



pravahini

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

#INDIA'S 1ST NATIONAL COALITION PLATFORM (NBS)

- Recently, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) Climate Centre for Cities (NIUA C-Cube), World Resources Institute India (WRI India) and their partners launched India's first National Coalition platform for Urban nature-based solutions (NbS) at the 11th World Urban Forum in Poland.
- NIUA focuses on research, knowledge management, policy, advocacy, and capacity building on urban development and management to address and develop sustainable, inclusive, and productive urban ecosystems in the country.

What is the World Urban Forum?

- The World Urban Forum (WUF) is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization.
- The WUF was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies.
- WUF11 is co-organized by UN-Habitat, Poland's Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and the Municipal Office of Katowice, Poland.



What is the Key Highlights of National Coalition platform for NbS?

- The India Forum for Nature-based Solutions aims to create a collective of NbS entrepreneurs, government entities and like-minded organizations, to help scale urban nature-based solutions through:
- Defining a shared language and communicating benefits that inform actions at the local level including scaling up of existing NbS interventions.
- Driving investment and strengthening delivery mechanisms through multi-stakeholder coordination.
- Mainstreaming urban ecosystem-based services and nature-based solutions in India through informing policy, plans and project interventions.

What is Local-led Adaptation?

- Local-led adaptation refers to **local communities, local governments acting strongly in taking effective decisions to tackle climate change.**
- Local-led adaptation is often characterised by **indigenous solutions, which are often associated with nature.**
- Given that the most vulnerable populations are the ones that are more dependent on natural resources, it is, therefore, to be expected that coping solutions also often germinate from the same source.

Recognition:

- **United Nations:** The UN promoted NBS as the **theme for World Water Day 2018** as "Nature for Water". The **UN World Water Development Report** was titled "**Nature-based Solutions for Water**". The **2019 UN Climate Action Summit** highlighted **Nature-based solutions** as an effective method to combat climate change.
- A **Nature Based Solution Coalition** was created, including dozens of countries, **led by China and New Zealand.**
- **European Union:** Since 2016, the EU has supported a **multi-stakeholder dialogue platform (Think Nature)** to promote the co-design, testing, and deployment of **improved and innovative NBS** in an integrated way.
- **India:** India launched its first **National Coalition platform for Urban nature-based solutions (NbS)** under the **Cities4Forests** initiative.
- **Cities4Forests:** It works **closely with cities around the world to connect with forests**, emphasises the importance of wetlands and their multiple benefits to help **combat climate change and protect biodiversity in cities.**

PAY ROLL AUTOMATION FOR DISBURSEMENT OF MONTHLY ALLOWANCES

- Recently, the Ministry of Defense inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Disbursement of Monthly Allowances (PADMA), an automated Pay & Allowances module for the **Indian Coast Guard.**

What are the Key Highlights about PADMA?

- PADMA is an **automated platform leveraging latest technology** which will provide seamless and timely disbursement of Pay & Allowances to around **15,000 Indian Coast Guard personnel.**
- This module has been developed under the aegis of the Defense Accounts Department and will be operated by **Pay Accounts Office Coast Guard, Noida.**

What is a Centralized & Decentralized Payment System?

- **Centralized Payment Systems** in India are **Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)** and **National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)** systems, **both owned and operated by the Reserve Bank.**
- Real time means the processing of instructions at the time they are received and gross settlement implies that settlement of funds transfer instructions occurs individually.
- **NEFT:** It is an electronic fund transfer system in which the transactions received up to a particular time

What is Indian Coast Guard?

- It is a **maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency** of India with **jurisdiction over its territorial waters** including its **contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.**
- **Contiguous zone:** It is a band of water extending farther from the outer edge of the territorial sea to up to 24 nautical miles from the baseline.
- **Special Economic Zone (SEZ):** It is an area in a country that is subject to different economic regulations than other regions within the same country.
- It comes under the **Ministry of Defense.**
- The concept of forming ICG came **into being after the 1971 war.**
- The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee.**

are processed in batches.

- It is generally used for fund transfers of up to Rs. 2 lakh.
- The **decentralised payment systems** will include clearing houses managed by RBI (**Cheque Truncation System (CTS)** centres as well as other banks (**Express Cheque Clearing System (ECCS)** centres and any other system as decided by RBI from time to time.
- **Cheque Truncation:** It is the **process of stopping the flow of the physical cheque issued by a drawer at some point by the presenting bank en-route to the paying bank branch.**
- **Express Cheque Clearing System:** Funds move from one account to another to settle a check payment. The amount is usually credited to the bank account of deposit and an equivalent amount debited at the bank from which it is drawn.

#MOHUA LAUNCHED 'NIPUN INITIATIVE'

- An Innovative project called "National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)" was launched on June 20, 2022 by Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri.

About NIPUN Initiative

- The NIPUN Initiative was launched for skill training of 100,000 construction workers.
- It has been launched under the flagship scheme of "Deendayal Antyodaya-Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)".
- Under the scheme, construction workers will be trained through fresh skilling and upskilling programs. This move will provide work opportunities to them in foreign countries also.

Which organisation will implement the project?

- The NIPUN Project will be implemented by (NSDC), which is the nodal agency under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- The agency would be responsible for overall execution of training, candidate tracking and monitoring.

NIPUN Bharat Mission

The Ministry of Education has launched a **National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat)**, for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

It was launched in 2021 as part of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

DAY-NRLM: DAY-NULM is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, being implemented since 2014-15.

Its aim is to **reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households** in the country by enabling them to **access self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities**.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) was launched by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, Government of India in 2011.

The Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to **increase household income through sustainable livelihood and improved access to financial services**.

#BAN ON WHEAT EXPORTS FROM INDIA

- Recently the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** suspended re-export of wheat and flour from grain originating in India is basically an assurance that whatever it imports will be used only for domestic consumption.
- The development comes a month after India banned wheat exports to meet the demand of its domestic market, neighbouring countries and vulnerable nations.
- UAE's Ministry of Economy explained that this decision comes in view of the international developments that have affected trade flows and in appreciation of the solid and strategic relations that bind the UAE and India, especially after the signing of



the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** between the two countries and the Indian government's approval to **export wheat to the UAE for domestic consumption**.

What is the Status of Wheat Export of India?

- **India** is the **world's second-biggest wheat producer** after China. But it accounts for less than 1% of the global wheat trade. It keeps a lot of it to provide subsidised food for the poor.
- Its **top export markets** are Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka - as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- **Reasons for Banning of Export of Wheat:**
- India has **suspended the export of wheat effective 13 May 2022**. In a notification published in the government gazette, the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** justified the ban by giving reasons that soaring global wheat prices have put pressure on food security, not only in India, but also in neighbouring and vulnerable nations.
- However, export will be allowed on the basis of permission granted by the Government of India to other countries to meet their food security needs and based on the request of their governments.
- The **ban was also prompted decrease in wheat production, after its production was affected by a heatwave** that swept across the country during March-April, while the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** was unable to mop up ample stocks for buffer stocks.
- **The rising inflation also prompted this step. The WholeSale Price Index (WPI)** in India has moved up from 2.26 per cent at the start of 2022 to 14.55 now. Retail inflation, too, hit an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April, driven by rising food and fuel prices.

#WHAT IS CRITICAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE?

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has declared IT (Information Technology) resources of **ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and NPCI** (National Payments Corporation of India) as '**critical information infrastructure**'.

What is Critical Information Infrastructure?

- The **Information Technology Act of 2000** defines **Critical Information Infrastructure** as a **computer resource**, the incapacitation or **destruction** of which shall have **debilitating impact on national security, economy, public health or safety**.
- The **government**, under the **IT Act of 2000**, has the **power to declare** any data, **database, IT network or communications infrastructure** as **CII** to protect that digital asset.
- Any person who secures access or attempts to **secure access to a protected system in violation of the law** can be punished with a **jail term of up to 10 years**.

Case of India:

- In October, 2020 as India battled the **pandemic**, the **electric grid supply to Mumbai suddenly snapped** hitting the mega city's hospitals, trains and businesses.
- Later, a study by a US firm claimed that this power outage could have been a **cyber-attack, allegedly from a China-linked group**, aimed at **critical infrastructure**. The government, however, was quick to deny any **cyber-attack** in Mumbai.
- But the incident underlined the possibility of hostile state and non-state actors **probing internet-dependent critical systems** in other countries, and the necessity **to fortify such assets**.

#AMRIT SAROVAR MISSION

- The Union government has asked the Ministry of Railways and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to use the soil/silt excavated from ponds/tanks in all districts across the country under the Amrit Sarovar Mission for their infrastructure projects.

What is Amrit Sarovar Mission?

- Amrit Sarovar Mission was launched on 24th April 2022 with a view to conserve water for the future.
- Aim:** The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- In total, it would lead to the creation of **50,000 water bodies** of a size of about an Acre or more.
- The Mission encourages **mobilisation of citizen and non-govt resources** for supplementing these efforts.
- Ministries Involved:**
- This Mission has been launched with a whole Government Approach with 6 Ministries/Department namely:
 - Department of Rural Development
 - Department of land resources
 - Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation
 - Department of Water resources
 - Ministry of Panchayati Raj
 - Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Changes.

What is Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav?

- Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an **initiative of the Government of India** to celebrate and commemorate **75 years of independence** and **the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements**.
- This Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India thus far in its evolutionary journey but also hold within them the power and potential to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of activating **India 2.0**, fuelled by the spirit of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The official journey of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav commenced on **12th March 2021** which started a **75-week countdown to our 75th anniversary of independence** and **will end** post a year on **15th August 2023**.

#BHARAT DRONE MAHOTSAV 2022

- Recently, India's biggest Drone Festival - **Bharat Drone Mahotsav 2022** was inaugurated in **New Delhi** by the Prime Minister.
- A virtual award of drone pilot certificates, panel discussions, product launches, display of a 'Made in India' Drone Taxi prototype, flying demonstrations, among others** were the key events.
- Monitoring:** The drone technology in the **SVAMITVA scheme** launched by the Government of India, within less than a year, has helped about half a million village residents to get their property cards by mapping out the densely-populated areas.
- Drones can be used for **real-time surveillance** of assets and transmission lines, theft prevention, visual inspection/maintenance, construction planning and management, etc
- They can be used for **anti-poaching actions, monitoring of forests and wildlife, pollution assessment, and evidence gathering**.
- Law Enforcement:** Drones are also significant for the law enforcement agencies, the fire and emergency services wherever human intervention is not safe and the healthcare services.



What are the Drone Rules, 2021?

- In 2021, the Ministry notified **liberalized drone rules with the aim to encourage R&D and to make India a drone hub.**
- It abolished several permissions and approvals. The number of forms that need to be filled was reduced from 25 to five and the types of fee brought down from 72 to 4.
- No permission is required for operating drones in green zones and no remote pilot license is necessary for non-commercial use of micro and nano drones.
- Payloads up to 500kg have been allowed so the drones can be used as unmanned flying taxis.
- Further, foreign ownership of companies operating drones has also been permitted.

What is the PLI Scheme for Drones?

- The government also approved a Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Drones and their components with an allocation of Rs. 120 crore for three financial years.
- The PLI Scheme for the drones and drone components industry addresses the strategic, tactical, and operational uses of this revolutionary technology.

What is the Drone Shakti Scheme?

- The Union Budget **pushed for promotion of drones through startups and skilling at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).**
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate '**Drone Shakti**' through varied applications and for **Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS)**. Courses for skilling will also be started in selected ITIs across all States.
- DrAAS allows enterprises to avail various services from drone companies, removing the need for them to invest in drone hardware or software, pilots, and training programmes.
- Sectors where drones can be employed are endless. These include photography, agriculture, mining, telecom, insurance, telecom, oil & gas, construction, transport, disaster management, geo-spatial mapping, forest and wildlife, defence and law enforcement to name a few.
- Drones **will also be promoted for crop assessment, digitisation of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients (Kisan Drones).**
- The drone services industry is **expected to grow to over Rs 30,000 crore in next three years and generate over five lakh jobs.**

#BAN ON SINGLE USE PLASTIC

- Recently, the Centre has defined a list of single-use plastic items that will be banned from 1st July 2022.
- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of notified single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1st July, 2022.

What is single-use plastic?

- **About:** It refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded.
- **Highest Shares of Plastic Manufactured and Used:**
- **Single-use plastic** has among the **highest shares of plastic manufactured and used** — from packaging of items, to bottles (shampoo, detergents, cosmetics), polythene bags, face masks, coffee cups, cling film, trash bags, food packaging etc.
- **Accounts for a Third of all Plastic Produced Globally:**
- **Contribution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions:**
- On the current trajectory of production, it has been projected that single-use plastic could account for **5-10% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**

Directions Issued:

- Directions have been **issued at national, state and local levels** — for example, to all petrochemical industries — **to not supply raw materials to industries engaged in the banned items.**
- Directions have also been issued to **SPCBs and Pollution Control Committees** to modify or **revoke consent to operate issued under the Air/Water Act** to industries engaged in single-use plastic items.
- **Local authorities** have been directed to issue **fresh commercial licenses** with the condition that **SUP items will not be sold on their premises, and existing commercial licences** will be cancelled if they are found to be selling these items.
- **Penalty:**
- Those found violating the ban can be penalised under the **Environment Protection Act 1986**— which allows for **imprisonment up to 5 years, or a penalty up to Rs 1 lakh, or both.**
- Violators can also be asked to pay Environmental Damage Compensation by the SPCB.
- There are municipal laws on plastic waste, with their own penal codes.

Countries which Ban Plastic:

- **Bangladesh** became the **first country to ban thin plastic bags** in 2002.
- **New Zealand:** New Zealand became the latest country to ban plastic bags in July 2019.
- **China:** China issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with phased implementation.
- **US:** Eight states in the US have banned single-use plastic bags, beginning with California in 2014. Seattle became the first major US city to ban plastic straws in 2018.
- **European Union:** In July, 2021, the Directive on **Single-Use Plastics** took effect in the European Union (EU).
- The directive bans **certain** single-use plastics for which alternatives are available, **single-use plastic plates, cutlery, straws, balloon sticks and cotton buds** cannot be placed on the markets of the EU member states.

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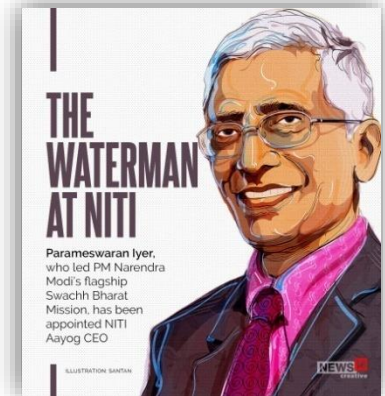
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#NEW CEO OF NITI AAYOG

- **NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog** CEO Amitabh Kant is set to leave and will be replaced by former Secretary of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation - **Parameswaran Iyer**.

What is NITI Aayog?

- **Background:** Planning Commission was replaced by a new institution – NITI Aayog on 1st January, 2015 with emphasis on 'Bottom -Up' approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance, Minimum Government, echoing the spirit of 'Cooperative Federalism'.
- It has two Hubs.
- **Team India Hub** acts as interface **between States and Centre**.
- **Knowledge and Innovation Hub** builds the think-tank acumen of NITI Aayog.



Composition:

- **Chairperson:** Prime minister
- **Vice-Chairperson:** To be appointed by Prime-Minister
- **Governing Council:** Chief Ministers of all states and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- **Regional Council:** To address specific regional issues, Comprising Chief Minister and Lt. Governors Chaired by the Prime Minister or his nominee.
- **Ad-hoc Membership:** Two members in ex-officio capacity from leading Research institutions on a rotational.
- **Ex-Officio membership:** Maximum four from the Union council of ministers to be nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Chief Executive Officer:** Appointed by the Prime-minister for a fixed tenure, in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- **Special Invitees:** Experts, Specialists with domain knowledge nominated by the Prime Minister.

#PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA

- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) has a completion rate of 67.72%, whereas the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) scheme that started a year ahead is **lagging behind with a 50% completion rate**.

What is PMAY-G Scheme?

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of "Housing for All" by 2022, the erstwhile rural housing scheme Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) w.e.f 1st April, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
- To help **rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses** by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.



What is PMAY-U Scheme?

- **Launch:** 25th June 2015, intends to provide housing for all in urban areas by year 2022.
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- **Features:** Addresses **Urban housing shortage among the Urban Poor including the Slum Dwellers** by ensuring a pucca house to eligible urban poor.
- The Mission **covers the entire urban area consisting of Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Special Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities or any such authority under State legislation which is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.**
- All houses under PMAY (U) have basic amenities like toilet, water supply, electricity and kitchen.

#BIOTECH STARTUP EXPO – 2022

- Recently, Prime Minister has inaugurated the **Biotech Startup Expo - 2022**.
- It is a **reflection of the expansive growth of the biotech sector** in the country.

What are the Key Highlights of the Expo?

- **About:** The Biotech Startup Expo 2022 will provide a common platform to connect investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, researchers, industry leaders, manufacturers, bio-incubators, regulators and government officials.
- The expo is being organised by the Department of **Biotechnology and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** to mark the completion of ten years of BIRAC.
- It will showcase **applications of biotechnology in various fields** including healthcare, agriculture, genomics, clean energy, biopharma, industrial biotechnology and waste-to-value.
- **Theme:** 'Biotech Startup Innovations: Towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat'.



What is Biotechnology and its Application?

- Biotechnology is **technology that utilizes biological systems**, living organisms or parts of this to develop or create different products.
- Biotechnology deals with **industrial scale production of biopharmaceuticals and biologicals using genetically modified microbes**, fungi, plants and animals.
- The applications of biotechnology include **therapeutics, diagnostics, genetically modified crops for agriculture, processed food, bioremediation, waste treatment, and energy production.**

What is the Status of Biotech Sector?

- **About:** India is among the **top 12 destinations for biotechnology globally** and **3rd largest biotechnology destination** in the Asia Pacific region.
- The country is **also the world's third-largest producer of recombinant Hepatitis B vaccine** and second-largest producer of **BT cotton** (genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton).
- India's Biotech sector is **categorised into Biopharmaceuticals, BioIndustrial, Bioagriculture, BioIT & BioServices**.
- Within bio-services, **India offers a strong capability in contract manufacturing, research and clinical trials**, and is home to the most US FDA approved plants globally outside of the US.

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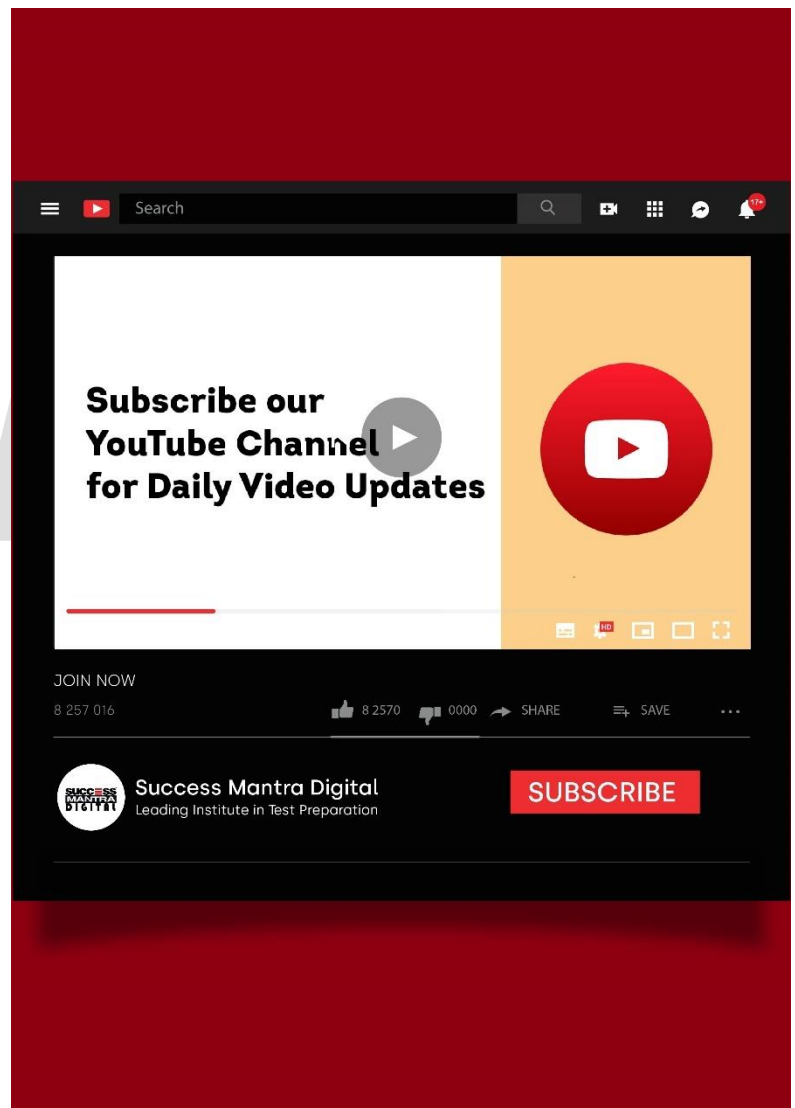
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