the late 1980s, after the beginning of the first Palestinian uprising against Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Hamas is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and other countries.



Israel-Palestine Conflict

- It is a decades long dispute between Israel and Palestine that began in the middle of the twentieth century when the Jews from various parts of the world were granted the homeland in present-day Israel by Britain.
- It is one of the world’s longest conflicts where Israel has occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which the Palestine state claims.
- With time, the countries around have normalized the ties with Israel through the Abraham Accord, Oslo Accord, etc.
- But the deadlock still persists and the world community is persistent in its effort to attain the two-state solution.

Mission Mausam

- **Context:** The Prime Minister inaugurated Mission Mausam to mark the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

About Mission Mausam

- **Aim:** To upgrade the capabilities of India’s weather department in forecasting, modelling, and dissemination.
- **Features:**
 - Budget allocation: Rs 2,000 crore for the first two years of its implementation.
 - Focus areas: Weather surveillance, modelling techniques and forecasting.
 - Beneficiary Sectors: Agriculture, aviation, defence, disaster management, tourism and health.

- **Phases:**
 - **Phase 1 (2025- March 2026):** Focus on expanding observation capabilities and conducting simulation experiments.
 - **Phase 2 (2026 onwards):** Introduce satellites and aircraft to enhance observational precision.
- **Supervision:** Mission Masum will be spearheaded by three institutions funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - The IMD, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting, Noida.
- **Cloud Chamber:** India will build a cloud chamber, as required to study Indian monsoon clouds.

National Turmeric Board

- **Context:** The Government of India notified the establishment of National Turmeric Board.

Key Facts

- It is a dedicated body established to promote turmeric cultivation, research, and exports, ensuring holistic growth in the turmeric sector.
- **Headquarters:** Nizamabad, Telangana.
- **First Chairperson:** Palle Ganga Reddy.
- **Ministry:** Operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Aim:** To enhance turmeric production.
 - Support farmers and improve their livelihoods.
 - Boost global exports of turmeric and value-added products.
- **Functions:** The Board will also look into creating awareness on the essential and medical properties of turmeric, ways to increase its yield and boost logistics and supply chain to foster trade into newer markets.

Indian Army Day

- **Context:** The 77th Army Day was celebrated in India with a theme of "Samarth Bharat, Saksham Sena".

About Army Day

- It is celebrated on January 15 each year to honor General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa, the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.
- On this day in 1949, General Cariappa took over the command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief, marking the transition to an independent Indian Army.
- General Cariappa is also known for leading Indian forces to victory in the India-Pakistan 1947 war.

About Indian Army Veterans' Day

- Celebrated annually on January 14th, this day commemorates the retirement of Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa.
- It is a day to recognize and appreciate the contributions and sacrifices of retired Indian Army personnel.

16th JANUARY 2025

Bhargavastra Micro Missiles

- **Context:** India has successfully tested the Bhargavastra, its first micro-missile system designed to counter swarm drones.

Key Highlights

- The Bhargavastra system successfully hit designated virtual targets over 2.5 kilometres away, demonstrating high precision and effectiveness.
- It can detect medium to large UAVs up to 10 kilometres and small drones up to 6 kilometres away, making it effective against a wide range of aerial threats.
- Bhargavastra can be mounted on mobile platforms, enabling rapid deployment and adaptability to diverse operational terrains, including high-altitude regions.

INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vaghsheer

- **Context:** India achieved its first-ever tri-commissioning of naval platforms with the induction of INS Nilgiri, INS Vaghsheer, and INS Surat.

About Naval Platforms

- INS Nilgiri is the lead ship of the Project 17A frigates and it honors the maritime history of the Chola dynasty. It is a next-generation stealth frigate designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau.
- INS Vaghsheer is the sixth and final submarine of the P75 Scorpene Project. It is dedicated to India's naval legacy and It is constructed in collaboration with France's Naval Group.
- INS Surat is the fourth and final ship of the Project and It reflects Gujarat's historical maritime ties with West Asia. It is a state-of-the-art destroyer with 75% indigenous content.
- The commissioning marks a significant step in India's self-reliance in defense and strengthening its Navy.
 - India's defense production exceeds Rs. 1.25 lakh crore, with over 100 countries importing Indian defense equipment.
 - The Make in India initiative is driving economic growth and self-reliance in defense.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Education launched the registration portal for the 3rd edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS).

Key Facts

- It will commence on 15th February 2025 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Launched in:** 2022.
- **Universities:** IIT Madras and Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

- **Aim:** To rediscover, reaffirm, and celebrate the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
- It is in sync with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating the Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.
- It provides an opportunity for scholars, students, philosophers, and artists from the two regions to share their knowledge.
- It also aims to make the youth aware and experience cultural oneness.
- Both Kashi and Chennai have been recognised by UNESCO as 'Creative Cities of Music'.

17th JANUARY 2025

Eighth Pay Commission

- **Context:** The Union Government has approved the establishment of the Eighth Pay Commission.

About the Pay Commission

- The Pay Commission determines the salary, compensation, and allowances for central government employees and pensioners.
- **Objectives:**
 - Proposing formulas for dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) adjustments to mitigate inflation's impact.
 - Recommendation of Pay commission is non-binding in nature.
- Pay Commissions are generally constituted every 10 years. The 8th Pay Commission is being set up well before the term of the 7th Pay Commission ends in 2025, allowing sufficient time for review and implementation.
- The 7th pay commission headed by Justice A.K. Mathur, was implemented in 2016 and introduced Pay Matrix; Min: Rs 18,000/month, Max: Rs 2,50,000/month.
- **Composition:** Usually headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.

Space Docking Technology

- **Context:** ISRO launched the PSLV-C60 mission, carrying a pair of satellites for the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) to demonstrate orbital rendezvous and docking.

Key Facts

- Docking technology allows the assembly of larger space modules by launching components separately and assembling them in orbit.
- It is crucial for interplanetary missions where the spacecraft may exceed the payload capacity of current launch vehicles.
- The Chandrayaan-4 lunar sample return mission exemplifies the potential application of docking capabilities for advanced exploration missions.
- ISRO plans to launch the 'Bharatiya Antariksh Station' (BAS) later this decade, which would benefit significantly from advancements in docking technology.

SVAMITVA Scheme

- **Context:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, will preside over the e-Distribution of SVAMITVA Property Cards on 18th January 2025.

Key Facts

- The SVAMITVA Scheme (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) was launched on 24th April, 2020 (National Panchayati Raj Day).
- It is a Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- The scheme aims to provide legal ownership records to rural property owners by issuing Property Cards, thereby enhancing rural governance and financial inclusion.
- The scheme ensures precise demarcation of land parcels in rural areas using drone technology and Geographic Information System (GIS) tools, reducing disputes over land boundaries.

- It provides Record of Rights (RoR) through SVAMITVA Property Cards, granting legal recognition to property owners in inhabited rural areas.

18th JANUARY 2025

National Sports Awards

- **Context:** The President of India recently presented the National Sports Awards 2024, honoring exceptional contributions to sports and adventure in India.

Award Categories

- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award:**
 - India's highest sporting honor, established in 1991-92.
 - Recognizes outstanding performance over a period of four years.
 - Named After: Major Dhyan Chand (1905-79), an iconic hockey legend who led India to three consecutive Olympic gold medals (1928, 1932, and 1936).

2024 Awardees:

- Gukesh D (Chess)
- Harmanpreet Singh (Hockey)
- Praveen Kumar (Para-Athletics)
- Manu Bhaker (Shooting)
- **Arjuna Award:**
 - Established in 1961 for consistent performance over the past four years.
 - Named After: Arjuna, the legendary warrior from the Indian epic Mahabharata.
 - First Recipient: P.K. Banerjee (Football).
- **Dronacharya Award:**
 - Instituted in 1985, this is India's highest honor for coaches.
 - Awarded for producing medal winners at prestigious international events.
 - Named After: Dronacharya, the guru of Arjuna in Mahabharata.
 - First Female Recipient: Renu Kohli (Athletics).

- **Major Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement:**
 - Instituted in 2002 for lifetime contributions to sports.
 - First Recipients:
Shahuraj Birajdar (Boxing)
Ashok Diwan (Hockey).
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy:**
 - The oldest National Sports Award, instituted in 1956–57.
 - Named in honor of Shri Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Education Minister and a freedom fighter.
 - First Recipient: Bombay University.
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar:**
 - Instituted in 2009, awarded to organizations, corporates, and individuals for significant contributions to sports promotion and development over the past three years.
- **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award:**
 - Introduced in 2004 to honor achievements in adventure sports.
 - Recognizes contributions across land, water, air, and lifetime adventure categories.
- It will involve significant industry participation and utilize ISRO's experience from earlier launch pad establishments. The facilities at the existing launch complex will be shared to maximize efficiency.
- The project is targeted to be completed within 48 months (4 years).
- The total fund requirement is Rs. 3984.86 Crore for the establishment of the TLP and associated facilities.

About Satish Dhawan Space Center

- SDSC SHAR is located in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on a spindle-shaped island between the Pulicat Lake and the Bay of Bengal.
- It is the Spaceport of India, a leading centre of ISRO, and provides world-class launch infrastructure for satellite and launch vehicle missions for national and international customers.
- The centre, originally known as SHAR (Sriharikota Range), was renamed in 2002 to honor Prof. Satish Dhawan, former ISRO Chairman.
- SDSC SHAR became operational on October 9, 1971, with the launch of 'Rohini-125', a small sounding rocket.

Satish Dhawan Space Center

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the establishment of the Third Launch Pad (TLP) at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

About Launch Pad

- Launch Pad refers to a platform or area used to launch rockets or other vehicles into space.
- Currently, India relies on two launch pads: First Launch Pad (FLP) and Second Launch Pad (SLP).
- FLP has been operational for 30 years, supporting PSLV and SSLV. SLP, operational for 20 years, primarily supports GSLV and LVM3, and is preparing for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.
- Third Launch Pad (TLP) will be designed to support Next Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLV), LVM3 vehicles with Semi-cryogenic stages, and scaled-up NGLV configurations.

19th JANUARY 2025

Central Reserve Police Force

- **Context:** Gyanendra Pratap Singh has been appointed as the Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

About Central Reserve Police Force

- The CRPF is the premier central police force of the Union of India entrusted with maintaining internal security.
- Established originally as the Crown Representative's Police in 1939, it stands as one of the oldest central paramilitary forces.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs.

- **Key roles of CRPF:**
 - **Law and Order:** Assists in maintaining peace during protests, riots, and elections.
 - **Counter-Insurgency Operations:** Engages in operations against armed insurgents, terrorists, and extremist groups, especially in areas like Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast.
 - **Disaster Response:** Provides aid during natural disasters.
- **Specialized Units of the CRPF:** Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), specializes in jungle warfare and counterinsurgency operations, particularly in Naxal-affected areas. Rapid Action Force (RAF) focuses on controlling riots and handling public unrest.

Kalaripayattu

- **Context:** Kalaripayattu has been relegated to the demonstration section for the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand, scheduled to begin on January 28.

About Kalaripayattu

- It is an ancient martial art originating from Kerala, India, but practiced worldwide. The term “Kalari” in Malayalam refers to a traditional gymnasium where this martial art, known as Payattu, is taught.
- Some believe Kalaripayattu was introduced by Lord Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, after reclaiming Kerala from the sea. However, historians date its origin between 200 BCE and 600 CE, with its peak popularity between the 14th and 16th centuries.

About National Games 2025

- Uttarakhand will host the National Games 2025 from January 28 to February 14, 2025.
- Over 10,000 athletes, officials, and coaches will participate in 38 sports.
- The mascot for the Games is “Mauli”, inspired by the Monal (Uttarakhand’s state bird).
- The Games tagline is: “Sankalp Se Shikhar Tak” (From Resolve to Zenith).

Securities Transaction Tax

- **Context:** The Securities Transaction Tax (STT) collection has surged by over 75%, reaching Rs 44,538 crore as of January 2025, compared to Rs 25,415 crore during the same period in 2024.

About Securities Transaction Tax (STT)

- STT is a type of tax that is charged on the purchase and sale of securities like stocks, mutual funds, and derivatives on recognized stock exchanges in India.
- It is a direct tax, meaning that it is levied directly on the transaction value of securities.
- The STT was introduced in India in 2004 to replace the earlier system of imposing a tax on securities transactions called the “stamp duty.”
- The 2024 budget has increased the securities transaction tax (STT) on Futures & Options (F&O) of securities to 0.02 percent and 0.1 percent respectively.

20th JANUARY 2025

Birthright Citizenship of USA

- **Context:** On his first day in office, US President Donald Trump signed several executive orders, including a controversial one aimed at ending birthright citizenship for children of parents without legal status.

Key Highlights

- This decision drew immediate backlash, prompting lawsuits from immigrant and civil rights groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union.
- According to Trump’s executive order, individuals not subject to the jurisdiction of the US Constitution fall into two main categories:
 - Unlawful Presence
 - When the mother was unlawfully present in the US at the time of birth.
 - The father was neither a US citizen nor a lawful permanent resident.

- Lawful but Temporary Presence
 - When the mother was lawfully in the US temporarily (e.g., under a visa or the Visa Waiver Program).
 - The father was neither a US citizen nor a lawful permanent resident.

About Birthright Citizenship in the US

- Birthright citizenship automatically grants citizenship at birth.
- In the US, it exists in two forms: jus soli (citizenship based on birthplace) and jus sanguinis (citizenship based on ancestry, for children born abroad to US citizens).
- The Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution, adopted in 1868 after the Civil War, guarantees birthright citizenship.
- It states that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.”
- This was originally intended to ensure citizenship for America-born children of formerly enslaved people.

Nigeria: The latest Partner Country of BRICS

- **Context:** Recently, Nigeria was officially admitted as a Partner country of the BRICS group.

Key Facts

- This move reflects Nigeria’s growing influence as Africa’s largest economy and its commitment to enhancing international collaboration.
- BRICS aims to provide a counterbalance to Western-led economic forums and promote South-South cooperation.
- The BRICS bloc also seeks to challenge the dominance of the US dollar in global trade. Leaders have discussed creating alternative payment systems to reduce dependence on dollar-based transactions.

- Nigeria’s admission marks it as the ninth partner, joining Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- Nigeria’s inclusion is due to its large population and economic potential. It aims to leverage BRICS for trade, investment, and socio-economic cooperation, aligning with its development objectives.

About BRICS

- BRICS was formed in 2009 to represent emerging economies.
- Initially comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China, the fifth member South Africa joined in 2010.
- The group focuses on economic cooperation, political dialogue, and reforming global governance.
- Recently, BRICS expanded with Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia and the UAE as the members.

21st JANUARY 2025

Global Economic Prospects (GEP) Report 2025

- **Context:** The World Bank has released the 2025 Global Economic Prospects (GEP) Report 2025, a flagship biannual publication of the World Bank Group that examines trends and projections in the global economy.

Major Highlights

- **Global Economy:** It is projected to expand by 2.7% in both 2025 and 2026, the same pace as in 2024.
- **Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs)** have undergone significant transformation since 2000, now contributing about 45% of global GDP, compared to 25% at the start of the century.
 - India, China, and Brazil, the three largest EMDEs, have collectively driven approximately 60% of annual global growth since the start of the century.
- **Trade Restrictions:** New global trade restrictions in 2024 were five times the 2010-19 average. As a result, overall economic growth dropped—from 5.9% in the 2000s to 3.5% in the 2020s.

- Challenges and Recommendations:
 - Rising trade tensions could reduce global growth. Persistent inflation could delay expected cuts in interest rates.
 - With the right policies, these economies can even transform some challenges into significant opportunities.
 - All countries, meanwhile, should work together to strengthen global trade governance, with the support of multilateral institutions.

India Specific Highlights

- **Growth:** India is projected to remain the fastest-growing large economy for FY26 and FY27 (growth rate – 6.7%), reaffirming its dominance in the global economic landscape.
 - Growth in India's services sector is expected to remain robust, while manufacturing activity will strengthen.
- **Investments:** India's Investment growth is expected to remain steady, supported by rising private investments, improved corporate balance sheets, and favourable financing conditions.

Vikas Engine

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully demonstrated the restart of its Vikas liquid engine at the Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri .

About Vikas Engine

- It is the workhorse engine with a nominal thrust of 80 tonnes.
- It is a key component powering the liquid stages of ISRO's launch vehicles, including the second

stages of PSLV & GSLV, liquid strap-ons of GSLV, and the core liquid stage of LVM3.

- Liquid engines that can throttle thrust are crucial for enabling booster stage recovery in future launch vehicles.
- It is developed by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre.

Exercise La Perouse

- **Context:** The indigenously designed guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai is participating in the fourth edition of the Multinational Exercise LA PEROUSE.

Key Highlights

- The exercise is scheduled from January 16 to 24, taking place in the strategic straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok, which connect the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.
- Participating Countries: Australia, Canada, France, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the U.K., and the U.S. are involved in the exercise.
- Strategic Importance: The exercise focuses on strengthening maritime safety, developing interoperability among navies, and enhancing collective action in maritime crises, particularly in the strategically important straits vulnerable to various risks.
- India's participation highlights its strong synergy, coordination, and commitment to a rules-based international maritime order.
- The exercise aligns with India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), aiming to enhance maritime cooperation and ensure a safer Indo-Pacific region.

