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Current affairs summary for prelims

14 September, 2024

POCSO Act

Context: *Karnataka High Court recently condemned delays in POCSO cases, highlighting flaws in the legal system.*

➢ **Overview:**

- Despite the POCSO Act mandating completion within one year, many cases remain pending for years.

The **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** came into effect on November 14, 2012, following India's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. This legislation aims to address sexual exploitation and abuse of children by defining and penalising these crimes more specifically than previous laws.

➢ **Key Features**

- **Gender-Neutral Nature:** The Act covers both boys and girls, acknowledging that sexual abuse can affect any child regardless of gender.
- **Ease of Reporting:** Non-reporting of sexual exploitation has been made an offence, increasing accountability and making it harder to conceal such crimes.
- **Explicit Definitions:** The Act explicitly defines offences such as sexual assault and child pornography, providing clearer legal standards compared to previous laws.

➢ **POCSO Rules 2020**

- **Interim Compensation:** Rule-9 allows for interim compensation for immediate relief and rehabilitation needs of the child.
- **Immediate Special Relief:** The Child Welfare Committee (CWC) can recommend immediate aid for essentials, which must be provided within a week.
- **Support Person:** The CWC can appoint a support person to assist the child through the legal process, ensuring their well-being and informing them and their guardians about case developments.

➢ **Fast Track Special Courts**

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, led to the creation of 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including 389 exclusive POCSO courts. As of May 31, 2023, 758 FTSCs, including 412 exclusive POCSO courts, are operational across India.

Challenges and Issues with the POCSO Act

➢ **Investigation Challenges**

- **Low Representation of Women:** With only 10% women in the police force, it is often challenging to comply with the requirement for a female sub-inspector to record a child's statement.
- **Investigation Lapses:** Despite provisions for using audio-video recording, lapses in evidence preservation and crime scene documentation still occur.
- **Judicial Examination Issues:** Statements recorded by judicial magistrates are often not cross-examined during trials, leading to potential issues with their validity.

➢ **Age Determination and Delays**

- **Age Determination:** The absence of specific age determination provisions under the POCSO Act complicates cases. Investigating officers often rely on school records, despite the Supreme Court's recommendations.
- **Charges Filing Delays:** Investigations are required to be completed within one month, but delays are common due to resource constraints and case complexities.

➢ **Legal Presumptions**

- **No Recent Intercourse Requirement:** The POCSO Act does not require proof of recent intercourse, which differs from the Indian Evidence Act and affects the conviction rate.

➢ **Initiatives to Combat Child Abuse**

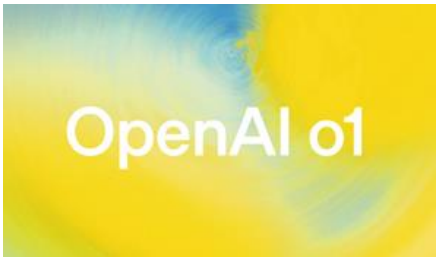
- **Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation Units**
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme**
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**
- **Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006**
- **Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2016**
- **Special Fast Track POCSO Courts**

OpenAI

Context:*OpenAI's recent AI model, openAI-o1, solves complex problems faster with advanced reasoning, outperforming earlier models.*

➢ **Overview:**

- These models are trained to think through problems more deeply, refining their process and recognizing mistakes
- The openAI-o1 model features a new class of capabilities, solving more complex science and maths problems with improved reasoning.



➢ **The Origins of OpenAI**
- **Establishment:** OpenAI was founded in December 2015 as a non-profit AI research organisation aimed at developing Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).
- **Objective:** The goal was to ensure AGI benefits all humanity and to prevent monopolisation by major tech companies like Google.

➢ **Founding Members**
- **Key Figures:** Among the founding members were Altman, Brockman, Reid Hoffman (LinkedIn co-founder), Amazon Web Services, Infosys, Peter Thiel and Elon Musk.
- **Initial Funding:** The founders pledged $1 billion to support the venture.

➢ **Evolution of OpenAI**
- **Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPTs):** Introduced in a 2018 report titled 'Improving Language Understanding by Generative Pre-Training,' GPTs are large language models using transformer neural networks to generate human-like text.
- **Capabilities:** GPTs are trained on vast amounts of unlabelled text data and excel in tasks such as language generation, sentiment analysis, language modelling, machine translation and text classification.

➢ **ChatGPT**
- **Overview:** ChatGPT, a state-of-the-art NLP model, is a variant of GPT-3 designed to generate human-like responses and facilitate natural dialogue.
- **Features:** It offers technical responses free of jargon, enhancing user interaction through conversational abilities.

➢ **OpenAI Sora**
- **Introduction:** Sora, built on research from DALL·E and GPT models generate videos from text instructions.
- *(DALL·E is a text-to-image model developed by OpenAI, introduced in January 2021. It generates digital images from natural language descriptions and can create images in various styles, including photorealistic, paintings and emojis.)*
- **Capabilities:** It creates videos up to one minute long, with high visual quality and accuracy and can add to existing videos for extended duration.
- **Features:** Generates detailed scenes with characters, actions and backgrounds.

➢ **OpenAI-o1 Model**
- Incorporates advanced reasoning abilities, allowing it to think through problems more thoroughly and develop more nuanced solutions.

➢ **Features of** model- **openAI-o1:**
- **Reasoning Improvements:** The openAI-o1 model demonstrates significant advancements in problem-solving and coding, utilising improved reasoning techniques and chain-of-thought processing.
- **Mathematics and Coding Scores:** openAI-o1 scored 83% on the International Mathematics Olympiad qualifier, AIME and ranked in the 89th percentile on Codeforces, a programming contest platform.
- **Expert Benchmark:** It surpassed PhD-level experts in physics, chemistry and biology on the GPQA diamond benchmark, though not in all respects.

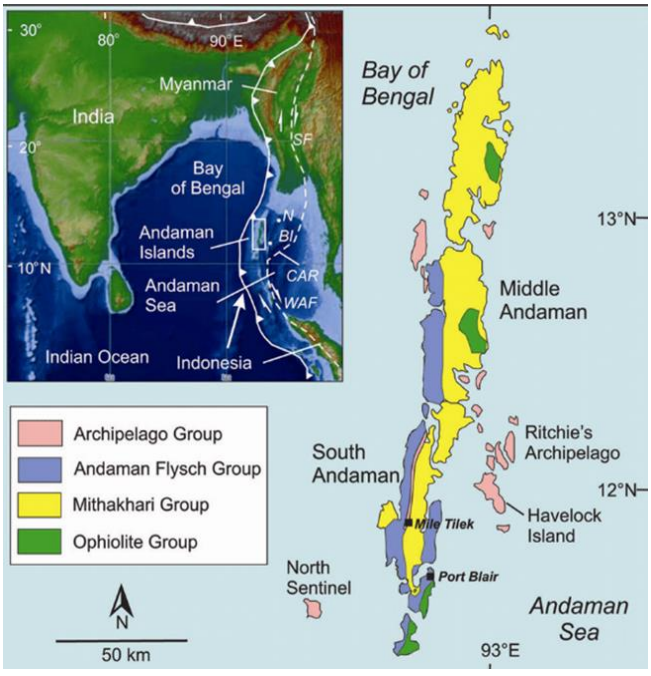
(*The GPQA Diamond Benchmark is a recently introduced evaluation framework designed to assess the capabilities of AI models, particularly in the context of question answering (QA) systems.*)

Project Strawberry: openAI-o1 is part of 'Project Strawberry,' aimed at enhancing AI reasoning. Initially called 'Q*' and later 'Strawberry,' the project focuses on developing models with advanced reasoning and deep research capabilities.

Historical Significance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Context:*The Central government announced that Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, will now be renamed Sri Vijaya Puram.*

➢ **Overview:**
- "Shri Vijaya Puram symbolises our freedom struggle's victory and underscores the Andaman and Nicobar Islands' role in that effort," Shah said.
- This area, formerly part of the Chola Empire, has long been vital to India's strategic and developmental goals.



- **Ancient References**
  - **Ramayana Period**: Known as **Handuman**.
  - **1st Century**: Referred to as "Agadaemon" or "Angademan" by Greek geographer Ptolemy.
- **Chola Empire Connection**
  - **Ancient Maritime Reach**:While there are no explicit historical records directly mentioning the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the extensive maritime influence of the Chola Empire suggests possible indirect awareness or influence over these islands.
- **Historical Exploration**
  - **13th Century**: Marco Polo described the islands as "**Angamanian**."
  - **14th Century**: Friar Odoric visited the islands.
  - **16th Century**: Caesar Fredericke documented the islands.
  - **19th Century**: Arab travellers also visited the islands.
- **Colonial Era**
  - **17th Century**: Lieutenant **Archibald Blair** established a naval base on a small island near South Andaman, marking the beginning of European influence.
  - **First Colony**: Established on Chatham Island with 12 acres of land.
- **Penal Settlement and Conflict**
  - **1857**: "The Andaman Committee," led by Dr. Frederic John Mouat, was set up to identify a suitable location for a penal settlement.
  - **January 22, 1858**: Captain H. Man raised the Union Jack at Port Blair, formalising the penal settlement.
  - **Spring 1858**: Penal settlement established at South Andaman, named Port Blair.
  - **May 17, 1859**: **"The Battle of Aberdeen"** occurred due to conflicts between convicts and native populations.
- **Cellular Jail**
  - **Construction**: Built between 1896 and 1910 in a star-shaped model with 668 cells, used for imprisoning freedom fighters.
- **World War II and Post-Independence**
  - **1942-1945**: Japanese occupied Port Blair during World War II.
  - **1943**: Subhas Chandra Bose established a provisional Indian government in the islands.
- **Recent Developments**
  - **1962**: Establishment of a naval garrison due to security concerns.
  - **2001**: Formation of the Andaman Nicobar Command (ANC) as India's first unified operational command.
- **Recent Projects**:
  - **Great Nicobar Project**: Includes an international container transshipment terminal, airport, power plant and township.
  - **Little Andaman Proposal**: Development of a new greenfield coastal city to enhance competitiveness.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Hindi Diwas

Today, the Union Home Minister of India has extended greetings to all the countrymen on the occasion of Hindi Diwas.

About Hindi Diwas:

- Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on **14th September** to commemorate the adoption of Hindi as the official language of India.
- The **theme** for Hindi Diwas **2024** is **"Hindi – the bridge between traditional knowledge and artificial intelligence".**
- **On 14th September 1949,** the **Constituent Assembly of India adopted Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language** of the country.
- According to **Article 343(1)** of the Indian Constitution, Hindi was declared the official language of the Union.
- Hindi languages and is listed among the **22 scheduled languages** in the **8th Schedule** of the Indian Constitution.
- **Maithili Sharan Gupta**, **Hazari Prasad Dwivedi**, **Seth Govindadas** and **Kaka Kalelkar** played key roles in promoting Hindi as the official language of India.
- The Government of India promotes the Hindi language through initiatives such as **Hindi Pakhwada**, **Rajbhasha awards**, the **Hindi Sahitya Sammelan** (Recognition) Act, 1956.

United Nations General Assembly

Recently, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar congratulated Cameroon's former Prime Minister Philemon Yang on assuming the presidency of the 79th United Nations General Assembly session.

About the United Nations General Assembly:

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is the main **policy-making and deliberative organ of the United Nations**.
- It is a forum where all **193 UN member states** can discuss and work together on international issues, and make key decisions for the UN.
- It **meets annually in New York City**, usually in September, but can also convene for special or emergency sessions as needed.
- **It can grant Permanent Observer Status** to non-member states and international organizations.
- **Each member state has one vote** and decisions are made by a simple majority for most issues.
- However, important issues like **peace** and **security**, **budgetary matters** and the **admission of new members require a two-thirds majority.**
- The UNGA's **President** is elected annually by the Assembly to serve a **one-year term**.

Zorawar

Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the preliminary automotive trials of the Indian light battle tank, Zorawar in Gujarat's Hazira on September 13, 2024.

About Zorawar:

- The Zorawar is a **hybrid tank** with a **Cummins 730 hp engine**, **a Cockrill 105 mm gun and turret**, and **a hull adapted from the Korean K-9 platform**.
- The tank is **named after Zorawar Singh**, a legendary general who **led Dogra forces to victory in Ladakh** and **Tibet** between **1834 and 1841**.
- It is **designed to operate in high altitude areas**, **marginal terrain** and **island** territories.
- It **weighs just 25 tons**, half the weight of heavier tanks **like the T-90**, allowing it to operate in difficult mountain terrain that is inaccessible to larger tanks.
- It can be **transported by air**, perform amphibious operations and fire at high angles of elevation.
- It has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in **collaboration with Larsen & Toubro**.
- The tank is expected to be handed over to the Army by **August 2025**.

Place in News

Switzerland

Recently, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar highlighted India's focus on inclusive growth, the rule of law, and women-led development, key aspects emphasized during India's G20 Presidency last year, while addressing the Indian community in Geneva, Switzerland.

Switzerland (Capital: Bern)

Location: Switzerland is a **landlocked country**, located in Central Europe.

Political Boundaries: Switzerland shares its borders with **Austria** and **Liechtenstein** (East), **France** (West), **Germany** (North) and **Italy** (South).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Switzerland is **Dufourspitze**, which is part of the **Monte Rosa massif** in the **Alps**.
- The major lakes in Switzerland are **Lake Geneva** (Lac Léman), **Lake Constance** (Bodensee) and **Lake Zurich**.
- The major rivers in Switzerland are the **Rhine**, **Rhone**, **Aare** and **Ticino**.

Membership:

- Switzerland is a member of the **United Nations** (UN), **World Trade Organization** (WTO), **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA) and participates in the Schengen Area but is not an European Union (EU) member.

	Swiss National Day: **On 1 August**, Switzerland commemorates the **signing of the Federal Charter of 1291,** in which the localities of **Uri**, **Schwyz** and **Unterwalden** pledged to help each other if attacked.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that Port Blair will be renamed to which new name to eliminate colonial imprints? **– Sri Vijaya Puram**
- Recently, the World Health Organisation approved which vaccine as the first shot against Mpox? **– Bavarian Nordic's Vaccine**
- Which app was recently launched by the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying? **– Rangeen Machhli App**
- The Indian Army Contingent has recently departed for which edition of the INDIA-OMAN Joint Military Exercise AL NAJAH? **– AL NAJAH V**
- Recently, under which act did the Central Government notify NaBFID as a Public Financial Institution (PFI)? **– Companies Act, 2013**