



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 01-02-2025

GS-1

1. Padma Awards
2. National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

GS-2

3. Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

GS-3

4. Inland Waterways Authority Of India (Iwai)
5. Wetland Accredited Cities List

Padma Awards

Syllabus: GS-1; Awards & Recognitions

Context

- India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on January 26th 2025, and on its eve, the Indian government announced the recipients of the prestigious Padma Awards.



About

- The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honors in India, conferred annually by the President of India to recognize exceptional achievements in various fields.

Categories of Padma Awards

1. Padma Vibhushan:

- **Purpose:** This is the second-highest civilian award and is given for exceptional and distinguished service in any field, including government service.
- **Notable Recipients:** Satyajit Ray (film), M. S. Swaminathan (agriculture), Lata Mangeshkar (music).

2. **Padma Bhushan:**

- **Purpose:** The third-highest civilian award, it is presented for distinguished service of a high order in any field.
- **Notable Recipients:** Ratan Tata (business), Javed Akhtar (literature), Zakir Hussain (music).

3. **Padma Shri:**

- **Purpose:** This is the fourth-highest civilian award, conferred for distinguished service in any field, including arts, literature, science, sports, social work, and public affairs.
- **Notable Recipients:** Kailash Satyarthi (social work), Priyanka Chopra (arts), Virat Kohli (sports).

Fields of Award

The Padma Awards are conferred for excellence in fields such as:

- **Art:** Fine arts, music, dance, theatre, film, etc.
- **Literature and Education:** Contributions to literature, knowledge, and education.
- **Science and Engineering:** Innovations and contributions to the scientific and technical fields.
- **Social Work:** Efforts in social causes and welfare.
- **Public Affairs:** Contributions to public life and governance.
- **Sports:** Achievements in national or international sports.
- **Trade and Industry:** Contributions to the business and industrial sectors.
- **Medicine:** Exceptional contributions to healthcare and medical sciences.
- **Environment and Wildlife:** Protection, conservation, and promotion of the environment and wildlife.

Process of Selection

- The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendation of the Prime Minister's office, based on nominations submitted by individuals, institutions, and governments.
- The recommendations are then reviewed by the Padma Awards Committee, which consists of eminent people from various fields, and final approval is given by the President of India.

National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

Syllabus: GS-1: Resource Geography – Critical Minerals.

Context:

- The Union Cabinet, has approved the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) with an expenditure of ₹16,300 crore and an additional ₹18,000 crore investment from PSUs.

What is the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)?

- The NCMM is a strategic framework designed to reduce India's dependency on imports for critical minerals by fostering domestic exploration, mining, and processing.
- It also focuses on acquiring mineral assets overseas and promoting innovation in mineral extraction and recycling technologies.

Key Details

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Mines
- **Announced In:** Union Budget 2024-25
- **Budget:** ₹34,300 crore
 - ₹16,300 crore from the government
 - ₹18,000 crore from PSUs and private sector investments
- **Objective:** Strengthen India's supply chain for critical minerals through domestic exploration, overseas asset acquisition, and technological advancements.

Aims of NCMM

- **Accelerate Domestic Exploration & Mining:** Expand exploration activities within India, including offshore reserves, to identify and extract critical minerals.
- **Regulatory Reforms:** Streamline mining approvals and processes to ensure seamless extraction and processing.
- **Strategic Global Partnerships:** Facilitate PSUs and private players in acquiring mineral assets abroad to secure a steady supply.

- **Infrastructure Development:** Establish mineral processing parks and promote recycling of critical minerals.
- **Encourage R&D & Innovation:** Support research in advanced mineral processing technologies and set up Centers of Excellence.

Key Features of NCMM

- **Comprehensive Value Chain Development:** Covers the entire lifecycle of critical minerals, from exploration and mining to beneficiation, processing, and recycling.
- **Financial Incentives:** Provides monetary support for exploration and sustainable mineral recovery projects.
- **Stockpile Strategy:** Develops a national reserve of critical minerals to ensure long-term supply security.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Encourages PSUs and private firms to invest in global mining projects.
- **Legislative Backing:** Supported by the 2023 amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Critical Minerals Covered Under NCMM

The mission prioritizes minerals essential for renewable energy, semiconductor manufacturing, and defense applications. Some of the key minerals include:

Mineral Name	Industry Used In
Lithium & Cobalt	EV batteries, electronics
Graphite & Nickel	Battery storage, alloys
Rare Earth Elements (REEs)	High-tech manufacturing, defense applications
Titanium & Tungsten	Aerospace, industrial applications
Vanadium & Molybdenum	Steel production, energy storage solutions

Significance of NCMM

- **Reduced Import Dependency:** By securing domestic and overseas sources, India can reduce its reliance on imports for critical minerals.

- **Boost to Renewable Energy:** Critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are vital for EV batteries and renewable energy storage, supporting India's green energy transition.
- **Strengthening Defense Capabilities:** Minerals like titanium and rare earth elements are crucial for defense and aerospace industries.
- **Economic Growth:** The mission will foster industrial growth, create jobs, and attract investments in the mining and manufacturing sectors.
- **Global Competitiveness:** By developing a robust supply chain, India can position itself as a key player in the global critical minerals market.

Challenges

- **Exploration Risks:** Identifying and extracting critical minerals domestically may face geological and technological challenges.
- **Global Competition:** Acquiring overseas assets may involve competition from other countries.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Mining and processing activities must adhere to sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact.

Conclusion

The National Critical Mineral Mission is a forward-looking initiative that aligns with India's goals of self-reliance, industrial growth, and sustainable development. By securing critical minerals, India can strengthen its position in high-tech industries, renewable energy, and defense sectors, ensuring long-term economic and strategic benefits.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Syllabus: GS-2: Statutory bodies.

Context:

- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 lakh on Vision IAS for deceptive advertising about its students' success in the civil services examination.

CCPA's Emphasis:

- The CCPA stressed that **complete course information** is crucial for consumers to make **informed decisions** about coaching institutes.
- The penalty was imposed to protect “**young and impressionable aspirants**” from **deceptive marketing practices**.

Key Takeaways:

- **Importance of Transparency:**
 - Aspirants should seek **complete and transparent information** about courses and success rates before enrolling in any coaching institute.
- **Consumer Protection:**
 - The CCPA's actions highlight the importance of **consumer protection laws** in safeguarding students from **misleading claims** and **unfair practices**.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** is a regulatory body established under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which replaced the earlier **Consumer Protection Act, 1986**.
- The CCPA was set up in **July 2020** to strengthen the framework for consumer protection in India.
- Its primary objective is to safeguard consumer rights, promote fair trade practices, and ensure that consumers are not subjected to false or misleading advertisements.

Key Functions and Powers of CCPA:

- **Protection of Consumer Rights:**
 - The CCPA is tasked with protecting, promoting, and enforcing the rights of consumers as a class.
 - It aims to prevent violations of consumer rights under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- **Regulation of Unfair Trade Practices:**
 - The CCPA ensures that no person or entity engages in unfair trade practices.

- It takes action against practices that are detrimental to consumer interests.
- **Monitoring of Advertisements:**
 - The CCPA ensures that no false or misleading advertisements are made for goods or services.
 - It prohibits the publication of advertisements that contravene the provisions of the Act.
- **Investigation and Enforcement:**
 - The CCPA has an **investigation wing**, headed by a **Director-General**, which conducts inquiries and investigations into violations of consumer laws.
 - It can take **suo-moto actions** (on its own initiative) to address consumer grievances and violations.
- **Product Recalls and Reimbursement:**
 - The CCPA has the power to order the **recall of products, reimbursement of prices, and return of products** in cases of consumer detriment.
 - It can also cancel licenses of businesses found violating consumer rights.
- **Class Action Suits:**
 - The CCPA can file **class action suits** if a consumer complaint affects multiple individuals.
 - This allows for collective redressal of grievances.
- **Penalties and Orders:**
 - The CCPA can impose penalties for false or misleading advertisements.
 - It can issue orders to discontinue unfair practices that are prejudicial to consumer interests.

Composition of CCPA:

- The CCPA is headed by a **Chief Commissioner**.

- It includes **two other Commissioners**:
 - One Commissioner deals with matters related to **goods**.
 - The other Commissioner handles issues related to **services**.

Nodal Ministry:

- The CCPA operates under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**, which oversees its functioning and implementation of consumer protection policies.

Significance of CCPA:

- The establishment of the CCPA marks a significant step in strengthening consumer protection in India.
- It provides a robust mechanism to address unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, and other violations of consumer rights.
- By empowering the CCPA with suo-moto powers and the ability to initiate class action suits, the Act ensures a proactive approach to consumer protection.

Inland Waterways Authority Of India (Iwai)

Syllabus: GS-3: Infrastructure – Waterways.

Context:

- India's Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) has announced a Rs500bn (\$5.8bn) investment to enhance its inland waterways network.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

Overview

- **Establishment:** The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) was established on **27th October 1986** under the **Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985**.

- **Purpose:** IWAI is the statutory body responsible for the development, maintenance, and regulation of **national waterways** in India for shipping and navigation.
- **Headquarters:** Located in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Jurisdiction:** Operates under the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways**, Government of India.

Functions of IWAI

- **Development of National Waterways:**
 - Identifies, develops, and maintains **inland waterways** for shipping and navigation.
 - Conducts surveys and feasibility studies for new waterways.
 - Constructs infrastructure like **terminals, jetties, and navigation locks**.
- **Regulation of Waterways:**
 - Regulates and ensures safe navigation on national waterways.
 - Issues licenses for vessels and operators.
 - Sets standards for vessel design, construction, and operation.
- **Promotion of Inland Water Transport (IWT):**
 - Promotes IWT as an eco-friendly and cost-effective mode of transport.
 - Encourages private sector participation in IWT development.
- **Technical and Financial Assistance:**
 - Provides technical expertise and financial support for IWT projects.
 - Collaborates with state governments and other stakeholders.
- **Research and Development:**
 - Conducts R&D for improving navigation, vessel design, and waterway management.
 - Focuses on sustainable development of inland waterways.

National Waterways in India

- India has **111 National Waterways (NWs)** as per the **National Waterways Act, 2016**.
- These waterways span over **24,000 km** across the country.
- Some important NWs include:
 1. **NW-1:** Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (Allahabad to Haldia, 1620 km).
 2. **NW-2:** Brahmaputra River (Dhubri to Sadiya, 891 km).
 3. **NW-3:** West Coast Canal (Kottapuram to Kollam, 205 km) in Kerala.
 4. **NW-4:** Krishna-Godavari River System and Kakinada-Puducherry Canal (1095 km).
 5. **NW-5:** East Coast Canal and Matai River (588 km).



Key Initiatives by IWAI

- **Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP):**
 - Aims to develop NW-1 (Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly) for commercial navigation.
 - Funded by the **World Bank**.

- Includes construction of multimodal terminals, navigation locks, and river information systems.
- **Arth Ganga:**
 - Part of the **Namami Gange** program.
 - Focuses on economic activities linked to Ganga, such as tourism, fisheries, and agriculture.
- **Digital Solutions:**
 - Implementation of **River Information Services (RIS)** for real-time navigation and safety.
 - Use of **GIS-based mapping** for waterway management.
- **Cargo and Passenger Transport:**
 - Promotion of cargo movement on waterways to reduce logistics costs.
 - Development of **roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro)** and **passenger ferry services**.
- **International Cooperation:**
 - Collaboration with countries like **Bangladesh** for cross-border inland water transport.
 - Development of the **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) routes**.

Advantages of Inland Water Transport

- **Cost-Effective:** Lower fuel consumption and operational costs compared to road and rail.
- **Environmentally Friendly:** Reduces carbon emissions and traffic congestion.
- **High Capacity:** Suitable for transporting bulk cargo like coal, cement, and fertilizers.
- **Reduced Wear and Tear:** Lessens the burden on road and rail infrastructure.

Challenges Faced by IWAI

- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Lack of terminals, jetties, and navigation aids.

- **Seasonal Navigability:** Water levels fluctuate due to monsoon and droughts.
- **Inter-State Coordination:** Requires cooperation between multiple states for waterway development.
- **Awareness and Adoption:** Limited awareness and preference for IWT among businesses.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Dredging and construction activities may impact river ecosystems.

Recent Developments

- **Sagarmala Programme:**
 - Integration of inland waterways with coastal shipping under the Sagarmala initiative.
- **Ganga Vilas Cruise:**
 - World's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh, promoting tourism on NW-1.
- **Multi-Modal Logistics Parks:**
 - Development of logistics hubs connecting waterways with road and rail networks.
- **Hydrographic Surveys:**
 - Conducting surveys to assess navigability and plan infrastructure development.

Key Takeaways for UPSC

- **Economic Growth:** IWAI plays a crucial role in reducing logistics costs and boosting trade.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Promotes green transport and aligns with SDGs.
- **Regional Development:** Enhances connectivity in remote and economically backward areas.
- **International Relations:** Facilitates trade and cooperation with neighboring countries like Bangladesh.

Wetland Accredited Cities List

Syllabus: GS-3; Ramsar Conservation

Context

- Indore and Udaipur have made history by becoming the first two Indian cities to join the global list of accredited wetland cities under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



India's Nominations for Wetland City Accreditation

- Earlier this month, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) submitted three Indian cities—Indore, Bhopal, and Udaipur—for Wetland City Accreditation (WCA).
- This marks the first time that India has nominated cities for this prestigious recognition.
- The wetland areas around these cities offer significant benefits, including flood regulation, livelihood opportunities, and cultural and recreational values.

Significant Wetlands of Indore and Udaipur

- *Indore*: Sirpur Lake in Indore, a Ramsar Site, has been recognized for its role in water bird congregation and is being developed as a bird sanctuary, highlighting the city's environmental significance.
- *Udaipur*: Surrounded by five major wetlands—Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai—Udaipur's wetlands are integral to the city's

culture and identity. They help regulate the local microclimate and provide natural buffers against extreme weather events.

Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)

- The **Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)** is a new initiative under the Ramsar Convention launched in **2021** to recognize cities that have shown significant commitment to the protection and sustainable use of wetlands.
- Cities that receive this accreditation are recognized for their successful integration of wetland conservation into urban planning and management, contributing to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, and climate resilience.

Importance of Wetland City Accreditation

- **Environmental Conservation:** Wetland cities are recognized for their efforts in conserving water resources, enhancing biodiversity, and maintaining ecosystems that provide vital services like flood regulation, water purification, and carbon sequestration.
- **Urban Sustainability:** The accreditation emphasizes the integration of wetland management into urban development, promoting sustainable growth while safeguarding natural resources.
- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Wetlands play a crucial role in climate adaptation and mitigation by serving as carbon sinks and buffering against extreme weather events.

Wetland Cities Globally

- As of **January 2025**, there are **31 wetland-accredited cities** across the world under the Ramsar Convention. These cities have adopted strategies that integrate wetland conservation into their urban systems.

Wetland Conservation in India

India is home to several significant wetlands, including Ramsar Sites, which are critical for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Some prominent examples of Ramsar Sites in India are:

- **Sundarbans Wetland** (West Bengal)
- **Keoladeo National Park** (Rajasthan)
- **Chilika Lake** (Odisha)
- **Vembanad Wetland** (Kerala)
- **Wular Lake** (Jammu & Kashmir)

01 February 2025

India's growing commitment to wetland conservation aligns with national objectives like **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** (Clean India Mission) and **National Action Plan on Climate Change** (NAPCC), which aim to integrate environmental sustainability into development policies.