



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 25-08-2025

GS-1

1. Drake Passage

GS-2

2. Fortified Rice Scheme
3. Made in India Label Scheme

GS-3

4. Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)
5. Lesser Flamingo

Drake Passage

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography

Context

- A significant earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.5 struck the **Drake Passage**.



About the Drake Passage: The "Gateway to Antarctica"

The recent earthquake highlights the powerful and volatile geological forces at work in this unique region.

1. Location and Geography:

- It is the body of water between **South America's Cape Horn** (Chile) and the **South Shetland Islands of Antarctica**.
- It is the **deep and wide** gateway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

2. Notorious Reputation:

- It is famously known as one of the **roughest sea passages in the world**.
- This is due to the unimpeded flow of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current squeezing through the narrow gap, where cold southern waters collide with warmer northern waters, creating powerful eddies.
- This, combined with relentless westerly winds and frequent storms, creates treacherous conditions for ships.

3. Climatic Boundary:

- The passage is more than just water; it defines a critical climatic transition zone.
- It separates the cool, subpolar climate of Tierra del Fuego from the frigid, polar environment of Antarctica.

4. Historical Significance:

- Before the opening of the **Panama Canal**, the Drake Passage was a vital, though extremely dangerous, route for global trade, allowing ships to avoid the even more perilous journey around Cape Horn itself.
- It is named after **Sir Francis Drake**, the English explorer who circumnavigated the globe.

Fortified Rice Scheme

Syllabus: GS-2: Social Sector - Health and Nutrition.

Context:

- Union Cabinet has approved continuation of universal supply of fortified rice under all government schemes till **December 2028** with **100% central funding of ₹17,082 crore.**

About the Scheme

- A **nutrition intervention programme** to supply rice fortified with **Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12** through government food safety nets.
- Objective: To combat **anaemia, malnutrition, and hidden hunger** in India.



Evolution

- **2019** – Pilot phase launched.
- **2022** – National scale-up approved for universal coverage.

Nodal Ministry & Agency

- **Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD)**, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- **FSSAI**: Frames technical standards for fortification.

Components of Distribution

- **Public Distribution System (PDS)** – fortified rice through ration shops.
- **PM POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal)** – fortified staples in school meals to address child anaemia.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** – supply for children & women beneficiaries.
- **Special Nutrition Initiatives** – under Wheat-Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP) and Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG).

Key Features

- **Universal Coverage:** By March 2024, fortified rice replaced normal rice in all central schemes.
- **Nutritional Focus:** Fortification with Iron, Folic Acid, Vitamin B12 → targets anaemia, neurological and cognitive deficiencies.
- **Cost Coverage:** Entire fortification cost borne by GoI.
- **Complementary Foods:** Promotion of Double Fortified Salt (DFS) & fortified edible oil in PM POSHAN.
- **Multi-Sectoral Convergence:** Linked with **Anemia Mukht Bharat (2018)** & nutrition awareness campaigns.
- **Monitoring:** States/UTs responsible for quality, compliance, and distribution.
- **Partnerships:** Supported by **NDDB Foundation for Nutrition (Gift Milk Programme)** for complementary nutrition in schools.

Significance

- Addresses **nutrition insecurity** among vulnerable groups.
- Supports **India's target to reduce anaemia by 50% in women of reproductive age by 2025** (as per National Nutrition Mission).
- Strengthens **food-based solutions** alongside supplementation (IFA tablets) and dietary diversification.

Made in India Label Scheme

Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions

Context

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has **formally approved the INR 995 crore** outlay for the scheme.



About

A voluntary certification initiative designed to build a stronger brand identity and guarantee the authenticity of products manufactured in India. It uses a logo with a QR code to provide transparent information about the product's origin.

1. **Pilot Phase Launched:** The scheme is not yet open for all manufacturers. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has **officially launched a pilot program**.
 - a. **Focus Sectors:** The pilot phase is initially focusing on a select few sectors to test the processes, technology, and consumer response. These sectors include:
 - i. **Food Products** (e.g., Dairy, Beverages, Packaged Foods)
 - ii. **Pharmaceuticals**
 - iii. **Textiles** (Garments, Handloom, handicrafts)
 - iv. **Leather Goods**
 - v. **Toys**
 - vi. **Furniture**

- b. **Purpose:** The pilot will help the government iron out any operational challenges, gather feedback from manufacturers and consumers, and refine the certification criteria before a nationwide rollout.
2. **Operationalization by QCI/BIS:** The Quality Council of India (QCI) is playing a central role in developing the detailed certification standards and operational guidelines. There is also discussion about the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) being involved as a nodal certification body due to its existing infrastructure and credibility.
3. **Integration with Other Initiatives:** The government is working to ensure the "Made in India" label **complements and integrates with existing schemes** like:
 - a. **One District One Product (ODOP)**
 - b. **Geographical Indications (GI) Tags**
 - c. **Vocal for Local:** This creates a cohesive ecosystem for promoting indigenous products.

Key Objectives

- Provide a clear identity based on Indian origin.
- Develop a qualifying mechanism to brand Indian products.
- Enhance recognition in both domestic and international markets.
- Strengthen market positioning by signaling authenticity, quality, and differentiation.

Eligibility

- Manufacturers and producers whose products are "wholly or substantially" made or assembled in India.
- Products must meet specific quality and manufacturing criteria set by the relevant regulatory bodies for their sector.

What to Expect Next (Future Outlook)

- **Expansion of Sectors:** Following a successful pilot, the scheme will gradually open to other manufacturing sectors such as electronics, automotive components, and engineering goods.
- **Consumer Awareness Campaigns:** A major marketing and awareness drive is expected to educate consumers on the meaning and value of the label, encouraging them to look for and trust the logo.
- **International Promotion:** IBEF will likely use this certification to promote authentic Indian products in global markets, trade fairs, and e-commerce platforms.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

Context

- RBI ED Indranil Bhattacharyya nominated as MPC member.

About

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is the **statutory and independent body responsible for deciding India's key interest rates**, primarily the repo rate. Its primary goal is to maintain **price stability** (control inflation) while also considering economic growth.

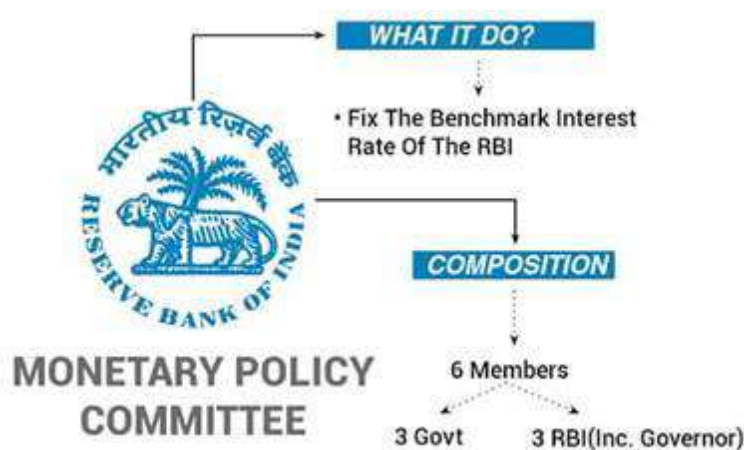
Key Details at a Glance

Aspect	Details
Primary Role	To set India's benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate).
Established	2016, under the amended RBI Act, 1934.
Inflation Target	4% ($\pm 2\%$)
Chairperson	The Governor of the RBI (ex-officio).
Membership	6 members in total.
Meeting Frequency	Bi-monthly (six times a year).

1. Composition & Structure

- The MPC is designed to include diverse perspectives from within the RBI and external experts.
- **Total Members: 6**
- **RBI Members (3):**
 - The RBI Governor (Chairperson)
 - The Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy

- One RBI Executive Director (recently nominated: **Indranil Bhattacharyya**)
- **External Members (3):** Nominated by the Central Government for a 4-year term and are not eligible for reappointment.
- **Voting:** Decisions are made by majority vote. The Governor has a casting vote in case of a tie.



2. Key Functions & Powers

- **Inflation Targeting:** Its main function is to fix the repo rate to achieve the inflation target of **4% with a tolerance band of $\pm 2\%$** .
- **Monetary Policy Review:** It conducts a comprehensive review of the monetary policy every two months.
- **Binding Decisions:** The decisions taken by the MPC are binding on the RBI.
- **Policy Instrument Adjustment:** It has the authority to adjust key monetary policy instruments like the repo rate, reverse repo rate, CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio), and SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio).
- **Transparency:** It publishes the minutes of its meetings and individual voting records, ensuring transparency and institutional accountability. This helps anchor public inflation expectations and boosts investment confidence.

3. Significance

- The establishment of the MPC institutionalized inflation targeting in India.

- It made monetary policy decisions more **transparent, credible, and data-driven**, moving away from a system where the decision-making was more centralized within the RBI.

Lesser Flamingo

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- The most recent notable event involves a **rare sighting of a Lesser Flamingo (Raj Hamsa) near the Fish Mill in Malpe, Karnataka.**

Key Facts About the Lesser Flamingo (Raj Hamsa)

Feature	Description
Common Name	Lesser Flamingo
Local Name	Raj Hamsa
Scientific Name	Phoeniconaias minor
Status	Near Threatened (IUCN Red List)
Population	The most numerous flamingo species in the world, but populations are declining.

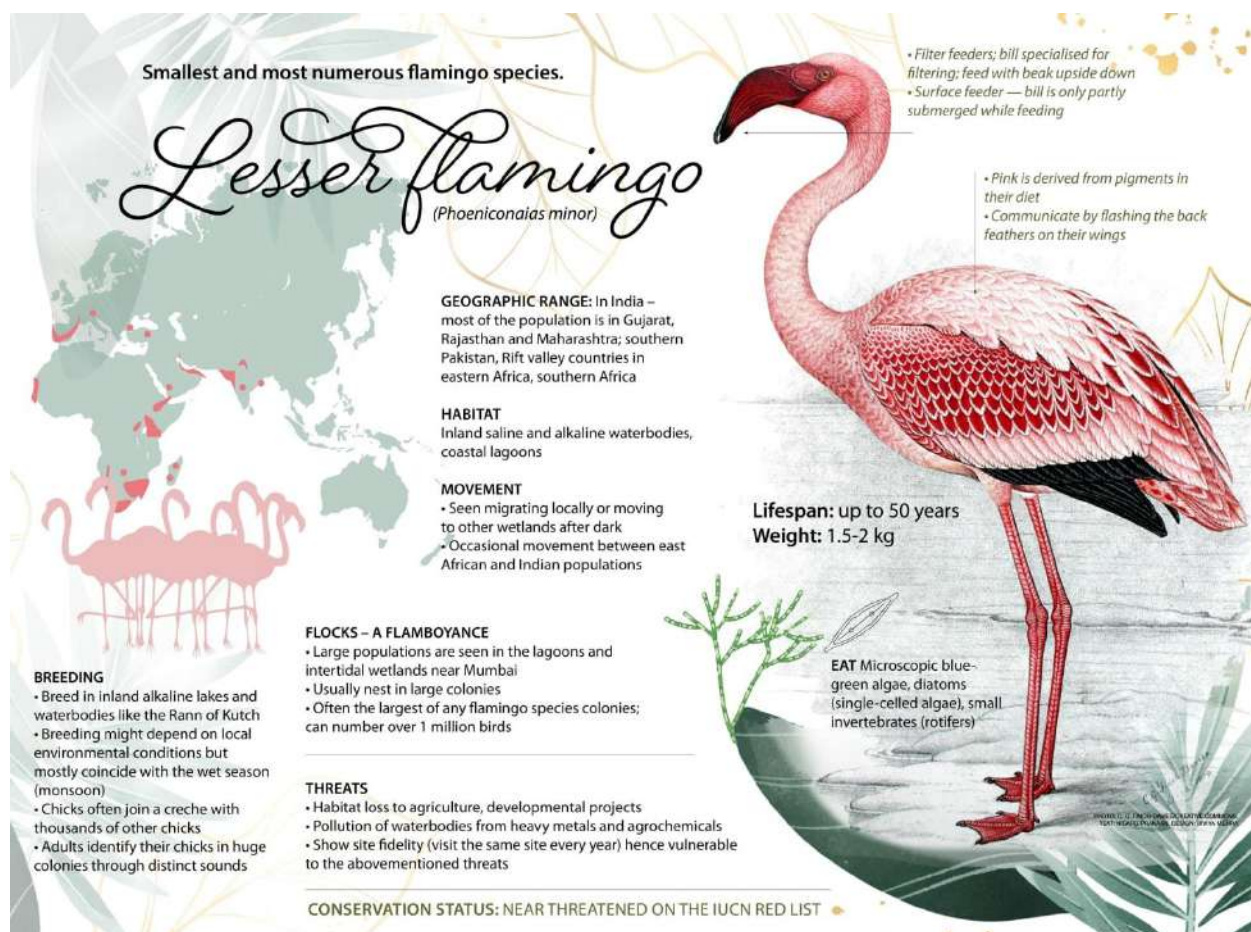
Physical Characteristics:

- **Size:** The smallest species of flamingo.

- **Coloration:** Vivid pink plumage, striking red eyes, and a unique deep red bill with a prominent black tip.
- **Distinctive Feature:** Possesses a "**hallux**" or hind toe, which is absent in some other flamingo species.
- **Sexual Dimorphism:** Adult males are, on average, significantly larger than females.

Habitat & Distribution:

- **Primary Range:** Indigenous to **sub-Saharan Africa** and **western India**.
- **Habitat Preference:** Thrives in harsh, alkaline environments like **saline lakes, lagoons, and mudflats** (e.g., Lake Natron in Tanzania, Sambhar Lake in India).
- **Vagrancy:** Occasional sightings outside this range (like the one in Malpe) are classified as vagrants.



Behavior & Diet:

- **Social Structure:** Highly **gregarious**, living and moving in massive, dense flocks numbering in the thousands or even millions.
- **Feeding:** Their specially adapted bills are used for filter-feeding primarily on **microscopic algae and diatoms** that thrive in alkaline lakes.
- **Reproduction: Serially monogamous**—they form strong pair bonds that last for the duration of raising a single chick each breeding season.

Why is it 'Near Threatened'?

While the species is still numerous, its population is in decline due to several threats:

- **Habitat Degradation:** Pollution, mining, and changing water levels due to climate change and drainage threaten their specialized breeding lakes.
- **Human Disturbance:** Tourism and industrial activity near breeding sites can cause colonies to abandon their nests.
- **Toxic Bacteria:** Their primary food source, blue-green algae, can produce toxins that cause large-scale mortality events under certain conditions.
- **Vulnerability to Disaster:** Because they exist in a few huge colonies, a single environmental disaster (like severe drought or flooding) at a key site can impact a massive portion of the global population.