News: Atal Tinkering Lab Marathon is being organised by the Atal Tinkering Labs of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and the NITI Aayog in an effort to identify India’s best student innovators.

Prelims focus: AIM, ATL and their important features.

Mains focus: Various initiatives to promote innovation and their significance.

Key facts:
- It is a six-month-long nationwide challenge across six different thematic areas, namely, clean energy, water resources, waste management, healthcare, smart mobility and agriculture-tech.
- This is open to all students under the age of 18 years.
- Students of top 30 innovations will be trained on business and entrepreneurship skills, including intellectual property, effective communication, making an elevator pitch, etc.

About ATLs?

With a vision to ‘Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators’, Atal Innovation Mission is establishing Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India.

Objective: The objective of this scheme is to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds; and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.

Financial Support: AIM will provide grant-in-aid that includes a one-time establishment cost of Rs. 10 lakh and operational expenses of Rs. 10 lakh for a maximum period of 5 years to each ATL.

Eligibility: Schools (minimum Grade VI – X) managed by Government, local body or private trusts/society can set up ATL.

Significance of ATLs:
- Atal Tinkering Labs have evolved as epicentres for imparting these ‘skills of the future’ through practical applications based on self-learning.
- Bridging a crucial social divide, Atal Tinkering Labs provide equal opportunity to all children across the spectrum by working at the grassroot level, introducing children to the world of innovation and tinkering.