



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 07-03-2025**

### **GS-2**

1. India-Qatar Relations

### **GS-3**

2. Navaratna Status
3. Revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP)
4. National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)
5. The Wallace Line

## **India-Qatar Relations**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Bilateral Relations.**

### **Context:**

- India and Qatar have significantly expanded and deepened their bilateral relations.
- The recent state visit of Qatar's Amir, **Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani**, marked a crucial milestone.
- Both nations **elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership** and signed key agreements in economic, energy, and diplomatic sectors.

### **Evolution of India-Qatar Relations**

- India's engagement with the **Gulf region** has been **multidimensional**—economic, cultural, and people-to-people.
- **Qatar's strategic significance** to India:
  - **Geostrategic location** in the Middle East.
  - Strong ties with **Western powers, Israel, and Afghanistan**.
  - **Dominance in LNG supply**, making it crucial for India's energy security.
- India prioritizes relations with the Gulf:
  - The Prime Minister has emphasized stronger Gulf ties.
  - India's **External Affairs Minister visited Qatar three times** in the last nine months, highlighting diplomatic importance.

### **Key Outcomes of the Amir's Visit**

#### **1. Strategic Partnership**

- India and Qatar **upgraded ties to a "strategic partnership"**, enhancing cooperation in:
  - **Energy security**
  - **Trade and investment**
- This aligns Qatar with **India's other strategic Gulf partners** (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait) under **GCC**.

#### **2. Economic and Trade Cooperation**

- Aim to **double bilateral trade from \$14 billion to \$28 billion** in five years.
- Qatar pledged **\$10 billion in new investments** in India, focusing on:
  - **Infrastructure**

- **Energy**
- **Technology**
- Agreements signed on:
  - **Economic cooperation**
  - **Youth affairs**
  - **Double taxation avoidance** (to ease business and investment).

### 3. Energy Cooperation

- **QatarEnergy and India's Petronet LNG signed a 20-year LNG supply deal, the largest-ever such agreement.**
- Ensures **India's long-term energy security** with stable pricing and diversified sources.

### 4. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Possibilities

- Discussions on an **India-Qatar Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** to boost trade.
- Qatar already has FTAs with **China**, and a deal with India could enhance investment.
- India must ensure:
  - **No dumping of goods by third-party nations via Qatar** to protect Indian manufacturers.

### 5. Resolution of Diplomatic Setback

- Relations strained due to **2022 espionage case**, where **eight former Indian Navy personnel were arrested and sentenced.**
- The **Amir of Qatar pardoned them**, improving diplomatic goodwill and trust.

## Challenges and Way Forward

### 1. Economic and Trade Barriers

- **Non-tariff barriers and bureaucratic hurdles** slow down trade.
- Qatar's **limited investments in India** compared to other Gulf nations.
- India must **attract more Qatari investment** in infrastructure, startups, and energy exploration.

### 2. Political and Security Risks

- **Middle East volatility** (Iran-Israel tensions) affects India's energy security.
- Any **diplomatic rift between Qatar and GCC nations** could impact India's trade interests.

### 3. Labor and Migration Issues

- Need for **better working conditions and legal protections** for Indian workers in Qatar.
- Ensure **seamless remittances and social security benefits** for Indian expatriates.

### Conclusion

- **Qatar remains a key strategic partner** for India in **energy security, trade, and regional diplomacy**.
- **Strategic partnership marks a new era**, reinforcing India's **influence in the Middle East and global energy markets**.

### Practice Qs:

Q. Examine the strategic significance of India-Qatar relations, focusing on energy security, trade, and regional diplomacy. Highlight key challenges and suggest measures to strengthen bilateral ties. (15 marks, 250 words)

## Navaratna Status

**Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Public Sector Undertakings.**

### Context:

- On March 3, 2025, the Centre approved the upgradation of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) as the 25th and 26th Navratna companies of India.

### Navratna Status: Criteria and Eligibility

- **Navratnas** are the second category of 'Ratna' CPSEs, placed between **Maharatnas** and **Miniratnas**.
- The **Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance**, grants this status based on specific financial and performance criteria.

### Eligibility Criteria

A CPSE must meet the following conditions:

- **Composite Score:**
  - A CPSE must score **60 or higher** on six performance indicators:
    - **Net profit to net worth ratio**

- **Manpower cost to total cost of production/services**
- **PBDIT (Profit before Depreciation, Interest, and Tax) to capital employed**
- **PBIT (Profit before Interest and Taxes) to turnover**
- **Earnings per share**
- **Inter-sectoral performance**

➤ **MOU Rating:**

- The company must receive an **Excellent or Very Good rating** in at least **three of the last five years** in its **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) performance evaluation**.

**Benefits of Navratna Status**

➤ **Increased Financial Autonomy**

- Can invest up to **₹1,000 crore or 15% of their net worth in a single project** without government approval.
- No need for government intervention in **joint ventures, mergers, or acquisitions**.

➤ **Strategic Expansion**

- Can **expand globally**, form strategic alliances, and enter international markets without bureaucratic delays.
- Better ability to **compete with private sector firms**.

➤ **Market Position and Investments**

- Improved financial credibility leads to **higher investor confidence**.
- Ability to provide **better returns to shareholders**.

**Other Navratna CPSEs in Indian Railways**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Navratna Status Year</b>	<b>Function</b>
<b>CONCOR</b>	2014	Multimodal logistics and freight transport
<b>RVNL</b>	2023	Rail infrastructure development
<b>IRCON</b>	2023	Railway & highway projects in India and abroad
<b>RITES</b>	2023	Transport infrastructure consultancy
<b>RailTel</b>	2024	Digital connectivity services for railways

- **CONCOR** was the **first Indian Railways CPSE** to achieve **Navratna status in 2014**.
- **RailTel** was the most recent addition in **August 2024**.

### Conclusion

- The upgradation of **IRCTC and IRFC** to Navratna status marks an important milestone for Indian Railways CPSEs.
- This will enable **greater autonomy, global expansion, and financial independence**, strengthening India's railway infrastructure and services.

## **Revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP)**

### Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Agriculture - Livestock

#### Context:

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM has today approved the Revision of Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP).

#### What is LHDCP?

- **Objective:** To improve livestock health through vaccination, disease control, and strengthening veterinary infrastructure.
- **Developed By:** Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- **Aim:**
  - Prevent, control, and eradicate major livestock diseases.
  - Enhance accessibility to veterinary healthcare services.
  - Boost livestock productivity and economic growth for farmers.

#### Key Features of LHDCP

- **National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP):**
  - Focuses on eradicating **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)** and **Brucellosis** through mass vaccination.
- **Critical Animal Disease Control Programme (CADCP):**
  - Aims for 100% vaccination coverage for **Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR)** and **Classical Swine Fever (CSF)**.
- **Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs):**

- Provides doorstep veterinary care through customized vehicles equipped with diagnostic and treatment facilities.
- **Pashu Aushadhi Initiative:**
  - A new component introduced to provide **affordable generic veterinary medicines** through PM-Kisan Samriddhi Kendra and cooperatives.
  - ₹75 crore allocated for this initiative.
- **Strengthening Veterinary Infrastructure:**
  - Upgrading veterinary hospitals, dispensaries, and diagnostic labs to improve service delivery.
- **Surveillance & Disease Reporting:**
  - Strengthening real-time disease monitoring through the **Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health (INAPH)**.
- **Public Awareness & Capacity Building:**
  - Training farmers and veterinarians on disease prevention, biosecurity measures, and best practices.
- **Central-State Fund Sharing:**
  - **60:40** for states.
  - **90:10** for Northeast and Himalayan states.
  - **100%** for Union Territories.

### **Diseases Covered**

The programme targets major livestock diseases, including:

- Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)
- Brucellosis
- Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR)
- Classical Swine Fever (CSF)
- Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)
- Anthrax
- Rabies
- Other livestock diseases.

### **Financial Outlay**

- The Union Cabinet has approved an outlay of **₹3,880 crore** for the period **2024-26** to implement the revised LHDCP.

### Significance of LHDCP

- **Economic Growth:** Improved livestock health leads to higher productivity and income for farmers.
- **Disease Prevention:** Reduces the risk of zoonotic diseases and ensures food security.
- **Accessibility:** Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs) and affordable medicines make veterinary care more accessible to rural and remote areas.
- **Sustainability:** Strengthened infrastructure and surveillance systems ensure long-term benefits for the livestock sector.

### Conclusion:

The revised LHDCP, with its focus on vaccination, disease control, and affordable veterinary care, is a significant step toward ensuring the health and productivity of India's livestock population. The introduction of the **Pashu Aushadhi** initiative further enhances the programme's reach and impact by making veterinary medicines more affordable and accessible.

## National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

**Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife Conservation.**

### Context:

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** chaired the **7th meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** at **Gir National Park, Gujarat**.

### First-Ever Riverine Dolphin Estimation

- Prime Minister released the report of the **first riverine dolphin estimation** in India.
- **Key findings:**
  - Total dolphin population: **6,327**
  - Survey covered **28 rivers across 8 states**.
  - Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest numbers, followed by **Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam**.
  - Conducted over **8,500 km** with **3150 mandays**.



➤ **Conservation Initiatives:**

- **Local community participation** in dolphin conservation.
- **Exposure visits for school children** in dolphin habitat areas.

**Foundation Stone for National Referral Centre for Wildlife**

- Established at **Junagadh, Gujarat**.
- Functions as the hub for:
  - **Wildlife health & disease management**.
  - **Coordination and governance** of wildlife-related aspects.

**Asiatic Lion Population Estimation**

- Conducted **once every five years** (last in **2020**).
- **16th cycle of lion estimation** announced for **2025**.
- **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** has now become a natural habitat for Asiatic lions.
  - Conservation efforts to include **prey augmentation** and **habitat improvement**.
- Emphasis on **eco-tourism** for wildlife conservation and local development.

**Centre of Excellence for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management**

- To be established at **SACON (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History), Coimbatore**.
- Focus areas:
  - **Equipping Rapid Response Teams** with technology for tracking and forewarning.
  - **Intrusion Detection Systems** in human-wildlife conflict hotspots.
  - **Capacity building** for field staff and local communities.

**Use of Advanced Technology in Wildlife Conservation**

- Prime Minister emphasized **Remote Sensing, Geospatial Mapping, AI & ML** to:
  - **Combat forest fires**.
  - **Mitigate human-animal conflicts**.
- **Collaborations:**
  - **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)&BISAG-N (Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics)**.

- **Forest Survey of India, Dehradun & BISAG-N** for space-based **forest fire detection and control**.

#### **Expansion of Cheetah Reintroduction Program**

- New locations for cheetah introduction:
  - **Gandhisagar Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh.**
  - **Banni Grasslands, Gujarat.**

#### **New Tiger Conservation Scheme**

- **Objective:** Conservation of tigers **outside** designated tiger reserves.
- **Focus:**
  - **Human-tiger conflict mitigation.**
  - **Co-existence with local communities.**

#### **New Project on Gharial Conservation**

- Initiative to **protect and increase the dwindling population** of **Gharials** in India.

#### **National Great Indian Bustard Conservation Action Plan**

- **Scaling up conservation efforts** for the **Great Indian Bustard**.
- **Task forces** to be created for:
  - **Indian Sloth Bear.**
  - **Gharial Conservation.**
  - **Great Indian Bustard Conservation & Development.**

#### **Role of Traditional Knowledge in Wildlife Conservation**

- PM directed:
  - Compilation of **traditional knowledge and manuscripts** on **forest & wildlife management**.
  - Use of **Artificial Intelligence** for documenting successful conservation models (e.g., **Gir Lion & Leopard Conservation Model**).

#### **Strengthening International Cooperation in Wildlife Conservation**

- Enhanced collaboration under **United Nations Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)**.

#### **Community Participation & Conservation Reserves**

- **6-fold increase** in **Community Reserves** in the past decade.
- Emphasis on:

- **Involvement of local communities in conservation efforts.**
- **AI & technology-driven conservation methods.**

## **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**

### **Introduction**

- The **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** is the highest advisory body on **wildlife conservation** in India.
- Established under **Section 5A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Reconstituted in 2022**, replacing the **Indian Board for Wildlife (1952).**

### **Composition & Leadership**

#### **Chairperson**

- **Prime Minister of India** (Ex-officio Chairperson).

#### **Vice-Chairperson**

- **Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).**

#### **Members**

- **47-member committee**, including:
  - **Top government officials** from relevant ministries.
  - **Experts** (conservationists, ecologists, environmentalists).
  - **Defence and expenditure secretaries.**
  - **Chief of Army Staff.**

#### **Member-Secretary**

- **Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) & Director, Wildlife Preservation.**

#### **Standing Committee of NBWL**

- A **smaller sub-body** within NBWL for **project clearances** in **Protected Areas (PAs).**
- Headed by **MoEFCC Minister.**
- Evaluates and clears **infrastructure and development projects** impacting wildlife habitats.

#### **Functions & Powers of NBWL**

#### **Wildlife Conservation Policy**

- Advises the **Central Government** on policies and strategies for **wildlife conservation**.

### Approval for Projects in Protected Areas (PAs)

- **Mandatory clearance** required for development projects within:
  - **National Parks.**
  - **Wildlife Sanctuaries.**
  - **Tiger Reserves.**

### Boundary Alterations in Protected Areas

- No **alteration of PA boundaries** without **NBWL recommendation**.

### Regulation of Tourism & Infrastructure in PAs

- Approves **construction of tourist lodges, eco-tourism activities, and other infrastructure** in PAs.

### Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflict

- Develops strategies to **reduce habitat destruction** and **human-animal interactions**.
- Implements conflict mitigation **measures** such as corridors, compensation policies, and relocation programs.

### Wildlife Health & Research

- Supports **scientific research** on wildlife and biodiversity conservation.
- Promotes **AI-based monitoring**, tracking of endangered species, and conservation programs.

### Significance of NBWL

- Ensures a **balance** between **development** and **environmental conservation**.
- Strengthens **wildlife protection laws** and promotes **sustainable policies**.
- Plays a crucial role in **India's international wildlife conservation commitments**.

## **The Wallace Line**

### Syllabus: GS-3: Biodiversity.

#### Context:

- How the Wallace line explains the difference in species across continents.

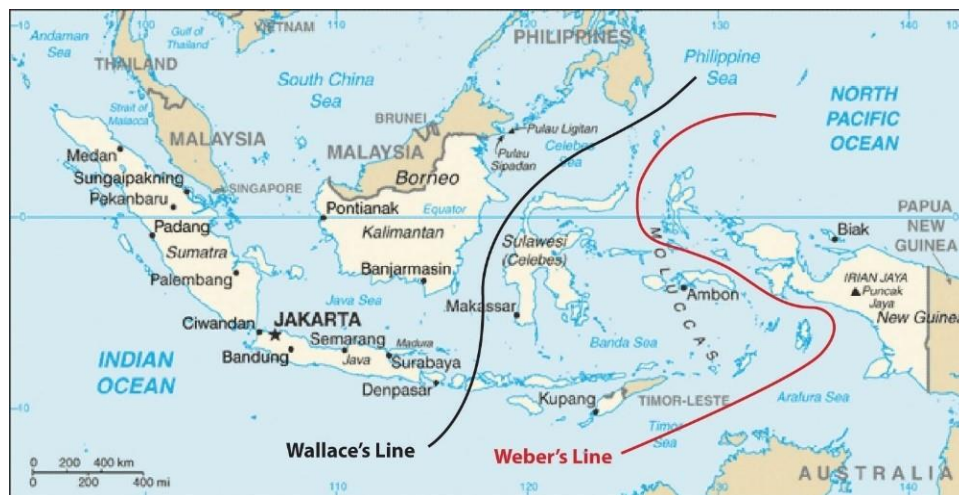
## The Wallace Line: A Biogeographical Marvel

### Introduction

- Kangaroos and cockatoos symbolize Australia; tigers and orangutans symbolize Asia.
- Both continents have unique and rich biodiversity.
- The **Wallace Line** is a conceptual boundary explaining the distinctiveness of these regions.

### What is the Wallace Line?

- Proposed by **Alfred Russel Wallace** in the late 19th century.
- Marks a dramatic shift in species composition between Asia and Australia.
- Runs between:
  - **Bali and Lombok** (Indonesia).
  - North between **Borneo and Sulawesi**.
  - Curves south of **Mindanao** (Philippines).
- Acts as an invisible barrier separating distinct fauna on either side.
- Wallace's fieldwork laid the foundation for **modern biogeography** (study of species distribution and origins).



### Key Findings on Sulawesi

- **Borneo and Sulawesi** are only 20 km apart but host very different species.
- Sulawesi's unique biodiversity includes:
  - **Tarsiers** (Tarsiidae family).
  - **Lowland Anoa** (*Bubalus depressicornis*).

- **Mountain Anoa** (*Bubalus quarlesi*).
- **Australian marsupials** like the **Dwarf Cuscus** (*Strigocuscuscelebensis*).
- Wallace was puzzled by Sulawesi's mix of Asian and Australian species.
- He noted affinities to Africa, India, Java, Maluku Islands, New Guinea, and the Philippines.

### Geological and Evolutionary Insights

- The Wallace Line is part of the **Malay Archipelago**, a region with over 25,000 islands.
- **Wallace's Theory:**
  - Islands like Sulawesi were once connected to the Asian mainland.
  - As islands drifted apart, species evolved independently, creating distinct distributions.
- **Ancient Geological Events:**
  - Australia broke off from Antarctica millions of years ago and drifted north.
  - Collision with Asia created the volcanic islands of Indonesia.
  - Variations in monsoons, aridity, and sea levels drove species adaptation and diversification.
- **2023 Study Findings:**
  - Analyzed 20,000 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.
  - Asian fauna migrated to Australia via rainforest-rich northern routes.
  - Australian species struggled to migrate to Asia due to cooler climates and later emergence of southern routes.

### Why Does the Wallace Line Matter?

- **Scientific Significance:**
  - Combines insights from geology, biology, and climate studies.
  - Reveals the deeper natural processes behind species distribution.
- **Modern Tools:**
  - Advanced evolutionary modeling and computer simulations are clarifying biogeography.
- **Conservation Relevance:**
  - The Indo-Malayan archipelago faces high rates of habitat destruction.

- Understanding species dispersal helps predict responses to climate change and habitat loss.
- **Beyond the Line:**
  - The Wallace Line is a simplification; boundaries are fuzzy.
  - Focus should shift to protecting species from habitat destruction rather than redrawing lines.

### Key Takeaways

- The Wallace Line highlights the unique biodiversity of Asia and Australia.
- It underscores the role of geological history, climate, and evolution in shaping species distribution.
- Modern research emphasizes the importance of conservation in the face of habitat destruction and climate change.