

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

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Head Office

Old No. 52, New No. 1, 9th Street,
F Block, 1st Avenue Main Road, (Near Isha Siddhi Vinayakar Temple), Anna Nagar East – 600 102.

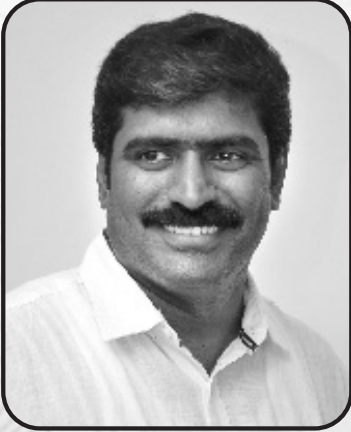
Ph: 044-2626 5326 | 98844 21666 | 98844 32666

Branches

SALEM: No. 189/1, Meyanoor Road, Near ARRS Multiplex, (Near Salem New Bus Stand), Opp. Venkateshwara Complex, Salem - 636 004. Ph: 95001 22022 | 99436 22022. **KOVAI:** No. 347, D.S. Complex, (3rd floor), Nehru Street, Near Gandhipuram Central Bus Stand, Ramnagar, Kovai - 641 009. Ph: 7502165390. **MADURAI:** No. 199, Dharshini Tower, 1st Floor, Vaigai Colony, Anna Nagar, Madurai - 625 020. Ph: 91500 21999 | 91500 21998. **TIRUNELVELI:** No. 58, IVY Towers, 3rd Floor, Palayamkottai, Near Palai Bus Stand, (Next to Muthamil Hospital), Tirunelveli - 627 002. Ph: 91500 10079. **THANJAVUR:** Muthu Complex, (Pantaloons Showroom Basement) No. 243, Cauvery Nagar, Opp. New Housing Unit, Thanjavur - 613 005. Ph: 78711 69099 | 78715 71819. **KOVILPATTI:** No. 4, Santhaipettai Street, (Near Sowbakya Towers), Opposite to Old Bus Stand, Kovilpatti 628 502. Ph: 90037 90335 | 81222 80685. **TIRUCHENGODE:** Vivekananda Educational Institutions, Elayampalayam (Po), Thiruchengode (TK), Namakkal - 637 205. Ph: 78457 79908. **TRICHY:** No. 48, Karur Bypass Road, Chatram Bus Stand (Opp. to St. Joseph College) Trichy - 620 002. Ph: 9500278085 | 9500278086. **TIRUVANNAMALAI:** MSTs Building, Vettavalam Main Road, Near Vijaya Mall Tiruvannamalai - 606601. Ph: 9884043666. **KRISHNAGIRI:** 7 D, Anna Salai, Next to Anna Arch, near New Bus station, Krishnagiri - 635001. Ph: 86374 23404. **DHARMAPURI:** No. 53, Nethaji Bypass Road, Dharmapuri - 636701. Ph: 7092922022 | 8489822022. **TIRUPPUR:** Balamurugan Complex, 2nd Floor, No. 33, Bungalow Street Main Road, Avinashi Road, Near Yes Bank, Tiruppur - 641602. Ph: 63850 66044 | 63850 66055

www.vetriias.com

Preface



M. SHUNMUGAM

Director

Vetrii IAS Study Circle.

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My Dear Aspirants,

Greetings to all of you! "What we think we become" Gautama Buddha. We all have dreams. To make dreams come into reality it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self discipline and continuous effort.

We at VETRII IAS Study Circle are committed to provide the right guidance, quality coaching and help every aspirants to achieve his or her life's cherished goal of becoming a civil servant.

The class room coaching at VETRII IAS Study Circle is meticulously planned to equip the aspirants with all the relevant facts and fundamentals of the subjects. Further the VETRII IAS Study Circle Study materials aim to support the candidate by providing the most relevant study material in a comprehensive manner.

We also thank other family members of Vetrii for making this effort a reality.

We wish the aspirants ALL THE VERY BEST
for their journey in Civil Services !

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F Block New No. 1, 9th Street,
1st Avenue Main Road, Chinthamani,
Anna Nagar (E), Chennai – 102.

Phone : 044-2626 5326

98844 72636 | 98844 21666 | 98844 32666

E-mail : enquiry@vetriias.com

Web : www.vetriias.com

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SCIENCE

GENERAL SCIENCE

Type-IV CNG cylinders

- **Context:** Aligned with the Government of India's objectives regarding the promotion of clean energy transportation, the reduction of carbon emissions, and the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) initiative, the Technology Development Board (TDB)—operating under the Department of Science and Technology—has entered into an agreement with NTF Energy Solutions Pvt. Ltd., a Delhi-based company.
- This agreement pertains to a "Project for setting up a manufacturing facility for the commercial production of Type-IV CNG cylinders."

Objective

- The primary objective of this project is to establish an advanced manufacturing facility for the production and commercialization of indigenously developed 'Type-IV Composite CNG Cylinders,' **utilizing high-quality filament winding, blow moulding, and high-pressure testing technologies.**
- This initiative is expected to strengthen India's indigenous capabilities in the **field of advanced gas storage systems** for clean transportation and emerging energy applications.

About Type-IV Composite CNG Cylinders

- Type-IV composite cylinders serve as a **next-generation alternative to conventional steel cylinders, offering a weight reduction of up to 75%.**
- By doing so, they not only enhance vehicle performance but also significantly reduce carbon emissions.
- These cylinders are designed with a corrosion-free polymer liner, an optimized CFRP

(Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer) layer structure, and advanced mechanical locking systems to ensure superior safety, durability, and resistance against leaks, vibrations, and pressure cycling.

Significance

- This assistance will help **accelerate the commercialization of indigenous lightweight composite cylinder technologies** and enable the company to contribute to India's transition towards cleaner and more efficient transportation solutions.

Malaria Vaccine (RTS, S/AS01E)

- **Context:** A study has found that the **world's first approved malaria vaccine (RTS, S/AS01E) has reduced overall child mortality rates by 13%** in certain parts of Africa.
- **Malaria is a life-threatening disease;** it is primarily transmitted to humans through the bites of certain infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
- **It does not spread directly from one person to another.**

Information regarding the Malaria Vaccine (RTS, S/AS01E)

- This vaccine was recommended by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in 2021 for use among children living in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions where the **P. falciparum** type of malaria is prevalent.
- The R21/Matrix-M vaccine is the second malaria vaccine to be approved by the World Health Organization, receiving its approval in 2023.

PCOS Renamed as PMOS

- **Context :** A global medical consensus led by the **Endocrine Society** has renamed **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)** as **Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS)** after extensive scientific consultations.

- PMOS is a **multisystem endocrine-metabolic disorder** affecting hormonal balance, metabolism, reproductive health, and mental well-being in women of reproductive age.
- It affects around **1 in 8 women globally** and is a leading cause of **infertility and menstrual irregularities**.
- Major health risks include insulin resistance leading to Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (hypertension, heart disease), and psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression.
- Diagnosis is based on at least **two of three criteria**:
 - Irregular or absent ovulation
 - Hyperandrogenism (clinical or biochemical signs)
 - Polycystic ovarian morphology or hormonal markers
- Studies show that up to **70% of cases remain undiagnosed**, due to lack of awareness and misleading terminology.
- They offer high durability, improved load distribution, and reduced maintenance costs.

Fermented Organic Manure

- **Context:** Recently, the Indian Biogas Association (IBA) called for a mandatory **blending of 10% ferment-ed organic manure with chemical fertilizers by the year 2030**.

About Fermented Organic Manure

- It is a type of organic fertilizer produced from organic materials such as **dung, crop residues, and com-post** through a **controlled fermentation process**.
- It serves as a by-product of operational **biogas or Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants** and is **utilized as a fertilizer**.

Benefits of Fermented Organic Manure

- It enhances soil fertility.
- It improves soil structure.
- It is beneficial for microorganisms.
- It aids in waste management.
- It also contributes to sustainable agriculture.

"BIRSA 101" — India's first indigenous CRISPR-based gene therapy for sickle cell disease

- **Context:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and CSIR-Institute of Genetics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), organized a workshop at the CSIR-IGIB campus. The workshop was on "BIRSA 101", India's first indigenous CRISPR-based gene therapy for sickle cell disease (SCD).

About BIRSA-101

- BIRSA-101 is India's first indigenously developed CRISPR-based gene therapy for sickle cell disease.
- The therapy is named after the legacy of tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda.
- It was developed by CSIR-Institute of Genetics and Integrative Biology.

LATEST INVENTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Geocell

- **Context:** CSIR-Central Road Research Institute has utilized Geocells technical textiles manufactured from end-of-life plastics—in road construction technology.
- Geocells are three-dimensional, honeycomb-like structures used in civil engineering to **stabilize soil and enhance its load-bearing capacity**.
- They confine soil and aggregates within a specific boundary, prevent soil erosion, and increase the structural strength of roads.
- They are widely used in **road construction, slope protection, embankments, and soil erosion control**.

Key Features of BIRSA-101

- **Use of CRISPR Technology:** This treatment uses the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technique to correct the defective gene that causes sickle cell disease.
- **Cost-effective treatment:** Compared to similar CRISPR treatments available worldwide, BIRSA-101 is very inexpensive; this could help poor patients access advanced treatment.

About Sickle Cell Disease

- Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder in which red blood cells become stiff and stiff, taking on a crescent shape.
- These abnormal cells are less efficient at carrying oxygen throughout the body.
- This deformed shape of the cells can clog blood vessels; this can lead to serious consequences such as severe pain, long-term complications, organ damage, anemia, infections, and stroke.

Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR-T Cell) Therapy

- The Technology Development Board signed an agreement under an Indo-Singapore joint venture to develop a treatment using CAR-T cell therapy for multiple myeloma, a type of incurable blood cancer.

About CAR-T Cell Therapy

- CAR-T cell therapy is often referred to as a “living drug” because it utilizes the patient’s own living immune cells, specifically T-cells.
- This is a **type of immunotherapy in which T-cells are genetically modified and transformed into powerful cancer-fighting cells called CAR-T cells.**
- **T-cells are a type of white blood cell** that plays a vital role in destroying harmful or abnormal cells in the body.
- In this therapy, T-cells are first collected from the patient’s blood and are then modified in

a laboratory by inserting a gene that creates a special artificial receptor called a Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR).

- After modification, these engineered CAR-T cells are infused back into the patient’s body to identify and attack cancer cells more effectively.
- CARs are specially designed proteins that help T-cells identify, bind to, and destroy specific proteins found on the surface of cancer cells.

Creation of Carbon-Free Ferrocene Analogue by Indian Scientists

- **Context:** Researchers from **Indian Institute of Technology Madras and Indian Institute of Science** have created the first stable carbon-free analogue of ferrocene.

About Ferrocene

- Ferrocene is a famous **organometallic compound** discovered over 70 years ago.
- Its discovery led to the development of organometallic chemistry with applications in: Materials science, Catalysis, Medicine

It contains:

- One iron atom
- Sandwiched between two flat carbon rings

Major Breakthrough

- Scientists successfully **replaced carbon rings with boron rings.**

The new compound contains:

- Boron-based rings
- A central osmium atom
- This makes it a fully inorganic “sandwich” compound.

Role of Boron and Osmium

- **Boron is chemically similar to carbon** and can form ring structures.
- Computer modelling identified osmium as the best metal to stabilise the boron sandwich structure.

Method Used

Researchers reacted:

- A polymeric osmium-bromine precursor
- With a borane-dimethyl sulphide reagent
- The mixture was heated to 100°C for eight hours.
- The final product was isolated as a colourless solid.

Significance of the Discovery

- The hydrogen bridges strengthen bonding with the metal.

The compound may help develop:

- High-temperature stable catalysts
- Advanced inorganic materials
- The discovery proves that sandwich structures are not limited to carbon-based chemistry.

Battery energy storage system(BESS)

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) has issued draft regulations for **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** and invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders on or before May 30, 2026.
- The proposed regulations aim to promote power procurement and deployment of BESS across the state to strengthen grid stability.

About BESS

- Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are advanced electrochemical devices that store electricity in chemical form and discharge it when required.
- **Working:** Batteries receive electricity from the power grid, straight from the power station, or from a renewable energy source like solar panels or other energy source, and subsequently store it as current to then release it when it is needed.

- **Need:** The National Electricity Plan 2023 estimates that 236 GWh BESS would be required by 2031-32.

- **Main components:**

- **Batteries:** Store electrical energy (most commonly lithium-ion).
- **Power Conversion System (PCS):** Converts DC electricity from batteries to AC for use on the grid, and vice versa.
- **Battery Management System (BMS):** Monitors and controls battery performance, health, and safety.
- **Energy Management System (EMS):** Coordinates the operation of all components for optimal performance.

- **Significance:**

- This will not only enhance the integration of renewable energy into the electricity grid but also minimize wastage while optimizing the utilization of transmission networks.
- This will reduce the need for costly infrastructure upgrades.
- This scheme is designed to harness the potential of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, the scheme aims to provide clean, reliable, and affordable electricity to the citizens.

Pumped-storage hydroelectricity (PSH)

- **Context:** The 1,100 MW Velimalai Pumped Storage Hydro Electric Project in Kanniyakumari district has been granted Terms of Reference (ToR) clearance by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The project, proposed by the **Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited (TNGECL)**.

About Pumped-storage hydroelectricity (PSH)

- **Pumped Storage Hydropower (PSH), or 'Pumped Hydro Energy Storage' (PHES),** is a method used to store energy within power systems and to balance electricity demand.
- In this method, water is pumped from a lower reservoir to an upper reservoir in order to store energy as '**gravitational potential energy.**'
- The electricity required for the water-pumping process is typically utilized during '**off-peak hours**'—periods when electricity is inexpensive and demand is low.
- During times of peak electricity demand, the stored water is released to flow through turbines located below, thereby generating electricity.
- Although PSH systems consume more energy than they produce—due to energy losses incurred during the pumping process—they remain highly economically viable because the generated electricity can be sold at a higher price during peak demand periods.

PSH systems are primarily categorized into two types:

- **Open-loop systems:** Systems that are continuously connected to a natural water source, such as a river.
- **Closed-loop systems:** Standalone systems in which water circulates between two reservoirs without any significant natural inflow of water.
- PSH power plants can be established either by utilizing existing dams or by **constructing two reservoirs at different elevations (including storage facilities situated on mountain peaks).**
- In India, approximately **120 potential sites suitable for PSH projects** have been identified; it is estimated that these sites could collectively

generate approximately **120 Gigawatts (GW)** of electricity.

Bio-mining method

- **Context : 94 Acres of Land Reclaimed at Perungudi Dump Site** through Bio-mining Project.
- Work is currently underway—at a cost of **Rs.350 crore**—to reclaim **225 acres of land at the Perungudi dump site by removing approximately 29.28 lakh cubic meters of accumulated legacy waste** using the eco-friendly bio-mining method.

About Biomining

- Biomining is a method of **extracting metals from ores and solid waste using living organisms such as bacteria, archaea, fungi, or plants.**
- It can also be used to clean areas contaminated with toxic metals.

Process

- Metals are usually trapped within solid mineral rocks.
- **Certain microbes help in oxidizing these metals,** making them soluble in water.
- This allows easier recovery of metals compared to extracting them directly from rocks.
- In some cases, microbes do not dissolve the target metal but instead break down surrounding minerals, making metal extraction easier from the residue.
- When microbes directly dissolve the metal, the process is called bioleaching.
- When microbes help concentrate or expose the metal in the leftover material, it is called biooxidation.

Benefits of Biomining

- **Resource recovery:** Biomining helps in recycling waste materials by extracting valuable metals and other useful components,

and the remaining material can sometimes be used as compost or fertilizer.

- **Eco-friendly approach:** It is a sustainable and environmentally safe method, and it also helps in cleaning contaminated land, making it suitable for other productive uses.

Experimental Gene-Editing Therapy Could Put an End to Lifelong Cholesterol Medications

- **Context:** Scientists have demonstrated that a one-time gene therapy treatment can significantly reduce levels of “bad” cholesterol for at least one year.
- This could pave the way for a future where certain heart patients no longer require lifelong cholesterol-lowering medications.

A Breakthrough in Cholesterol Treatment

- Scientists have developed a one-time gene therapy treatment.
- This treatment significantly reduces levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol for at least one year, potentially reducing the need for lifelong medication.

Verve-102 Shows Promising Results

- This experimental therapy, known as **Verve-102**, has reduced LDL cholesterol levels by up to 62% in patients suffering from hereditary high cholesterol and early-onset heart disease.

Heart Disease Remains a Major Global Threat

- Heart disease continues to be one of the leading causes of death worldwide.
- In India, nearly 28% of all deaths are attributed to heart disease.

Application of Advanced Base-Editing Technology

- This therapy relies on “base editing” a highly precise and advanced gene-editing technology

designed to make targeted DNA modifications within the body.

Significant Reduction in LDL Cholesterol

- At the highest dosage tested, patients experienced an average reduction of 78 mg/dL in LDL cholesterol, representing a decline of nearly 62%.

‘CLEAR’ Technology for Advanced Protein Imaging in Cancer Research

- **Context:** Scientists at JNCASR have developed the ‘CLEAR’ imaging platform for advanced protein mapping.

About Proteins

- Proteins play a crucial role in biological processes and in the diagnosis of diseases.
- However, using conventional imaging methods, it has remained challenging to accurately map the spatial organization of numerous proteins within tissues and cells while preserving their structural integrity.

About ‘CLEAR’ Technology

- Researchers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have developed a novel imaging platform that can significantly enhance the visualization and mapping of proteins within biological samples.
- This could aid in research and diagnostics related to cancer and neurological disorders.
- This technology, termed ‘**Cleavable, Light-Erasable Antibody Reporter**’ (CLEAR), overcomes a major challenge in spatial protein mapping, enabling scientists to visualize a large number of proteins within a single biological sample using just one fluorescent marker.

- According to the **Ministry of Science and Technology**, the ‘CLEAR’ platform will

enable high-resolution and high-plex imaging across cells and tissues.

- After imaging a batch of proteins, the fluorescent signal can be erased using a gentle pulse of 365-nanometer LED light.
- This allows researchers to label and image a new batch of proteins within the very same cell.
- Unlike existing multimodal imaging techniques, CLEAR integrates high multimodal capability, speed, spatial resolution, and compatibility with delicate biological samples including living cells.

▪ EO sensors provide **high-resolution, visually interpretable images but are limited by cloud cover and poor lighting conditions.**

▪ SAR sensors enable **all-weather, day-and-night imaging but require complex interpretation.**

▪ Drishti overcomes these limitations by enabling simultaneous, co-registered acquisition of optical and radar imagery of the same location.

▪ It eliminates the need for post-processing fusion of data from multiple satellites, improving efficiency and accuracy.

▪ The satellite uses proprietary synchronization technology to align different sensor geometries for simultaneous observation.

▪ It incorporates Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate optical-like images from SAR data, enhancing usability under adverse conditions.

▪ Particularly significant for tropical regions like India, where persistent cloud cover affects conventional optical imaging.

▪ Key applications include **Agriculture monitoring, Disaster management, Urban planning, Infrastructure mapping, Maritime surveillance, and Border security.**

▪ Ensures continuous, reliable, and consistent Earth observation data with improved interpretability.

▪ Reduces dependence on multiple satellite platforms for comprehensive imaging.

▪ Represents a major milestone in India's private space sector, complementing the role of Indian Space Research Organisation.

▪ Aims to build a constellation of 10 satellites by 2030 to establish a self-reliant Earth observation infrastructure for India.

SPACE

Mission Drishti

- **Context :** Mission Drishti is the **world's first satellite to integrate Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors** on a single platform, enabling all-weather, day-and-night imaging.
- Developed by **Bengaluru-based start-up GalaxEye**, it is India's largest privately developed earth observation satellite (190 kg).
- Successfully launched aboard Falcon 9 by SpaceX from Vandenberg Space Force Base.

About Mission Drishti

- It is the world's first **"OptoSAR"** satellite, marking a major technological advancement in Earth observation.
- OptoSAR technology integrates **Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors** on a single platform.
- The OptoSAR technology overcomes limitations of conventional satellites by ensuring reliable and continuous data acquisition across diverse environmental conditions.

IN-SPACE and Indian Space Partnerships

- **Context:** Nine Indian space technology companies, part of a delegation led by the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPAcE)**, recently

signed agreements for various partnerships and joint ventures at the 'Space Meetings Veneto 2026' event held in Venice, Italy.

About IN-SPACE

- The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) is an autonomous nodal agency operating under the Department of Space, serving as a 'single-window' platform for space-related activities.
- It was established as part of India's space sector reforms to encourage and support the participation of private entities in the space domain.
- IN-SPACe has been entrusted with the responsibilities of promoting, facilitating, authorizing, and supervising space activities undertaken by Non-Governmental Entities (NGEs).
- IN-SPACe is headquartered in Ahmedabad.

Key Functions

- Supporting private entities in the development of launch vehicles and satellites, as well as in the provision of space-based services. Facilitating the sharing of infrastructure and facilities controlled by the Department of Space and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Assisting in the creation of new space infrastructure and related facilities within the country.

Role of the Agency

- IN-SPACe acts as a bridge between ISRO and private sector participants to ensure the optimal utilization of India's space resources and the expansion of space-related activities.
- It assesses the requirements of private industries, educational institutions, and research organizations, and works in collaboration with ISRO to fulfill those needs.

Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)-Shukrayaan

- **Context:** During Prime Minister official visit to Sweden, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Swedish National Space Agency signed a MoU formalizing Sweden's participation in India's upcoming Venus Orbiter Mission.

About Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM)

- Officially called the Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM), Indian Space Research Organisation's Shukrayaan (which translates to "Venus Craft") will be India's first exclusive mission to explore Venus.
- The mission has been cleared by the Union Cabinet with an estimated cost of ₹1,236 crore. The orbiter is expected to carry 19 scientific instruments for research and observation.
- **Planned Launch:** March 29, 2028, using LVM3, ISRO's heavy-lift launch vehicle.

Main Goals of the Venus Orbiter Mission

- Examine the geological structure of Venus, including its surface and regions beneath it.
- Study the planet's atmosphere, its composition, and weather-related processes.
- Explore the ionosphere and understand its changing behaviour.
- Observe how Venus interacts with solar radiation and charged particles from the Sun.
- Compare the evolution of Venus with Earth to understand why the two planets developed so differently.

Scientific Instruments on Board

- **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR):** Used for high-resolution mapping and imaging of Venus's surface.
- **Thermal Imaging Cameras:** Designed to record heat patterns and temperature changes.

- **Atmospheric Sensors and Instruments:** Intended to analyse atmospheric gases, circulation, and dynamics.

Key Technical Features of the Mission

- **Aero-Braking Method :**For the first time, ISRO plans to use the aero-braking technique during a planetary mission. In this process, the spacecraft will pass through the upper layers of Venus's atmosphere repeatedly to gradually reduce its orbit. This method helps save a significant amount of fuel.
- **Orbital Plan:**The orbiter will first be placed in a highly elliptical orbit around Venus. Later, mission controllers will adjust it into a lower orbit to improve scientific observations and data collection.
- **Components of Chandrayaan-3:** Propulsion Module, Lander Module named Vikram, Rover named Pragyan
- **Launch details :**Chandrayaan-3 was launched on **14 July 2023** from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, using the LVM3 launch vehicle.
- **Landing achievement :**The Vikram lander successfully soft-landed on **23 August 2023**. This achievement made India
 - The **first country to land near the lunar south polar region.**
 - The **fourth country to soft-land on the Moon** after the Soviet Union, the United States, and China

Chandrayaan-3 mission

- **Context:**India's Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission has been honoured with the prestigious 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), presented in Washington DC on May 21.
- **Landing site:**The landing took place near the lunar south polar region. This region is scientifically important because it contains permanently shadowed craters and areas where water ice may exist or survive for long durations.

About Chandrayaan-3 mission

- Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission and the country's second attempt at a soft landing on the Moon.
- It was designed mainly to demonstrate safe and soft landing, rover mobility on the lunar surface, and in-situ scientific experiments.
- The mission was **launched by ISRO on 14 July 2023** and achieved a successful **soft landing on 23 August 2023** near the Moon's south polar region, making **India the first country to soft-land near this region and the fourth country overall to achieve a soft landing on the Moon.**
- The **mission objectives of Chandrayaan-3** were
 - To demonstrate safe and soft landing on the lunar surface
 - To demonstrate rover roving on the Moon
 - To conduct in-situ scientific experiments on the lunar surface
- **Payloads on the lander**
 - ChaSTE - Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment
 - ILSA - Instrument for Lunar Seismic Activity
 - RAMBHA-LP - Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere - Langmuir Probe
- **Payloads on the rover**
 - LIBS - Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscope
 - APXS - Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer

- Scientific findings
 - **LIBS** confirmed the presence of sulphur on the lunar surface through direct in-situ measurement
 - **APXS** detected elements such as aluminium, sulphur, calcium, iron, chromium, titanium, manganese, silicon, and oxygen-related signatures in the soil and rocks
 - **ChaSTE** made the first in-situ observations of the temperature profile of the lunar topsoil near the south polar region.
- Its headquarters is located in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- It is headed by a Chairperson appointed by the Cabinet Committee on Security. It became operational in June 2022.

Key Functions

- Providing single-window authorization for all space-related activities of Non-Government Entities (NGEs), including private companies, academic institutions, and foreign subsidiaries.
- Promoting, guiding, and mentoring the private sector through industry-friendly regulations.
- Establishing safety and technical regulations for launch vehicles, satellites, and ground stations.

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe)

- **Context:** With the support of IN-SPACe, the Department of Space (DoS) has approved the establishment of Common Technology Facilities (CTFs) in Gujarat (Koraj) and Tamil Nadu (Thoothukudi).

About IN-SPACe

- The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre is an autonomous coordinating agency operating under the Department of Space (DoS).
- Released the Earth Observation Policy (2023), which governs data dissemination.
- Released Norms, Guidelines, and Procedures (NGP) for Indian space activities.

Recent IN-SPACe Decisions

- Granted authorization to Agnikul Cosmos for the Agnibaan SOrTeD launch (2024).
- Granted authorization to Skyroot Aerospace for the Vikram-S launch (2022).

GEOGRAPHY

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Western Disturbances

- **Context:** Following the weakening and eastward movement of a recent Western Disturbance, Northwest India is currently experiencing a brief, temporary respite from rain and thunderstorms.

About Western Disturbances

- These are extra-tropical storm systems that originate in the **Mediterranean Sea and travel eastward towards the Indian subcontinent.**
- They bring moisture-laden winds and interact with the subtropical jet stream.
- Consequently, weather conditions across vast regions including parts of **Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh** are affected.
- Western Disturbances primarily impact India during the **winter months, spanning from November to March.**
- They **bring rainfall and snowfall that are vital for the Rabi crop season**, particularly across Northwest India, including Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi.

Origin and Naming of Western Disturbances

- Western Disturbances are named as such due to their origin and movement patterns.
- These weather systems **originate in the western parts of the globe, specifically within the Mediterranean region.**
- When they form in the Mediterranean Sea and its adjoining areas, they are referred to as Western Disturbances.
- The term “Disturbance” refers to the disruptive nature these weather systems exhibit as they travel eastward from their point of origin towards the Indian subcontinent and beyond.
- While these phenomena are known as Western

Disturbances in India, similar weather events in other parts of the world may be referred to by different names, depending on their specific origins and impacts.

The Teesta River

- **Context:** Recently, the Government of Bangladesh sought China’s “involvement and support” for the Teesta River restoration project.

About Teesta River

- It originates from Lake ‘**Tso Lhamo,**’ situated in the **North Sikkim region** of India at an elevation of approximately 5,280 meters.
- It is a glacier-fed river; the ‘**Pahurni**’ and ‘**Khangse**’ glaciers, along with Lake ‘**Tso Lhamo,**’ serve as the primary water sources for its flow.
- It is a major tributary of the **Brahmaputra River** (known as the ‘**Jamuna**’ in Bangladesh).
- It flows through two countries: **India and Bangladesh.**
- 83% of the river’s catchment area **lies within India**, while the **remaining 17%** is located in Bangladesh.

Block-Level Monsoon Forecasting in India

- **Context :** The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has introduced a new weather forecasting system capable of providing block-level southwest monsoon forecasts across 15 states and one Union Territory.

About the New Forecasting System

- This system was developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It uses a combination of:
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) based analysis
 - Historical weather records
 - Global weather forecast models

- Coverage of the System
 - It currently covers 3,196 blocks.
 - These blocks are spread across 15 states and 1 Union Territory.
 - Primary focus is given to monsoon core regions that rely heavily on rainfall for agriculture.

About Indian Meteorological Department

- The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) was established in 1875 as the National Meteorological Service and apex agency for meteorology in India.
- The IMD functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- Its headquartered in New Delhi.
- The IMD is headed by the Director General of Meteorology (DGM).
- The IMD operates hundreds of observatories across India and Antarctica.

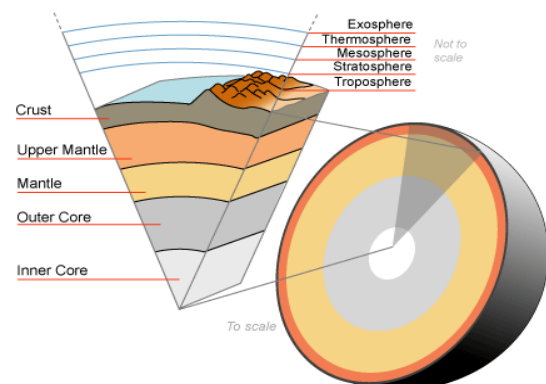
Earth's Outer Core and Magnetic Field Shift

Earth's Outer Core

- The Earth's outer core is a massive liquid layer located about **2,800 km beneath the surface**.
- It is mainly composed of molten iron and nickel.

Role in Generating Magnetic Field

- Continuous movement of liquid metals in the outer core generates Earth's magnetic field.



- This **magnetic field protects the planet from harmful solar radiation and charged particles from the Sun.**

Study by Researchers

- Scientists from the University of Edinburgh and the British Geological Survey studied the movement of liquid iron in the outer core.

Discovery of Flow Reversal

- Researchers found that around 2010, molten iron beneath the equatorial Pacific Ocean changed direction: from a slow westward movement, to a faster eastward flow.

Two Major Flow Patterns Identified

- Primary Pattern (95% of movement)
 - Consisted of a steady westward flow.
 - Explains the historical westward drift of Earth's magnetic field.
- Secondary Pattern
 - Revealed the sudden directional reversal around 2010.
 - The eastward surge began weakening around 2020.

Link with Earth's Inner Core

- Researchers connected the 2010 reversal to seismic and geodetic changes occurring in Earth's solid inner core.

Uneven Flow Between Hemispheres

- The model showed that the outer core flow is about 10% asymmetrical between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Importance of the Findings

- The study may help explain sudden magnetic disturbances or "geomagnetic jerks."
- It also suggests that deep-Earth liquid movements can change direction much faster than previously believed.

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

Idu Mishmi Tribe

About the Tribe

- The Idu Mishmi Tribe is one of the **major tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh**.
- They mainly inhabit the Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The tribe resides largely in the **Mishmi Hills region near the Tibet border**.

Cultural Identity

- The community is recognised for its **unique hairstyles, traditional customs and artistic designs on their attire**.
- They are highly skilled in weaving and handicrafts.

Language

- The tribe speaks the **Idu Mishmi language**.
- **UNESCO has classified this language as endangered**.

Connection with Nature

- Traditionally, the Idu Mishmis follow **animistic beliefs and maintain a close relationship with forests, plants and wildlife**.
- Tigers hold a sacred position in their culture and mythology.
- According to their beliefs, humans and tigers were born from the same mother, making tigers their “elder brothers”.

Iyu-ena’ Belief System

- The tribe follows a traditional system called **Iyu-ena’**.
- It consists of myths, taboos and customary restrictions related to nature and wildlife protection.
- Hunting several animals is restricted under this belief system.
- Killing tigers is completely forbidden.

Festivals

- Important festivals of the tribe include Reh and Ke-Meh-Ha.
- They also prepare a traditional rice beer known as Ebu.

Social Structure

- The Idu Mishmi society follows a patriarchal and patrilineal system.
- Property and inheritance are generally passed from father to son.

Koraga Tribe

- The Koraga Tribe is recognised as one of India’s Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and is currently witnessing a decline in population.
- The community is mainly concentrated in the **Dakshin Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka and the Kasargod district of Kerala**.

Language

- Most members of the tribe speak the Tulu language, though the community also possesses its own traditional language.

Clan System

- The Koragas are organised into 17 exogamous clans or groups, locally referred to as “bali.”

Traditional Occupation

- Traditionally, the tribe depends on agriculture and forest-based activities for livelihood.
- They collect bamboo, cane, and creepers from forests and use them for making baskets and other handicrafts.
- Their economy remains **closely connected with forest resources and nature**.

Culture and Traditions

- The community performs folk songs, dances, and rituals to honour deities, ensure agricultural prosperity, and ward off diseases and epidemics.

- Important musical instruments used by the Koragas include: Dholu (drum), Voote (flute)

Social Structure

- The Koraga society follows a **matrilineal tradition where lineage is traced through the mother's side**.
- However, after marriage, couples generally follow patrilocal residence.
- Property rights are shared equally between sons and daughters.

Religious Beliefs

- The tribe worships several Bhuta (spirit) deities through traditional rituals and performances.
- Bhuta Kola is an important ritualistic folk performance associated with the worship of spirits such as: Panjurli, Kallurti, Korathi, Guliga.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Prosopis Juliflora to Green Methanol: Turning an Invasive Threat into Clean Fuel

Background

- Prosopis juliflora is listed among **the world's top 100 invasive species**.
- Known locally as **Gando Baval (Kutch), Vilayati Keekar (North India), Seemai Karuvelam (Tamil Nadu)**.
- Introduced by the **British in the 1920s and later in 1961 in Gujarat** to combat desertification.
- Has severely degraded biodiversity in **Banni grasslands by displacing native grasses**.

Project Overview

- **India's first green methanol plant to use Prosopis juliflora as feedstock**.
- Located at **Deendayal Port Authority**.
- Capacity: **5 tonnes of methanol per day**.
- Built by **Thermax Energy** with technology from **Ankur Scientific**.

About Green Methanol

- Alternative marine fuel **replacing bunker oil**.
- Produced from biomass (agricultural residues) instead of fossil fuels.
- Uses **Prosopis juliflora** and can also process bagasse, cotton stalk, etc.

Technology Process

- **Gasification Stage (Ankur Scientific)**
 - Biomass → Syngas (H₂, CO, CO₂)
 - Process occurs between combustion and pyrolysis.
- **Methanol Synthesis (Thermax Energy)**
 - Syngas → Methanol fuel

Environmental Benefits

- **Up to 95% reduction in CO₂ emissions**.
- **Up to 80% reduction in NO_x emissions**.
- Eliminates sulphur oxides and particulate matter.
- Supports cleaner shipping in line with International Maritime Organization norms.

Significance

- Converts an ecological problem into an energy resource.
- Helps in restoring grassland ecosystems by removing invasive species.
- Supports India's "green port" initiative along the western coast.
- Potential to reduce oil imports using agricultural waste.

UN Expands Methane Monitoring System

- **Context:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) expanded the **Methane Alert and Response System (MARS)** to include coal mines and waste facilities

Key Findings of UNEP Analysis

- UNEP analysis released in April 2026 identified coal mining and waste management as major methane emission sources

- Two of the world's three largest methane-emitting sites were landfills located in Chile and India
- The Indian site corresponds to the **Kanjurmarg landfill in Mumbai**

Methane Emission Sites in India

- Satellite-based analysis identified two Indian landfill sites among the world's 25 largest methane emitters
- These sites are located in: **Secunderabad and Mumbai**

About Methane

- Methane is more than **80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period in trapping heat**
- However, methane remains in the atmosphere for only about a decade, unlike carbon dioxide which persists for centuries
- Rapid methane reduction is considered one of the fastest ways to slow global warming

Functioning of MARS

- MARS uses data from **more than 35 satellites to detect methane "super-emitters"**
- System alerts governments and industries about major methane leaks
- It also tracks whether corrective measures have been taken and emissions reduced

Significance

- Strengthens global methane monitoring and climate mitigation efforts
- Enhances transparency in industrial emissions
- Supports rapid action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Highlights growing role of satellite technology in environmental governance

Human-Wildlife Conflict

- Human-Wildlife Conflict occurs when encounters between humans and wildlife lead to negative consequences, such as loss of property, livelihoods, and human life.
- It poses a serious global threat to sustainable development, food security, biodiversity conservation, and health; it negatively impacts both humans and wildlife, while also hindering the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
- Human-Wildlife Conflict has been recognized as a global concern within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the United Nations' 'Convention on Biological Diversity' (UN CBD).

Causes of Human-Wildlife Conflict

- An expanding human population pushes settlements closer to protected forest areas, thereby increasing encounters between humans and wildlife.
- The primary cause of this degradation is the **cultivation of exotic plant species specifically Acacia, Mangium, and Eucalyptus** within forest areas for commercial purposes.
- Changing agricultural practices also contribute to the issue; these practices lure wildlife out of forest areas when they are unable to find sufficient fodder within their natural habitats.

Consequences of Human-Wildlife Conflict

- Human-wildlife conflict results in **significant loss of life and injuries**. E.g.: It is estimated that between 2021 and 2025, approximately 344 people lost their lives in human-wildlife conflict incidents across the state of Kerala.

- Crop damage, livestock loss, and property damage translate into substantial financial losses for farmers. Farmers lose 10–15 percent of their annual yield to animals that damage crops such as elephants, Nilgai, wild boars, and monkeys.
- Wildlife is frequently killed, either accidentally or as acts of retaliation; this undermines species conservation efforts.
- **Community Participation:** Protection initiatives known as “**Suraksha Kavach**” are being implemented by actively engaging local communities in conservation measures, such as the formation of surveillance committees.
- **Enhanced Compensation:** The compensation amount for loss of life resulting from human-animal conflicts has been increased from ₹5 lakhs to ₹10 lakhs.

Key Measures and Strategies Implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu

- **AI-based Early Warning Systems:** The Government of Tamil Nadu has launched a first-of-its-kind AI-based Command and Control Centre that utilizes thermal cameras, ground sensors, and satellite data to monitor and predict the movements of elephants and leopards in sensitive areas such as the Valparai Plateau and the Nilgiris.
- **Technological Applications:** With the aim of preventing animals from entering villages, a project is currently being implemented to replace traditional and less-effective barriers with “**Smart**” solar-powered electric fences.
- **Rapid Rescue Teams (RRTs):** 28 Rapid Rescue Teams, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, have been deployed to handle human-animal conflict situations arising in the field.
- **Habitat Improvement and Fodder Management:** The government is focusing on improving animal habitats by removing invasive alien plant species and planting nutrient-rich native vegetation with the aim of encouraging animals to remain within the forests and reducing the need for them to stray into agricultural lands.
- **Special Schemes:** Unique action plans have been formulated and are being implemented for specific animal species (e.g., ‘**Mission SARPA**’ for snakebite treatment, and special schemes for Bonnet Macaques and wild boars).
- **Anti-Poaching Surveillance Camps:** These camps have been established specifically to monitor the movements of elephant herds, particularly in areas such as Lower Kotagiri and Gudalur.

India’s Water Governance and Water Crisis

- **Context:** India supports nearly one-fifth of the world’s population but possesses only about 4% of global freshwater resources.
- According to the NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index, nearly 600 million people face high to extreme water stress.
- Although India receives substantial annual rainfall, only about 1,100 billion cubic metres of water is considered usable due to:
 - Limited storage infrastructure
 - Uneven rainfall distribution
 - Ecological constraints

Declining Per Capita Water Availability

- Per capita water availability in India has declined from over 5,000 cubic metres after

Independence to around 1,400 cubic metres today.

- **India is the world's largest groundwater user,** accounting for **nearly one-fourth of global groundwater extraction.**
- Excessive groundwater dependence has caused **declining water tables in several regions.**
- **India's water crisis is both hydrological and institutional in nature.**

Water Governance Structure in India

- Water governance in India involves the **Union Government, State Governments, and local bodies.**
- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** is the **nodal authority** for water resources, drinking water, and sanitation.
- The **Central Ground Water Board** assesses groundwater resources and aquifer management.
- NITI Aayog evaluates State performance through the **Composite Water Management Index.**

Major Government Initiatives

Jal Jeevan Mission

- **Launched in 2019** to provide tap water connections to rural households.
- The mission has been extended till **2028 for universal rural coverage.**

Atal Bhujal Yojana

- Atal Bhujal scheme was **launched on 1 April 2020.**
- This scheme **will improve the existing condition of several water biodies** of the country.
- Focuses on **groundwater sustainability** in water-stressed regions.

▪ Promotes participatory aquifer management and groundwater budgeting.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

- Centrally sponsored scheme **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** was launched during the year 2015-16.
- Encourages micro-irrigation and efficient water management in agriculture.
- Aims to **improve irrigation efficiency** as agriculture consumes most freshwater resources.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched on **25th June 2015** in selected 500 cities and towns across the country.
- Focuses on **urban water supply, sewage treatment, and wastewater reuse.**

Namami Gange Programme

- The Namami Gange Programme was launched in **June 2014** by the Government of India.
- Targets **pollution control, sewage treatment, and ecological restoration** in the Ganga basin.

Towards a Circular Water Economy

- India is moving toward **integrated and sustainable water governance.**
- **Wastewater recycling and reuse** can reduce pressure on freshwater resources.
- Efficient irrigation methods and suitable crop choices can improve agricultural water productivity.
- Technological innovation and participatory governance are essential for long-term water sustainability.

Ganges Soft-shell Turtle

- **Context:** India's first satellite-tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.
- **Assam** is considered one of the most important regions globally for freshwater turtle conservation.
- Out of the eight species of soft-shell turtles found in India, five occur in the Kaziranga landscape.

About the Ganges Soft-shell Turtle

- Scientific name: **Ganges soft-shell turtle**
- The species can be identified by the unique arrowhead-like markings present on the upper part of its head.

Habitat and Distribution

- The turtle mainly inhabits rivers and major canals that have muddy beds and flowing, cloudy water.
- It can also survive in ponds and lakes.

- In India, it occurs in large rivers, reservoirs, and lakes.

Ecological Importance

- The turtle acts as an important predator in river ecosystems.
- By feeding on dead and decomposing animals, it helps maintain the cleanliness and ecological balance of rivers.

Threats

- The species faces major threats from:
 - Illegal poaching
 - International wildlife trade
 - Loss and degradation of habitat

Conservation Status

- Protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- Listed as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.
- Included in CITES Appendix I, which bans international commercial trade of the species.



INDIAN POLITY

Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026: Digital OCI System & Stricter Norms for Minors

- Context: The Union Home Ministry notified the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, introducing electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) cards, fully online applications, and stricter norms on dual passports for minors.

Digital Transformation of OCI System

- Introduction of electronic OCI (e-OCI) cards alongside physical cards.
- Shift to a fully online application process.
- Elimination of duplicate physical paperwork.
- Creation of a centralised digital registry of OCI holders.

Biometric Integration

- Applicants must consent to sharing biometric data.
- Enables integration with fast-track immigration programmes.
- May allow automatic future enrolment.

Significance

- Promotes paperless governance and ease of doing processes.
- Enhances efficiency, transparency, and data management.
- Strengthens immigration facilitation and regulatory oversight.
- Addresses legal gaps related to dual nationality in minors.

India's First Paperless Judiciary State

- Context : Sikkim has been declared India's first paperless judiciary state. Announcement made by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant at a conclave in Gangtok. Marks a major step

towards digital justice system and e-courts transformation in India.

- Focus on digital reforms such as e-filing and digital case management to improve efficiency and accessibility.
- Emphasises making justice delivery more inclusive and user-friendly through technology integration.
- Supports India's broader vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, highlighting the role of a modern judiciary in governance and development.

About High Courts

- High Courts are constitutional courts established under **Part VI (Articles 214–231)** of the Indian Constitution, with **Article 214 mandating a High Court for each State**.
- Parliament is empowered to establish a common High Court for two or more States or for a State and a Union Territory to ensure judicial efficiency.
- Each High Court consists of a **Chief Justice and other judges as determined by the President of India**, with strength varying based on workload.
- Judges are appointed by the **President after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State, and the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court (for other judges)**.
- A High Court judge must be a **citizen of India** and should have **either at least 10 years of judicial experience in India or 10 years of practice as an advocate in a High Court**.
- Judges hold office until the **age of 62 years** and can be removed only through **impeachment by Parliament on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity**.

- The institution of High Courts in India originated in **1862** with the establishment of **High Courts at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras**.

- At present, **India has 25 High Courts**, some of which exercise jurisdiction over more than one State or Union Territory, including Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Supreme Court of India

- Context** : The Union Cabinet of India approved increasing the strength of the Supreme Court of India from **34 to 38 judges (including the Chief Justice of India)**.
- A **Bill will be introduced in Parliament** to amend the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956** to raise the sanctioned strength by four.
- The current sanctioned strength is **33 judges + Chief Justice of India**.
- This is the **first increase in six years**, after the 2019 amendment which raised strength from 31 to 33 judges.
- Article 124(1)** of the Constitution of India empowers **Parliament to determine the number of Supreme Court judges**.

About Supreme Court of India

- The Supreme Court of India is the **apex judicial body** under the Constitution.
- It was **established on 26 January 1950** with the commencement of the Constitution.
- The Court was **inaugurated on 28 January 1950** in the Chamber of Princes at the old Parliament House. The first Chief Justice was Harilal J. Kania
- It initially functioned from the **old Parliament House** and shifted to its present building on **Tilak Marg, New Delhi in 1958**.
- The Supreme Court of India was originally envisaged under Article 124 of the Constitution of India with a strength of **one Chief Justice and seven other judges**, while empowering Parliament to increase this number based on need.

- Over time, the sanctioned strength has been progressively increased through legislation from **8 judges in 1950 to 11 (1956), 14 (1960), 18 (1978), 26 (1986), 31 (2009), and 34 (2019)** to address rising caseloads and ensure effective delivery of justice.

- Proceedings are conducted in **English**.

- The Supreme Court is established under **Part V, Chapter IV (Articles 124-147)** of the Constitution of India.
- Judges of the Supreme Court of India are appointed by the President of India under Article 124 of the Constitution of India through the **collegium system**.

Vande Mataram

- Context** : The Union Cabinet of India approved an amendment to the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** to make **insult or obstruction to the singing of Vande Mataram punishable**.

- At present, the Act provides punishment (up to **3 years imprisonment or fine or both**) for insulting the **National Anthem, National Flag, and the Constitution**, but not the National Song.

- In **7 November 1875 Vande Mataram** was written by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** and published in **Anandamath** in the **1882**.

- It was given the **status of National Song**, with only the **first two stanzas officially adopted**.

- In **1937**, the Indian National Congress decided to use the first two stanzas in official gatherings.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued **advisory guidelines** stating that

- All **six stanzas** may be sung/played at official events.
- The National Song may be given **precedence over the National Anthem** when both are played.

- These guidelines were **non-statutory (advisory in nature)**.

- The amendment aims to give **statutory backing** by bringing the National Song under legal protection similar to the National Anthem.

State Council of Ministers and Governor's Discretionary Powers

- The Indian Constitution outlines the appointment and conditions of service for members of the State Council of Ministers.
- According to this provision, the **State Governor appoints the Chief Minister**.
- The Governor also appoints other ministers on the advice of the Chief Minister.
- It is stipulated herein that all ministers shall **hold office during the pleasure of the Governor**.
- It further states that the State Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the State Legislative Assembly.

The Governor's Discretionary Powers

- Under certain circumstances, the Governor possesses the authority to act on his own discretion, without the advice of the Council of Ministers.
- Following a Legislative Assembly election, if no single party secures a clear majority, the Governor has the authority to select and appoint the Chief Minister.
- If there is reason to suspect that the State Government has lost its majority, the Governor may request the Chief Minister to prove his majority in the Legislative Assembly.
- The Governor has the authority to reserve a bill passed by the State Legislative Assembly for the consideration of the President.
- If the Governor deems that the constitutional machinery in the State has broken down, he may submit a report to the President recommending the imposition of President's Rule.

- In certain situations, the Governor may exercise discretionary powers regarding actions such as summoning or proroguing the Legislative Assembly, or dissolving the Assembly.

- The Governor has also been vested with specific individual powers regarding certain special responsibilities related to tribal areas.

Lok Adalat

- Context: NALSA is set to conduct the second National Lok Adalat of 2026 across the country today.
- During the period from 2023 to 2025, 12 National Lok Adalats were organized, resulting in the settlement of 26 crore (260 million) cases.

About Lok Adalats

- As a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) designed to **resolve disputes through mutual agreement rather than prolonged litigation**, Lok Adalats stand as **one of India's most people-centric mechanisms for delivering justice**.
- This mechanism is rooted in the constitutional mandate regarding **"Access to Justice" enshrined under Article 39A of the Constitution**.
- Lok Adalats aim to **reduce judicial backlog while providing a speedy, affordable, and amicable means of dispute resolution**.
- They function at the National, State, District, and Taluk levels.

Lok Adalat Structure

- Established under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**, to facilitate institutionalized dispute resolution.
- Reinforces **Article 39A of the Constitution by ensuring equal access to justice and free legal aid**.

- Awards (decisions) passed by a **Lok Adalat** are deemed equivalent to decrees passed by a Civil Court.
- No appeal is permitted against a Lok Adalat award, thereby ensuring finality and speedy resolution.
- **No court fee is charged;** furthermore, any court fee paid prior to the proceedings is refunded once a settlement is reached.
- The Constitution does not prescribe a fixed procedure for selecting a Chief Minister in a hung Assembly.

Objective of the Governor

- The Governor's primary responsibility is to **ensure the formation of a stable and responsible government in the State.**
- The Governor must act according to constitutional conventions and not on personal discretion or political considerations.

Guidance from Committees and Courts

- Recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, the Committee of Governors (1970), and various Supreme Court judgments guide the Governor's actions in such situations.
- These bodies emphasised that the Governor's personal opinion or arbitrary decision-making has no constitutional relevance.

Exploring Government Formation

- The Governor should explore all possible options with political parties, alliances, and independent MLAs to form a stable government.
- The process should be completed within a **"reasonable time" to prevent political instability and horse-trading.**

President's Rule as Last Resort

- If no party or alliance can form a stable government, the Governor may recommend **President's Rule under Article 356.**
- The imposition of President's Rule should be treated only as an extreme and final option.

Dissolution of Assembly

- In the **B.R. Kapur Judgment** and **Rameshwar Prasad Judgment** cases, the Supreme Court held that the Governor may dissolve the Assembly under **Article 174(2)(b)** even before

Lok Adalat Cases

- **Civil Disputes:** Matters related to property, monetary recovery, and contracts.
- **Family Matters:** Matrimonial disputes and maintenance cases.
- **Labour Issues:** Workmen's compensation and employment-related disputes.
- **Criminal Cases:** Only compoundable (settleable) offenses are permitted.
- **Excluded Matters:** Non-compoundable criminal offenses and constitutional cases are prohibited.

Jurisdiction of Lok Adalats

- **Cases Pending in Courts:** Matters that have already been filed in any court of law.
- **Pre-Litigation Disputes:** Conflicts resolved prior to the formal filing of a court case.
- **Territorial Limits:** Jurisdiction confined to the geographical boundaries of the authority organizing the Lok Adalat.
- **Public Utility Services:** Permanent Lok Adalats handle disputes related to essential services.
- **Pecuniary Limit:** Permanent Lok Adalats handle cases with a monetary value of up to ₹1 crore.

Governor's Role in Government Formation in a Hung Assembly

Constitutional Provision

- The Governor appoints the **Chief Minister under Article 164 of the Constitution of India.**

its first sitting if no viable government can be formed.

Order of Preference for Inviting Parties

- The Sarkaria Commission recommended the following order of preference for government formation
 - A pre-poll alliance commanding majority support.
 - The single largest party capable of proving majority support.
 - A post-poll alliance with majority backing in the Assembly.

Minority Governments

- In the **S.R. Bommai Judgment case**, the Supreme Court stated that a government need not necessarily have an outright majority initially, provided it enjoys the confidence of the House.
- The judgment recognised the constitutional validity of minority and coalition governments.

Importance of Floor Test

- The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that a floor test in **the Legislative Assembly is the most objective and transparent method** to determine majority support.
- The confidence vote should generally be decided on the floor of the House rather than through the Governor's personal assessment.

Concerns over Misuse of Powers

- Courts have cautioned that discretionary powers of **Governors should not be misused for advancing the political interests of the ruling party at the Centre.**
- Constitutional machinery in the State should be preserved as far as possible through democratic processes.

Pro-tem Speaker

- A Pro-tem Speaker is a **temporary Speaker appointed for a specific period to conduct the**

official proceedings of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies.

Details Regarding the Pro-tem Speaker

- 'Pro-tem' is a Latin phrase; in English, it means 'for the time being.' Therefore, the temporary Speaker **appointed for a specific duration to conduct the business of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies** is referred to as the 'Pro-tem Speaker.'
- A Pro-tem Speaker is selected **to conduct the proceedings of the House following the completion of elections to the Lok Sabha or Legislative Assemblies**, and prior to the voting process for the election of the permanent Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
- The Constitution of India **does not directly or explicitly** use the term 'Pro-tem Speaker.'
- The office of the Pro-tem Speaker ceases **to exist immediately upon the election of a new permanent Speaker for the House.**

Pro-tem Speaker in Parliament and State Legislatures

- The Pro-tem Speaker is appointed by the **President of India or the Governor of the respective State.**
- By convention, the most senior member of the House with the concurrence of the other members is **appointed as the Pro-tem Speaker.**
- He continues to conduct the proceedings of the House **until a permanent Speaker is elected.**

Duties

- To preside over the first session of the Lok Sabha or the State Legislative Assemblies.
- To administer the oath of office to the newly elected Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs).
- To conduct the **'Vote of Confidence' in the House** to enable the government to prove its majority.

- Conducting the election for the **Speaker and the Deputy Speaker**.

Constitutional Position

- The term 'Pro-tem Speaker' is **not explicitly mentioned** in the Constitution.
- However, **Articles 94 and 95** (pertaining to Parliament) and **Article 180** (pertaining to State Legislatures) of the Constitution make provisions regarding the duties to be performed when the office of the Speaker falls vacant.

Powers of the Governor over the State Legislature

- **Sessions, Prorogation, and Dissolution of the State Legislature.**
- The Governor shall from time to time summon the House or each House of the State Legislature to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit; but six months shall not intervene between the last sitting of one session and the date appointed for the first sitting of the next session.

The Governor may from time to time

- prorogue the House or either House
- Dissolve the Legislative Assembly.

Key Feature

- The Governor summons the **members to a legislative session**.
- It formally brings a legislative session to an end **without dissolving the House**.
- It brings the life of the Legislative Assembly to an end, thereby necessitating fresh elections.
- The Legislative Assembly must **meet at least twice a year**; this ensures that a **maximum gap of only six months** intervenes between the last sitting of one session and the first sitting of the next session.

- Although this action is usually undertaken on the advice of the Chief Minister, if such advice is received at a time when the Chief Minister's majority strength is in doubt, **the Governor may exercise his own discretion to make a decision**.

Chief Minister and State Council of Ministers

- **Context:** Governor issued the order appointing the leader of the ruling party as Chief Minister under **Article 164 of the Constitution**.
- Article 164 of the Indian Constitution outlines the **appointment, tenure, responsibilities, and qualifications of the Chief Minister** and other Ministers in State governments.

Other Provisions Relating to Ministers

- The Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor, and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on **the advice of the Chief Minister**, and the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.
- (1A) The total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in the Council of Ministers in a State shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly of that State. Provided that the number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, in a State shall not be less than twelve. (Ninety-first Amendment Act).
- (1B) A member of the Legislative Assembly of a State or, in a State having a Legislative Council, a member of either House of the Legislature of that State belonging to any political party who is disqualified for being a member of that House under the Tenth Schedule shall also be disqualified to be appointed as a Minister.
- (2) The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly of the State.

- (3) Before a Minister enters upon his office, the Governor shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out for the purpose in the Third Schedule.
- (4) A Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of the Legislature of the State shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister.
- (5) The salaries and allowances of Ministers shall be such as the Legislature of the State may from time to time by law determine; Furthermore, until the State Legislature so determines, they shall be as specified in the Second Schedule.
- If no stable majority emerges, alternative government formation or **President's Rule under Article 356** may follow.

Governor's Role in Floor Test and Government Formation

- The Governor appoints the Chief Minister under **Article 164(1)** and plays a key role in government formation in hung assemblies.
- Under **Article 163**, the Governor acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers except in constitutionally permitted discretionary situations.
- In case of a hung assembly, the Governor exercises situational discretion **to invite a leader who is most likely to command majority support**.
- The Governor may call for or direct a floor test when there is objective material indicating doubt over the majority of the government.
- The Governor cannot act on internal party disputes and must ensure that majority is tested only on the floor of the House.

Floor Test and its Procedure

- A floor test (trust vote) is a constitutional mechanism **to determine whether the Council of Ministers enjoys the confidence of the Legislative Assembly**.
- It is required when there is doubt over majority due **to coalition instability, withdrawal of support, defection, or competing claims to form government**.
- The Chief Minister moves a motion of confidence and **must prove majority support among members present** and voting, absentees are excluded.
- Voting may take place through voice vote, division vote (electronic/slip-based), or ballot vote depending on Assembly procedure.
- A composite floor test is conducted in a hung assembly when multiple groups claim majority and no clear government exists.
- If the Chief Minister wins, the government continues, **if the CM loses, resignation of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers follows**.
- When the House is in session, the **Speaker is the presiding authority responsible for conducting and regulating the floor test**.
- The Speaker ensures **orderly conduct of proceedings and decides the voting procedure (voice vote, division vote, or electronic voting)**.
- The Speaker may exercise a **casting vote (Article 189)** in case of a tie, as per constitutional and procedural rules.
- In 2020, the Supreme Court in **Shivraj Singh Chouhan & Ors versus Speaker** case upheld the powers of the Speaker to call for a floor test if there is a prima facie view that the government has lost its majority.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- **Context :** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed fines on coaching institutes for false advertisements and unfair trade practices.
- **The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a fine of ₹10 lakh against Motion Education Private Limited and ₹5 lakh against Career Line Coaching (CLC) in Sikar for violating consumer rights under the False Advertisements, Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and issued final orders.**

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is a modern and comprehensive law introduced to protect the interests of consumers in the rapidly growing digital and service-oriented economy, prevent unfair trade practices and ensure speedy redressal of consumer complaints.
- The Act replaced the erstwhile **Consumer Protection Act, 1986.**

Objectives of the Act

- To protect consumers against misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices, and defective goods or services.
- To create effective enforcement mechanisms and ensure accountability and responsibility among manufacturers, sellers, service providers and advertisers.

Key Features of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019

- **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):** To protect the interests of consumers, the Act establishes the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).

- The Authority has the power to investigate unfair trade practices, impose penalties, and order the withdrawal or cessation of misleading advertisements.

False Advertisement - Definition under Section 2(28)

- Product Liability Rules
- The Act formally recognises six key consumer rights, including:
 - Right to protection, Right to information, Right to choose, Right to be heard, Right to seek redress, Right to consumer awareness
- Regulation of e-commerce
- Facilitation of consumer grievance redress

Ordinance Increasing Supreme Court Judges Strength

- **Context:** President has promulgated an ordinance increasing the number of judges in the Supreme Court of India.
- The number of judges has been increased from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

Judicial numbers

The top court currently has a backlog of over **93,000 cases**, which is threatening to reach six figures even as the court is going into summer recess, or 'partial working days', in June

The Framers of the Constitution had originally in Article 124(1) envisaged a Supreme Court consisting of the CJI and 'not more than seven judges' until 'Parliament by law prescribes a larger number'

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 as originally enacted, provided for the maximum number of judges (excluding the CJI) to be 10

Graph shows increase in strength of the Supreme Court (Maximum number of judges excluding the CJI)



Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956

- When the 'Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act' was enacted in 1956, the sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court of India was fixed as follows:
 - 10 judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

Increase in strength through the 1960 Amendment Act:

- From 10 to 13 judges (excluding the Chief Justice).
- Subsequently expanded to 17 judges.

1986 Amendment Act – Increase to 25 Judges

- In 1986, another Amendment Act significantly expanded the number of judges in the Court
 - The number of judges was increased from 17 to 25.

2009 Amendment Act – Increase to 30 Judges

- In 2009, Parliament once again amended the Act to address the increasing workload of the judiciary.

2019 Amendment Act – Current Strength of the Supreme Court

- The total number of judges, including the Chief Justice of India, was fixed at 34.

Total Judicial Strength

- **With this amendment:**
 - Total sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court rises from 34 to 38 judges, including the CJI.

Constitutional Provision

- **The ordinance was issued under:**
 - **Article 123 of the Constitution**, which empowers the President to promulgate ordinances when Parliament is not in session.
- **The ordinance is titled:**
 - The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026.

Parliamentary Approval

- The ordinance will be placed before both Houses of Parliament after reassembly.
- **It will cease to operate:**
 - If Parliament does not **approve it within six weeks of reassembly**, or
 - If both Houses **pass resolutions disapproving it**.

- The President also has **the power to withdraw the ordinance**.

Reason for Increasing Judges

- The move aims to address the growing pendency of cases in the Supreme Court.
- **The backlog has crossed:**
 - 93,000 pending cases.
- Pendency increased further after the COVID-19 pandemic due to greater use of e-filing systems.

Constitutional Background

- Originally, **Article 124(1)** of the Constitution provided for:
 - The Chief Justice of India and not more than seven judges.
- Parliament was empowered to increase the number through legislation.

Committee on Empowerment of Women

- **Context:** Lok Sabha speaker has constituted the **Committee on Empowerment of Women**.
- **Daggubati Purandeswari** has been appointed as the **Chairperson** of the committee.

About the Committee on Empowerment of Women

- The committee was first formed **on April 29, 1997** during the 11th Lok Sabha.
- The committee has a **total strength of 30 members:**
 - 20 members are nominated by the Speaker from the Lok Sabha.
 - 10 members are nominated by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha from among Rajya Sabha members.
- The duration of the committee is **not more than one year**.
- It is reconstituted annually.

Working Principle

- Members of the committee are expected to function collectively beyond party differences for the **cause of women's empowerment and welfare.**

Functions of the Committee

Review of NCW Reports

- Examines reports **submitted by the National Commission for Women.**
- Recommends measures that the Union Government should adopt to improve the condition and status of women.

Ensuring Equality and Dignity

- Studies the initiatives taken by the Central Government to guarantee equality, dignity, and better status for women in all spheres.

Education and Representation

- Evaluates steps taken to promote:
 - Comprehensive education for women
 - Adequate representation of women in legislatures, public services, and other sectors

Monitoring Welfare Schemes

- Reviews the implementation and effectiveness of welfare programmes meant for women.

Action Taken Reports

- Assesses the action taken by the Union Government and Union Territory administrations on recommendations made by the committee.

Judges' Inquiry Committee

- Context:** The Judges' Inquiry Committee submitted its report regarding the complaints against Justice Yashwant Varma to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- This inquiry was conducted under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, which provides

the statutory framework for investigating allegations of misconduct against judges.

- The Committee was constituted by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha on August 12, 2025,** to examine these complaints.

- In accordance with statutory procedures, this report will be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

On the Removal of Judges

- The "removal" of judges refers to the formal procedure for dismissing a Supreme Court or High Court judge from office on grounds of proven **misbehavior or incapacity.**

- It aims to ensure the accountability of the judiciary while simultaneously insulating it from political interference.

- The statutory framework for this process is provided under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, read in conjunction with **Articles 124(4) and 218 of the Constitution of India.**

- However, the **term "removal" is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution.**

- The grounds for removal include **"proven misbehavior" and "incapacity."**

- The procedure commences with a motion introduced in either House of Parliament.** This requires the support of **100 Members of Parliament (MPs) in the Lok Sabha or 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha**, and the motion must be admitted by the Speaker or the Chairperson, respectively.

- Inquiry Committee:** Once the motion is admitted, a three-member Inquiry Committee is constituted under the provisions of the 1968 Act. It shall comprise a **Supreme Court Judge (or the Chief Justice), a High Court Chief Justice, and a distinguished legal scholar.**

- Parliamentary Approval and Presidential Order:** This committee shall submit its report to

the Parliament; if the charges are substantiated, a debate shall be held on the resolution, which must then be passed by a “**special majority**” in both Houses. Subsequently, the President shall issue the order for removal from office.

Zonal Council

- **Context:** Home Minister Amit Shah to chair Central Zonal Council meeting in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh.
- The meeting will be attended by the Chief Ministers and senior officials of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand

About Zonal Councils

- **Mooted by PM Jawaharlal Nehru in 1956** to address linguistic hostilities and promote cooperation.
- **Legal Basis:** Established under **States Reorganisation Act, 1956 as statutory (extra-constitutional) advisory bodies.**
- **Objective:** Foster coordination among states and the Centre for economic, social and political stability.
- **Nature:** Only deliberative and advisory, recommendations are not binding.

Composition

- **Chairman:** Union Home Minister (common chairman for all Zonal Councils).
- **Vice-Chairman:** Chief Ministers of states in each zone, serving by rotation for one year.
- **Members:**
 - Chief Ministers and two ministers from each state in the zone.
 - Administrators of Union Territories in the zone.
 - NITI Aayog representative, Chief Secretaries and Development Commissioners as advisors (without voting rights).

- Standing Committees: Chief Secretaries of member states discuss issues and prepare for main meetings.

six zonal councils

- Under **state reorganisation act, 1956**
 - Set up The Northern Zonal Council; The Central Zonal Council; The Eastern Zonal Council; The Western Zonal Council; The Southern Zonal Council.
- Under **North Eastern Council Act, 1972.**
 - Set up North Eastern Council.

The Supreme Court Collegium and the Judicial Appointment System

- **Context:** The Supreme Court Collegium (the committee for the selection of judges) has approved proposals for the **appointment of 19 judges to the Madras High Court.**

About the Collegium

- The Supreme Court Collegium is a body empowered to make decisions regarding the selection, transfer, and **promotion of individuals eligible to be appointed as judges of the Supreme Court of India, as well as Chief Justices and judges of the various High Courts.**

Composition of the Current Collegium

- The current Supreme Court Collegium consists of **five judges: the Chief Justice of India and the four most senior judges of the Supreme Court.**

A System Not Explicitly Mentioned in the Constitution

- This system is **not specifically mentioned in the Constitution of India.** Rather, it evolved over time through a series of judgments delivered by the Supreme Court.

The Appointment Process

- In this process, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), along with the **four most senior judges of the**

Supreme Court, jointly recommend names for judicial appointments and transfers.

The High Court Collegium

- At the High Court level, the Chief Justice of the respective High Court, along with the two most senior judges of that court, function jointly as the Collegium.

The Role of the Government

- The Government may raise queries or objections regarding the recommendations made by the Collegium. However, if the Collegium reiterates the same recommendations, it becomes mandatory for the Government to approve those appointments. Constitutional Articles
- Article 124** – Establishment and Constitution of the Supreme Court
- Article 124 (2)** – Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal, after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose; and shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-five years.
- Article 217** – Judges of the High Courts shall be appointed by the President after consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Governor of the respective State. Consultation shall also be held with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on One Nation, One Election (ONOE)

- The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) observed that implementing the “One Nation, One Election” system could potentially save around ₹7 lakh crore and contribute nearly 1.6% growth to India’s GDP.

- The Committee consists of **39 members**, including 27 Members of Parliament from the Lok Sabha and 12 members from the Rajya Sabha, along with the Chairperson.

About One Nation, One Election (ONOE)

- ONOE** refers to the proposal of conducting elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies simultaneously, so that both polls take place within the same election cycle.
- Scope:** The proposal does not include elections to Panchayats, municipalities, or by-elections within the framework of simultaneous elections.
- Common Voting Process:** Under this system, voters would cast votes for both Lok Sabha and State Assembly representatives on the same day, either in a single phase or through multiple coordinated phases.

Constitutional Framework and Suggested Amendments

- Committee Recommendation:** The High-Level Committee (2023–24), headed by Ram Nath Kovind, recommended the introduction of ONOE to improve administrative efficiency and reduce the frequent conduct of elections.
- Constitutional Amendment Bill:** The proposal was officially introduced through the Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks to synchronise the tenure of State Legislative Assemblies with that of the Lok Sabha.
- Article 82A:** The proposed Article 82A authorises the President to announce an “appointed date” for synchronised elections, even if it requires shortening the tenure of certain State Assemblies.

- **Residual Tenure System:** If a legislature is dissolved before completing its term, the newly elected House would function only for the remaining duration of the original term rather than receiving a full five-year tenure.
- **Powers of the Election Commission:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) would be empowered to postpone elections in States where conducting simultaneous polls is not feasible. This would require amendments to Articles 83, 172, and 327 of the Constitution.
- Article 12 includes: Union Government, State Governments, Legislatures, and local or other authorities under government control.

Central Information Commission (CIC)

BCCI and RTI Act

BCCI's Stand on RTI

- Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) argues that it is a **private and autonomous body**.
- Therefore, it claims it does **not qualify as a "public authority"** under the Right to Information Act (RTI Act).
- The CIC was set up by the Central Government in **2005 under the RTI Act**. Therefore, it is a statutory body and not a constitutional body.
- It examines matters related to **central government departments, ministries, public sector enterprises, financial institutions, and offices functioning under the Central Government and Union Territories**.
- The Commission consists of one Chief Information Commissioner along with a maximum of ten Information Commissioners.
- The Chief Information Commissioner and the Information Commissioners are **appointed by the President of India** on the advice of a selection committee.

Section 2(h) of RTI Act

- Section 2(h) defines a **public authority** as:
 - Any authority or institution established by: **the Constitution, Parliamentary law, State law, or government notification**.
- It also includes bodies that are: owned, controlled, or substantially financed by the government.
- NGOs receiving substantial government funding are also covered.
- This committee is headed by the Prime Minister and also includes the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.
- The Chief Information Commissioner and other Information Commissioners hold office for a period of **three years or until they attain the age of 65 years**, whichever occurs earlier. After completing their tenure, they cannot be reappointed.
- The **President of India is empowered to remove** the Chief Information Commissioner or any Information Commissioner from office.

BCCI's Legal Argument

- BCCI states that it is:
 - a **charitable society**,
 - Registered under the **Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975**.
- Hence, it argues that it is **independent of government control**.

Article 12 of the Constitution

- BCCI argues it does not fall under the definition of **"State"** in **Article 12** of the Constitution of India.

Supreme Court and Revival of Sedition Proceedings

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India allowed revival of proceedings under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code for accused persons who consent to continue their trials.

Background: Freeze on Sedition Cases in 2022

- In May 2022, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court had suspended all pending sedition proceedings across the country.
- The court had raised concerns regarding the misuse of Section 124A, a colonial-era provision introduced in 1898.

Colonial-Era Nature of Sedition Law

- Both the Union government and the Supreme Court acknowledged that Section 124A was: a colonial law, unsuitable for present-day India, and inconsistent with modern democratic values.

Government's Stand

- The Union government referred to Prime Minister statement during "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" emphasizing the need to remove outdated colonial laws and practices.

Concerns over Free Speech

- The Supreme Court observed that sedition law had a "chilling effect" on: freedom of speech, civil liberties, and democratic dissent.
- The provision carries punishment up to life imprisonment.

Reference to I.R. Coelho Judgment

- The court's earlier observations aligned with the judgment in **I.R. Coelho versus State of Tamil Nadu (2007)**, which emphasized that laws must evolve with changing times and societal progress.

May 21, 2026 Clarification

- The Supreme Court clarified that lower courts may continue deciding sedition cases on merits where accused persons seek speedy disposal and closure of proceedings.

Constitutional Challenge Still Pending

- The constitutionality of Section 124A is still under challenge before the Supreme Court.
- Multiple petitions, including **S.G. Vombatkere versus Union of India**, argue that the law violates Fundamental Rights such as: freedom of speech and expression, personal liberty, right to life, and equality before law.

Uniform Civil Code

- **Context:** The Union Home Minister has stated that the government has formulated special provisions to ensure that **all tribal communities are exempted from the purview of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, thereby guaranteeing that their rights are fully protected.

About the Uniform Civil Code

- The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) paves the way for the creation of a **single, nationwide law applicable to all religious communities** regarding personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption.
- Currently, India's personal law framework is complex, with each religion adhering to its own specific laws.

Personal Laws in India

- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, governs Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists.
- Muslim Personal Law governs Muslims.
- The Indian Succession Act, 1925, applies to Christians, Parsis, and Jews.
- The Special Marriage Act provides a framework for solemnizing marriages between individuals of different religious faiths and for

registering such marriages through a Marriage Officer.

Key Features of the Uniform Civil Code

- Establishes a common set of laws governing civil matters that are common to all religions.
- Eliminates discriminatory practices within personal laws, particularly those concerning women's rights.
- Separates civil law from religion, ensuring that the laws remain secular in nature.
- Promotes social harmony by fostering a shared legal identity.
- Streamlines the legal complexities that arise from the existence of diverse personal laws. Legal Framework and Articles Governing the Uniform Civil Code:
- **Article 44:** A Directive Principle of State Policy mandating that the State shall endeavor to secure a uniform civil code for all citizens.
- **Article 14:** Ensures equality before the law and the equal protection of the laws.
- **Article 25:** Safeguards freedom of religion, raising questions regarding the balancing of religious practices with legal uniformity.

Committee on Petitions

- **Context:** Recently, Rajya Sabha Member Raghav Chadha was appointed as the new Chairman of the Rajya Sabha's 'Committee on Petitions'.

About Committee on Petitions

- The Committee on Petitions is one of the **oldest committees of the Parliament**.
- This committee originated from a resolution moved in the '**Council of States**' on **September 15, 1921**, to constitute a 'Committee on Public Petitions' empowered to receive evidence.
- The committee acquired its current name, the 'Committee on Petitions', in the year 1933.

- The Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions **was first constituted in 1952 with a Chairman and four other members**; in 1964, its membership strength was increased to ten, a composition that has remained unchanged since then.
- It is a 'Standing Committee' of the Rajya Sabha; the committee is constituted under Rule 147 of the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha**.
- The members of this committee are nominated by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha; the Chairman of the committee is also appointed by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The 'quorum' for the committee is five; generally, the committee is reconstituted every year.
- The committee examines petitions referred to it; it reports to the House regarding **specific grievances**; furthermore, it may recommend individual relief measures or broader reformative actions.
- The committee is empowered to receive **evidence, call for documents, seek comments from Ministries or Departments, examine witnesses, and hear the views of petitioners**. Furthermore, it may recommend appropriate remedial measures to resolve grievances or to prevent their recurrence.

Anti-Defection Law and Political Party Primacy

Constitutional Background

- The original Constitution (1950) provided **limited grounds for disqualification of MPs under Article 103**.
- Decisions on disqualification were made by the President based on the opinion of the Election Commission of India.

Introduction of the 10th Schedule

- The 10th Schedule was added through the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**.

- It aimed to prevent political defections and curb opportunistic party-switching by elected representatives.
- Under this law, disqualification cases are decided by the Speaker or Chairman of the House.

Original Exceptions under the Anti-Defection Law

- Two exceptions were initially allowed:
 - Split (Paragraph 3)
 - Merger (Paragraph 4)

Removal of the "Split" Provision

- Paragraph 3 recognised a split when one-third of legislators formed a separate faction.
- This provision was removed by the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003.
- The removal followed recommendations of:
 - Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms (1990)
 - 170th Law Commission Report (1999)

Significance of Removing Paragraph 3

- Deletion of the "split" clause reduced the scope for legitimising internal party breakaways.
- It strengthened the authority and supremacy of the political party over the legislature party.
- Parliament signalled that party discipline and accountability are central to democracy.

Supreme Court's Stand

- In **Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary, Governor of Maharashtra**, the Supreme Court reinforced the importance of the parent political party.
- The Constitution Bench stated that the legislature party cannot be separated from its political party.
- The Court emphasised that political parties continue to direct and influence their elected representatives even after elections.

Tamil Nadu Reservation Act, 1994

- **Context:** As a case regarding the 69% reservation policy is scheduled to come up for hearing in the Supreme Court, the Chief Minister has issued directives to officials to expedite appropriate legal measures to safeguard the 69 percent reservation in education and employment within Tamil Nadu.
- The **76th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1994**, is a significant amendment in India concerning the policy of reservation.
- It was enacted by the Parliament in the 45th year of the Republic and **received the assent of the President on August 31, 1994.**
- The primary objective of this amendment was **to accord constitutional protection to a reservation law enacted by the Government of Tamil Nadu by including it in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.**

The 76th Constitutional Amendment Act

- The 76th Constitutional Amendment Act was introduced with **the aim of protecting the Tamil Nadu Reservation Act, which provided for a 69% reservation in educational institutions and government services for Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes.**
- Through Article 31-B of the Constitution, by including the Tamil Nadu law in the Ninth Schedule, Parliament ensured that the said law would receive constitutional protection against challenges raised on the grounds that it violated Fundamental Rights.

Changes Effected under the 76th Constitutional Amendment Act

- **Ninth Schedule:** This amendment inserted a new entry, '257-A', into the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

- This entry covers the **‘Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993’** (officially known as **‘Tamil Nadu Act 45/1994’**).
- **Reservation Policy:** The Government of Tamil Nadu implemented a 69% reservation system in educational institutions and State government services for Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes.
- The objective of this amendment was to **safeguard this policy by bringing the Act under constitutional protection.**
- Article 31-B: Through Article 31-B of the Constitution, laws listed in the **Ninth Schedule** receive **immunity (protection)** from being invalidated on the grounds that they violate Fundamental Rights.
- The strategy focuses on the **“4 Es”**: **Education, Engineering** (roads and vehicles), **Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services**

Supreme Court’s Constitutional Role

- The Supreme Court is the **custodian of the Constitution** and can exercise special powers to ensure justice.
- It invoked **Article 142** of the Constitution to provide **“complete justice”**.

About Article 142

- Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders necessary for doing **complete justice** in any case.
- **These powers are:**
 - Inherent to the Supreme Court
 - Beyond limitations of ordinary laws
 - Used when law is silent or inadequate

National Commission for Women

- **Context:** The National Commission for Women (NCW) has submitted a comprehensive report containing recommendations regarding the **rights of Muslim women in India to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and the Ministry of Minority Affairs.**
- This report was submitted following an extensive national-level consultation undertaken with the objective of **strengthening the legal, social, and constitutional rights of Muslim women in the country.**

The Commission’s Views on Women’s Rights and Personal Law Reforms

- Constitutional Safeguards and Legal Reforms
- The Commission noted that constitutional safeguards and recently enacted legal reforms have played a pivotal role in promoting and protecting women’s rights in India.

Supreme Court Declares Safe Travel on National Highways a Fundamental Right

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India declared the **Right to Safe Travel on National Highways** as a part of the **Right to Life** under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- Safe and motorable roads are now considered a **constitutional obligation of the State.**

Case Background

- The judgment came in:
 - In **Re: Phalodi Accident vs. National Highways Authority of India and Others** (2025).
- The Court took **suo motu cognisance** of two road accidents in November 2025 that caused the death of 34 people.

Government’s Road Safety Goal

- India aims to reduce road accidents by **50% by 2030.**

Enhancing Access to Justice

- The Commission emphasized the importance of making the justice delivery system more accessible to women, thereby ensuring the availability of easy legal aid and effective remedies.

Progressive Codification of Personal Laws

- The Commission underscored the necessity of codifying personal laws in a clearer, more uniform, and progressive manner to eliminate ambiguities within existing laws and to ensure fairness.

Key Areas of Special Focus

- Special attention was directed toward issues concerning the following matters: Marriage, Divorce, Maintenance, Child Custody, and Inheritance.

Review of Laws Pertaining to Muslim Women

- The consultation also undertook a review of key laws pertaining to the rights of Muslim women. These include the following:
 - The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937
 - The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939
 - The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986
 - The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- The National Commission for Women is a **statutory body** of the Government of India; it primarily focuses on advising the government **on all policy-related matters affecting women.**
- This body was established in **January 1992**, under the provisions of the Constitution of India, as defined in the '**National Commission for Women Act, 1990**'.

- The primary objective of the **National Commission for Women is to represent the rights of women in India** and to serve as a voice for their issues and concerns.

- Dowry, politics, religion, equal representation for women in employment, and the exploitation of women in the workforce have been the central themes of the campaigns undertaken by this body.

- The National Commission for Women also undertakes the task of receiving and investigating complaints from women who have been subjected to violence, discrimination, harassment, or the denial of their rights.

Jan Vishwas Act

- **Context** : The Central Government has directed the southern states to fast-track the **implementation of reforms introduced under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, through the Jan Vishwas reforms.**

- **The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act mandates the decriminalization of offenses and simplifies regulatory compliance across 79 laws and 784 rules.**

- This reform aims to boost the 'Ease of Doing Business' by significantly reducing the regulatory and compliance burden on traders and business enterprises.

- Its primary goal is to support honest businesses. At the same time, it ensures that strict action continues to be taken against fraud, violations, and malpractice.

- State governments have been directed to ensure the swift issuance of registrations and licenses without any delay or procedural hurdles once the necessary documents are submitted.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Record GST Collections in April 2026

- **Context:** India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections **reached ₹2.43 lakh crore in April 2026.**
- Highest-ever monthly GST collection recorded.
- Previous peak: ₹2.36 lakh crore (April 2025).

Significance

- Indicates strong economic activity and improved compliance.
- Higher import revenue reflects increased trade activity.
- Demonstrates resilience of India's indirect tax system despite rate rationalisation.

PaRRVA Framework

- **Context:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India has introduced the **Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA) system** to improve transparency and safeguard investors in financial markets.

Institutional Structure

- The regulatory framework for PaRRVA was released by SEBI in April 2025, outlining its functioning and rules.
- CARE Ratings Limited has been designated as the first PaRRVA entity to validate performance-related data.
- National Stock Exchange of India Limited will act as the PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC), managing data infrastructure and processing.

About PaRRVA

- PaRRVA is a SEBI-regulated system created to:
 - Verify the historical risk and return records of market intermediaries.

- Ensure uniform standards in how returns are calculated and presented.
- Offer investors reliable, comparable, and transparent performance information.
- Key Features

- Enables regulated entities such as advisers, analysts, and algorithmic trading service providers to present performance data that has been independently verified.
- Provides investors with credible, standardised, and comparable data to support better decision-making.
- Allows the use of PaRRVA-certified performance figures in advertisements, ensuring compliance with SEBI norms.
- Ensures that all risk-return metrics are validated independently and adhere to regulatory guidelines.

Compliance Requirements

- Investment advisers and research analysts are required to register with PaRRVA within three months.
- After a two-year transition period, only performance data verified by PaRRVA can be shared publicly.

Significance

- Enhances investor confidence by providing accurate and trustworthy data.
- Helps minimise risks arising from misleading information and mis-selling practices.

Fair and Remunerative Price

- **Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs increased the **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** of sugarcane by ₹10 to ₹365 per quintal for the 2026–27 sugar season.

About Fair and Remunerative Price

- The Fair and Remunerative Price is the **minimum statutory price that sugar mills**

- **must pay to sugarcane farmers**, ensuring fair and assured remuneration.
- It was **introduced in 2009** replacing the earlier **Statutory Minimum Price (SMP)** and is governed under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
- The FRP is **recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** and **approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**.
- It aims to **ensure income security for farmers, protect them from market fluctuations, and maintain stability in sugar production and supply**.
- The FRP is determined based on **cost of production (A2+FL), sugar recovery rate, demand-supply conditions, and a reasonable profit margin for farmers**.
- It is **announced annually before the sugar season (October–September)** to guide procurement and pricing decisions.
- The revision seeks to improve accuracy, consistency and comparability of regional economic data.

Key Priorities in GSDP Compilation

- Expanding data integration through administrative records, sectoral databases and surveys.
- Refining estimation techniques to **better capture emerging service sectors and unincorporated enterprises**.
- Ensuring consistency between national and state-level economic estimates.
- Standardising methodologies across States and UTs for transparency and comparability.

Importance of GSDP

- GSDP is the main indicator for measuring the economic performance of States.
- It helps in analysing sectoral growth, industrial output and regional development.
- GSDP is widely used for fiscal planning, taxation, budgeting and inter-state comparisons.

MoSPI Revises National Accounts Base Year to 2022–23

- **Context:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has updated the base year of the National Accounts to 2022–23.
- This revision aims to more accurately capture the current structure of the economy by incorporating modern data sources and improved estimation practices with evolving international standards.
- The change also aligns India's accounting practices with evolving international standards.

Adoption by States and UTs

- All States and Union Territories are required to adopt the **new base year for compiling Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)**.

Role in Fiscal Federalism

- GSDP plays an important role in **India's fiscal federal structure**.
- Finance Commission uses GSDP data to **recommend distribution of Central taxes among States**.
- Indicators such as **per capita GSDP** and **GSDP distance from top-performing States** are used to ensure balanced regional development and fiscal equity.

Borrowing Limits of States

- Department of Expenditure under the Ministry of Finance uses GSDP estimates to **determine States' borrowing limits under the fiscal responsibility framework**.

- Borrowing ceilings are generally fixed as a percentage of GSDP.

Present Status

- Currently, 34 States and UTs compile GSDP estimates **using the 2011–12 base year**.
- **Lakshadweep and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu** are yet to be fully integrated into the process.

Uniform Guidelines

- MoSPI released draft guidelines for compilation of Gross State Value Added (GSVA) on 7 April 2026 for stakeholder consultation.
- Based on feedback received, the **Uniform Guideline for GSVA compilation with base year 2022–23 has been finalised**.
- The guideline aims to ensure reliability, uniformity and comparability of State-level economic estimates across India.

India's Financial Inclusion and Digital Transformation

- **Context:** India's financial inclusion journey is undergoing a paradigm shift, driven by the convergence of a strong Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- AI, digital footprints, and consent-based data-sharing frameworks are enabling efficient, personalized, and inclusive financial services.

Digital Solutions Transforming Financial Access

JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile)

- JAM combines bank accounts, biometric identity, and mobile connectivity to provide universal financial access.
- Aadhaar enables secure digital authentication.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- Unified Payments Interface is a real-time digital payment platform enabling instant bank-to-bank transfers.
- UPI promotes low-cost, interoperable, and secure digital payments.

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)

- Direct Benefit Transfer transfers **subsidies and welfare benefits directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts**.
- DBT improves transparency and reduces leakages and delays.

AI and Financial Services

- AI improves efficiency, outreach, and personalization in financial services.
- It supports advanced analytics, fraud detection, risk management, and customer-centric solutions.
- India's digital financial ecosystem provides the data foundation required for AI-driven innovation.

BHASHINI Initiative

- BHASHINI promotes multilingual access to **financial and banking services**.
- In February 2026, BHASHINI and the Reserve Bank of India signed an MoU for integrating **AI-based language solutions into banking services**.
- Banking services are planned to be made accessible in all **22 scheduled Indian languages**.
- "Banking BHASHINI" will develop domain-specific AI models for banking vocabulary and regulatory language.

RBI Regulatory Sandbox

- The Reserve Bank of India introduced the **Regulatory Sandbox framework to encourage responsible fintech innovation**.

- It provides a controlled environment to **test new financial technologies under regulatory supervision.**
- It balances innovation with consumer protection and financial stability.

MuleHunter.AI

- **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub launched MuleHunter.AI in December 2024.**
- It is an AI-powered tool designed to **detect mule bank accounts used in cybercrime and money laundering.**
- The tool analyses transaction patterns in real time to identify suspicious activities.
- Public sector banks have successfully tested the system.

Mission Digital ShramSetu

- Mission Digital ShramSetu was **announced in October 2025.**
- It aims to **create an AI-driven ecosystem for India's informal workforce.**
- The initiative uses **AI, Blockchain, and immersive learning technologies.**
- The mission seeks to integrate informal workers into the mainstream economy and **support the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.**

Significance

- Digital Public Infrastructure and AI are transforming India's financial **ecosystem into a more inclusive and technology-driven model.**
- AI-enabled governance **improves transparency, efficiency, security, and accessibility of financial services.**
- India's approach combines innovation, regulation, and inclusion to create a sustainable digital financial ecosystem.

Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Kharif Crops 2026-27

- **Background:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the

Prime Minister, has approved an increase in the MSP for 14 Kharif crops for the 2026-27 marketing season.

About Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a minimum price fixed by the government to ensure that farmers get a fair price for their produce, even if market prices fall.
- MSP was introduced during the 'Green Revolution' in 1966-67 to protect farmers from losses and strengthen the country's food security.
- The government announces MSP twice every year:
 - Before the Kharif (monsoon) crop growing season
 - Before the Rabi (winter) crop growing season
- The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** recommends the MSP rates.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** gives its final approval.

India's Wholesale Inflation Rises to 8.3% in April 2026

- **Context:** India's wholesale inflation, measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), rose sharply to 8.3% in April 2026, the highest level in nearly 3.5 years.
- The previous higher WPI inflation was recorded in October 2022.
- WPI inflation had stood at 3.9% in March 2026, indicating a significant month-on-month jump.
- The increase is mainly attributed to the West Asia crisis, which triggered a surge in global energy prices.
- Prices of crude oil and natural gas recorded steep inflation, with inflation in this category reaching 67.2% in April 2026.
- The data was released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- Despite the rise in overall wholesale inflation, food inflation remained relatively low at 2% in April 2026, compared to 1.9% in March 2026.
- Economists believe the data reflects the first visible impact of the West Asia conflict on the Indian economy.
- About Wholesale Price Index (WPI)
- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) measures the change in prices of goods traded in bulk at the wholesale level between businesses.
- It covers only goods and does not include services, as services are not traded on a wholesale basis.
- WPI helps in analysing price movements and demand-supply conditions in sectors such as industry, manufacturing, and construction.
- The index is published every month by the Economic Adviser under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The month-to-month increase in WPI is used to estimate the rate of wholesale inflation in the economy.
- Calculation of WPI
- WPI is computed using the wholesale prices of a selected group of important commodities.
- Commodities are included based on their economic importance and representation across various sectors.
- These items collectively reflect different segments of the economy and help provide an overall picture of wholesale price trends.
- Base year used for calculation: 2011-12
- Only about 14,500 tonnes of sugar exports are allowed under preferential quota commitments to the European Union (EU) and the United States (US).
- **Reasons for the Ban**
 - Concerns that monsoon and sugarcane production could be affected by the impact of 'El Nino'.
 - Global uncertainties, such as the Iran issue, are also major reasons for this decision.
- **Production and Stock Details**
 - Sugar production for the year **2025-26 is estimated to be around 279 lakh tonnes.**
 - As of October 1, 2025, the opening stock is more than 50 lakh tonnes.
- **Objective**
 - This measure has been taken to ensure the country's food security, control sugar price hikes in the domestic market, and ensure abundant availability, even amidst global and climate-related uncertainties.

Sugar Production

- Globally, India is the largest consumer of sugar and the **second-largest producer of sugar.**
- Tamil Nadu ranks **second in sugarcane productivity in India.**

About Sugarcane crop

- Sugarcane production requires a temperature between **21°C and 27°C**, and a humid climate with **75-150 cm of rainfall.**
- Compared to northern India, due to the tropical climate of southern India, the sugarcane grown here has a **higher sucrose** content, and the yield per hectare is also higher.
- **Uses:** It is a tropical and sub-tropical cash crop used for the production of sugar, jaggery, ethanol, and bioenergy.

Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)

- The 'Fair and Remunerative Price' (FRP) is the price legally determined by the Central

Sugar Export Ban in India

- **Context :** The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has placed exports of all types of raw, white, and refined sugar under the "prohibited" category.
- This ban comes into effect immediately. It will continue until the end of the current 2025-26 sugar season, i.e., September 30, 2026.

Government at which sugar mills must purchase sugarcane from farmers. Sugar mills are legally bound to pay this price to the farmers.

- This FRP price is fixed based on the recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** and is approved by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**.

Jaggery

Information on Jaggery

- Popularly known as ‘Gur’, jaggery is a traditional and unrefined natural sweetener.
- It is produced by boiling down sugarcane juice without the use of any chemical additives.
- Since it possesses a high nutritional value—much like honey—it is often referred to as “medicinal sugar.”

India's Position in Jaggery Production

- India accounts for more than 70 percent of global jaggery production, thereby standing as the world's largest producer of jaggery.
- Jaggery production is predominantly carried out through decentralized, small-scale cottage industries.

Sugarcane Production in India (2024–25)

- In the year 2024–25, India's total sugarcane production is **estimated at 444.9 million tonnes**.
- The state of **Uttar Pradesh contributed 48.5 percent to the total sugarcane production**.
- Maharashtra contributed 24.1 percent, while Karnataka contributed 10.5 percent.
- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana are other key states playing a significant role in sugarcane production.

Jaggery in Tamil Nadu's Nutrition Schemes

- To combat malnutrition among children and to boost school attendance, the Government of Tamil Nadu has incorporated jaggery as a key component in its nutrition schemes.
- Under the ‘**Nutritious Meal Scheme**’ and the ‘**Integrated Child Development Services**’ (ICDS), supplementary nutritious food is provided to children as ‘take-home food packets’ for **300 days a year**.
- Jaggery constitutes approximately **27 percent** of this **supplementary nutritional food mix**; this enhances the food's energy and micronutrient value.
- This supplementary nutritional food mix is commonly referred to as ‘**Sathumaavu**’ (Nutritious Flour).
- This Sathumaavu is procured in a **65:35 ratio from 25 women-managed cooperative societies** and two private manufacturing firms.
- According to NITI Aayog, approximately **32.75 lakh** beneficiaries in Tamil Nadu receive nutrient-rich food through this initiative.
- This scheme also promotes the utilization of traditional and nutrient-dense food products, such as jaggery.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tagged

Jaggery Varieties

- A Geographical Indication (GI) identifies products that are associated with a specific geographical region.
- GI recognition not only strengthens the regional identity of an area but also preserves traditional processing methods.
- **Kolhapur Jaggery (Maharashtra)** is renowned for its golden hue and high sucrose (sugar) content.

- **Muzaffarnagar Jaggery (Uttar Pradesh)** is celebrated for its export-quality production, which is manufactured from high-grade sugarcane.
 - **Munnar/Marrayoor Jaggery (Kerala)** is highly esteemed for its purity and medicinal properties.
 - **Central Travancore Jaggery (Kerala)** is recognized for its traditional processing methods and its uniqueness, which is exclusive to that region.
- Currently, this index is **calculated using the year 2011–12 as the base year.**

Cement

- **Share in ICI:** 5.37%
- **Production** recorded a growth of 9.4%.
- **Cumulative Growth:** 8.7%.

Steel

- **Share in ICI:** 17.92%
- **Production** increased by 6.2%.
- **Cumulative Growth (Year-to-Date):** 9.5%.

Electricity

- **Share in ICI:** 19.85%
- **Electricity generation** increased by 4.1%.
- **Annual Gross Growth:** 1.0%.

Key Highlights

- The Cement sector recorded the highest growth in **April 2026**.
- The Steel and Electricity sectors also exhibited positive growth.
- The Coal and Fertilizer sectors witnessed a significant decline.
- Petroleum Refinery Products hold the highest share within the ICI basket.

Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) – April 2026

- **Context:** The combined Index of Eight Core Industries increased by 1.7% (provisional) in April 2026 compared to April 2025.
- Positive growth was recorded in the following sectors: **Steel, Cement, and Electricity.**

About the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- The ICI measures the performance of **eight core infrastructure industries: Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Petroleum Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity.**
- Together, these eight sectors account for a **weight of 40.27% in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).**
- The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** is a key statistical indicator that tracks short-term fluctuations in the volume of production across various industrial sectors in India.
- It reflects whether industrial activity is expanding or contracting during a specific period; thus, it serves as a significant measure of the country's economic performance.
- The **IIP is released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO)**, which functions under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).**

Care Economy

- Care Economy includes activities related to **childcare, eldercare, disability support, health related home care and domestic services.** It includes unpaid care work predominantly performed by women within households and paid care work delivered through formal and informal markets.

Government support for the care economy

- The central government schemes for provision of care infrastructure and services are:
- **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0:**
 - An Integrated Nutrition Support Programme.

- It seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.
- **Mission Shakti's Samarthya sub-scheme:** consist of erstwhile schemes of
 - Ujjwala (LPG connection), Swadhar Greh (provides shelter, clothing, food and health benefits to women), Working Women Hostel, National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), ₹ 5000 Direct Bank Transfer to pregnant women and lactating mothers
- **Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana**
 - The main objective of the Scheme is to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing through providing support.
- **National Social Assistance Program**
 - secures for citizens adequate means of livelihood, raise the standard of living, improve public health and provide free education to all children.
- The Anganwadi system (now in Palna scheme)
 - world's largest public system for child services, reaches 80 million children of up to six years of age through 1.4 million centres.
 - Anganwadi centres primarily cater to children aged 0-6 years. They significantly contribute to early education and holistic child development. However, since they are only open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., women

still need additional care options if they are to work a full eight-hour day.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

- **Context :** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) came into effect in the year 2016, and it has now successfully completed 10 years of implementation.
- The IBC is a critical institutional reform that has created a positive impact on credit markets, corporate behavior, investor confidence, and overall economic efficiency.

About the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was enacted in 2016 based on the recommendations of the **T. K. Viswanathan Bankruptcy Law Reforms Committee (2015)**.
- It provides a consolidated, time-bound, and creditor-driven framework for resolving insolvency in India.
- It was introduced to curb the rise of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and to improve previously weak debt recovery mechanisms like the SARFAESI Act and Lok Adalats.
- It aims for a swift resolution to prevent the erosion of the value of stressed assets.
- Protecting asset value, ensuring timely resolution, fostering a healthy credit cycle, and promoting the ease of doing business.
- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is the regulatory authority functioning under this Act.
- The IBBI frames the regulations, its board includes members from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has the authority to adjudicate corporate insolvency cases.

- The Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) handles insolvency cases related to individuals and partnership firms.
- In the event of a default, a financial creditor, an operational creditor, or the corporate debtor itself can initiate the insolvency resolution process.
- The Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) must generally be completed within a strict timeframe of 330 days.
- It compares:
 - **Inputs:** Rainfall, surface water inflow, groundwater recharge.
 - **Outputs:** Evaporation, surface runoff, groundwater extraction.
- It helps identify areas experiencing water surpluses and deficits.
- It supports resource-based water allocation and planning.

Water Budgeting for Sustainable Water Management

Water Availability Status in India

- India receives an average annual rainfall of **approximately 3,880 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM)**.
- After accounting for evaporation and other losses, the average annual water availability is estimated at **1,999.20 BCM**.
- The growing population is reducing per capita water availability while simultaneously increasing the pressure on water resources.
- India accounts for **17.5 percent** of the global population and **11.6 percent** of the global livestock population; this generates an extremely high demand for water.
- It facilitates the sustainable utilization of available water resources.
- **Facilitates:** Crop planning, groundwater management, drought preparedness, and flood management.
- Promotes efficient water allocation across **agriculture, domestic use, livestock rearing, and industrial sectors**.

Agriculture and Water Budgeting

- Irrigation demand is projected to reach **807 BCM by the year 2050**.
- Supports:
 - Selection of water-efficient crops.
 - Optimal irrigation scheduling.
 - Climate-resilient agriculture.

The Growing Water Crisis

- In rural areas, **80 to 90 percent** of available water is utilized for agriculture.
- Declining groundwater levels, seasonal water scarcity, and water-related conflicts are on the rise.
- There is a need to shift the approach to water management from being 'supply-centric' to being 'demand-centric.'
- bsupported initiatives demonstrate enhanced productivity through water-efficient crop cultivation methods.

Livestock and Water Demand

- The livestock population has increased from **512 million (2012) to 536 million (2019)**.
- The cattle population has **increased by 18%**.
- Water budgeting incorporates water requirements for the following: drinking, fodder production, and allied activities.
- Ensures balanced water allocation across different sectors.

About Water Budgeting

- Water budgeting involves systematically assessing the water availability and demand within a specific village, watershed, block, or district.

Government Initiatives

- Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY)
 - Launched in **2019**.
 - Implemented in **229 groundwater-stressed blocks** across **7 states**.
 - Focuses on decentralized groundwater management at the **Gram Panchayat (village council) level**.
- National Water Mission (NWM)
 - Recognizes water budgeting as a key component of **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**.
 - Promotes water conservation and long-term water security.
 - Encourages women's participation in water governance through the '**Nari Shakti Se Jal Shakti**' initiative.

Successful Social Models

- The Hiware Bazar Model (Maharashtra)
 - **Key Initiatives:** Rainwater harvesting, Watershed development, Groundwater recharge, Annual Gram Sabha based water budgeting, Restrictions on borewells.
 - **Outcomes**
 - Water security was achieved despite low rainfall.
 - It became a model for Maharashtra's drought mitigation strategy.
- Rajasthan's Chief Minister's Jal Swavalamban Abhiyan (MJSA)
 - Launched in **2016**.
 - **Four-water-concept:** Rainwater, Ground water, Sub-surface water, and Soil moisture.
 - **Outcomes**
 - Groundwater levels increased by approximately 4%. Soil fertility and crop yields improved.

- Technology for Water Management
 - Varuni Web App
 - An Indo-German project titled "**Water Security and Climate Adaptation in Rural India**" (WASCA).
 - **Collaborating Agencies:** Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Rural Development, NITI Aayog.

Key Features

- Generates block-level water budgets.
- Utilizes data regarding rainfall, land use, cropping patterns, population, and water resources.
- Automatically identifies water-surplus and water-deficit areas.
- Supports local planning and intervention strategies.
- Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan
- Launched by the **Government of Maharashtra in 2014**.

Key Features

- Geo-tagging and mobile-based monitoring.
- Focus on water conservation and groundwater recharge.
- Village-level water budgeting.

Importance of Water Budgeting

- Promotes **demand-driven water management**.
- Supports **climate resilience**.
- Enhances **groundwater sustainability**.
- Encourages community participation.
- Increases agricultural productivity.
- Strengthens rural livelihoods.
- Enables **evidence-based policy formulation**.

TAMIL NADU

INITIATIVES / SCHEMES

Tamil Nadu's Initiatives Regarding Road Accidents

- **Context:** It is a matter of concern that **Tamil Nadu continues to be the state with the highest number of road accidents in India.** According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 4.95 lakh road accidents occurred in India in 2024.

Tamil Nadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI)

- **The Tamil Nadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI)** is a comprehensive trauma care program launched by the Government of Tamil Nadu in **June 2017**.
- TAEI was established under the **Health Department** to facilitate coordinated action among various stakeholders and to prevent loss of life.
- **Objective:** To standardize, streamline, and strengthen accident and emergency care services particularly along highways with the aim of reducing fatalities.
- **Key Pillars:** TAEI encompasses the following six domains: Trauma (Road Traffic Accidents), Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attacks), Stroke, Burns, Poisoning, and Pediatric Emergency Care (PREM).

Innuir Kappom – Nammai Kaakkum 48 Scheme

- Provides free emergency medical treatment to victims of road accidents within the first 48 hours of the incident.
- This scheme covers 101 specific medical treatments, valued up to ₹2.00 lakhs, across more than 723 empanelled hospitals.

- Ensures immediate and cashless treatment to save lives during the 'Golden Hour.'

Key Details of the Scheme

- Anyone involved in a road accident within Tamil Nadu (including state residents, non-residents, and foreign nationals).
- As outlined in the Tamil Nadu Health Systems Project document, 101 medical treatments—including accident-related trauma care—are provided up to a value of ₹2 lakhs for the first 48 hours.
- No upfront payment is required for emergency medical services.
- No insurance card or prior authorization is required; all accident victims are eligible to receive treatment under this scheme.
- As of January 2026, it has been reported that over 5 lakh individuals across various hospitals have benefited from this scheme.

Emergency Ambulance Scheme

- The '108 Emergency Ambulance Scheme' in Tamil Nadu is a **24/7 free service launched on September 15, 2008**.
- It aims to provide **immediate pre-hospital care and transportation to a hospital** accessible via a toll-free number during emergency situations such as **accidents, injuries, and pregnancy-related complications**.
- Operated under a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model**, the scheme ensures rapid response times through the deployment of trained Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

Key Features

- Launch Date: **September 15, 2008**.
- Objective: **To provide a free, 24x7, integrated emergency service** covering medical, police, and fire-related emergencies.
- **'Emergency 108' App:** A mobile application designed to track ambulances and minimize response times. It also enables users to transmit

their location details even in the absence of an internet connection.

- **Personnel:** Each ambulance is staffed by a trained **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) qualified to provide pre-hospital care.**

Related Services

- **104 Helpline:** Used for obtaining free medical advice, maternal care support, and mental health counseling.
- **112 Service:** Part of the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), which integrates the 108 service.

Singappen Special Rapid Force for Women's Safety in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** The Government of Tamil Nadu issued a Government Order to establish the **"Singappen" Special Rapid Force** aimed at strengthening women's safety across the State.
- The **"Singappen" Force** will function with **preventive and protective strategies as its primary objective.**
- The force will maintain a visible public presence **to enhance confidence and security among women.**
- It will be deployed across the State with adequate personnel and modern infrastructure to assist women in distress situations.

Major Functions of the Force

- Identification and monitoring of crime-prone and vulnerable locations to prevent offences against women.
- **Continuous surveillance and intensified patrolling in public places.**
- Special focus on crowded areas such as: **Bus stops, Railway stations, Educational institutions, IT company zones and other high-footfall locations**
- Prevention and control of illegal and anti-social activities through active police presence.

- Immediate response and prompt action on complaints related to women's safety.

- Rescue and protection of victims along with facilitating access to support and welfare services.

- Coordination and Administration

The force will coordinate with

- Department of Social Welfare
- Department of Education
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- It will conduct awareness programmes and encourage community participation for improving women's safety.
- The headquarters of the **"Singappen" Special Rapid Force** will function from the office of the Director General of Police (DGP).

Tamil Nadu Women's Development Corporation

- **Context:** On behalf of **Tamil Nadu Women's Development Corporation**, various creative activities are being undertaken to market the **products produced by women's self-help groups operating in rural and urban areas in urban areas.**
- As a part of this, **a natural market is being organized at the Mother Teresa Women's Complex in Nungambakkam, Chennai** on the first and third weekends of every month, Saturdays and Sundays, featuring the products of the self-help groups.

About Tamil Nadu Women's Development Corporation

- Established by the Government of Tamil Nadu in **1983.**
- Registered as **a statutory body and functioning under the Department of Rural Development and Panchayats.**

Objectives

- Upliftment of the status of women through education, employment, economic empowerment and self-reliance.

- It is fully committed to promoting the Self Help Group (SHG) movement by providing skill development training to SHGs across Tamil Nadu through various poverty alleviation schemes

The Tamil Nadu Women Development Corporation is currently implementing the following major schemes:

- Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihoods Mission (TNSRLM).
- Tamil Nadu Urban Livelihoods Mission (TNULM).
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Rural Skill Development Scheme (DDU-GKY).
- Mahila Yojana (Women Development Scheme).

Tamil Nadu: From Wind Energy Pioneer to Solar Energy Powerhouse

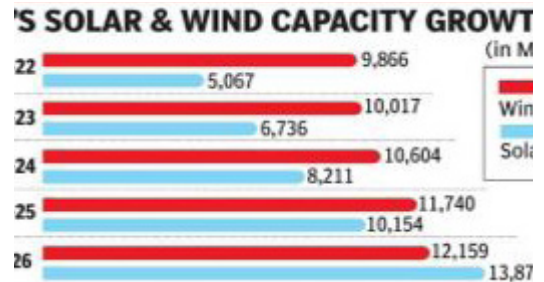
Tamil Nadu's Pioneering Status in Renewable Energy

- Tamil Nadu has stood as one of India's leading states in the renewable energy sector, particularly in the field of wind energy.
- The state established a robust wind energy ecosystem and emerged as a central hub for India's wind energy sector.
- Although Gujarat subsequently surpassed Tamil Nadu in terms of installed wind energy capacity, Tamil Nadu continues to play a pivotal role in India's renewable energy landscape.

Efforts to Reclaim Leadership in the Wind Energy Sector

- Repowering (upgrading) older wind turbines to enhance efficiency.
- Improving power transmission and distribution infrastructure.
- Attracting new investments into the renewable energy sector.
- It is estimated that wind turbines nearing the end of their operational lifespan with a combined

capacity ranging from approximately 2,500 MW to 3,000 MW are suitable for repowering; this initiative will significantly boost power generation capacity.



Installed Renewable Energy Capacity (April 2026)

- Solar Energy Capacity: 13,871 MW
- Wind Energy Capacity: 12,159 MW
- In terms of installed power generation capacity within Tamil Nadu, solar energy has now surpassed wind energy to take the lead.

Rapid Growth of Solar Energy

- Tamil Nadu's solar energy generation capacity has risen from 5,067 MW in March 2022 to 13,871 MW in April 2026.
- The state achieved the milestone of 10 GW in solar energy generation capacity in March 2025.

Tamil Nadu's National Standing in the Solar Energy Sector

- Based on installed solar energy capacity, Tamil Nadu currently ranks fourth at the national level.
- The states leading Tamil Nadu are as follows: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra

Factors Driving Solar Energy Expansion **Supportive 'Open Access' Policies**

- Tamil Nadu's favorable 'Open Access' policy framework has encouraged investments in renewable energy and facilitated the procurement of electricity.

Industrial Demand for Green Energy

- To achieve sustainability and green energy-related targets, industries and corporations are increasingly adopting renewable energy on a large scale.

Transition from Wind Energy Dominance to a Solar Energy Hub

- Tamil Nadu was once known primarily for its wind energy sector.
- While continuing to strengthen its wind energy sector through modernization and restructuring efforts, the state is now emerging as one of India's leading hubs for solar energy.

Tamil Nadu's Push to Become an AI Hub

- **Context:** Tamil Nadu plans to establish itself as a **major regional hub for Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.
- Focus is on **developing indigenous AI capabilities and Tamil-language AI ecosystems**.

Development of Tamil Large Language Models (LLMs)

- The state aims to **build Large Language Models (LLMs)** specifically tailored for Tamil computing.
- Initiative seeks to reduce dependence on English-centric AI models dominated by global tech companies.

Strengthening AI Infrastructure

- Tamil Nadu is increasing investments in:
 - Graphics Processing Units (GPUs)
 - High-performance computing infrastructure
 - Digital public infrastructure for AI
- GPUs are essential for training and running advanced AI models due to their parallel processing capability.

Collaboration with International Institutions

- The government is exploring partnerships with several organisations.

- Discussions are underway with the National University of Singapore for academic collaboration.

Indigenous AI Ecosystem

- Talks are being held with **Sarvam AI** to strengthen local AI capabilities.
- Emphasis on creating: **Tamil AI tools, Tamil datasets, Vernacular AI resources**

Role of Tamil Virtual Academy

- Tamil Virtual Academy will play a major role in:
 - Expanding Tamil-language AI resources
 - Supporting Tamil computing projects

Connection with National AI Mission

- **Tamil Nadu has not yet implemented the** Union Government's National AI Mission.
- The National AI Mission was approved in 2024 with an outlay of about ₹10,300 crore.

Objectives of National AI Mission

- Build large-scale GPU infrastructure
- Support Indian AI startups
- Develop indigenous Indian Large Language Models (LLMs)

Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET)

- **Context:** Tuberculosis **death rates** showed a sustained **decline in six districts of Tamil Nadu** following the roll-out of the State's **Kasanoi Erappi-la Thittam (TN-KET)**, a new study published in **Global Health Action** has found.
- **"Beyond the six districts,** the overall impact of TN-KET also reflected across the rest of the State, with a **nearly 2.5% reduction in TB deaths** after its implementation.

Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET)

- TN-KET is a state-level TB mortality reduction initiative **launched by Tamil Nadu in 2022**, focused on early detection and differentiated care for severe TB cases.

- Tamil Nadu has become the **first state in India to include a predictive system** for tuberculosis (TB) mortality in its TB eradication programme.
- The forecasting model was created by the **Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE)**.
- The predictive model has been incorporated into **Tamil Nadu's TB SeWA platform** and will operate under the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET) patient care initiative.

Key Features:

- **Paper-Based Triage Tool:** Assesses **5 quick parameters** (BMI, oxygen level, respiratory rate, leg swelling, ability to stand) to classify patients as "severely ill."
- **Fast-Track Care:** 98% of identified severe cases admitted within 7 days.
- **Severe TB Web App:** Calculates mortality risk and helps guide urgent interventions.
- **Simplified Assessment:** No lab needed and saves 6–7 days over older 16-parameter tools.
- **Differentiated Care Model:** Offers customized treatment based on age, BMI, severity, and comorbidities.

Key Achievements & Impact

- **Data Reduction in Early Deaths:** Statewide early TB deaths saw a **20% decline** within just two quarters of the project's execution.
- **District-Level Progress:** By 2024, nearly two-thirds of Tamil Nadu's districts documented a **20% to 30% reduction** in overall TB mortality.
- **High Screening Efficiency:** In 2024, **98% of adult TB patients** were successfully triaged at diagnosis, well exceeding the state's initial target of **90%**.

POLITY

New Chief Minister Takes Charge in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** C. Joseph Vijay, president of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
- His elevation marks a major shift in **Tamil Nadu's bipolar Dravidian political system that had dominated the State since 1967.**

Formation of the Ministry

- Nine Cabinet Ministers were sworn in along with him.
- Eight Ministers, including one woman Minister, are first-time members of the Cabinet.
- The government is likely to become Tamil Nadu's first coalition government.

Historic Significance

- C. Joseph Vijay is the first person belonging to a minority Christian community to become Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu since Independence.

Key Announcements and Decisions

- The Chief Minister signed three important files immediately after assuming office.
- A new scheme providing 200 units of free electricity was announced for domestic consumers whose bi-monthly consumption does not exceed 500 units.
- The scheme is expected to cost the State exchequer around ₹1,730 crore annually.
- The existing scheme of 100 units of free electricity will continue for households consuming above 500 units bi-monthly.

Women's Safety Measures

- The government announced the formation of an elite "**Singa Penn Special Force**" dedicated to **women's safety.**
- The special force will operate through 65 police stations across 37 districts and nine cities.

Anti-Narcotics Initiative

- An Anti-Narcotic Task Force was also created to combat offences related to illegal drugs and narcotics trafficking in the State.

Women Ministers in Tamil Nadu:

Historical Evolution

- Context: In the newly formed Tamil Nadu Cabinet, nine Ministers were sworn in along with the Chief Minister.
- Keerthana became the first woman elected from the Sivakasi Assembly constituency.
- Claims on social media that she is the first woman Cabinet Minister in Tamil Nadu are incorrect.

First Woman Minister in Madras Presidency

- The first woman to become a Cabinet Minister in the then Madras Presidency was Rukmini Laxmipathi in 1946.
- She served in the Cabinet headed by T. Prakasam.
- She handled the **Public Health and Medicine** portfolios.
- Earlier, the 1937 Cabinet formed under C. Rajagopalachari had no women Ministers.

Women Ministers After Independence

- After India became a Republic, no women were included in the Cabinet formed in 1952 under Rajagopalachari.
- During a Cabinet reshuffle in 1953, **Jothi Venkatachalam** was inducted as a Minister.

Lourdammal Simon and Kamaraj Era

- In 1957, **Lourdammal Simon** became a Minister in the Cabinet led by K. Kamaraj.
- She represented the **Colachel constituency** in Kanyakumari district.
- She was assigned the **Local Administration** portfolio.

Women Ministers in the DMK Era

- In 1967, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam formed the government for the first time.

- **Satyavani Muthu** became Minister for **Adi Dravidar Welfare** in the Cabinet headed by C. N. Annadurai.

- She later continued as Minister in Cabinets formed by M. Karunanidhi.

Later Developments

- After the death of M. G. Ramachandran, **Janaki Ramachandran** briefly served as **Chief Minister** and was the only woman in her Cabinet.
- In 1991, R. Indirakumari became a Minister in the Cabinet formed by J. Jayalalithaa.
- Since 1991, women have continuously been represented in Tamil Nadu Cabinets.

Presiding Officers of State Legislatures

- Context: J.C.D. Prabhakar, was unanimously elected the Speaker of the 17th Tamil Nadu Assembly. M. Ravisankar, was unanimously elected the Deputy Speaker.

Constitutional Provision

- **Article 178** provides for the offices of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker in State Legislative Assemblies.
- They are elected by the Assembly from among its members.
- In the **Kihoto Hollohan Case (1992)**, the Supreme Court held that the Speaker's decisions are subject to judicial review.
- They ensure smooth functioning of legislative proceedings and uphold democratic principles.

Functions of the Speaker

- Presides over Assembly proceedings
- Certifies Money Bills
- Interprets Rules of Procedure
- Decides disqualification under the Anti-Defection Law

Role in Maintaining Order in the Legislature

- Preside over Assembly sessions and conduct legislative business.

- Ensure orderly and disciplined debates inside the House.
- Prevent disruptions, offensive language, and unruly behaviour.
- Enforce legislative rules and procedures, including points of order and admissibility of motions.
- Allocate speaking time and facilitate participation of members in discussions.
- Help in the appointment of legislative committees for balanced representation.
- The Speaker directly serves as the Chairperson of the following Legislative Committees:
 - Business Advisory Committee
 - General Purposes Committee
 - Rules Committee

Role in Ensuring Impartiality and Democratic Practices

- Apply established precedents and rules for fair decision-making.
- Exercise casting vote in case of a tie, requiring political neutrality.
- Maintain trust and objectivity in legislative functioning.
- Hold consultations with leaders of different political parties to ensure consensus and smooth conduct of proceedings.
- Support democratic functioning through institutional strengthening and capacity building initiatives.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Archaeological Excavations at Vellalore, Coimbatore

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has unearthed nearly 500

artefacts during excavations at **Vellalore on the Noyyal river bed in Coimbatore.**

- Findings include **Roman copper coins, spindle whorls, shell bangles, and glass bangles.**
- Excavations are being conducted at eight archaeological sites across Tamil Nadu.
- The excavation proposal received approval from **the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology under the Ministry of Culture**

Evidence of Roman Trade Links

- The discovery of Roman copper coins indicates ancient trade relations between the Roman world and the Coimbatore region.
- Earlier informal digging activities in **Vellalore** had also reportedly revealed Roman coins.

Sites Included in the Excavation Programme

- Vellalore (Coimbatore), Thelunganur (Salem), Adichanur (Kallakurichi), Manikkollai (Cuddalore), Nagapattinam, Pattanamurudur (Thoothukudi), Karivalamvanthanallur (Tenkasi), Keezhadi .

Financial Allocation

- The Government of Tamil Nadu **allocated ₹7 crore in the 2025-26 Budget** for archaeological excavations and scientific studies at these sites.

Excavation Details at Vellalore

- Excavations are being carried out at **two locations on the Noyyal river bed.**
- Out of seven planned trenches, five have already been excavated to a depth of 2.5 metres.

ECONOMY

Tamil Nadu: One of the Leading States in Income Growth since 2003-04

- **Context:** According to a recent Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, Tamil Nadu's per capita

- Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has grown significantly since 2003-04.
- When calculated at constant prices (adjusted for inflation), the state's per capita GSDP in 2024-25 stands at 4.2 times the level recorded in 2003-04.
 - This 4.2-fold real growth in Tamil Nadu's per capita income is significantly higher than the national average growth of 3.3 times.
 - Based on current US dollar values, Tamil Nadu's per capita income is 6.6 times higher than in 2003-04; securing the fourth position nationally, the state trails Karnataka by only a very narrow margin.
 - The wetland was recognised as a **Ramsar Convention site in 2002** due to its ecological significance.
 - The lagoon forms an important ecotonal habitat supporting diverse life forms, including mudskippers, seagrass ecosystems, oyster beds, and over 200 species of birds.
 - Vegetation in the region includes nearly 132 plant species such as *Walsura piscida*, *Manilkara elengi*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, *Spinifex littoreus*, and *Calamus viminalis*.
 - The wetland serves as a habitat for several migratory and resident birds, including flamingos, Eurasian curlews, oystercatchers, bar-tailed godwits, sand plovers, and greater flamingos.
 - The barrier island of Sriharikota, which separates the lagoon from the Bay of Bengal, houses the Satish Dhawan Space Centre India's primary rocket launch facility. This makes Pulicat unique in world conservation geography.

ENVIRONMENT

Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary

- **Context:** The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has directed the Tamil Nadu government to complete the rationalisation of the boundaries of the Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary within a year, while clearing two industrial expansion projects near the protected wetland in Tiruvallur district.

About Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary

- It is a large, **shallow coastal brackish-water lagoon located along the Bay of Bengal coast**, receiving water from several streams and rivers.
- It is the **second-largest brackish water lagoon in India after Chilika Lake**, extending across the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- It receives inflow mainly from the **Aarani River in the south and the Kalangi River in the northwestern region**.
- **Tamil Nadu Records Lowest OOP Medical Spending in Public Hospitals**
- According to the National Sample Survey (NSS) report titled "Household Social Consumption: Health", Tamil Nadu recorded the lowest Out-of-Pocket Medical Expenditure (OOPME) for hospitalisation in public hospitals among major Indian States.
- **The average OOPME for in-patient care in government hospitals in Tamil Nadu was ₹1,357, significantly lower than the national average of ₹6,631.**

REPORT / SURVEY

- The survey covered hospitalisation expenditure incurred during the previous 365 days, excluding childbirth-related treatment.
- **Despite low expenditure in public hospitals, Tamil Nadu reported very high OOPME levels in private and charitable hospitals.**
- Across all hospitals (urban and rural combined), the average OOPME in Tamil Nadu stood at ₹44,535 compared to the national average of ₹34,064.
- In charitable hospitals, the average OOPME in rural areas was ₹1,68,697, while in urban areas it was ₹53,237.
- In private hospitals, OOPME was ₹72,979 in rural areas and ₹75,149 in urban areas.
- The overall average OOPME for private hospitalisation in Tamil Nadu was ₹74,168, much higher than the national average of ₹50,508.
- The findings indicate strong affordability in the State's public healthcare system, but also highlight the high financial burden associated with private healthcare services.

Post-COVID Healthcare Advancements in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** A study conducted by IIT Madras reveals that, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tamil Nadu's emergency healthcare system has strengthened significantly, and notable improvements have been observed in maternal and child health indicators.

Research Team and Study Period

- On behalf of IIT Madras, a research team led by retired IPS officer Kandaswamy—and

including Unnitor, an Associate Analyst at the Bengaluru-based firm Moody's Analytics—conducted this study on the state of healthcare in post-COVID Tamil Nadu.

Key Findings of the Study

- The study analyzed eight years of data regarding the '108' Ambulance Service, spanning the period from 2017 to 2024. According to the findings, Tamil Nadu's healthcare system has demonstrated a rapid re-recovery following the challenges posed by the pandemic, and its overall operational efficiency has improved.

Improvements in Maternal and Child Health

- Furthermore, the maternal mortality rate has declined by 19 percent, while the incidence of home births has dropped by over 36 percent. The study also noted a 28 percent reduction in miscarriages, a 17 per-cent reduction in neonatal mortality, and a 19 percent reduction in infant mortality. Overall, significant progress has been achieved in key maternal and child health indicators.

Primary Factors Contributing to the Progress

- The study results indicate that the expansion of emergency medical infrastructure, an increase in the healthcare workforce, and the implementation of specialized initiatives—such as the 'Suvanam' pro-gram—within maternal and child welfare schemes have been the primary drivers behind these advancements.

NATIONAL - NEWS

Barrier-Free Toll Collection System Launched in Gujarat

- **Context:** India's first multi-lane, barrier-free toll collection system was launched in the state of Gujarat.
- This new service has been introduced at the Choryasi toll plaza, located along the Surat-Bharuch stretch of National Highway-48.
- Under this system, vehicles are not required to stop to pay toll fees.
- By integrating modern technologies including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Artificial Intelligence (AI) analytics, and FASTag toll fees will be collected via cameras and QR codes while the vehicle is still in motion.

10th National Health Summit

- **Context:** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the 10th **National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity: Best Practices Shaping India's Health Future**

Purpose of the Summit

- Promote inclusive, accessible, and affordable healthcare.
- Encourage innovation, cross-learning, and replication of best practices.
- Strengthen a responsive and efficient public health system.

Major Health Achievements

- Institutional deliveries increased: 79% → 89%.
- Decline in
 - Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)
 - Under-5 mortality (↓79%)
 - Infant mortality (↓73%)

Disease control milestones

- Polio-free (2014)
- Neonatal tetanus eliminated (2015)
- Trachoma no longer a public health issue
- Tuberculosis incidence declining faster than global average (92% treatment coverage).

Swasth Bharat Portal

- Single integrated platform for multiple health programmes.
- Reduces multiple logins & data duplication.
- Supports data visualisation and planning.
- Integrated with Ayushman Bharat Health Account under Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.

JANANI Portal

- Full form: Journey of Antenatal, Natal & Neonatal Integrated Care.
- Focus on RMNCH (maternal & child health).

Features:

- Lifecycle-based tracking
- Identification of high-risk pregnancies
- Real-time data for timely intervention

Capacity Building Initiative

- Integrated Training for Primary Healthcare Teams
- Combines multiple trainings into one structured programme.
- Delivered via iGOT Karmayogi.

Focus on:

- Prevention → Detection → Treatment → Follow-up

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) 2.0

- Upgrade of 2013 framework.
- Focus on 4Ds: Defects, Diseases, Deficiencies, Developmental delays

- One of the largest child health screening programmes globally.

Key features:

- Expanded coverage (including childhood NCDs)
- Digital tracking & monitoring
- Improved referral and follow-up systems

Significance

- Strengthens primary healthcare and digital health ecosystem.
- Promotes innovation, inclusivity, and quality improvement.
- Advances vision of Viksit Bharat through a resilient health system.

MoRTH Tightens Norms for HAM

Projects to Prevent Catastrophic Failures

- **Context:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has introduced **stricter disqualification rules for Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) projects.**
- Circular issued on April 29, 2026 **to improve construction quality and safety in national highways.**

About HAM Model

- A type of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- **Government pays:**
 - 40% of project cost during construction
 - 60% as annuity payments during operation period

Key Provisions Introduced

- Bidders involved in catastrophic failures due to construction defects in the last 2 years may be disqualified.
- Applicable to both ongoing and completed projects.
- Minus 30 marks for catastrophic failure in bid evaluation.

- Bidders must submit an undertaking confirming no involvement in such failures (including consortium members).

Definition of Catastrophic Failures

- Collapse of bridges, flyovers, underpasses
- Embankment or pavement failure affecting usability
- Collapse of launching girder/staging causing fatalities
- Tunnel collapse or people trapped >72 hours
- Failure of Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC)

Significance

- Acts as a strong deterrent against poor construction practices.
- Enhances quality, safety, and accountability in highway infrastructure.
- Aims to reduce accidents, structural failures, and long-term repair costs.

Aarogya Maitri in Jamaica

- **Context :** India has deployed its flagship **Aarogya Maitri in Jamaica**, marking a major step in strengthening India-Caribbean relations and humanitarian diplomacy.

- The initiative is part of India's broader South-South cooperation and India-CARICOM engagement framework, focusing on healthcare, disaster resilience, and capacity building.
- It is implemented **under India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) framework**, enabling rapid, technology-enabled medical response in partner countries.
- The deployment is coordinated by the National Security Council Secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, reflecting India's emphasis on strategic global health partnerships.

About Aarogya Maitri

- Announced by during Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023, the 'Aarogya Maitri' project is a humanitarian initiative that extends India's commitment to global health and disaster relief. '
 - **The Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri (BHISHM)**, part of Project Aarogya Maitri, is an innovative emergency medical aid program.

RBSK 2.0 Guidelines: Expanding Child Health Screening and Care in India

- **Context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) 2.0 Guidelines at the recently concluded National Summit on Good Practices and Innovations in Public Healthcare Service Delivery.

RBSK 2.0: Strengthening Child Health Screening in India

- The revised Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram builds on over a decade of implementation, expanding its scope to meet emerging child health challenges.
- Continues and strengthens the **4Ds approach** Defects at Birth, Diseases, Deficiencies, and Developmental Delays while adding focus on non-communicable diseases, mental health, and behavioural issues.
- Introduces a preventive, promotive, and curative continuum of care, covering children from birth to 18 years.

Expanded Screening Coverage

- Includes developmental disorders and mental health conditions.
- Screens for risk factors of NCDs like diabetes and hypertension.

Doorstep Screening Services

- Delivered through Mobile Health Teams.
- **Conducted at Anganwadi Centres and schools for early detection and universal reach.**

Digital Health Integration

- Introduction of digital health cards.
- Use of real-time data systems and integrated platforms for monitoring and service delivery.
- Improves efficiency, transparency, and data-driven decisions.

Multi-Sectoral Convergence

- Coordination between health, education, and women & child development sectors.
- Community platforms act as key points for awareness and follow-up care.

Focus on Outcomes

- Promotes early identification and timely intervention.
- Aims to reduce disease burden and improve overall child well-being.

- **Government Commitment:** Reflects a strong push towards accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare for every child, ensuring holistic growth and long-term health outcomes.

DME Pilot Project in Pune: Advancing Clean Fuel Alternatives in India

- **Context:** Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, in partnership with CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory, is planning to roll out an **industrial-scale pilot project in Pune for the production of dimethyl ether (DME).**
- This initiative aims to position **DME as a substitute for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)**, particularly for industrial applications.
- Dimethyl Ether (DME) is a synthetic fuel that can serve as an **alternative to diesel, especially in modified compression ignition engines.**

Characteristics of DME

- DME has a very **high cetane number**, meaning it ignites easily and performs efficiently in diesel-type engines.
- At normal atmospheric conditions, it exists as a colourless gas.
- It burns with very low emissions, producing minimal soot, nitrogen oxides (NOx), sulfur oxides (SOx), and particulate matter.
- Its thermal efficiency is comparable to conventional fuels, making it a practical substitute.
- DME can be used as a clean alternative fuel, particularly suitable for adaptation in existing diesel engines used in agriculture and transportation sectors in India.

India's Rise as a Global Healing and Medical Tourism Hub

- Rising healthcare costs, long waiting periods, and lifestyle diseases are pushing patients worldwide to seek treatment abroad, boosting the Medical Value Travel (MVT) industry.
- India's medical tourism sector is estimated at **USD 8.7 billion (2025) and expected to grow to USD 16.2 billion by 2030.**
- India blends advanced medical technology with traditional healing systems like **Yoga, Ayurveda, and Naturopathy, creating a holistic healthcare ecosystem.**
- **Government Initiative:** The "Heal in India" programme promotes the country as a leading destination for integrated and affordable healthcare services.

India as a Global Hub for Medical and Wellness Tourism

- **Medical Tourism:** Focuses on advanced treatments such as surgeries, organ transplants, and diagnostics in specialised hospitals.

- **Wellness Tourism:** Emphasises preventive and holistic care through AYUSH systems like Yoga and Ayurveda.
- **Integrated Approach:** Together, they cater to both curative and preventive healthcare needs globally.

Global Rankings and Recognition

- India ranks **10th globally among medical tourism destinations.**
- **12th in wellness tourism** markets worldwide.
- **5th in the Asia-Pacific region for wellness tourism.**

Cost Advantage

- India offers **high-quality treatment at significantly lower costs compared to developed nations.**
- Availability of skilled doctors, modern technology, and minimal waiting time enhances its attractiveness.

Budget 2026–27

- **Regional Medical Hubs:** Plan to establish five integrated healthcare hubs with medical, research, and educational facilities.
- **Comprehensive Care:** Includes diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation, and AYUSH centres.
- **Employment Generation:** Expected to create jobs for doctors and allied health professionals.
- **Boost to Traditional Medicine**
- Proposal to establish three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda.
- Upgradation of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre to promote research and global collaboration.

Yoga as Global Soft Power

- International Day of Yoga 2025 highlighted the theme "**Yoga for One Earth, One Health**", linking wellness with sustainability.

- Yoga strengthens India's image as a leader in holistic health and well-being.

Nationwide Fire Safety Week in Healthcare Facilities

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, in collaboration with States/UTs and other Central Ministries, will conduct a **pan-India Fire Safety Week**.
- **To promote awareness, prevention, and mitigation of fire hazards** in healthcare institutions across the country.
- All States and Union Territories will actively implement training and preparedness initiatives.
- Strengthen fire safety systems in hospitals and ensure protection of patients, healthcare workers, and critical infrastructure.

India Introduces First National Guidelines for Childhood Diabetes Care

- **Context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued the **country's first detailed national guidelines on childhood diabetes**, marking a major step toward incorporating its diagnosis and treatment into the public healthcare system.
- This initiative comes amid the rising burden of diabetes in India, where over 100 million people are affected, including an increasing number of children.
- The guidelines introduce a comprehensive, free care package at government health facilities.
- This includes essential support such as **insulin, glucometers, and diagnostic tests, ensuring accessible treatment for young patients**.
- To aid early detection, the framework highlights the **"4Ts" warning signs – frequent urination (Toilet), excessive thirst (Thirsty),**

constant fatigue (Tired), and unexplained weight loss (Thinner).

Diabetes

- Diabetes is described as a long-term metabolic condition in which the body either produces insufficient insulin or fails to use it efficiently, **resulting in elevated blood sugar levels (hyperglycaemia).**
- **Insulin** is a vital hormone released by the pancreas that enables cells to absorb glucose from the bloodstream and use it for energy.

Childhood diabetes mainly includes

- **Type 1 diabetes:** An autoimmune condition where the body does not produce insulin.
- **Type 2 diabetes:** Often linked to lifestyle factors, where the body becomes resistant to insulin.

Great Nicobar Project: Infrastructure, Environmental Safeguards and Tribal Welfare

- **Context:** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&NI) administration **did not achieve the mandated 50% quorum at the gram sabha meetings** held to get consent for the Centre's ₹92,000-crore Great Nicobar Island project.
- **Quorum is the minimum number of members needed in such a meeting to reach a decision.**
- According to the rules issued by the Centre for the implementation of the FRA, a **quorum at a gram sabha is achieved only if 'one-half' or 50% of the adult population of that village is in attendance, of which one-third must be women.**

The Great Nicobar Project

- The Great Nicobar Project is a strategic project which aims to **strengthen India's presence in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Asia.**

- The project seeks to balance port-led growth with calibrated environmental safeguards and protection of indigenous communities.
- By combining strategic, economic, and ecological priorities, the project seeks to ensure that development in Great Nicobar is sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with national interests.
- Expected to support both **domestic and international passenger traffic**
- Strategically located near major tourist destinations such as **Phuket, Langkawi and Senang City**
- Complements port-led economic development and boosts tourism potential

The project includes

- **International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT)** with a capacity of 14.2 million TEU (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit)
- **Greenfield International Airport** (4000 Peak Hour Passengers-PHP)
- A **450 MVA (Megavolt Ampere) gas and solar-based power plant**,
- A **new township** spanning 16,610 hectares.

Core Infrastructure Components of the Great Nicobar Project

- **International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT)**
 - Developed at Galathea Bay under the Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island programme
 - **Aims to reduce India's dependence on foreign transshipment hubs such as Colombo, Singapore and Klang**
 - Possesses natural water depth of more than 20 metres, suitable for large container vessels
 - Intended to attract **both gateway cargo and transshipment cargo**
 - Enhances India's strategic, defence and maritime security presence in the Indian Ocean Region

Greenfield International Airport

- Proposed to improve connectivity and promote tourism in Great Nicobar Island

Township and Area Development

- Planned to support residential, commercial and institutional needs of the project
- Provides urban infrastructure for workers, businesses and service providers
- Expected to facilitate economic activities and organised urban expansion on the island

Power Plant

- Intended to provide reliable and uninterrupted electricity supply for the port, airport and township
- Designed with backup systems to ensure continuity even during component failure
- Seeks to reduce dependence on diesel-based electricity generation in the islands
- Renewable energy sources are planned as supplementary power generation options

Environmental Safeguards and Compensatory Afforestation Plan

- Before clearance, the project underwent multiple levels of statutory scrutiny, including preparation of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).
- The EMP outlines mitigation measures for construction and operational phases.

Environmental Management Plan (EMP)

- EMP is a **plan to ensure sustainable development around a proposed project**.
- It involves the industry, Government, Pollution Control Board, and local people.

- It includes measures to reduce environmental impacts.
- Mitigation is done at the source and at the project site.

Tribal Welfare and Social Considerations in the Great Nicobar Project

- **Indigenous Communities of Great Nicobar**
 - Great Nicobar Island is inhabited by the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes
 - Shompens are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** and mainly follow a hunter-gatherer lifestyle
 - Nicobarese communities primarily live in coastal settlements and depend on fishing for livelihood
- **Policy Framework for Tribal Protection**
 - Project aligns with the Shompen Policy, 2015 and Jarawa Policy, 2004
 - These policies require development projects to **prioritise welfare and cultural integrity of PVTGs**
 - Structured consultation mechanisms are mandated before implementation of large-scale projects

Constitutional and Administrative Safeguards

- Project implementation follows provisions of **Article 338A(9) of the Constitution**
- **Article 338A (9)** - The Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Scheduled Tribes.
- Emphasis placed on safeguarding interests of Scheduled Tribes and PVTGs
- No additional policy measures affecting tribal communities have been introduced beyond the development project

- Tribal welfare, rights and protection remain central to the planning and implementation process

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit

- **Context:** The inaugural International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit, to be held here from June 1 to 3, is expected to **adopt the first-ever global declaration on big cat conservation**.
- Summit is expected to adopt the first-ever global declaration on big cat conservation called the **"Delhi Declaration"**
- Declaration will focus on shared **conservation priorities, transboundary cooperation, and landscape-based conservation approaches**

About the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- IBCA is an alliance of countries hosting **at least one of the seven big cat species**
- Big cats covered under the alliance include: **Lion, Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma**
- Alliance aims to **strengthen global cooperation for conservation of big cats and their habitats**

Membership and Participation

- IBCA currently has **24 member countries and 3 observer countries**
- Representatives from about 95 countries are expected to participate in the summit

Objectives of the Alliance

- Promote protection and conservation of big cats and their habitats
- Improve prey base and ecosystem health
- Encourage research, innovation, development and capacity building
- Facilitate sharing of information and best practices among member countries

- Strengthen collective global action for biodiversity conservation

Theme of the Summit

- Theme: "Save big cats, save humanity, save ecosystem"

India's Role

- IBCA was conceived and piloted by India
- Officially launched by Prime Minister in 2023
- India views conservation as a global responsibility requiring cooperation, knowledge sharing and mutual support

Significance

- Promotes international cooperation in wildlife conservation
- Strengthens ecosystem-based and transboundary conservation strategies
- Enhances global efforts to protect endangered big cat species and biodiversity
- Reinforces India's leadership in global environmental diplomacy

First Anniversary of Operation Sindoor

- **Context:** India marked the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor on May 7
- Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam on April 22 last year
- The operation reflected India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism

Objectives of Operation Sindoor

- Aimed to punish perpetrators and planners of cross-border terrorism
- Intended to destroy terrorist infrastructure located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir
- Focused on neutralising terror threats while maintaining strategic restraint

Major Military Actions

- Indian Armed Forces conducted detailed surveillance and identified multiple terror camps and training centres
- Airstrikes targeted nine major terror infrastructures across the border
- Around 100 terrorists were reportedly eliminated during the operation
- Eleven Pakistani airbases were also attacked during the operation

Non-Military Measures under Operation Sindoor

- India adopted diplomatic, economic and strategic measures while maintaining strategic restraint and international support.
- Closure of Attari-Wagah Border
- Suspension of Bilateral Trade
- Visa and Travel Restrictions
- Cultural Restrictions
- Diplomatic

Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty

- India placed the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 in abeyance until Pakistan permanently stops support for cross-border terrorism

Pakistan depends heavily on the Indus river system for

- 80% of its agricultural land
- 93% of its water usage
- Indus basin supports around 237 million people in Pakistan
- Agriculture linked to the river system contributes nearly one-fourth of Pakistan's GDP

Suspension could lead to

- Agricultural losses
- Food shortages

- Water rationing
- Electricity shortages
- Industrial disruption

Benefits for India

- Treaty restrictions on infrastructure projects in Jammu & Kashmir were eased
- India gained greater control over western rivers such as Jhelum and Chenab

Broader Impact

- Enhanced India's global image as a nation taking decisive action against terrorism
- Reflected growing defence and technological capabilities of India
- Also highlighted India's emerging strength in advanced defence systems and military coordination

Significance

- Operation Sindoor remains a symbol of India's strong counter-terrorism policy
- Demonstrated India's military preparedness, strategic restraint and deterrence capability

Cabinet Approves Two Semiconductor Projects

- **Context:** Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister approved two semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

Projects include:

- India's first commercial **Mini/Micro-LED display facility** based on Gallium Nitride (GaN) technology
- A **semiconductor packaging and testing facility**

Investment and Employment

- Projects will be **established in Gujarat**
- Total cumulative investment is around ₹3,936 crore

- Expected to generate employment for about 2,230 skilled professionals

Significance of the Projects

- Strengthens India's semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem.
- Promotes **indigenous advanced display and chip packaging technologies.**
- Enhances India's capabilities in compound semiconductors and GaN technology.
- Supports the objectives of the **India Semiconductor Mission and Atmanirbhar Bharat.**
- Boosts high-technology manufacturing and skilled employment generation.

About India Semiconductor Mission

- The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) was **launched in 2021** with a financial allocation of ₹76,000 crore under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**
- ISM functions as a specialised and autonomous **institution under MeitY, Government of India.**
- It operates as an independent business division within the Digital India Corporation.
- The mission seeks to develop a strong semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem and position India as a major global centre for electronics manufacturing and chip design.
- ISM acts as the nodal agency for the effective and coordinated implementation of programmes related to semiconductor and display manufacturing in India.
- It is also responsible for implementing various schemes **approved under the Semicon India Programme.**

Artificial Intelligence in the Indian Judiciary

- **Context:** The Supreme Court has proposed formulating guidelines for both lawyers and judges to regulate the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in drafting judgments and filing petitions.

The Significance of AI Application in the Judiciary

- AI tools such as **SUPACE** and **LegRAA** extract facts from vast volumes of case records and identify relevant precedents, thereby aiding judicial research and decision-making support.
- The **SUVAS** platform translates Supreme Court judgments into 18 regional languages, enabling litigants to read court orders without the need for intermediaries.

India's Steel Sector: Growth, Self-Reliance and Global Competitiveness

- **Context:** India became the world's second-largest steel producer in 2018 and has retained this position continuously.
- Crude steel is the **first solid steel** product obtained after solidification of liquid steel.
- India's share in global crude steel production increased from 5.2% in 2014 to 7.9% in 2024, strengthening its global competitiveness.
- India is also the second-largest consumer of finished steel, according to the World Steel Association.
- India aims to achieve 500 MT steel production capacity by 2047 under the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat.
- The steel sector is also pursuing decarbonisation to contribute to India's net-zero emission intensity target by 2070.

Robust Performance of the Steel Sector

- Steel is an alloy primarily composed of iron,

carbon (< 2%) and manganese (1%), along with small quantities of silicon, phosphorus, sulphur and oxygen.

- Steel is recognised as **one of India's Sunrise Sectors** due to its critical role in construction, engineering and industrial growth.
- There are different forms of steel and iron which are vital for the steel sector. Some of them are:
 - **Crude steel** - first solid steel product formed upon solidification of liquid steel.
 - **Finished steel** - product obtained upon hot rolling/forging of Semi-finished steel.
 - **Hot metal, pig iron and sponge iron** - key forms of iron that constitute important categories within the steel industry.

India's Steel Export Destinations

- Major destinations for India's finished steel exports are **Vietnam, Belgium and Taiwan**, accounting for over 50% of total exports.
- Rising exports contribute to **higher foreign exchange earnings and improve India's trade balance**.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) for Specialty Steel

- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Specialty Steel was launched in 2021 with a financial outlay of ₹6,322 crore.
- Specialty steel is a value-added downstream steel product used in sectors such as **automobiles, defence and engineering**.
- It is one of the 14 sectors covered under India's PLI Scheme.
- The scheme provides **incentives for 5 years** (FY 2024-25 to FY 2030-31) to eligible companies based on investment and production targets.
- It aims to **enhance domestic production, improve technology, increase exports and reduce import dependence**.

National Steel Policy 2017

- The National Steel Policy 2017 **targets 300 MTPA crude steel capacity and 255 MTPA production by 2030–31.**
- **It aims to increase per capita finished steel consumption to 158 kg from the current 61 kg.**
- The policy seeks to achieve domestic self-sufficiency in high-grade automotive, electrical and specialty steels.
- It also aims **to reduce coking coal import dependence** from 85% to 65% by 2030–31.
- India has already achieved 168 MTPA crude steel production, which is around 66% of the policy target.

Major Steel Zones in India

- Key steel production hubs include **Kalinganagar, Angul, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Nagarnar, Bhilai, Raipur, Jamshedpur, Bokaro, Durgapur, Kolkata and Visakhapatnam.**
- The government is accelerating rail, road and port infrastructure projects across **12 major steel zones to improve logistics and develop multimodal connectivity.**
- These efforts **aim to support long-term growth and strengthen India's steel sector as a pillar of industrial self-reliance.**

Somnath Temple: Symbol of India's Faith and Civilisational Resilience

- **Context:** Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Somnath Temple in Gujarat to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the temple's reopening, which was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1951.

Location and Religious Importance

- Somnath Temple is situated at **Prabhas Patan on the Saurashtra coast of Gujarat.**

- It houses one of the **sacred Jyotirlingas** mentioned in the Shiva Purana.
- The temple is associated with the worship of **Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna and Shakti.**
- The Dwadasha Jyotirlinga Stotram places Somnath first among the twelve Jyotirlingas.

Historical Importance

- Somnath represents India's enduring spiritual faith and civilisational continuity.
- The temple faced repeated invasions and destruction **between the 11th and 18th centuries.**
- The first recorded attack on the **temple occurred in 1026.**

- Despite repeated destruction, Somnath was rebuilt multiple times by rulers and devotees.

Reconstruction through History

- **King Kumarapala** restored the temple during the 12th century.
- The King of Junagadh rebuilt it during the 13th century.
- **Ahilyabai Holkar** rebuilt the temple in the 18th century.
- After Independence, **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** initiated the reconstruction of Somnath in 1947.

- The present temple was built in the **Kailash Mahameru Prasad** architectural style.

- **Dr. Rajendra Prasad** consecrated the rebuilt temple on 11 May 1951.

Somnath Swabhiman Parv

- The **Somnath Swabhiman Parv** commemorates 1,000 years since the first recorded attack on Somnath in 1026.
- The year 2026 marks the **75th anniversary of the reopening of the Somnath Temple.**

- The event symbolises India's resilience, faith and cultural resurgence after centuries of destruction.

Role of Prime Minister

- Prime Minister, Chairman of the Somnath Trust, is participating in the 75th anniversary celebrations.
- He described Somnath as a symbol of India's "unconquerable spirit".
- The Prime Minister highlighted the "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi" approach focusing on development along with heritage preservation.

Temple Architecture and Features

- Somnath is regarded as the **first among the twelve Aadi Jyotirlingas**.
- The temple complex includes the Garbhagriha, Sabha Mandap and Nritya Mandap.

Environmental and Sustainability Measures

- Somnath was declared a "Swachh Iconic Place" in 2018.
- Temple flowers are converted into **vermicompost for Bilva plantations**.
- Plastic waste is converted into **paver blocks under Mission LiFE**.
- Rainwater harvesting systems recycle nearly 30 lakh litres of sewage water monthly.
- A **Miyawaki forest with 7,200 trees** absorbs nearly 93,000 kg of carbon dioxide annually.

The Drug Menace in India

- **Context:** The Court highlighted the massive backlog of cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985.
- To expedite trials, the Supreme Court recommended the establishment of special NDPS courts in all states.

Causes of the Drug Menace in India

- India is situated between two major illicit drug-producing regions: the Golden Crescent (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) and the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand).
- Vendors and smugglers utilize technologies—including drones—to transport narcotics across the India-Pakistan border in the state of Punjab.
- The easy accessibility of narcotics such as 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), or Ecstasy, has manifested in the form of a rising number of drug addiction cases.
- Unemployment, family disintegration, depression, academic pressure, and urban alienation contribute to drug abuse.
- Technologies such as the use of the Dark Web and encrypted platforms have enabled anonymous drug transactions.

Key Measures Taken to Curb the Drug

Menace in India

- **Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA):** Launched in 2020 to make India drug-aware and resilient against substance abuse.
- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** Establishes stringent regulations to control and regulate activities related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- **National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 2012:** Aims to combat the drug menace in a holistic manner.
- **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) (2018–2025):** A multi-pronged strategy focusing on education, de-addiction, and rehabilitation for individuals and families.

- **International Treaties:** India is a signatory to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

One Case One Data Initiative

- **Context:** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday announced in open court the launch of a major digital initiative **"One Case One Data"**
- It aimed at **integrating judicial administration across all levels of courts in India.**
- The system seeks to connect courts from the taluk level to the Supreme Court into a unified digital framework.
- Objective is **to create a comprehensive, interconnected, and centralized judicial database.**

Su Sahay AI Chatbot

- The CJI also launched **"Su Sahay", an AI-powered assistance chatbot.**
- The chatbot has been integrated with **the website of the Supreme Court of India.**
- Purpose is to **facilitate easier access to justice and court-related services for litigants and the general public.**

10th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD)

- **Context:** The 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue was organised in New Delhi with the theme **"Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming World."**
- India, serving as Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (2025–27), used the platform **to highlight maritime security, governance of the blue economy, and technological innovation under its MAHASAGAR vision.**

- The dialogue assumed greater significance amid rising tensions in West Asia, disturbances in the **Strait of Hormuz, and the sinking of the Iranian naval vessel IRIS Dena near Sri Lanka in March 2026.**

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- IORA is an intergovernmental organisation **established on 7 March 1997.**
- The idea for the organisation emerged from the **vision of former South African President Nelson Mandela during his 1995 visit to India.**
- Initially, the grouping was called the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative (IORI), later renamed the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), before adopting its present name.
- The Secretariat of IORA is located in Ebene, Mauritius, and is headed by a Secretary-General appointed for a fixed tenure.
- The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest decision-making body of the organisation and meets annually.

Importance of IORA for India

- Strengthening India's Role as a Security Provider
- Balancing Chinese Influence
- Ensuring Energy and Trade Security
- Promoting the Blue Economy
- Enhancing India's Diplomatic Influence
- Unique Regional Platform
- Expanding Soft Power and Cultural Links
- Humanitarian and Disaster Response Leadership
- Supporting India's Indo-Pacific Strategy

National Jute Board

- **Context:** With the aim of modernizing crop monitoring, the National Jute Board has expanded the operations of the '**Jute Crop Information System**' (JCIS) a technology-based platform developed in collaboration with ISRO.
- It was designed as a strategic initiative to mitigate the adverse effects of climate variability on agriculture, while simultaneously ensuring long-term food and livelihood security.

About the National Jute Board

- The National Jute Board is an apex body functioning under the **Ministry of Textiles, Government of India**.
- It is responsible for the overall development of the jute sector.
- The Board is governed under the '**National Jute Board Act, 2008**'.
- It formally came into effect on February 12, 2009.
- Since 2022-23, it has been subsumed under the umbrella scheme of the '**Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana**' (PMRKVY).
- It promotes climate-resilient agricultural practices through a set of specific, target-oriented, and integrated interventions.
- It lays a strong foundation for sustainable agricultural growth by enhancing water-use efficiency, improving soil health, and strengthening climate-resilient agriculture.

Objectives

- To increase the share of Indian jute products in the global market by identifying innovative applications for jute products and by disseminating new technologies.
- To promote the growth of the jute industry through human resource development, training, and design-related inputs.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Key Initiatives undertaken under NMSA

- This promotes '**Integrated Farming Systems**' to foster diversified and risk-resilient agriculture.
- This promotes micro-irrigation systems to enhance water-use efficiency.
- This is supported through the '**Soil Health Card Scheme**' (SHC), which promotes balanced nutrient application and preserves the long-term fertility of the soil.
- This initiative facilitates the generation of information and knowledge related to climate change, as well as its dissemination through a two-way channel.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

- **Context:** Under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, the government has set a target to bring 100 lakh hectares of land under micro-irrigation coverage during the five-year period from 2025-26 to 2029.

Details regarding the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

- It was launched in 2014-15 under the framework of the '**National Action Plan on Climate Change**' (NAPCC).

Pilot Programme to Connect Out-of-School Children with NIOS

- **Context:** The Union Government is launching a pilot programme to connect out-of-school children aged 14-18 years with the National

Institute of Open Schooling through distance learning.

- The initiative moves beyond the earlier voluntary enrolment framework and aims for proactive identification and inclusion.

Objective of the Initiative

- To identify and reconnect children who have dropped out of school.
- To provide flexible distance education opportunities through NIOS.
- To improve educational access for vulnerable adolescents.

Coverage of Pilot Programme

- The pilot will be implemented in **10 districts across nine States**: Odisha, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

Key Features

- App-based mapping of out-of-school children aged 14–18
- Monitoring and tracking systems
- Incentive mechanisms for enrolment and participation
- District-level convergence strategies among departments

Important Data

- According to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS): More than two crore children in the 14–18 age group are currently out of school in India.

AI-Based Helpbot “Abhay” Launched by CBI

- **Context:** The Central Bureau of Investigation has introduced an **AI-driven helpbot named “Abhay”** to verify the authenticity of notices issued by the agency.

Need for the Initiative

- **Cyber-related frauds** are emerging as a serious challenge to India’s criminal justice system.

- Technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence and deepfake tools** are making it increasingly difficult for people to distinguish genuine information from fake or manipulated content.

About “Abhay”

- “Abhay” is an AI-enabled chatbot system created **to help citizens confirm whether CBI notices are genuine**.
- It has been developed to counter: Cyber fraud, Digital arrest scams, Fake notices circulated in the name of the CBI.

Key Features

- Provides a secure and user-friendly verification mechanism.
- Designed with strong safeguards for data privacy and confidentiality.
- Offers a publicly accessible authentication system to enhance trust and transparency.

Project Saksham

- **Context:** National Highways Authority of India, in collaboration with Vertis Foundation, is implementing ‘Project Saksham’ **to promote inclusive development and empower rural women through skill development**.

Objective

- The initiative aims to:
 - Provide structured vocational training
 - Create sustainable livelihood opportunities
 - Promote financial independence and social empowerment among rural women

Key Features

- Project Saksham functions through:
 - 12 training centres located across India
- It focuses **on underserved communities residing near National Highways**.

Kalam & Kavach 3.0

- **Context:** The third edition of Kalam & Kavach will be inaugurated on May 14, 2026.

Purpose of the Conference

- The conference serves as a major strategic platform for discussions on:
 - India's defence transformation
 - Indigenous defence capabilities
 - Future warfighting preparedness
- It brings together policymakers, military leaders, diplomats, industry representatives, start-ups, innovators, and academic experts.

Central Theme

- The event is based on the vision of: **Jointness, Aatmanirbharta, Innovation (JAI)**
- It also emphasises: **Indigenisation, International Collaboration (I²)**

Objectives

- Promote integrated military capability development.
- Encourage technological innovation in defence.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships aligned with: National security goals, Vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

- **Cibtext** : A consultative meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) alliance is scheduled to take place in India next week.
- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) alliance **comprises four nations: India, the United States, Australia, and Japan**. This alliance operates with the primary objective of **promoting peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region**.
- While one of the member nations assumes the leadership of the alliance each year, India is holding the chairmanship for the current year.

National One Health Mission

- **Context**: The Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee on One Health was held in New Delhi.

- One Health mission focuses on national preparedness against emerging public health threats.

About the National One Health Mission

- The National One Health Mission is a collaborative **multi-sector initiative that seeks to integrate human health, animal health, wildlife health, and environmental health systems** for stronger disease surveillance, diagnostic capacity, and coordinated outbreak management.
- **Vision**: The mission aims to create a unified framework for disease prevention and pandemic preparedness in India by promoting cooperation among the human, animal, and environmental sectors.
- **Approval** : The mission was approved by the **Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council during its 21st meeting held in 2022**.
- **Nodal Agency**: The initiative is coordinated by the Indian Council of Medical Research under the guidance of the **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)**.
- **Anchor Institution**: The National Institute of One Health, Nagpur
- **Operational Tools of One Health**
 - **Animal Vaccination**: Large-scale vaccination reduces zoonotic disease spread.
 - **Veterinary Surveillance**: Regular livestock monitoring helps identify outbreaks early.
 - **Medicine Regulation**: Controlled use of animal drugs limits resistance and environmental harm.
 - **Sanitation Measures**: Proper disposal of waste and carcasses prevents vector-borne diseases.
 - **Shared Data Systems**: Integrated human, animal, and environmental databases improve disease tracking.

The Use of Ammonium Sulfate as an Alternative to Urea

- **Context:** With the Iran war triggering a shortage of fertilizers and a spike in prices, the Centre has asked states to consider ammonium sulphate as a substitute for urea in rice cultivation.

Ammonium sulphate $[(NH_4)_2 SO_4]$

- It is a **white salt** completely soluble in water containing **20.6 per cent of nitrogen and 24.0 per cent of sulphur**.
- It is used advantageously in **rice and jute cultivation**.
- It is easy to handle and it stores well under dry conditions. But during rainy season, it sometimes forms lumps.
- It can be applied before sowing, at the time of sowing or as a top-dressing to the growing crop.

Urea $[CO (NH_2)_2]$

- It is the most **concentrated solid nitrogenous fertilizer, containing 46 per cent nitrogen**.
- It is a **white crystalline** substance readily soluble in water.
- It absorbs moisture from the atmosphere and has to **be kept in moisture proof containers**. It is readily converted to ammoniacal and nitrate forms in the soil.
- The nitrogen in urea is readily fixed in the soil in an ammoniacal form and is not lost in drainage.
- Urea sprays are **readily absorbed by plants**.
- It may be applied at sowing or as, a top-dressing.
- It is suitable for most crops and can be applied to all soils.

Ethanol E30

- **Context:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has announced new petrol standards for ethanol blends of up to 30% (E30) and issued

a Gazette notification to this effect on May 18, 2026.

- These new standards encompass **E22, E25, E27, and E30**, which designate **petrol blended with 22%, 25%, 27%, and 30% ethanol**, respectively.
- Ethanol blending in petrol refers to the **mixing of anhydrous ethanol** with petrol for use in vehicles equipped with spark-ignition engines.
- These regulations came into effect on **May 15, 2026**. This serves merely as a technical guideline and does not constitute a mandate for the immediate, nationwide compulsory introduction of E30 fuel.
- The **Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP)**, **initiated in 2003**, aims to reduce import dependency, conserve foreign exchange, support farmers, and deliver environmental benefits.
- Ethanol blending in petrol has risen from **1.5% in 2014 to 10% in 2022, and further to 20% in 2025**.
- India has set a target to achieve 27% ethanol blending (E27) by 2030 through a phased implementation process.

VB - G RAM G

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Rural Development has informed a Parliamentary Standing Committee that 25 states have already allocated funds for the 125-day work scheme.
- In place of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (the 100-day work scheme)**, the 'VB-G RAM G Bill' (a **125-day work scheme**) was passed in Parliament last December. Following the assent granted by President Droupadi Murmu, the bill officially became law.
- Under this new legislation, the duration of the work scheme has been extended from **100 days to 125 days**.

Funding Sharing Mechanism

- In states and Union Territories possessing a legislative assembly, the Central Government will bear 60 percent of the funding for this scheme, while the respective State and Union Territory governments will bear the remaining 40 percent.
- For the eastern states, as well as the Himalayan region—specifically Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir—the Central Government will contribute 90 percent of the scheme's funding, with the respective State governments contributing the remaining 10 percent.
- In this context, a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj was held in New Delhi.
- The 125-day work scheme is scheduled to be implemented starting July 1st. Twenty-five states have already allocated funds for this initiative. All necessary administrative and policy-related measures for the scheme have been set in motion.

New Cards Featuring Facial Recognition

- Furthermore, it was announced that new 'Smart Work Cards' will be issued for the 125-day work scheme, replacing the work cards previously issued for the 100-day scheme.
- Officials stated that, in order to ensure transparency and accountability within this program, these new work cards will feature a specialized facial recognition capability for identification purposes.

79th World Health Assembly

- **Context:** Union Health Minister highlighted India's expanding efforts in tuberculosis elimination, lung health screening, and ethical use of artificial intelligence in healthcare while addressing multiple high-level side events during the **79th World Health Assembly in Geneva.**

India's Tuberculosis Elimination Efforts

- Under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) and the vision of a "TB-Free India," India has undertaken one of the world's largest campaigns for TB screening and early detection.
- Active patient-finding efforts have been expanded through the following initiatives:
 - Door-to-door outreach
 - Mobile screening units
 - Community awareness campaigns
 - Targeted campaigns focusing on high-risk and vulnerable populations

National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)

- In 2020, the RNTCP was renamed the 'National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme' (NTEP).
- This renaming was undertaken to emphasize the Government of India's objective of completely eliminating TB in India by 2025—five years ahead of the global targets set for 2030.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to TB (Base Year: 2015) are as follows:
 - An 80% reduction in the incidence rate.
 - A reduction of over 90% in the mortality rate.
 - Zero catastrophic financial burden on any patient or their family due to TB.
- The programme operates under the guidance of the 'National Strategic Plan 2017-2025'.
- Furthermore, the key activities of the programme are implemented under four strategic pillars: "Detect - Treat - Prevent - Build" (DTPB). The Role of Ayushman Bharat
- Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres, along with frontline health workers, help bring healthcare services closer to communities.

TB-Free India Campaign

- Through the TB-Free India Campaign, India has mobilized citizens, corporations, organizations, and communities.
- This initiative provides support—including care and assistance—to TB patients and their families.

Digital Initiative – TB-Free India App

- The Ministry launched the TB-Free India App, featuring “Kushi”—a multilingual conversational technology powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Features of the App:
 - Real-time guidance regarding TB symptoms
 - Information concerning entitlements
 - Details of nearby diagnostic centers
- This app is designed to function even on basic smartphones.

India's Global Commitment

- India reiterated its commitment to eradicating TB ahead of global targets.
- India expressed its readiness to collaborate globally on scalable solutions for lung health screening.

Key Facts about Tuberculosis (TB)

- India bears the highest TB burden in the world; it is estimated that approximately 2.6 million people contract the disease annually, and nearly 400,000 people lose their lives due to it.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) is implementing an ambitious ‘National Strategic Plan’ aimed at achieving the ‘TB eradication’ targets set under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2025.

TEAM Initiative

- **Context:** The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is accelerating

the digital transformation of India's smallest businesses through the ‘Trade Enhancement and Access to Markets’ (TEAM) initiative a transformative sub-scheme under the ‘**Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance**’ (RAMP) program, which operates with the support of the World Bank.

- Implemented by the **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)**, the TEAM initiative aims to provide **end-to-end e-commerce support to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)**. By doing so, it enables them to participate effectively in digital commerce ecosystems, specifically through the ‘**Open Network for Digital Commerce**’ (ONDC).
- This initiative seeks to empower artisans, home-based entrepreneurs, local manufacturers, and small retailers by providing them with structured institutional support at every stage of their e-commerce journey—including onboarding, product listing, packaging, logistics, and customer management.

About the TEAM Initiative

- **A Central Sector Scheme launched in 2024.**
- The objective of this initiative is to provide comprehensive e-commerce assistance to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs), thereby facilitating their successful integration into digital commerce platforms via the ‘**Open Network for Digital Commerce**’ (ONDC).
- It is designed to promote open and inclusive digital networks that are conducive to the exchange of goods and services through electronic platforms.
- **Project Linkage:** TEAM serves as a key sub-scheme under the ‘**Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance**’ (RAMP) program, which is being implemented with the support of the World Bank.

- **About RAMP:** Launched in 2022, this program focuses on enhancing the operational efficiency and expanding the reach of **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** across the country.
- **Duration:** The scheme will be implemented for a period of **three years, spanning from 2024 to 2027.**
- **Implementing Agency:** The scheme is being implemented by the '**National Small Industries Corporation**' (NSIC).
- **Punishment:**
 - Minimum **imprisonment of five years.**
 - Fine of at least **₹15,000** or the dowry value, whichever is higher.
 - Reduced punishment only in exceptional circumstances.
- **Dowry Prohibition Officers:**
 - **Appointed by state governments.**
 - Responsible for prevention, investigation support, victim assistance, and enforcement of the Act.

Dowry Death in India

- **Context:** NCRB data- UP, Bihar lead in dowry death cases.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 was introduced to **abolish the practice of dowry** in India and curb this social evil through law.
- It is the **first comprehensive legislation aimed at addressing dowry** across all communities, applying uniformly to all persons except where specifically exempted.
- **Objectives:**
 - Ban giving, taking, and demanding dowry.
 - Protect women from harassment and exploitation.
 - Discourage commercialization of marriage.
 - Promote **equality and dignity for women.**
- **Main provisions:**
 - **Giving or receiving dowry is a punishable offence.**
 - **Even demanding dowry without exchange is illegal.**
 - Dowry received must be transferred to the woman within a fixed time period.
 - Serious offences are **cognizable and non-bailable.**
 - Courts can act based on police reports or victim complaints.

Indian Farmers Shift to Millets

Cultivation Due to Climate Change

- **Context:** Geopolitical tensions and severe climatic disruptions are prompting Indian farmers to increasingly cultivate hardy crops such as **Pearl Millet (Bajra) and Sorghum (Jowar).**
- Uncertainties stemming from international conflicts—including the war in Iran—**weak monsoon seasons caused by El Niño**, and persistent crop losses due to pests like the **Pink Bollworm** have encouraged farmers to move away from water-intensive and fertilizer-dependent crops, shifting instead toward hardy millets that require fewer inputs and can withstand harsh climatic conditions.

Millet Cultivation in India

- India stands as the **world's largest producer of millets, contributing nearly 42.75% to global millet production.**
- Millets are generally categorized into major and minor varieties.
- **Major millets** include Pearl Millet (Bajra), Sorghum (Jowar), and Finger Millet (Ragi). **Minor millets** include Foxtail Millet (Kangni), Little Millet (Kutki), Kodo Millet (Kodra), and Proso Millet (Cheena).

- In India, millets are primarily cultivated during the Kharif season, although certain varieties—particularly in the southern regions—are also grown during the Rabi season.
- Among all millet varieties, **Pearl Millet (Bajra)** accounts for nearly 60% of the country's total millet production.

Regional Distribution of Millets

- **Rajasthan possesses the largest area under millet cultivation** and records the highest production volume in the country. It is followed by Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra.
- Rajasthan leads in **Bajra production**, Karnataka dominates **Ragi cultivation**, while Maharashtra ranks first in **Sorghum production**.
- In terms of **minor millets**, **Madhya Pradesh holds the top spot**, followed by Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)

- **Context:**The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management has recently completed the documentation and field verification of nearly all **wetlands in Maharashtra**. Consequently, **out of the state's 23,415 wetlands, only 11 remain to be surveyed**.

About the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management

- The National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management was established in **2011 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**.
- Its objective is to assist in the conservation, preservation, restoration, management, and policy planning related to coastal areas.
- **Headquarters:** Located in Chennai.

Objectives and Functions

- To emerge as a **globally recognized knowledge and research institution focusing on coastal ecosystems**, environmental resources, and coastal processes.
- To promote the integrated and sustainable management of India's coastal and marine areas for the welfare of traditional coastal and island communities.
- To provide scientific guidance and policy-related advice to the Central Government, State Governments, and other stakeholders on matters related to **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)**.

Launch of 'Jeevan' App and 'Shatayu' Dashboard for Elderly Welfare

- **Context:**The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment is set to launch the 'Jeevan' mobile application for senior citizens and the 'Shatayu' dashboard for elderly caregivers.
- The objective of this initiative is to strengthen elderly care services by leveraging technology, supportive policies, and community participation.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is introducing these two key digital platforms dedicated to the welfare of the elderly:
 - 'Jeevan' Mobile App for Senior Citizens
 - 'Shatayu' Dashboard for Elderly Caregivers

About the 'Jeevan' App

- The 'Jeevan' app is being launched specifically for senior citizens.
- It aims to enhance their access to various support mechanisms, welfare services, and essential information related to senior citizen care.

About the 'Shatayu' Dashboard

- The 'Shatayu' dashboard has been developed for elderly caregivers.

- It will serve as an information platform providing details regarding elderly care services, care assistance, and other relevant data within the elderly care ecosystem.
- **Kerala has single digit IMR 8**, lowest in the country.
- **Tamil nadu** brings up second position among larger states with **IMR 11**.

Birth rate and infant deaths falls in India

- **Context:**The bulletin from the recent **Sample Registration Survey (SRS) 2024** provides the sharpest picture yet of India in the throes of demographic transition.
- As per the latest estimate, while the country's birth rate has fallen between **2014 and 2024** and the death rate is down marginally, good gains have been reported with the **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)**, amid substantial progress made over the last decade.

India's Health Gains Shadowed by Rural-Urban Divide in Birth and Death Rates

- The country's birth rate — live births per 1,000 population — fell from 21 in 2014 to 18.3 in 2024, while the death rate (deaths per 1,000 people) is down from 6.7 to 6.4.
- The IMR, recorded as the number of deaths per thousand live births, has dropped from 39 to 24.
- The overall performance is creditable, indicating several measures being launched by the Center and States to improve healthcare outcomes.
- The rural birth rate fell from 22.7 to 20.2 in the given decade, the simultaneous decadal performance in the urban areas was better — the birth rate fell from 17.4 to 14.7.
- In the rural areas, the death rate fell from 7.3 to 6.8 between 2014 and 2024, and in the urban segment, it was at 5.5 in 2014 and went up marginally to 5.6 --still a better performance than in rural areas.

Severe heatwave conditions to prevail in parts of India

- **Context:**Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are likely to persist over the plains of Northwest India, Central and East India, and parts of Peninsular India during the next six to seven days, says India Meteorological Department (IMD) .
- The IMD stated that heatwave conditions are likely in isolated areas of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh from **May 22 to May 28**.
- "Severe heatwave conditions over East Uttar Pradesh and East Madhya Pradesh are expected during the same period," the IMD said.

Definition

- A **heatwave** is a period of abnormally hot weather, usually over several days, that is significantly hotter than what is normal for a place at that time of year. The World Meteorological Organization describes it as a period where local excess heat accumulates over a sequence of unusually hot days and nights.

Conditions for Declaring a Heatwave

- A heatwave is declared when the highest temperature recorded at a station is **40°C or above in plains** and **30°C or above in hilly areas**.
- **Classification Based on Variation from Normal Temperature**
 - **Heat Wave:** When the maximum temperature is **4.5°C to 6.4°C higher than the normal temperature**.
 - **Severe Heat Wave:** When the maximum temperature is **more than 6.4°C above the normal temperature**.

Health Impacts of Heat Waves

- **Heat Cramps:** Edema (swelling) and Syncope (Fainting) generally accompanied by fever below 39°C.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps and sweating.
- **Heat Stroke:** Body temperatures of 40°C or more along with delirium, seizures or coma. This is a potential fatal condition.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- **Context:** The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) has welcomed Saudi Arabia as its newest Member Country.
- IBCA said Saudi Arabia's joining is a significant collective step towards advancing global cooperation for Big Cat conservation and a sustainable planet.

About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- **India will host** the inaugural International Big Cat Alliance Summit 2026, in New Delhi.
- The event represents an important milestone in promoting international collaboration for the protection of big cats and their natural habitats.
- The theme of the summit is **"Big Cats, Save Humanity, Save Ecosystem."**
- The conference aims to provide a global forum for deliberations on the challenges, opportunities, and joint efforts required for big cat conservation across countries.
- The summit will also showcase India's success in wildlife conservation, particularly its efforts related to: **Tigers, Asiatic lions, Leopards, Snow leopards, and Cheetahs.**
- A proposed **Delhi Declaration** is expected to outline common international priorities, strengthen cross-border cooperation, and

support a landscape-based strategy for conserving big cats and their ecosystems.

Smart Border Project and Border Security Measures

- **Context:** Home Minister announced that the government will soon launch the **Smart Border Project** to strengthen security along the borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- The objective is **to make the borders highly secure and difficult to infiltrate.**

Use of Advanced Technology

- The Smart Border initiative will integrate modern technologies such as: **drones, radars, advanced surveillance cameras, and other high-tech security systems.**
- These technologies will help create a comprehensive and technologically advanced border security network.

Strengthening Border Security Grid

- The Home Minister stated that work is underway to establish an **impregnable border security grid within the next year under the Smart Border concept.**

Easier Operations for BSF

- The new technological systems will make the functioning of the Border Security Force (BSF) more efficient, effective, and stronger.

Focus on Emerging Security Threats

- The government emphasized the need to develop new strategies to tackle: **cyber threats, hybrid warfare, and drone-based security challenges.**

Government's Stand on Infiltration

- The government is committed not only to stopping infiltration but also to identifying and deporting illegal infiltrators from the country.
- He said the government **would not allow unnatural demographic changes due to illegal migration.**

Role of Border States

- The Home Minister noted that governments in: Tripura, Assam, and West Bengal have adopted policies opposing illegal infiltration.

Growth of BSF

- The Border Security Force, established in 1965 with 25 battalions and limited resources, has grown into the world's largest border guarding force with nearly 2.7 lakh personnel.

Expansion of BSF Jurisdiction

- The government has extended BSF jurisdiction from 15 km to 50 km from the international border in certain areas to improve border management and security operations.

Coldwater Fisheries Sector in India

- **Context:** India's coldwater fisheries sector is emerging as a vital component of the Blue Economy. It contributes significantly to livelihoods, nutritional security, eco-tourism, and sustainable development in mountainous regions.
- Coldwater aquaculture is practiced in **high-altitude, snow-fed rivers, streams, lakes, and reservoirs** characterized by temperatures ranging from 5°C to 25°C, dissolved oxygen levels exceeding 6 mg/L, and pH levels between 6.5 and 8.0.
- This sector is concentrated in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Nagaland, as well as in the hilly regions of West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.
- More than 278 coldwater fish species have been identified in India. Among these, the **Rainbow Trout, Golden Mahseer, and Snow Trout are the most prominent species.**
- In the year 2024-25, India's total fish production stood at approximately 197.75 lakh

tonnes. Of this, **the coldwater fisheries sector contributed about 3% to the country's inland fish production.**

- The national-level production of coldwater fish stands at approximately 7,000 metric tonnes. Meanwhile, Trout production has witnessed a substantial increase growing by about 1.8 times over the past decade to reach approximately 6,000 metric tonnes in 2024-25.
- **Jammu and Kashmir is the leading region** for trout production, followed by the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Government Schemes and Initiatives

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (2020-26)

- Under this scheme, projects worth ₹5,638.76 crore have been sanctioned for states engaged in cold-water aquaculture.
- This provides support for hatcheries, raceways, RAS units, ponds, cold storage facilities, and transportation infrastructure.

Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)

- The Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund has approved projects worth ₹7,761.78 crore for infrastructure development (2018-26).

Blue Revolution Scheme (2015-20):

- This scheme laid the foundation for scientific trout farming through the establishment of hatcheries, raceways, and fish stocking in reservoirs.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhhi Sah-Yojana:

- Valued at ₹6,000 crore, this scheme supports aquaculture insurance, fisheries sector startups, micro-enterprises, and value chain capabilities.

Model Guidelines (2026):

- The government has released the **'Model Guidelines for Cold-Water Fisheries Development, 2026,'** covering aspects such as site selection, hatchery standards, disease management, biosecurity, branding, certification, e-commerce, and skill development.
- **India is strengthening international cooperation with Norway and Iceland for technology transfer,** sustainable aquaculture practices, disease control, and export promotion.

Mohenjo-daro

- **Context:** Mohenjo-daro, the **largest city of the Indus Valley Civilization** of the Indian Subcontinent, was truly the 'rebel' of its times. It was not only more equal than its neighbours in Mesopotamia and Greece, but it actually became more egalitarian as it prospered, according to a new study.
- Its zenith, or "Mature" phase, occurred during the period from **2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.**
- By the mid-2nd millennium BCE, the civilization began to decline due to severe climatic changes and environmental factors.
- Excavation work at the Mohenjo-daro site commenced in 1920 and continued in various phases until 1964–65.
- **In 1922, Rakhal Das Banerjee of the Archaeological Survey of India** confirmed the site's immense historical significance.
- The city of Mohenjo-daro is renowned, particularly for its **advanced urban planning.**
- The city featured streets neatly laid out in a grid pattern, paved roads, efficient water supply systems, enclosed drainage and sewage disposal structures, houses equipped with toilet facilities, and monumental public buildings such as **the 'Great Bath' and the 'Great Granary.'**
- It is estimated that, at its zenith, the city may have had a population ranging from approximately 30,000 to 60,000, and it is considered to provide evidence of a highly organized society.

About Mohenjo-daro

- Meaning "Mound of the Dead," Mohenjo-daro stands as one of the most significant centers of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- This civilization spanned a vast geographical area **extending from Sutkagen Dor in Balochistan (near the Iran-Pakistan border) to Alamgirpur in present-day Uttar Pradesh; its boundaries stretched from Manda in Jammu to Daimabad in Maharashtra.**
- Among the important Harappan-era sites located within India, Lothal, Dholavira, and Kalibangan are particularly noteworthy.
- Alongside the city of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro is regarded as **one of the most renowned cities of the Bronze Age civilization;** this civilization flourished approximately **between 3300 BCE and 1200 BCE.**
- In recognition of its historical significance, it **was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980.**

India's First Geothermal Power Project

- **Context:** Ladakh is set to take a significant step towards clean energy generation with Lt Governor approving the setting up of **India's first geothermal power project by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation at Puga valley in Ladakh,** at an altitude of over 14,000 feet.
- Testing, evaluation and commissioning of the pilot plant are expected during FY 2026–27.

Implementing Agency

- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will develop the **geothermal power project.**

- The project is located in Puga Valley of eastern Ladakh at an altitude above 14,000 feet.

Objective

- The project aims to **harness geothermal energy as a clean, renewable and low-carbon power source.**

Pilot Plant

- ONGC will establish a **1-MWe pilot geothermal power plant in Puga Valley.**
- A Detailed Project Report (DPR) will be prepared for large-scale commercial exploitation.

Geothermal Energy

- Geothermal energy is produced from **heat stored beneath the Earth's surface.**
- It is considered a **renewable and environmentally sustainable source of power.**

Himalayan Geothermal Belt

- Puga Valley and Chumathang lie in the Himalayan geothermal belt known for **intense tectonic heat activity.**

Temperature Findings

- Existing wells recorded temperatures above 200°C at around 400 metres depth.
- Geothermometric studies indicate subsurface temperatures exceeding 240°C.

Power Generation

- The pilot plant is expected to generate around 1 MW of electricity.
- The turbine inlet temperature is expected to be around 200°C.

Education to Employment and Enterprise Standing Committee

- **Context:** Union Budget 2026–27 proposed the creation of a High-Powered 'Education to Employment and Enterprise' Standing Committee.

Objective

- The Committee aims to help India achieve a **10% share in the global services market by 2047.**
- It focuses on **growth, employment generation, exports and entrepreneurship in the Services sector.**

Major Functions

- Identify priority areas for growth in the Services sector.
- Assess impact of frontier technologies like **Artificial Intelligence on jobs and skills.**
- Recommend policy measures for employment and skilling.
- Strengthen linkage between education, employment and enterprise ecosystems.

Key Observations

- India's demographic dividend offers opportunities for economic growth.
- Education, skilling and employment systems must align with changing economic needs.
- Industry-relevant skills are essential for future jobs.

Final Goal

- Convert India's demographic dividend into a growth dividend.
- Bridge gaps between education, employment and entrepreneurship.
- Promote coordinated action among Centre, States, industry and academia.

High-Level Committee to Study Demographic Change

- **Context:** The Central Government has constituted a high-level committee to address the challenges associated with demographic changes resulting from infiltration and other factors.
- This committee will be chaired by Mr. Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar, a former Judge of the Supreme Court.

- Demographic change is a critical issue that bears upon not only national sovereignty but also national security, law and order, profound shifts in the social fabric, and the protection of tribal communities.
- The committee will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the demographic changes occurring across India **due to illegal immigration and other anomalous factors**.
- Furthermore, the committee will analyze trends regarding anomalous demographic changes at the level of religious and social communities, and will propose planned, time-bound solutions to address them.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- **Context:** The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has initiated regulatory actions **against the unauthorized online sale and advertisement of hazardous chemicals, explosives, and their associated precursors on digital platforms**.
- This action has been undertaken under the provisions of the **'Consumer Protection Act, 2019,'** with the aim of strengthening consumer protection, public safety, and responsible e-commerce practices.
- In this regard, notices have been issued to major e-commerce platforms concerning the listing and sale of regulated substances including **Ammonium Nitrate, Gunpowder, Picric Acid, and Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate**.

About the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The CCPA is a regulatory body **established in 2020** under the provisions of the 'Consumer Protection Act, 2019.'
- The CCPA functions under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs**.

Composition

- The Authority consists of a Chief Commissioner as its head, along with two other Commissioners as members.

Powers and Functions

- To investigate or inquire into matters related to violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices—either **suo motu** (on its own initiative), based on a complaint received, or upon the direction of the Central Government.
- Imposition of **a fine of up to ₹10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years** on manufacturers or endorsers who publish false and misleading advertisements.
- This fine amount may be **extended up to ₹50 lakh**, and the imprisonment up to five years.
- Filing of complaints regarding violations of consumer rights or unfair trade practices with the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.

Ken-Betwa Link Project

- **Context:** Presiding over the **51st PRAGATI meeting held in New Delhi**, the Prime Minister noted that the Ken-Betwa project should serve as a **model for resolving inter-state water disputes through cooperation, timely clearances, technology-based monitoring, and planned implementation**.

About the Ken-Betwa Link Project

- The Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) is **India's first initiative** being implemented by the Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority under the National Perspective Plan (NPP) formulated in **1980 for the interlinking of rivers**.
- It aims to transfer surplus water from the **Ken River in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa River in Uttar Pradesh, a tributary of the Yamuna**.

Phases of the Project

- Phase I: Construction of the Daudhan Dam complex, lower and upper-level tunnels, the Ken-Betwa Link Canal, and powerhouses.
- Phase II: Development of the Lower Orr Dam (across a tributary of the Betwa), the Bina Complex Project, and the Kotha Barrage.

Benefits

- Irrigation for 6.3 lakh hectares of land annually.
- Drinking water supply for 62 lakh people.
- The project includes provisions for hydroelectric power generation (100 MW) and solar power generation (27 MW).

Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0

- **Context:** The Prime Minister has emphasized the necessity of effectively implementing Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0. Furthermore, he underscored that this mission must move beyond mere infrastructure creation to ensure measurable outcomes through continuous monitoring, citizen participation, and coordination among various stakeholders.

About Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0

- Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0, being implemented from 2021 to 2026, aims to transform all Indian cities into 'Garbage-Free Cities.'
- The program focuses on 100% source segregation of waste, bio-remediation of legacy dumpsites, and scientific waste management.
- Additionally, it emphasizes used water management and sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) sanitation standards across the country.

Key Objectives

- **Garbage-Free Cities:** A complete and sustainable transition towards total sanitation and 100% solid waste processing.

- **Legacy Waste Management:** The removal and bio-remediation of legacy dumpsites to reclaim urban land.

- **Used Water Management:** The treatment and reuse of greywater and sewage, particularly in cities with a population of less than one lakh that do not fall under the AMRUT scheme.

- **Sanitation:** Sustaining the existing Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in Urban Local Bodies and upgrading them to ODF+ and ODF++ standards.

Key Components

- **Solid Waste Management (SWM):** Door-to-door collection, source segregation of waste, and the establishment of centralized/decentralized waste processing and composting plants.

- **Safaimitra Suraksha:** Protecting sanitation workers by mechanizing sewage and septic tank cleaning operations.

- **Plastic Waste Management:** Phasing out single-use plastics and effectively managing Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste.

Target Beneficiaries and Financial Allocation

- **Coverage:** All statutory towns in India.
- **Financial Allocation:** Estimated at ₹1.41 lakh crore for the SBM-U 2.0 scheme.
- **Funding Mechanism:** This is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**, wherein funds are released to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) based on the achievement of specific targets, such as securing a **minimum '1-Star Garbage Free City' certification**.

Key Initiatives

- **Swachh Survekshan:** The world's largest annual cleanliness survey (implemented by QCI).
- **LiFE, Mera Swachh Shehar' Campaign:** Promotes 'Mission LiFE' and behavioral change among citizens.

- **National BCC Framework for GFC:** Strengthens public participation (Jan Andolan) to create 'Garbage Free Cities' (GFC).

Sikkim - Literate State

- **Context:** Sikkim has become a fully literate state under the ULLAS - Nav Bharat Sakshardha Karyagram scheme on 27th May 2026.
- The literacy rate achieved is 99.82%.
- The Union Education Ministry's target for "Full Literacy" is 95%.
- ULLAS scheme was launched in Sikkim on 14th November 2022.
- Areas covered:
 - All 6 districts
 - 34 blocks
 - Gram Panchayats and wards.

About ULLAS - Nav Bharat Sakshardha Karyagram scheme

- ULLAS stands for: Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society.
- This is a **Centrally funded scheme to be implemented during the period 2022-2027.**
- The scheme is designed in line with the objectives of the **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).**
- The main target of this scheme is the **elderly/adults aged 15 years and above who have missed out on formal schooling.**
- Its primary objective is to educate illiterate adults and integrate them into the society and the economy of the country.
- The vision of this scheme is "**Jan Jan Sakshar**" (**Literacy for every person**).
- The scheme is implemented through voluntary work based on the noble objective of "**Kartavya Bodh**" (**Sense of Duty**).
- It has **five main components:**
 - Basic Literacy and Numeracy
 - Essential Life Skills
 - Basic Education

- Vocational Skills
- Continuing Education

- The ULLAS app is used to register learners and volunteers.
- This registration can be done by users themselves or through enumerators.
- The app acts as a digital gateway to access learning resources through **NCERT's DIKSHA website.**

DIESEL-ISOBUTANOL BLENDING FROM '26

- **Context:** INDIA is set to introduce a mandate for blending isobutanol with diesel later this year, **Road Transport and Highways Secretary** said at CII Multimodal Transportation and Logistics Summit in New Delhi.

About Isobutanol

- **Isobutanol (C₄H₁₀O)** is a **four-carbon alcohol** that appears as a clear, combustible liquid.
- It has a **higher energy content than ethanol**, making it an attractive alternative fuel component.
- Besides its traditional **use as a solvent in paints and coatings**, it is increasingly being evaluated as a renewable blending agent for diesel fuels.

Production Process

- Isobutanol is manufactured through the **fermentation of sugar-rich feedstocks** such as sugarcane juice, molasses, and cereal grains.
- Specially engineered microorganisms convert these sugars into isobutanol under controlled, sterile fermentation conditions.
- In sugar-processing facilities, production typically requires modifications to existing fermentation vessels along with distillation systems capable of separating both **ethanol and isobutanol** from the fermentation broth.

Key Characteristics

- **Improved Safety:** Isobutanol has a higher flash point than ethanol, making it less volatile and safer to handle when blended with diesel fuel.
- **Superior Blend Compatibility:** It mixes more effectively with diesel and generally does not require additional additives to maintain blend stability.
- **Higher Energy Content:** Its greater calorific value compared to ethanol can contribute to better fuel economy and engine performance.
- **Adaptable Manufacturing:** Isobutanol can be produced alongside ethanol using existing biofuel infrastructure with only limited equipment upgrades.
- **Environmental Advantages:** Its use as a fuel blendstock may help reduce particulate matter emissions and lower the overall carbon footprint of transportation fuels.

Weather monitoring system

- **Context:** Union Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences on Friday inaugurated **India's first "SkyCast" aviation weather monitoring system at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in New Delhi**, saying the country has entered a new era of **"fog-free, weather-smart aviation"**.
- Developed under the Centre's **"Mission Mausam"** initiative, the advanced integrated atmospheric monitoring system is designed to provide **real-time weather intelligence to pilots**, airlines and airport operators, helping reduce flight delays, diversions and cancellations caused by fog, turbulence and poor visibility."

About Mission Mausam

- Mission Mausam was introduced by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences in 2024**.
- The programme is being carried out by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, the **National Centre for Medium-Range Weather**

Forecasting (NCMRWF), and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

- Its purpose is to strengthen weather and climate-related services by providing accurate and timely observations, forecasting, and modeling support for sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, and rural development.

Objectives of Mission Mausam

- To improve India's weather forecasting capabilities for **short-term, medium-range, extended-range, and seasonal periods**.
- To create advanced **high-resolution forecasting models** for more reliable monsoon predictions.
- To deliver useful **weather-based advisories** for sectors including agriculture, water management, energy, healthcare, and disaster preparedness.
- To promote **scientific research and capacity building** through partnerships with national and global institutions.

Importance of Mission Mausam

- It represents a major step forward in strengthening India's ability to manage climate variability and its socio-economic consequences.
- The mission contributes to sustainable development by protecting people, livelihoods, and essential infrastructure from weather- and climate-related risks.

Nirbhay Raho' initiative

- **Context:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj successfully conducted a **three-day national Training of Trainers program** in New Delhi.
- The program focused on legal provisions for **women's security**, marking a major step forward for the Ministry's newly launched **'Nirbhay Raho'** initiative.

About Nirbhay Raho Initiative

- The Nirbhay Raho Initiative is a nationwide programme focused on **gender-responsive governance and strengthening grassroots institutions**.
- It is funded and implemented through the **Union Government's Nirbhaya Fund, which is a non-lapsable fund** dedicated to **women's safety and empowerment**.
- The initiative aims to **transform local self-government bodies into strong support systems** that ensure the protection and well-being of women.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The programme is overseen by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India**
- **Aim**
 - The initiative seeks to reduce gender-based discrimination and violence at the grassroots level by **creating inclusive, sensitive, and women-friendly Panchayats**.
 - It aims to empower rural leaders with legal knowledge, survivor-focused approaches, and first-response skills to improve women's safety and access to justice in rural areas.

Key Features

- **Nirbhay Netri (Strengthening Women Leaders)**
 - Focuses on training and capacity building of **approximately 14.5 lakh Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)**.
 - Enhances their legal awareness and leadership skills to effectively address safety and security issues within their communities.
- **Nirbhay Chetna (Engaging Male Representatives)**
 - Targets **around 17.5 lakh Male Elected Representatives** across the country.

- Promotes gender sensitivity, challenges patriarchal attitudes, and encourages male leaders to actively support women's safety and equality initiatives.

▪ Nirbhay Drishti (Improving Safety Infrastructure)

- Supports the development of **technology-based safety measures** in rural areas.
- Provides funding for the installation of CCTV surveillance systems at key locations within Gram Panchayats to enhance security and monitoring.

Kala-II Hydroelectric Project and the White-bellied Heron

- **Context:** The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), operating under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has granted in-principle forest clearance for the **'Kala-II Hydroelectric Project'**.
- This has sparked concerns regarding the potential impacts that the project could have on the habitat of the **White-bellied Heron**.

Kala-II Hydroelectric Project

- The **'Kala-II Hydroelectric Project'**, with a **capacity of 1,200 MW**, is a run-of-river scheme proposed by THDC India Limited.
- The project is situated in the **Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh**, located in close proximity to the India-China border
- The project involves the construction of a **128.5-meter-high concrete gravity dam**, along with an associated underground powerhouse.

White-bellied Heron

- **Scientific Name:** *Ardea insignis*
- **Ecological Significance:** It is considered a key indicator species reflecting the health and integrity of riverine ecosystems.

- **IUCN Red List Status:** Critically Endangered.
- Globally, the distribution of this species is extremely limited; it is primarily found in **Bhutan, India, and Myanmar**.
- Within India, it is predominantly found only in specific pockets of **Arunachal Pradesh and Assam**.

Threats Posed by the Project

- The **Lohit River basin** serves as one of the most critical habitats for the '**White-bellied Heron**'.
- Reports indicate that these herons have been sighted in areas such as **Walong, Sengkhung, and the Kamlang Tiger Reserve area**, which is situated in the lower reaches of the river.
- Since forests and riverbank areas are liable to become submerged, there is a risk that the sites essential for the breeding, foraging, and nesting of storks could be destroyed; this poses a grave threat to the very survival of the species.

Babesiosis Infection

- **Context:** The deaths of **eight lion cubs** in **Gujarat**—suspected to be caused by a **Babesiosis infection**—have raised concerns regarding the health and safety of Asiatic lions.
- Babesiosis is a **parasitic infection** primarily transmitted through the bites of infected ticks.
- Infected animals may exhibit symptoms such as fever, weakness, coughing, and a runny nose.
- It is a **zoonotic disease**, meaning it can be transmitted from animals to humans.
- Mild to moderate infections are typically treated with a **combination of atovaquone and azithromycin administered over a period of 7 to 10 days**.

The Future of India's Semiconductor Sector: A 10-Year Action Plan (2026–2035)

- **Context:** NITI Aayog's 'Frontier Technologies Hub' has released **India's first comprehensive 10-year action plan** titled "**The Future of India's Semiconductor Sector**."

Importance of Semiconductors

- **Semiconductors are critical for:** National Security, Economic Stability, Digital Sovereignty, and Future Technological Competitiveness.
- **They power sectors such as:** Defense Systems, Telecommunications, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Automotive, Healthcare Devices, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), and Advanced Manufacturing.

Vision and Goal

- Aims to build a semiconductor **value chain worth US\$ 120–150 billion by the year 2035**.
- Seeks to transform India from being merely a major consumer of semiconductors into a key partner within the global semiconductor value chain.

Five Strategic Pillars

- **Frontier Research & Design IP:** Fostering cutting-edge research and innovation in semiconductor design.
- **Policy & Investment:** Mobilizing long-term capital and incentivizing investments.
- **Manufacturing:** Focusing on advanced packaging and compound semiconductor manufacturing.
- **Talent:** Cultivating skilled talent across the entire workforce ecosystem of the semiconductor sector.
- **Partnerships:** Strengthening collaboration with trusted nations and global industry leaders.

Key Objectives

- Positioning India as a **world-leading hub for advanced packaging and OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test)**.
- Emerging as a key supplier of **wide-bandgap semiconductors**.
- Fostering leadership in compound semiconductor manufacturing.
- Strengthening advanced semiconductor design capabilities.
- Generating over **100 advanced semiconductor design-related Intellectual Property (IP) assets**.

Alignment with National Initiatives

- It supports the objectives of the '**India Semiconductor Mission**,' as announced in the **Union Budget of 2026**.
- It signifies India's evolutionary transition from: **Ecosystem Creation → Ecosystem Deepening**
- It focuses on strengthening the following areas: **Design, Materials, Manufacturing, Packaging, Skill Development, Research & Development, and Trusted Global Partnerships**.

Launch of Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) and Maritime Digital Initiatives

- **Context:** Union Minister launched the **Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI) FY 2024-25** and **four major digital initiatives** during the **37th Foundation Day celebrations of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority in Mumbai**.

Logistics Port Performance Index (LPPI)

- Serves as a national benchmarking tool to evaluate and improve port performance.
- **Aligned with:**
 - PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan
 - Maritime India Vision 2030
 - Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047

- Aims to enhance **efficiency, transparency, and global competitiveness** of Indian ports.

Four Digital Initiatives Launched by Directorate General of Shipping

- **24x7 Grievance Redressal Module** under the **e-Navik Platform**.
- **Ship Registration Module** on the **e-Samudra Platform**.
- **Medical Practitioner Module**.
- **Unified Ship Recycling Credit Note Module**.

Significance of Digital Initiatives

- Improves transparency, accountability, and service delivery.
- Simplifies vessel registration procedures.
- Strengthens monitoring of authorized medical practitioners for seafarers.
- Reduces fraudulent medical certifications.

Major Port Rankings under LPPI

- **Dry Bulk Cargo:** Paradip Port Authority ranked first.
- **Liquid Bulk Cargo:** Sikka Port and Terminals ranked first.
- **Container Cargo:** Mundra Port ranked first.
- JNPA secured second position among major container ports.

Other Key Initiatives Highlighted

- Launch of indigenous **Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)**.
- Introduction of AI-powered tender evaluation platform – **NIVIDA**.
- Signing of multiple strategic MoUs.

India's Logistics Achievement

- India's ranking in the **World Bank Logistics Performance Index improved from 44th to 22nd** in the International Shipments category.

- Seven Indian ports featured among the world's top 100 ports in the World Bank Container Port Performance Index 2024.

SkyCast System: India's First Advanced Aviation Weather Intelligence System

- **Context:** Union Minister inaugurated India's first SkyCast System at Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- India has become the 19th country in the world to deploy this advanced integrated atmospheric remote sensing system.
- The next SkyCast facility will be established at Noida International Airport.

About SkyCast System

- Developed under **Mission Mausam**.
- An advanced aviation weather monitoring and forecasting system.
- Provides **real-time atmospheric information** for safer aviation operations.
- Helps reduce flight disruptions caused by: **Fog, Turbulence, Adverse weather conditions**

Key Features

- Provides advance weather alerts to pilots and aircrew up to three hours in advance.
- Supports safer take-offs and landings.
- Reduces flight diversions, delays, and cancellations.
- Offers accurate nowcasting and early warning services.

Technologies Integrated in SkyCast

- Radar Wind Profiler
- SODAR (Sonic Detection and Ranging)
- Microwave Radiometer
- Ground-based Fog Aerosol Spectrometer (GFAS)
- CL61 Lidar-based Ceilometer

Core Component: Radar Wind Profiler

- The Radar Wind Profiler continuously measures atmospheric conditions up to 3 km above the airport, including **wind speed, wind direction, turbulence, vertical velocity, and boundary-layer dynamics**, providing critical information for safe aircraft descent and landing operations.

Fog Monitoring Capabilities

- Ground-based Fog Aerosol Spectrometer (GFAS)
 - Measures: **Fog droplets, Aerosols, Aerosol-fog interactions**
 - Particularly useful in urban areas like **Delhi** where pollution affects visibility.
- CL61 Lidar-based Ceilometer
 - Monitors the vertical structure of fog.
 - Helps assess: **Fog formation, Visibility reduction, Atmospheric conditions impacting aviation.**

Origin of the Project

- Based on findings from the **Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX)**.
- WiFEX was launched jointly by: **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and India Meteorological Department**

Benefits Beyond Aviation

- Enhances **weather forecasting accuracy**.
- Supports: **Artificial Intelligence-enabled decision support systems**, Urban weather forecasting, Pollution management, Transport advisories, Disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

NATIONAL SCHEMES

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- **Context:** The Centre may roll out a fresh electric bus scheme for States after completing the tendering and allocation of all 14,000 buses under the PM E-DRIVE programme,

About PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- The PM E-DRIVE (Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement) programme, introduced in October 2024 and operational from October 1, 2024,
- It is a major government initiative aimed at boosting the adoption of electric mobility in India.
- Its core purpose is to promote the use of electric vehicles (EVs), expand charging infrastructure, and strengthen the domestic EV manufacturing ecosystem.
- The scheme focuses on accelerating the shift toward EVs by providing upfront financial incentives for buyers and encouraging the development of widespread charging facilities.

Key Components of the Scheme

- Financial support is offered for the purchase of various electric vehicles, including electric two-wheelers (e-2W), three-wheelers (e-3W), e-ambulances, e-trucks, and other emerging EV segments.
- Funds are allocated for procuring electric buses, setting up a large-scale charging network, and modernizing testing infrastructure under the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- Covers administrative expenses, Information, Education & Communication (IEC) activities, and fees for the Project Management Agency (PMA).

Eligibility Criteria

- Be registered as motor vehicles under the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR).
- Use advanced battery technologies.

Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling

- **Context :** The Ministry of Mines has approved 58 companies under the **Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling**, marking a major step in strengthening India's critical mineral security and circular economy.
- The scheme, notified on 2nd October last year, has a total outlay of Rs.1,500 crore and is part of the broader National Critical Mineral Mission.
- It aims to develop domestic recycling capacity for critical minerals from lithium-ion batteries, e-waste, and industrial scrap to reduce import dependence and support clean energy and advanced manufacturing.

About Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling

- The **Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling** is part of the National Critical Mineral Mission, aimed at strengthening domestic capacity and supply chain resilience in critical minerals.
- The scheme has a tenure of six years (FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31) and focuses on recycling of **e-waste, lithium-ion battery scrap, and other industrial scrap** to recover critical minerals.
- It supports both large recyclers and small/new recyclers (including start-ups), with one-third of the total outlay reserved for smaller players to encourage wider participation.
- Incentives are provided for full recycling value chains (not just black mass production), including a **20% capital subsidy** on plant and machinery and an operational subsidy linked to incremental sales performance.

- Financial support is capped at Rs.50 crore for large entities and Rs.25 crore for small entities, with structured operational subsidies released in phases based on production milestones.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the **5th edition of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** to mitigate economic impacts of the **West Asia crisis**.
- The scheme provides **additional credit guarantees** to **MSMEs and non-MSMEs**, including sectors like **aviation**.
- The objective is to **help businesses overcome liquidity stress, sustain operations, and prevent economic slowdown** due to external shocks.
- The scheme reflects the government's focus on **financial stability, credit support, and economic resilience** during global crises.

About Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

- The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) was **launched during the COVID-19 pandemic** to provide **liquidity support to businesses, especially MSMEs** affected by lockdowns.
- It offers **100% credit guarantee** by the government to **banks and NBFCs** for loans extended to eligible borrowers.
- The scheme covers **existing loan outstanding as on February 29, 2020**, enabling additional **working capital and term loans**.
- It aims to **reduce credit risk for lenders and ensure easy access to finance for stressed businesses**.
- The objective is to **support business continuity, protect jobs, and stabilise the economy during crisis situations**.

Mission for Cotton Productivity

- **Context :** The Union Cabinet approved the Mission for Cotton Productivity for the period **2026-27 to 2030-31** to address **low productivity, quality issues, and stagnation in the cotton sector**.
- It is aligned with the government's **5F vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign)** to strengthen the textile value chain.
- The mission focuses on developing **high-yielding, climate-resilient, and pest-resistant seed varieties to improve productivity**.
- It promotes modern cultivation practices such as **High Density Planting System and Integrated Cotton Management**.
- It emphasises **Extra Long Staple cotton to enhance quality and boost exports**.
- It aims to strengthen ginning, processing, and testing infrastructure to meet global quality standards.
- It will be implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** and the **Ministry of Textiles**, with support from **Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research**.
- The mission will initially **cover 140 districts in 14 states** and 2000 ginning units.
- It promotes **Kasturi Cotton Bharat for traceability, certification, and branding of Indian cotton**.
- It encourages digital integration of mandis to improve price discovery and enhance farmers' income.
- It supports sustainable practices, recycling, and diversification into natural fibres.
- It targets production of 498 lakh bales and an increase in productivity to 755 kg per hectare by 2031.

India Semiconductor Mission

- **Context** : The Union Cabinet approved two semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission.
- Total investment is about ₹3,936 crore with expected employment generation of around 2,230 skilled jobs, and both projects are located in Gujarat.
- Crystal Matrix Limited will establish a compound semiconductor fabrication and ATMP facility at Dholera for manufacturing Mini/Micro-LED display modules using Gallium Nitride technology, marking India's first commercial Mini/Micro-LED facility.

About India Semiconductor Mission

- India Semiconductor Mission was launched in 2021 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.
- It has a total financial outlay of ₹76,000 crore and aims to develop a **sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem** in the country.
- The mission provides **financial support and incentives** to companies investing in semiconductor fabrication, display manufacturing, and chip design.
- It focuses on strengthening the **entire semiconductor value chain**, including manufacturing, packaging, and design ecosystems.
- It promotes the development of **indigenous Intellectual Property (IP)** and encourages **Transfer of Technology (ToT)**.
- It includes a scheme for setting up **semiconductor fabrication plants (fabs)** in India.
- It includes a scheme for setting up **display fabrication plants (fabs)** in India.
- It also supports the establishment of **semiconductor, silicon photonics, and sensor manufacturing units**.

- It promotes **ATMP/OSAT facilities** (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging) as part of backend semiconductor manufacturing.
- The overall objective is to reduce import dependence, boost domestic manufacturing, and position India as a **global semiconductor hub**.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- **Context**: To implement the '**Self-Reliant India**' initiative within the maritime sector, the Indian Maritime Foundation signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in Chennai with IIT Mumbai, IIT Chennai, and the Indian Maritime University.

- Guided by the vision of '**Viksit Bharat 2047**' (Developed India 2047), the Central Government is actively implementing the '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**' (Self-Reliant India) initiative across various sectors.
- Accordingly, the Indian Maritime Foundation is undertaking efforts to execute various innovative projects within the maritime domain.

About the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- The Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is a major initiative launched with the **objective of transforming India into a self-reliant nation**.
- This scheme was launched on **May 13, 2020**.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, an **economic relief package worth ₹20 lakh crore** was announced to support the nation.

This initiative operates by focusing on the following five key pillars:

- Economy
- Infrastructure
- Systems
- Vibrant Demography
- Demand (Needs and Market)

Key Objectives of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan Initiative

- To **establish India as a Global Supply Chain Hub**.
- To enhance the government's confidence in the capabilities and growth potential of the private sector.
- To create effective growth catalysts (Force Multipliers) for Indian manufacturers.
- To expand opportunities for exporting products such as agricultural produce, textiles, apparel, and jewellery to global markets.
- To assess and enhance the self-reliance potential of every sector including defense, agriculture, healthcare, and infrastructure with the support of the FY22 Budget.

Key Schemes Implemented under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

Scheme to Support Startups

- A scheme aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing and promoting exports.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- A scheme providing free food and financial assistance to the poor.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- A scheme offering emergency credit assistance to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

PM SVANidhi Scheme

- A scheme providing low-interest loans to street vendors.

One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- A facility enabling individuals to procure food grains in any state using a single ration card.

PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

- A scheme providing direct financial assistance to farmers.

Make in India

- An initiative aimed at promoting manufacturing and investment within India.

Mission Mausam

- **Context:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) has established the '**Mission Mausam Urban Weather Observatory**' along with associated monitoring facilities.
- This initiative was developed by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- The primary objective of this facility is to **enhance real-time weather forecasting and climate research within an urban environment**.
- Its goal is to improve the prediction of severe weather events particularly in Chennai by studying sea-breeze and land-breeze dynamics, atmospheric aerosols, and cloud characteristics.

Introduction – 'Mission Mausam'

- Due to its diverse topography and climatic conditions, India is significantly influenced by various weather patterns and monsoon systems.
- Given that agriculture serves as a primary source of livelihood in India, accurate weather forecasting is absolutely essential.
- In recognition of this critical need, the Union Cabinet approved this project on September 11, 2024.
- This project is being implemented through the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is a major national initiative slated for implementation over a two-year period, with an estimated outlay of ₹2,000 crore.
- The objective of this project is to position India as a global leader in the fields of weather and climate science.
- Through this initiative, the ultimate goal is to transform India into a "Weather-Ready Nation" and a "Climate-Smart Nation."

- This initiative aims to provide accurate and reliable weather and climate information to several sectors Agriculture, Disaster Management and Rural Development

IndiaAI Mission

- **Context:** An MoU has been signed between **IndiaAI and the ICMR** to accelerate the responsible application of **AI in the healthcare sector**.
- Under this collaborative initiative, both organizations will effectively leverage their complementary strengths by integrating IndiaAI's computing infrastructure, data platforms, and AI skilling initiatives with the ICMR's biomedical research expertise and its '**Medical Information Data for AI Solutions**' (MIDAS) framework, thereby enabling the innovation, research, and deployment of AI-driven healthcare solutions.

About IndiaAI Mission (2024)

- The IndiaAI Mission (2024) was launched under the aegis of **the MeitY** with an outlay of **₹10,371.92 crore**, aiming to position India as a global hub for "**Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India.**"
- **Implementing Agency:** IndiaAI — an **autonomous business division** operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- **Budget:** A financial outlay of over **₹10,371.92 crore** has been allocated over a period of five years.
- **Primary Objective:** To democratize access to AI computing resources, foster sovereign AI capabilities, and promote "**AI for Social Good.**"

The Seven Pillars of the IndiaAI Mission

- **IndiaAI Compute:** Enhancing computing capabilities.

- **IndiaAI Data Platform:** A central AI data repository (AIKosh).
- **India AI Future Skills:** Building human capital ready for Artificial Intelligence.
- **Safe and Trusted AI:** Ethical and secure deployment of Artificial Intelligence.
- **India AI Innovation Centre:** Fostering research and collaboration.
- **India AI Application Development Initiatives:** Sector-specific AI solutions.
- **India AI Startup Fund:** Funding and global support for AI startups.

JANANI Platform

- **Context:** During a National Conference on Best Practices, the Union Ministry of Health introduced the '**Janani**' platform to **strengthen maternal and child healthcare**.
- **Objective:** Janani is a **service-oriented digital platform** designed to comprehensively track and maintain the digital health records of women during their reproductive years.
- Developed as an enhanced version of the existing **Reproductive and Child Health (RCH)** system, this platform creates a longitudinal health record by documenting key service delivery events throughout the continuum of care.
- **Achievements:** To date, Janani has **achieved 1.34 crore beneficiary registrations**, over 30 lakh registrations of pregnant women, the generation of over 30 lakh MCH cards, and over 1 lakh biometric verifications.

Key Features of the Janani Platform:

- **Comprehensive Tracking:** It monitors the entire maternal journey, including Ante-Natal Care (ANC), delivery preparedness, institutional delivery, Post-Natal Care (PNC), and newborn/infant care.
- **QR-enabled Digital Cards:** This platform introduces **QR-enabled Maternal and Child**

Health (MCH) cards, allowing individuals to carry their medical records across various health centers.

- **Digital Authentication and Security:** Beneficiaries can register using their **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)**, Aadhaar (via OTP/biometrics), or mobile numbers.
- **Alerts for High-Risk Pregnancies:** Janani generates automated alerts for high-risk pregnancies and creates relevant lists for frontline health workers (such as ASHA workers) to facilitate timely intervention.
- **Pan-India Integration:** It features a Pan-India search facility that is essential for tracking migrant populations and ensuring continuity of care.
- **Self-Registration:** Beneficiaries can register themselves directly via the web or mobile applications, enabling them to access health-related information, details on nearby medical centers, and nutritional guidance.

Significance

- Ensuring accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare services, with a special focus on **enhancing digital accessibility, continuity of care, and improved maternal and child health outcomes.**

Jan Suraksha Schemes: 11 Years of Expanding Social Security Coverage in India

- **Context:** Three Jan Suraksha Schemes - **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)**, **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)** and **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)** complete 11 years of providing social security cover.
- These flagship schemes aim to broaden the insurance and pension landscape by shielding citizens against life's uncertainties and fostering long-term financial resilience.

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)

- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana is a government-backed life insurance scheme providing financial protection against death due to any reason.
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana was launched in May 2015 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Finance.
- The scheme offers life insurance coverage at a premium of less than ₹2 per day.
- PMJJBY is a one-year renewable insurance scheme valid from 1 June to 31 May every year.

Eligibility

- All individual bank or post office account holders **aged 18 to 50 years are eligible to join the scheme.**
- Subscribers must provide consent for auto-debit of the premium from their bank or post office account.
- The annual premium under the scheme is ₹436 per member.

Benefits

- The scheme provides an **insurance cover of ₹2 lakh in case of the subscriber's death due to any cause.**
- A lien period of 30 days is applicable from the date of enrolment.

Significance

- PMJJBY enhances **financial security for economically vulnerable families.**
- The scheme supports the government's agenda of financial inclusion and social security coverage for all citizens.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)

- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana is a **government-backed accident insurance scheme providing coverage against accidental death and disability.**
- The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, launched **on May 9th 2015**, is a flagship social

security initiative of the Government of India.

- The scheme offers **insurance coverage up to ₹2 lakh at a very low premium of less than ₹2 per month.**

Key Features

- PMSBY is a **one-year renewable insurance scheme valid from 1 June to 31 May every year.**
- The scheme is administered through **Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs)** and other participating general insurance companies.
- Banks and post offices act as enrolment and implementation agencies for the scheme.

Eligibility

- All individual bank or post office account holders aged **18 to 70 years are eligible to enroll.**
- Subscribers must provide consent for auto-debit of the premium from their account.
- An individual can enroll through only one bank or post office account, even if multiple accounts are held.

Premium

- The annual premium under **the scheme is ₹20 per member.**
- The premium is automatically deducted from the subscriber's bank or post office account through the auto-debit facility.

Insurance Benefits

- **₹2 lakh** is payable in case of accidental death or total permanent disability.
- **₹1 lakh** is payable in case of partial permanent disability due to an accident.

Significance

- PMSBY provides **affordable social security and accident insurance coverage to economically weaker sections.**
- The scheme promotes **financial inclusion and risk protection for citizens, especially low-income households.**

- It complements other social security initiatives under the government's inclusive welfare framework.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- Atal Pension Yojana was launched **to create a universal social security system, particularly for the poor, underprivileged and workers in the unorganised sector.**
- Atal Pension Yojana is a government-supported **pension initiative introduced in 2015** with the objective of providing social security and old-age income protection to workers employed in the unorganised sector.
- The scheme aims **to provide financial security and pension support during old age.**
- APY is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority under the framework of the National Pension System.

Eligibility

- The scheme is **open to all bank account holders aged 18 to 40 years.**
- Only individuals who are not income tax payers are eligible to join the scheme.
- The contribution amount varies according to the pension amount selected by the subscriber.

Pension Benefits

- Subscribers receive a guaranteed minimum monthly pension **after attaining 60 years of age.**
- Pension options available under the scheme are: **₹1,000 per month, ₹2,000 per month, ₹3,000 per month, ₹4,000 per month, ₹5,000 per month.**
- The pension amount depends on the subscriber's contribution and age of entry into the scheme.

Disbursement of Benefits

- After the subscriber's death, **the pension is payable to the spouse.**
- After the death of both subscriber and spouse, **the accumulated pension corpus is returned to the nominee.**

- In case of premature death of the subscriber before 60 years, the spouse can continue contributing to the APY account until the subscriber would have attained 60 years.

Significance

- APY strengthens old-age income security for workers in the unorganised sector.
- The scheme promotes financial inclusion and social protection for economically vulnerable populations.
- It contributes to building a sustainable pension culture in India.

National AI Skill Development Program for the Creative Sector

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, in collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)**, has launched a National AI Skill Development Program for the creative sector.
- This program was developed in partnership with **Google and YouTube**.
- Implemented by **The Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)**.

Objectives

- To build industry-ready AI skills within the creative sector and to **strengthen India's creative economy**.
- To **provide 15,000 AI skill scholarships** across creative domains such as media, animation, gaming, and digital storytelling.
- To cover areas such as **Generative AI, Prompting, Workflow Automation, and Responsible AI**, aligned with industry requirements.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

- **Context:** During the cycle of the 15th Finance Commission, provisions have been made to facilitate the **establishment of over 400,000 micro-enterprises** through the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

- Furthermore, through this scheme, employment opportunities have been created for more than 3.6 million people.

About Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

- This is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in **August 2008**.
- It is a credit-linked subsidy scheme administered by the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)**.
- The scheme aims to **create self-employment opportunities** for **first-generation entrepreneurs** and to **foster sustainable livelihoods** in the manufacturing and service sectors particularly in rural areas.
- This scheme is implemented by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.

Eligibility for the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

- Any individual aged **18 years or above** is **eligible for this scheme**.
- There is **no income ceiling** for availing financial assistance to set up projects under the PMEGP.
- For setting up projects with a value exceeding ₹10 lakhs in the manufacturing sector, and projects exceeding ₹5 lakhs in the business/service sector, beneficiaries **must possess a minimum educational qualification of having passed the 8th grade**.

Government Launches VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 Replacing MGNREGA

- **Context:** Government of India notified the implementation of the **Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G] Act, 2025** on 11 May 2026.
- The Act will be implemented across the country from **1 July 2026**.

Replacement of MGNREGA

- With the enforcement of the new law, **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** will stand repealed from the same date.
- The transition marks a major shift in **India's rural development and employment framework.**

Objective of the New Act

- The VB-G RAM G Act aims to promote integrated, productivity-oriented and future-ready rural transformation aligned with the vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047.**

Enhanced Employment Guarantee

- Every rural household with adult members willing to undertake unskilled manual work will receive a statutory **guarantee of 125 days of wage employment annually.**
- The increased employment guarantee is intended to **strengthen livelihood security and improve rural incomes.**

Unemployment Allowance

- Employment must be provided within the prescribed timeframe after demand for work is made.
- If employment is not provided, eligible workers will receive unemployment allowance as per the provisions of the Act.

Wage Payment Provisions

- Wages will continue to be transferred directly into workers' **bank or post office accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).**
- Wage payments must be made **weekly or within 15 days after closure of the muster roll.**
- Workers will be entitled to compensation in case of delayed wage payments.

Budget Allocation

- For the financial year 2026–27, the Central Government has allocated ₹95,692.31 crore for the programme.

- It is the **highest-ever Budget Estimate allocation for a rural employment scheme in India.**

- Including State contributions, the total programme outlay is expected to exceed ₹1.51 lakh crore.

Expected Benefits

- The programme is expected to boost rural infrastructure development, employment generation and enhancement of rural incomes.

Smooth Transition from MGNREGA

- Employment under MGNREGA will continue **without interruption until the new Act comes into force.**
- Ongoing works under MGNREGA as of 30 June 2026 will be seamlessly carried forward under the new framework.

Support to States and UTs

- The Government has provided adequate labour budget allocations to **States and Union Territories according to demand and field requirements.**
- The aim is to **ensure that no eligible rural household faces inconvenience during the transition period.**

Features of the VB-G RAM G Framework

- The main objective of the scheme is to provide a legal guarantee of wage employment to rural households while **promoting the creation of durable and quality rural infrastructure assets.**
- The programme seeks to connect rural employment generation with larger national economic and infrastructure goals through integration of **Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans with initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti.**
- The proposed legislation is designed to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- The guaranteed annual wage employment for each rural household has been increased

from 100 days to 125 days under the new framework.

- The funding pattern for wages has been revised to a 60:40 sharing arrangement between the Centre and the States, replacing the earlier system where unskilled wages were fully financed by the Central Government.

Sahayog Portal

- **Context:** The Cyber Crime Division has sent a letter to the platform 'X' (formerly Twitter), requesting the removal of posts that disrupt public peace.
- The Sahayog Portal is an online platform launched in October 2024 to facilitate the rapid removal of illegal content from the internet.

About the Sahayog Portal

- It is an online platform launched in October 2024 to facilitate the rapid removal of illegal content from the internet.
- It enables government agencies to send direct removal notices to social media platforms and other online intermediaries.
- It derives its statutory backing from Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- It ensures that intermediaries act swiftly while retaining their 'Safe Harbour' protections.
- Nodal Ministry: Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Features of the Sahayog Portal

- Connects government agencies, State/Union Territory Nodal Officers, and 65 online intermediaries on a single platform.
- Sends rapid, documented notices to intermediaries for the immediate removal of illegal content.
- Operates under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, thereby ensuring legal enforceability and consequences for non-compliance.

PM MITRA Textile Park

- **Context:** India's first fully operational, mega PM MITRA Textile Park is located in Warangal, Telangana.
- Inaugurated by the Prime Minister, this massive facility valued at ₹1,695 crore spans an area of 1,300 acres.
- It operates based on the '5F' vision (Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign) to boost the domestic textile industry.
- **Employment Generation:** Expected to create more than 24,000 jobs across the entire textile value chain.

About PM MITRA Textile Park

- The Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) scheme establishes mega textile hubs.
- These hubs bring together every stage of textile production—such as spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing, and garment manufacturing—under one roof.
- Each park covers a vast area (approximately 1,000 acres or more) and functions as a comprehensive ecosystem for textile manufacturing.
- MITRA Parks can be either **greenfield (new)** or **brownfield (existing)** projects.
- The scheme is inspired by the vision: "Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign."
- Furthermore, it aims to make Indian textiles affordable, quick to market, and of high quality.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Textiles

Key Features of PM MITRA Parks

- Each park consolidates spinning, garment manufacturing, dyeing, and processing activities within a single zone, thereby reducing transportation time and costs.

World-Class Infrastructure

- These parks feature modern roads, reliable power and water supply, worker dormitories, logistics facilities, and ready-to-use factory units. Furthermore, they provide dedicated spaces for research, skill development, and commercial operations.
- PM MITRA allocates 50% of the park area for core manufacturing activities, 20% for common utility facilities, and 10% for commercial development.

Employment and Investment

- Each park is expected to generate 100,000 direct and 200,000 indirect jobs.
- The scheme aims to attract investments exceeding ₹70,000 crore.

Public-Private Partnership

- The PM MITRA Park will be established through a 'Special Purpose Vehicle' (SPV); this entity will operate under a 'Public-Private Partnership' (PPP) model, jointly owned by the State Government and the Government of India.

Capital Support and Incentives

- The Ministry of Textiles will provide financial assistance of up to ₹800 crore per park for 'Greenfield' projects and up to ₹500 crore per park for 'Brownfield' projects.
- State Governments will provide the necessary land and upgraded basic utility infrastructure for these proposed mega textile parks.

PM MITRA Parks location

- These seven approved PM MITRA Parks are being established at the following locations: Tamil Nadu (Virudhunagar), Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow District), and Maharashtra.

Project Cheetah: India's Cheetah Conservation Initiative

- Context: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister released two female cheetahs brought from

Botswana into an open forest in the **Kuno National Park** following the completion of their quarantine period.

- The reintroduction of cheetahs brought from Nigeria, South Africa, and now Botswana is achieving consistent success, and today **Madhya Pradesh has earned nationwide recognition as the 'Cheetah State'**.
- This will give impetus to 'Project Cheetah' and add another important chapter to India's wildlife conservation history.
- The objective of the project is **to restore the endangered animal species in the state, increase their numbers, and prepare them for free hunting and roaming.**

Project Cheetah

- Project Cheetah is India's premier wildlife conservation initiative focused on bringing back cheetahs, which were **declared extinct in the country in 1952.**
- The programme represents a landmark ecological effort, as **India became the first nation** to undertake the intercontinental relocation and reintroduction of an extinct large carnivore species.
- The Government of India officially **launched the project in 2022.**
- The first group of African cheetahs was translocated from **Namibia to Kuno National Park in 2022.**
- A second batch of cheetahs was brought from **South Africa in 2023 to strengthen the reintroduction programme.**
- The project is being carried out under the supervision of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** with assistance from Indian and international wildlife specialists.

Major Objectives of Project Cheetah

- To reintroduce cheetahs into the Indian ecosystem after an absence of over seven decades.

- **To create a self-sustaining and genetically healthy cheetah** population in natural habitats over the long term.
- **To revive and conserve grassland** and savannah ecosystems, which have historically received limited conservation attention in India.
- **To enhance biodiversity** by restoring the role of a top predator within the ecological food chain.
- **To encourage eco-tourism** opportunities and support livelihood generation for local communities through public participation.
- **To reinforce India's position** as a global leader in wildlife protection, ecological restoration, and species recovery initiatives.
- Based on the source of the raw material, ethanol is classified into three generations
- **1G Ethanol:** Derived from food crops such as sugarcane and maize.
- **2G Ethanol:** Derived from crop residues, bagasse (sugarcane pulp), and bamboo.
- **3G Ethanol:** Derived from algae; this remains in the Research and Development (R&D) phase.
- **Miscibility:** Ethanol is 99.9% pure alcohol, and due to its chemical compatibility, it blends with petrol.
- Ethanol blending improves fuel combustion and reduces carbon monoxide (CO₂) and hydrocarbon emissions.

Ethanol Blending Program

- **Context:** India is currently exploring the possibility of utilizing 100% ethanol as an alternative to petrol. This solution is being advanced during a period of critical challenges.
- While this news may seem astonishing to us, it is not novel to Brazil. Since 2003, a vehicular fuel blend consisting of 95.6% ethanol and 4.4% water has been in use there.
- **Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP):** Aims to reduce import dependency, save foreign exchange, boost the domestic agricultural sector, and yield associated environmental benefits.
- The blending ratio has risen from 1.5% (2014) to 10% (2022), and is targeted to reach 20% by 2025.
- **E27 Target:** India aims to achieve a 27% ethanol blend by 2030, supported by a phased approach.

About Ethanol

- Ethanol (C₂H₅OH) is a renewable, flammable, and colorless bio-alcohol used as a transportation fuel.
- It is produced either through the fermentation of sugars/starches or via the hydration of ethylene.
- Ethanol possesses a high octane rating but has an energy density that is 27% lower than that of petrol.
- It functions both as an additive when blended with petrol and as a standalone fuel (E85, E100) in flex-fuel vehicles.
- Ethanol is also utilized in the manufacture of disinfectants, perfumes, beverages, and industrial solvents.
- To ensure consumer awareness, the ethanol blend percentage must be mandatorily displayed on fuel pumps and vehicles.

The POCSO Act

Historical Background

- In 1992, by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), India assumed international obligations to strengthen its child protection laws.
- All these developments collectively paved the way for the enactment of the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)**

Act, 2012, which was notified on November 14, 2012.

Objectives of the POCSO Act

- To protect children under the age of 18 from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and exposure to pornography.
- To protect both boys and girls equally, thereby ensuring non-discriminatory legal action.
- To provide a safe environment for reporting, medical examination, and investigation, with the aim of minimizing psychological trauma.
- To establish Special Courts to ensure the timely disposal of cases within a stipulated timeframe.
- To impose stringent penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty (introduced post-2019).

Government Initiatives for Child Protection

- **POCSO Act (2012) and POCSO Rules (2020)**: Provide for stringent punishments for sexual offenses against children, interim compensation, support persons, and child-friendly reporting mechanisms.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)**: Focuses on preventing female infanticide, improving the survival of the girl child, promoting education, and reducing the risk of exploitation.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**: Monitors children's rights, inspects institutions, conducts inquiries, and ensures the implementation of child protection laws.
- **PM CARES for Children Scheme (2021)**: Provides financial assistance, education, health insurance, and welfare support to children who have lost their parents due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal**: Facilitates the online reporting of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and cyber exploitation.

- **Operation Smile and Operation Muskan** (State Police): Nationwide rescue operations aimed at recovering missing and abducted children.

PM SHRI

- **Context**: The Union Ministry of Education has issued a **fresh reminder regarding the pending implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)** scheme to **West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** after Assembly elections concluded in the three States.

PM SHRI Schools Scheme

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister, approved the PM SHRI Schools Scheme.
- PM SHRI stands for **PM ScHools for Rising India**. PM SHRI is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- The scheme aims to develop more than 14,500 schools across India.
- Existing schools managed by the Central Government, State Governments, Union Territories, and local bodies will be strengthened under the scheme.
- PM SHRI Schools will serve as **model schools showcasing the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020**.

Objectives of PM SHRI Schools

- To provide high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education.
- To create joyful and student-friendly learning environments.
- To support multilingual needs and diverse academic abilities of children.
- To develop holistic and well-rounded individuals with 21st century skills.
- To promote active participation of students in the learning process.

Funding Pattern

- In **General States and Union Territories**

having a legislature, the expenditure is shared between the **Centre and the State in the ratio of 60:40**.

- For **North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir**, the **funding pattern is 90:10**, with the larger share borne by the Central Government.
- In **Union Territories** without a legislature, the **entire cost of the scheme is financed by the Central Government**.

SEHAT Initiative

- **Context:** In a significant initiative to reinforce the convergence of agriculture, nutrition, and public health, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) jointly launched **“SEHAT - Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation”**, a national mission-mode programme designed to **translate agricultural advancements into tangible health outcomes for the people of India**.
- The initiative highlights India's transition from treatment-oriented healthcare towards a system focused on **prevention and health promotion**.
- Its main aim is to **strengthen coordination among agriculture, nutrition, and public health sectors for improving overall health outcomes**.
- The programme gives importance to biofortified crops, nutrient-dense foods, integrated farming practices, and prevention of non-communicable diseases.
- SEHAT encourages the concept of **“food as medicine”** by promoting nutritious and scientifically supported agricultural methods.
- The initiative is aligned with the One Health approach, which connects human, animal, and environmental health systems.

Key Features

- Developing and promoting crop varieties that are naturally enriched with essential micronutrients such as **zinc and iron**.
- Re-emphasizing the consumption of climate-resilient and **nutrient-rich millets**, such as Kodo, Kutki, Ragi, Sorghum, and Pearl Millet.
- Encouraging rural households to integrate livestock rearing, fisheries, and beekeeping with crop cultivation to ensure diverse and balanced family nutrition.
- Implementing scientific interventions and awareness programs to protect farmers from the risks associated with pesticide exposure and hazardous chemicals.
- Exploring and promoting dietary alternatives that can act as therapeutic agents to prevent and manage lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.
- Addressing the interconnected health of humans, animals, and the environment through collaborative planning between medical and agricultural scientists.
- Developing real-time dashboards and research databases to align agricultural policies with national nutrition strategies.

Extension of Samagra Shiksha and PM POSHAN Schemes

- **Context:** The Central Government has provided a temporary extension to the **Samagra Shiksha Scheme and PM Poshan** schemes till September 30, pending approval for their continuation for another five years.

About the Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- Samagra Shiksha was introduced in **2018 by the Ministry of Education** as a flagship programme for school education.
- The scheme aims to **provide equitable, inclusive, and affordable quality education across the country**.

- It covers the entire schooling cycle from pre-primary to senior secondary level.

The scheme merged three earlier programmes into one comprehensive framework

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
- Teacher Education (TE)

Objectives

- To improve the quality and efficiency of school education.
- To ensure inclusive and equitable access to education for all children.
- To strengthen holistic and integrated learning from preschool to Class 12.
- To make quality education accessible irrespective of social or regional background.

Implementation and Funding

- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Education through the Department of School Education and Literacy**.
- It functions as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- The financial sharing pattern between the **Centre and States is generally 60:40**.

NIPUN Bharat Programme

- In June 2021, the government launched the **NIPUN Bharat initiative under Samagra Shiksha**.
- The programme focuses **on children aged 3 to 9 years**.
- Its objective is to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills at an early stage of learning.

PM POSHAN Scheme

- The Government approved the PM POSHAN Scheme for the **period 2021–22 to 2025–26**.
- PM POSHAN stands for **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman**.
- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Education**.

- It provides **one hot cooked meal to children studying in Government and Government-aided schools**.

Coverage of the Scheme

- The scheme covers children from **Classes I to VIII**.
- Children enrolled in **pre-schools or Bal Vatika in primary schools are also covered**.
- The programme is implemented **across the country without discrimination** based on gender or social background.

Objectives of PM POSHAN

- PM POSHAN was earlier known as the **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**.
- The scheme seeks to **address hunger and improve educational participation among children**.

Main objectives include

- Improving nutritional status of school children
- Encouraging regular school attendance
- Supporting children from disadvantaged sections
- Enhancing concentration and classroom participation

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) - 1995

- Context:** A recent study indicates that the monthly old-age pension of Rs.200 to Rs.500 provided by the Central Government under NSAP has lost a significant portion of its value due to years of inflation.
- The report states inflation has reduced the value of pensions by approximately 45%. To maintain the same purchasing power, a Rs.200 pension should now be approximately Rs.353.

About NSAP

- Launched in 1995, it is a social welfare scheme providing financial aid to the poor and vulnerable.
- Under IGNOAPS, the Centre provides Rs.200/month for those aged 60–79 and Rs.500/month

for those 80 and above. Currently, over 221 lakh people benefit from this.

- It is a '**Centrally Sponsored Scheme**'.
- Managed by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- **Constitutional Basis:** Based on Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), which urges the state to provide public assistance to those in need.

Key Beneficiaries

- Elderly living below the poverty line (BPL).
- Widows and Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
- Families who have lost their primary breadwinner.

Sub-schemes under NSAP

- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (1995):** Old age pension for the poor.
- **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme. (2009):** Pension for widows.
- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (2009):** Pension for persons with disabilities.
- **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS - 1995):** One-time grant after the death of a primary breadwinner.
- **Annapurna Scheme (2000):** Food security for eligible seniors not receiving a pension.

DigiLocker

- **Context:** Gujarat, along with five other states, was honored for its outstanding contribution to expanding the use of DigiLocker in state government services.

About DigiLocker

- **Launched in 2015** by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** under the Digital India mission.
- It is an officially recognized government app following high security standards.
- Allows users to store authentic documents digitally (e.g., passports, mark sheets, ID proofs) for verification during travel or applications.

- **Under Rule 9A of the IT Rules, 2016,** digital documents issued via DigiLocker are legally equivalent to original physical documents.

- Promotes **paperless governance, reduces administrative overhead, and allows instant, secure document sharing.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- **Context:** In Satara, Maharashtra, the 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana' beneficiaries' conference and the 'Maha Awas Abhiyan' state-level awards ceremony were held.
- Till now, three crore houses have been built across the country under this scheme.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- This scheme was introduced in two phases
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban - in 2015
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Rural - in 2016
- **Objectives**
 - The objective s of this scheme is to **set up affordable permanent houses for poor families living in urban and rural areas.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Rural

- **Administrative Ministry**
 - This scheme operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Salient Features**

- **Selection of Beneficiaries:** Priority is given to landless families in this scheme; further, at least 60% of national-level targets are allocated for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) families.

Fund Sharing Method

- In plain areas, 60:40 ratio between the Central and State Governments
- For Northeastern and Himalayan states, 90:10 ratio
- For Union Territories, 100% Central Government financial assistance
- **Financial Assistance Provided**

- For beneficiaries in plain areas, Rs. 1.20 lakh
- For beneficiaries in hilly or difficult geographical terrain areas, Rs. 1.30 lakh

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban

- Administrative Ministry
 - This urban housing scheme is managed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Objectives
 - Providing affordable housing solutions to poor people living in urban areas, especially those living in slums, is the main objective of this scheme.
 - This scheme primarily operates as a 'Centrally Sponsored Scheme'.
- Areas Covered by the Scheme
 - All statutory towns listed in the 2011 Census, as well as towns notified later by the State Governments, come under the scope of this scheme.
- Fund Sharing Method
 - For Northeastern and Himalayan states, 90:10 fund sharing ratio
 - For Union Territories, 100% Central Government financial assistance
 - For other states and Union Territories with legislature, 60:40 fund sharing method

Scheme for Promoting Coal / Lignite Gasification Projects

- **Context** : As a measure to strengthen energy security, the Union Cabinet has approved a new scheme to **promote the process of converting coal and lignite into synthesis gas (Syngas) through gasification.**

About Coal Gasification

- Coal gasification is a **thermo-chemical process that converts coal into a versatile and combustible gas mixture called 'synthesis gas' or 'Syngas'.**
- **Syngas is a mixture of carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen, it is used to produce various by-products such as urea, methanol, synthetic natural gas (SNG), and ammonia.**

- Current status of Coal and Lignite in India: Coal reserves (401 billion tonnes); Lignite reserves (47 billion tonnes).

Objectives

- Its primary objective is to **diversify the utilization of India's vast coal reserves and to achieve the national target of 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal gasification by the year 2030.**

Key Features of the Scheme

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Coal, Government of India.
- **Financial Allocation:** A total financial allocation of ₹37,500 crore has been made to incentivize projects aiming to gasify around 75 million tonnes (MT) of coal or lignite.
- **Incentive:** Financial assistance is capped at 20% of the total cost of plant and machinery.
- **Selection Process:** Projects will be selected through a transparent and competitive bidding process, using project cost and production capacity as criteria.
- **Long-term Policy Commitment:** The government has extended the 'Coal Linkage' duration for coal gasification projects up to 30 years; this provides the stability required for long-term investments.
- **Technology-Agnostic Approach:** Although this scheme allows the use of various technologies, it actively encourages the adoption of indigenously developed coal gasification technologies.

Significance

- India's import expenditure on alternative products to coal, such as LNG and urea, stood at ₹2.77 lakh crore in the financial year 2025.
- This scheme advances a self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) by producing these domestically from indigenous coal.

National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)

- **Context:** With the vision to strengthen the concept of “**Sahakarse Samridhhi**” (Prosperity through Cooperatives) in the fisheries sector, a National Workshop on Fisheries Cooperatives was organized in Hyderabad.
- Its aim is to strengthen the fisheries cooperative ecosystem and promote “**cooperation among cooperatives**” for the inclusive and sustainable development of fishing communities and rural economies.

About the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)

- The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) was established in the year **2006**.
- It is registered as a society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- Location: **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- It is an autonomous organization under the administrative control of the **Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
- It works to enhance fish production and productivity in the country and to coordinate fisheries development in an integrated and holistic manner.

Mission Karmayogi

- **Context :** Union Minister Jitendra Singh has stated that the ‘Mission Karmayogi’ scheme is steadily progressing towards an administrative framework integrated with Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The Minister noted that ‘Mission Karmayogi’ is advancing smoothly towards an AI-integrated governance model by converging skill development, capacity building, technology, and public service delivery.

About Mission Karmayogi

- Mission Karmayogi is a **new experiment in the direction of capacity building**. Through this scheme, government employees must **modernize their thinking and approach, and enhance their skills**. This is to provide them with an opportunity to transform into a ‘Karmayogi’.
- On **September 2, 2020**, the Government approved the **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**.
- **It comprises six core pillars:** Policy Framework, Institutional Framework, Competency Framework, Digital Learning Framework (iGOT-Karmayogi), Electronic Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS), and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- **Need for the Reform:**
 - Government employees play a vital role in formulating policies and implementing them.
 - Shifting from a ‘**rules-based**’ human resource management system to a ‘**roles-based**’ system.
 - The fundamental objective of this mission is to allocate the right person to the right role at the right time.

iGOT Karmayogi Platform

- **MY iGOT:** It delivers targeted training courses directly on the homepage of every officer, specifically addressing the unique capacity-building needs of the officer as identified in the Capacity Building Plan of their respective Ministries/Departments.

Unique Identity Card Scheme

- **Context:** In **2024**, the **Central Government announced** a Unique Identity Card Scheme for farmers. As a fundamental feature of this scheme, linking **agricultural land with the Aadhaar number** has been made mandatory.

- In Tamil Nadu, there is a total of 1.23 crore acres of agricultural land and 42.52 lakh farmers.
- Under the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** scheme which has been operational since 2019-21, 57 lakh farmers in Tamil Nadu, who own less than 5 acres of land, are currently receiving benefits.
- Since it was discovered that ineligible individuals had been included as beneficiaries in this scheme, a need was felt to ensure the accuracy of beneficiary identification.
- Furthermore, allegations arose that subsidized fertilizers were being diverted for industrial use rather than for agriculture; this further reinforced the need for stricter regulatory controls.
- In this regard, although the previously launched **Soil Health Card Scheme** attempted to streamline fertilizer usage, it did not achieve the expected level of success.
- Therefore, the primary objective of the current Unique Identity Card Scheme is to **prevent the leakage and misuse of subsidies**.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a **Central Sector Scheme of the Government of India**.
- The scheme was launched in **February 2019** and was implemented with **retrospective effect from December 1, 2018**.
- Subject to certain exclusion criteria, this scheme **aims to provide financial assistance to land-holding farmer families across the country** to help them meet expenses related to agriculture, allied activities, and domestic needs.
- Under this scheme, an **annual sum of ₹6,000 is deposited directly into the bank accounts of farmers in each financial year, in three equal installments of ₹2,000 each (April-July,**

August–November, and December–March), through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Campaign)

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry stated that India has set a target to achieve exports **worth \$1 trillion this year and \$2 trillion over the next five years**.
- He emphasized that this would serve as the true hallmark of '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' (Self-Reliant India).

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Campaign)

- The '**Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**' (Self-Reliant India Campaign) reflects a broad vision for **India's economic transformation and self-reliance**.
- This initiative focuses on economic revival, promoting domestic industries, and fostering national self-reliance, while simultaneously strengthening India's participation in global supply chains.
- Through sector-specific measures, the scheme aims to generate employment, improve liquidity, expand manufacturing activities, and strengthen administrative frameworks.
- This campaign views times of crisis as an opportunity for economic reform and domestic growth.
- Inspired by the principle of "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" (The World is One Family)—enshrined in the Maha Upanishad—this initiative does not advocate for isolation from the world. Instead, it promotes strategic self-reliance by leveraging local resources, supporting Indian industries, and enhancing India's role within international markets and supply chain networks. Objectives of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- Promotion of domestic industries
- Creation of a self-reliant economy
- Integration with global supply chains
- Post-COVID-19 economic recovery
- Reforms in key economic sectors
- Support for farmers and MSMEs
- Improvement in the standard of living

ANRF Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Integrative Research Program

- **Context:** The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has selected 10 institutions under its flagship initiative, the Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Integrative Research program.

Key Objective

- The program aims to integrate science, technology, social sciences, and humanities to address complex societal and systemic challenges through multidisciplinary research.

Focus on Integrative Research

- This initiative promotes multidisciplinary and integrative research approaches to find solutions to regional and national issues.

Requirement for Collaboration

- Each Centre is required to establish inter-institutional collaborations, which may be either discipline-specific or multidisciplinary in nature.

Extensive Institutional Network

- Collectively, the selected Centres involve researchers from 20 collaborating institutions located across India.

Strong National Response

- The program received 945 proposals from academic and research institutions, demonstrating significant national interest and relevance.

Inspired by the National Education Policy 2020

- This program draws inspiration from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the integration of multidisciplinary education and research.

Alignment with Viksit Bharat 2047

- It supports the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'—to transform India into a developed, innovative, inclusive, and self-reliant nation by the year 2047.

Role of Emerging Technologies

- This initiative recognizes the critical role of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, and Big Data Analytics in driving socio-economic transformation. Contribution to Sustainable Development
- This initiative aims to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through comprehensive and knowledge-integrated solutions.

SHE-MART Initiative

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has launched a nationwide roadmap for establishing SHE-MARTs (Self Help Entrepreneurs-Marketing Avenues for Rural Transformation).

- **Main Objective:** The initiative aims to strengthen women-led enterprises, improve rural incomes, and expand market access for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across India.

Focus of Discussions

- Discussions focused on operationalising the SHE-MART initiative announced in the Union Budget 2026.
- **Key themes included:** Institutional frame works, Financing models, Governance systems Technology integration, Monitoring mechanisms, Implementation strategies, Vision for SHE-MARTs.

- Enterprise-Led Rural Markets
- The initiative emphasizes shifting from traditional livelihood promotion to enterprise-based rural market systems.

Role of States and UTs

- States and Union Territories reviewed the draft operational framework and suggested practical measures for large-scale implementation.

Convergence with VB-GRAM-G

- Discussions highlighted opportunities for convergence between SHE-MARTs and the VB-GRAM-G initiative in infrastructure, market support, and demand generation.

Key Panel Discussion

- A national panel discussion on “SHE-MARTs as a Strategic Intervention for Rural Marketing” explored scalable models for women-led rural markets.

Community Ownership and Professional Management

- Participants stressed the importance of combining professional retail management with community ownership and women-led governance.

Consensus on SHE-MART Model

- A broad consensus emerged that SHE-MARTs should function as decentralised, professionally managed, community-owned enterprise ecosystems rather than subsidy-dependent retail outlets.

Link with Lakhpati Didi Mission

- The Ministry reaffirmed its goal of creating **three crore additional “Lakhpati Didis”** by 2029 through sustainable women-led rural enterprises and marketing platforms.

Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) and Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

- **Context:** The Ministry of Rural Development held a meeting with a delegation from

the **Asian Development Bank** to discuss collaboration in the areas of land governance, digital land records modernisation, and watershed development.

- **Unique Land Parcel Identification Numbers, also known as Bhu-Aadhaar**, have already been generated for **nearly 66 per cent of agricultural land parcels in the country**.

About the Digital India Land Records

Modernization Programme (DILRMP)

- The **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)** was introduced in **2016** after restructuring the earlier National Land Records Modernization Programme.

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** implemented by the Department of Land Resources under the Ministry of Rural Development.

- The programme has been continued for the period from **2021-22 to 2025-26** with the inclusion of two additional components:

- **Computerization of all revenue courts** across the country along with their integration with land records.

- **Linking of Aadhaar numbers with Records of Rights (RoR)** based on the consent of individuals.

- The main objective of DILRMP is to **transform the existing manual and presumptive land title system into a modern digital system** with conclusive land titles.

Major Components

- **Computerisation of Records:** Includes mutations/transfers.

- **Digitisation of Maps:** Integrates textual and spatial data.

- **Survey/Re-survey:** Updates all survey and settlement records and creates original cadastral records where necessary.

- **Computerisation of Registration:** Integrates with the land records maintenance system.
- **Geospatial Information System (GIS):** Core development for enhanced land records management.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology to tackle inherited genetic disorders.
- **The programme focuses on preventing rare genetic diseases through early detection, genomic testing, and genetic counseling.**

About Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

- The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), also known as “Bhu-Aadhar,” is an initiative under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).
- It assigns a **unique 14-digit identification number** to every land parcel in the country.
- The main objective of ULPIN is to provide a **distinct identity to each surveyed piece of land and reduce cases of land fraud and disputes.**
- ULPIN also seeks to create a comprehensive database containing all relevant details related to properties across India.
- In addition, different types of land-related data currently maintained by various ministries and government departments will be integrated with the ULPIN system to ensure better coordination and accessibility of information.

UMMID Programme

- **CONTEXT:** The Union Minister of Science and Technology Dedicates UMMID Programme to the Nation, Says Genomic and Precision Medicine Will Shape the Future of Healthcare

About UMMID Programme

- The **UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and Treatment of Inherited Disorders)** programme is an initiative of the Government of India aimed at addressing inherited genetic disorders among pregnant women and newborn babies.

Objectives of the Programme

- **Prevention and Counseling:** To screen pregnant women and newborns for inherited genetic disorders and provide timely medical guidance and treatment.
- **Capacity Building:** To train doctors and healthcare professionals in areas such as molecular genetics, cytogenetics, and clinical genetics.
- **Diagnostic Network:** To establish **NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras** across the country for advanced diagnosis and comprehensive patient care.

Major Components

- **NIDAN Kendras:** Around 30 regional centers have been set up to provide prenatal testing, newborn screening, counseling, and diagnostic services in different parts of the country.
- **Training Centres:** Institutions such as All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Christian Medical College, and The Madras Medical Mission serve as centres of excellence for training healthcare professionals.
- **Screening in Aspirational Districts:** Special emphasis is given to aspirational districts for large-scale genetic screening of pregnant women and newborn children.

The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

- **Context:** The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), implemented by the National Health Authority under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, has achieved a major milestone with over **100 crore health records successfully linked with Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHA).**

- The achievement marks a significant step towards building an integrated, citizen-centric and interoperable digital healthcare ecosystem in the country.

About Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

- ABDM was officially launched nationwide on **September 27, 2021**.
- ABDM is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched to establish an integrated digital healthcare system across India.
- It aims to help citizens, healthcare providers, and insurance agencies securely store, access, and exchange health records through a common digital platform.

Purpose

- The mission seeks to **connect digital health services** to ensure continuous healthcare support and better use of healthcare resources.

Features of the Scheme

- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Duration:** 5 years
- **Implementing Agency:** National Health Authority (NHA)

Objectives

- To create a strong digital framework for India's healthcare sector.
- To improve coordination and connectivity among different stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem.

Main Components

- **ABHA and ABHA App:** ABHA provides a unique **14-digit health identification number** that allows individuals to access and manage their digital health records. The ABHA app enables users to upload and scan medical documents digitally.
- **Health Facility Registry:** A comprehensive database containing details of public and private healthcare institutions across the country.

- **Healthcare Professionals Registry:** A national database of healthcare workers, including practitioners of both modern medicine and traditional systems of medicine.

- **Unified Health Interface (UHI):** An open digital platform that supports services such as online appointments, telemedicine, and other healthcare facilities.

- **Health Information Exchange and Consent Manager (HIE-CM):** A system that allows citizens to securely share and access their health information based on informed consent.

- **National Health Claims Exchange (HCX):** A digital mechanism designed to simplify, standardize, and accelerate the processing of health insurance claims.

VB-G RAM G: New Rural Jobs Scheme

- **Context:** The new law, **Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (VB-G RAM G)**, will replace the 20-year-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act from **July 1**.

Higher Funds for Larger and Poorer States

- Central allocations to States will be based on the **16th Finance Commission's horizontal devolution formula**.

- This formula gives greater weightage to:

- **Poorer States** through Per Capita GSDP Distance (42.5% weightage).
- **Larger States** through Population (17.5% weightage).

Parameters Used for Allocation

- The allocation formula includes: Population (2011 Census), Demographic performance, Forest cover Geographical area, Per capita GSDP distance, Contribution to GDP.

Shift from Demand-Based Model

- Unlike MGNREGA's demand-driven structure, VB-G RAM G moves towards a **normative allocation model**.

- Funds will no longer automatically expand according to employment demand.

Cost Sharing Between Centre and States

- Under MGNREGA, the Centre paid **100% of wages**.
- Under VB-G RAM G, wage expenditure will be shared in a **60:40 ratio** between the Centre and States for most States.
- A **National Level Steering Committee and Central Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Council** will guide allocations, monitoring, and implementation.

Performance-Based Funding

- From the second year onward, a portion of funds will depend on States' performance based on:
 - Timely payment of wages
 - Compliance with social audits
 - Percentage of completion of works
 - Other indicators notified by the Centre

BHAVYA Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Government has issued detailed operational guidelines for the **BHAVYA Scheme**, which aims to establish 100 world-class industrial parks across India.

About the BHAVYA Scheme

- BHAVYA is a **Central Sector Scheme** focused on **developing integrated industrial ecosystems** capable of attracting both domestic and international manufacturing investments.
- The initiative is aligned with major government programmes such as: **Make in India, PM Gati Shakti, and the national manufacturing expansion strategy**.
- Its objective is to **make industrial investment more efficient, globally competitive, and easier to implement**.

Development of 100 Industrial Parks

- Under the scheme, 100 industrial parks are proposed to be developed between 2026-27 and 2031-32.

- During the first phase, up to 50 industrial parks will be selected through a competitive challenge-based process.

- States, Union Territories, and eligible agencies will compete based on: quality of infrastructure, connectivity, and investment potential.
- The competitive selection mechanism is expected to improve execution efficiency and project standards.

Main Features of the Scheme

- A major feature of BHAVYA is the emphasis on **plug-and-play industrial infrastructure**.
- This approach allows industries to begin operations quickly without long delays in obtaining basic infrastructure and utilities.
- **Facilities Proposed in Industrial Parks**
- **The industrial parks will provide:** multimodal logistics connectivity, uninterrupted water and power supply, underground utility networks, renewable energy infrastructure, housing facilities for workers, skill development centres, waste management and treatment systems, and testing laboratories.

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyuday Yojana

- **Context:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is set to launch the '**PM-AJAY**' website and the '**PM-AJAY**' mobile application to facilitate the implementation of the '**Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyuday Yojana**' (PM-AJAY) scheme.

About the 'PM-AJAY' Website and Mobile App

- The website is designed to ensure **faster and more accountable service delivery to beneficiaries**, while also facilitating seamless coordination among the various stakeholders involved in the scheme.
- The PM-AJAY Dashboard records the socio-economic developmental progress achieved in over 47,000 villages with a majority Scheduled Caste (SC) population.

- The PM-AJAY website functions as a **digital interface linked to a centralized database**, thereby enabling the release of funds based on the achievement of various milestones (key stages) of the scheme.
- The PM-AJAY mobile **application aims to provide access to scheme services via mobile devices, enhance field-level monitoring, facilitate real-time reporting, and strengthen transparency and digital governance.**

Details regarding the Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY) scheme was officially launched by the Government of India during the **financial year 2021-22.**
- This scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- The Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jati Abhyudaya Yojana (PM-AJAY) is a **scheme funded 100% by the Central Government.**
- This **scheme aims to reduce poverty prevailing among Scheduled Castes through various initiatives**, such as creating additional employment opportunities and improving socio-economic indicators in villages where Scheduled Castes constitute a majority of the population.
- It is a converged scheme formed by merging three Central Government schemes: the 'Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana' (PMAGY), the 'Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan' (SCA to SCSP), and the 'Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana' (BJRCY).

Objectives of the PM-AJAY Scheme

- To enhance the income of the target population through various income-generating schemes, skill development, and infrastructure development.
- To reduce poverty among the target population and uplift them above the poverty line.

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme

- **Context:** The Ministry of Food Processing Industries held a press briefing highlighting the progress, implementation status, and major accomplishments of the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME Scheme).

About Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme

- The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME) was **launched in 2020 by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.**
- The scheme aims to **support and formalise India's unorganised micro food processing sector.**

Need for the Scheme

- India has nearly 25 lakh unregistered and informal food processing enterprises.
- The sector faced several challenges such as: Limited access to credit, Lack of modern technology, Poor branding and packaging, Weak quality standards, Inadequate market linkages
- Strengthening food processing is important for: **Reducing food wastage, Increasing farmers' income, Generating employment opportunities.**

Objectives

- Promote formalisation and modernization of micro food processing enterprises.
- Encourage sustainable growth through cooperatives, groups, and collective enterprises.
- Improve rural food processing infrastructure and entrepreneurship.

Financial Outlay and Duration

- The centrally sponsored scheme has a **total outlay of ₹10,000 crore.**
- Initially approved for implementation from 2020–21 to 2024–25.
- The scheme has been extended until September 2026.

One District One Product (ODOP) Approach

- The scheme follows the One District One Product (ODOP) model.
- It promotes **economies of scale in procurement, processing, and marketing.**
- Traditional and indigenous products receive focused support and market visibility.

Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) Scheme

- **Context:** With the objective of making public Wi-Fi services across the country simpler, faster, and more easily accessible, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced a series of reforms under the PM-WANI (Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface) framework, designed to benefit citizens.

Objective

- The scheme aims to increase the proliferation of public Wi-Fi hotspots in the country particularly in rural areas in order to build a robust digital communication infrastructure.

About the PM-WANI Scheme

- The Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme was launched by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in December 2020.
- The scheme aims to **increase the proliferation of public Wi-Fi hotspots in the country particularly in rural areas in order to build a robust digital communication infrastructure.**
- Through improved access to public hotspots, the government aims to boost employment

opportunities for small and micro-entrepreneurs, and to provide internet access at affordable rates to the urban poor and rural households that currently lack adequate internet facilities.

- The scheme encourages local shops and establishments to provide Wi-Fi for "last-mile" internet delivery, without requiring any license or registration fees.

Components of the PM-WANI Ecosystem

- **Public Data Office (PDO):** This entity will set up, maintain, and operate WANI-compliant Wi-Fi access points to provide broadband services to subscribers. No license is required from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- **Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA):** This acts as an aggregator for Public Data Offices and handles tasks related to authorization and accounting.
- **App Provider:** This develops an application to register users, detect WANI-compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in nearby areas, and display them within the app to facilitate access to internet services.
- **Central Registry:** This maintains the details of App Providers, Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs), and Public Data Offices (PDOs).

National Health Accounts figures indicate high burden of health care costs on people

- **Context:** As per the latest figures from the **National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates for India 2022-23**, **out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE)** is nearly half of the current health expenditure, and financial protection for health emergencies remains incomplete, though government and insurance spending has increased.
- The share of **Government Health Expenditure (GHE)** as a **per-centage of the GDP** has risen

from 1.15% in 2013-14 to 1.43% in 2022-23, and as per the new GDP series, it will be 1.48% in 2022-23.

- Stated that **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** and associated government health insurance schemes are **failing to provide substantial protection to people from high healthcare spending**.

About Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

- Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) was introduced in **September 2018** as the flagship programme of the Ayushman Bharat mission.
- It is regarded as the **world's largest publicly funded health insurance scheme**.
- The scheme seeks to promote **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and reduce the burden of huge medical expenses
- At the national level, the programme is **administered by the National Health Authority (NHA)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, while State Health Agencies (SHAs) oversee implementation in respective states.

Coverage and Financial Structure

- PM-JAY offers health insurance coverage of up to **₹5 lakh per family annually**.
- It mainly includes **secondary and tertiary hospitalization care**, while outpatient primary care is excluded.
- The scheme covers expenses for up to **3 days before hospitalization**, including tests and consultations, and **up to 15 days after discharge for medicines and follow-up treatment**.

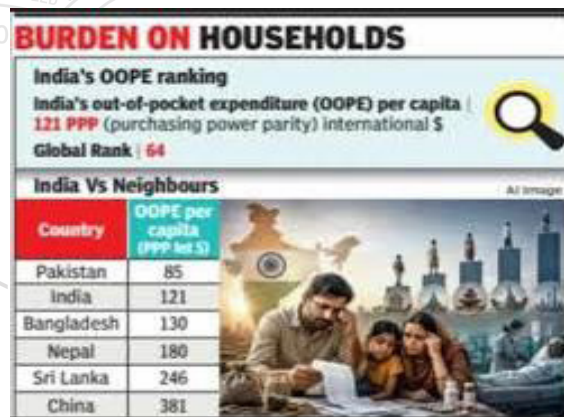
Funding Pattern

- PM-JAY functions as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with shared financial responsibility between the Centre and States:
 - 60:40** for regular States and Union Territories with legislatures.

- 90:10** for North-Eastern and Himalayan States.
- Full Central funding for Union Territories without legislatures.

Eligibility and Beneficiaries

- Initially, the programme targeted **nearly 12 crore poor and vulnerable families (around 55 crore people)**, representing the **bottom 40% of India's population**.
- Beneficiaries are selected using deprivation and occupational criteria listed in the **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011** for rural and urban households.
- The scheme places no restriction on family size, age, or gender, ensuring inclusion of women, children, and senior citizens.
- In **September 2024**, PM-JAY was widened to include **all individuals aged 70 years and above**, regardless of income or SECC category, through the **Ayushman Vay Vandana Card**, benefiting **around 6 crore elderly citizens**.
- Coverage was also extended to **ASHA workers, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs)**.



Challenges Faced by PM-JAY

- Restricted Coverage:** OPD treatment, medicines, and diagnostics outside hospitalization are not included, and some expensive procedures remain uncovered.

- **Limited Hospital Participation:** Several private hospitals hesitate to join due to low package rates, while public hospitals face overcrowding.
- **Fraudulent Practices:** Instances of fake beneficiaries, false claims, and unnecessary treatments have been reported.
- **Awareness and Access Issues:** Many eligible families are unaware of the scheme, and low digital literacy affects accessibility.
- **Financial Pressure:** Rising healthcare demand increases the fiscal burden on governments, with variations in implementation across states.
- **Healthcare Quality Concerns:** Lack of specialists and uneven standards of care across regions impact treatment outcomes.
- **Claim Settlement Delays:** Slow reimbursement processes and complicated paperwork discourage hospitals from active participation.
- **Higher Financial Assistance:** Support for planting material was significantly increased from **₹12,000 per hectare to ₹29,000 per hectare**, along with enhanced maintenance assistance.
- **Support for Rejuvenation:** Farmers are provided special aid of **₹250 per plant** for rejuvenating old oil palm gardens.
- **Priority Regions:** The mission gives special attention to North-Eastern states as well as traditional oil palm growing states such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Major Targets

- **Expansion of Cultivation Area:** Bring around **6.5 lakh hectares** under oil palm plantations by 2025-26.
- **Production Goals:** Achieve CPO production of **11.20 lakh tonnes** by 2025-26 and **28 lakh tonnes** by 2029-30.
- **Consumption Objective:** Sustain edible oil consumption at **19 kg per person annually** up to 2025-26.

National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)

- **Context :** A national workshop on oil palm development in the Northeast was held under the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP).

National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)

- National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), **approved in 2021** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, was launched to enhance domestic edible oil production by expanding oil palm cultivation and increasing Crude Palm Oil (CPO) output.
- The mission has a **financial allocation of ₹11,040 crore**.

Key Features

- **Price Protection:** The scheme introduced the **Viability Price (VP)** mechanism for the first time to shield farmers from fluctuations in global CPO prices.

NeSDA Portal

- **Context :** To strengthen digital governance in India, the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** has launched the 'NeSDA 2025' portal.

About the NeSDA Portal

- The National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) is a biennial (once every two years) framework used to assess the online service delivery of States, Union Territories, and selected Central Ministries.
- It is modeled after the **United Nations (UN) Online Service Index (OSI)** and has been customized to suit India's federal structure.
- The framework evaluates the availability, accessibility, and overall maturity of e-governance services from a citizen-centric perspective.

- NeSDA serves as a benchmarking tool to **enhance service delivery and promote best practices among various government entities.**
- This assessment covers key sectors such as: Finance, Labour and Employment, Education, Local Governance and Utilities, Social Welfare (including Health, Agriculture, and Home Security), Environment, Tourism, Public Grievances, Transport and Travel.
- The scheme **covers 1.16 million schools, over 156 million students and 5.7 million Teachers of Govt. and Aided schools**
- **The major objectives of the Scheme are**
 - Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
 - Bridging **Social and Gender Gaps** in School Education;
 - Ensuring **equity and inclusion at all levels** of school education;
 - Support States in implementation of **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.**

Education Minister reviews fund utilisation under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- **Context:** Union Education Minister held a detailed review meeting on fund release and utilisation under the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**, with a focus on making Samagra Shiksha 3.0 more efficient, transparent and outcome-oriented.
- Union Minister said that an integrated approach through the convergence of key schemes, including **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**, **PM-POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman)**, **ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society)**, **PM-SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India)** and other flagship programmes, will be undertaken from this year.

About Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from **pre-school to class 12.**
- **Period: 1st April 2021 to 31st March, 2026.**
- The scheme has been prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of **equal opportunities for schooling** and equitable learning outcomes.
- It subsumes the three Schemes of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**, **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)** and **Teacher Education (TE)** and was launched in 2018.

Salient Features:

- It aims to ensure that all children have access to **quality education** with an **equitable and inclusive classroom environment.**
- The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving quality of school education by focussing on the **two T's - Teacher and Technology.**
- The fund sharing pattern for the scheme between Centre and States
 - **90:10** for North-Eastern States
 - **60:40** for all other States and Union Territories with Legislature
 - **100% centrally sponsored** for Union Territories without Legislature.
- The revised Samagra Shiksha Scheme includes new measures based on the recommendations of **NEP 2020** to improve school education and make learning more **accessible, inclusive, and effective.**

Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme

- **Context:** Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister has said that the **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme** is delivering encouraging results.
- Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister said that Thiruvananthapuram-

based semiconductor **start-up** Netrasemi has developed the **country's first Edge AI System-on-Chip, NETRA A2000, using an advanced 12-nanometre technology node.**

Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme

- DLI Scheme was launched in **December 2021** as part of the **India Semiconductor Mission**
- It aims to **offer financial incentives** as well as **design infrastructure support** across various stages of development and deployment of semiconductor design.
- **Target Segments:** Semiconductor design for Integrated Circuits (ICs), Chipsets, System on Chips (SoCs), Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor-linked design.
- **Nodal agency:** C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), operating under MeitY.
- **Aim:** To nurture at least **20 domestic companies** involved in **semiconductor design** and facilitate them to achieve turnover of more than **Rs.1500 Crore in 5 years.**

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION

- **Context:** The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, implemented by the **National Health Authority (NHA)**, has crossed the landmark milestone of **90 crore Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs)** across the country.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that the achievement marks a major step in **India's journey towards a connected, interoperable and citizen-centric digital health ecosystem**

About Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

- It aims to develop the backbone to support the **integrated digital health infrastructure of the country** to bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of Healthcare ecosystem through digital highways.

Objectives

- To build modern and advanced digital healthcare infrastructure.
- To develop registries that act as a **single, reliable source of health data.**
- To ensure the use of common open standards by all digital health stakeholders.
- To create a secure system for maintaining personal health records.

Components

- Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)
 - A **central database of healthcare professionals.**
 - Covers practitioners from both modern and traditional systems of medicine.
- Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) Number
 - A unique **14-digit number** generated through **self-registration.**
 - Used to **identify and authenticate individuals.**
- ABHA App
 - A **Personal Health Records (PHR)** application.
 - Individuals have full control over their health information.
- Health Facility Registry (HFR)
 - A national database of healthcare facilities.
 - Includes public and private hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, diagnostic labs, imaging centres, and other health institutions.
- Unified Health Interface (UHI)
 - An **open platform for digital health services.**
 - Connects patients with healthcare service providers (HSPs).
 - Supports services such as appointment booking, teleconsultation, and healthcare service discovery.

Implementation & Governance

- **Implementing Agency:** National Health Authority (NHA).
- **Voluntary Participation:** The scheme including the creation of the ABHA ID is strictly voluntary for citizens.

PM SVANidhi Scheme (Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi)

- **Context:** PM SVANidhi Completes Six Years of Empowering Street Vendors Through Access to Affordable Credit and Social Security.
- Over the last six years, **more than 75.5 lakh street vendors** across the country have benefited under PM SVANidhi.
- The scheme has also recorded a **20% annual increase** in average beneficiary incomes.

About PM SVANidhi

- **PM SVANidhi (Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi)** is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched in **June 2020** by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** to provide collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors.
- The scheme has been **extended until March 2030**.

Key Features

- Provides loans without requiring any collateral.
- Follows a three-stage loan structure:
 - **First Loan:** Up to ₹15,000
 - **Second Loan:** Up to ₹25,000
 - **Third Loan:** Up to ₹50,000
- Vendors who repay loans on time receive a **7% interest subsidy**, which is credited directly to their bank accounts every quarter.
- Beneficiaries who successfully repay the second loan can avail a **UPI-linked RuPay Credit Card** for easy access to credit.

- Encourages digital payments by offering **cashback rewards up to ₹1,600** on eligible transactions.

Implementation

- Implemented jointly by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** and the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)**.
- The implementing agency is the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)**.

Coverage

- Initially launched for street vendors in statutory towns.
- Later expanded to include vendors in **census towns** and **peri-urban areas**.

Proposed 'Kill Switch' and On/Off Facility

- **Context:** To protect users from digital payment frauds and scams, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is exploring the introduction of a mechanism known as a **"Kill Switch."**
- To enhance customer safety and control, the RBI has also proposed an **"On/Off"** facility for all digital payment modes.

About the Kill Switch

- A Kill Switch is an emergency mechanism that allows for the immediate blocking or deactivation of a system, account, or service under specific circumstances.
- Under this proposal, users may be provided with an emergency option within banking or payment applications to immediately freeze all financial transactions if they suspect fraudulent activity.

Need for the Freezing Mechanism

- Online arrest scams and online financial frauds are on the rise.
- Fraudsters often pose as police or law enforcement officials via video calls, threatening victims with fake legal proceedings.

- Victims are coerced into sending money to avoid arrest or investigation.
- It is reported that such scams have resulted in financial losses amounting to nearly ₹3,000 crore across India.

Benefits of the Kill Switch

- **Facilitates the immediate suspension of financial transfers.**
- Helps prevent financial losses in instances where fraudulent attempts are suspected.
- Provides customers with an emergency safety tool.
- Strengthens trust in digital payment systems.

Enable/Disable Facility

- The Reserve Bank of India proposes to extend the existing card control feature to all digital payment channels.
- Customers will be able to enable or disable payment services whenever required.

Benefits

- Greater control for customers over digital transactions.
- Reduced risk of unauthorized transactions and fraud.
- Enhanced security and consumer protection.
- Improved flexibility in managing banking services.

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- **Context:** Minister for New and Renewable Energy, said that on the 29th of this month, India has achieved the highest-ever single-day record of 15 thousand rooftop solar installations across the country under **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**.
- Also informed that **Maharashtra** has emerged as a leading contributor to this success by registering a record **4,700 rooftop solar installations in one day**.

About PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- The **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana** is a **Central Sector Scheme** introduced by the Government of India in **2024**.
- It is regarded as the **largest residential rooftop solar programme** in the world.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The scheme is overseen by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**.
- **Duration:** It is being implemented from **FY 2023–24 to FY 2026–27**.
- **Purpose:** The initiative aims to promote the widespread adoption of rooftop solar systems in households and contribute to India's transition towards clean and sustainable energy.
- **Goal:** Installation of rooftop solar systems in **1 crore residential homes** by 2026–27.
- **Electricity Benefit:** Beneficiary households can receive up to **300 units of electricity free of cost every month**.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - The applicant must be an Indian citizen.
 - The household should own a house with adequate rooftop space for solar panel installation.
 - A valid electricity connection is mandatory.
 - The household should not have previously availed any government subsidy for rooftop solar installations.
- **Implementation Mechanism**
 - At the national level, the scheme is coordinated by the **National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA)**.
 - At the state level, implementation is carried out through electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) or State Power/Energy Departments acting as **State Implementation Agencies (SIAs)**.

Digi YATRA project

- **Context** : Union Minister for Civil Aviation, has congratulated the **Digi Yatra Team for enabling over 10 crore seamless journeys through the Digi Yatra App.**
- The Minister further informed that currently, **Digi Yatra is active at 38 airports, and by next year, 27 more airports** will be enabled with the application.
- Also, said that the Digi Yatra platform stands as one of the most successful digital innovations in global aviation currently.
- The app has witnessed over **2.4 crore downloads** across **iOS and Android.**

About Digi Yatra project

- The Digi Yatra project was officially launched on **December 1, 2022**
- Digi Yatra provides a **hassle-free, paperless airport travel experience** by eliminating the need for repeated identity verification at various checkpoints.
- Every traveller is issued a **distinct Digi Yatra ID** for seamless authentication during the journey.
- **Enrollment in the Digi Yatra system** is entirely optional and based on the passenger's choice.
- The **Digi Yatra Foundation (DYF)** has been established as a joint venture organization to develop and operate the **Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem.**



IMPORTANT DAYS

International Labour Day

- The International Labour Day which is also known as May Day will be observed on **May 1, 2026**.
- Theme of International Labour Day 2026: **"Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment."**

Maharashtra Day

- Maharashtra Day is observed annually on **May 1** to commemorate the creation of the state of Maharashtra as a separate entity in 1960.

Gujarat Foundation Day

- Gujarat observes its Foundation Day **every year on May 1**, marking its establishment as a separate state in 1960 following its division from the former Bombay State.

World Press Freedom Day

- World Press Freedom Day 2026, **observed on May 3**, centers on the theme **"Shaping a Future of Peace"**, emphasizing the vital role of journalism in fostering truth and sustainability.

World Asthma Day

- World Asthma Day 2026 was observed **globally on May 5** to raise awareness about improving access to essential asthma treatment and care.
- The theme for the World Asthma Day 2026 is: **"Access to anti-inflammatory inhalers for everyone with asthma – still an urgent need."**

World Athletics Day

- The World Athletics Day celebrated by the people **every year on May 7**.

World Red Cross Day

- World Red Cross Day is celebrated **annually on May 8** in honour of the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Red Cross Movement.
- The official World Red Cross Day 2026 theme is **'Keeping Humanity Alive'**

World Ovarian Cancer Day

- World Ovarian Cancer Day 2026 is observed **on May 8** to promote awareness about ovarian cancer and encourage greater attention toward women's health.
- The official World Ovarian Cancer Day 2026 theme is **"No Woman Left Behind"**

World Thalassemia Day

- World Thalassemia Day is marked annually on **May 8** to spread awareness about thalassemia, a severe hereditary blood disorder that affects millions of people across the world.
- The official theme for World Thalassemia Day 2026 is **'Hidden No More: Finding the Undiagnosed. Supporting the Unseen.'**

Mother's Day 2026

- Mother's Day 2026 will be celebrated on Sunday, 10 May 2026, the occasion is observed annually on the second Sunday of May.
- The theme for Mother's Day 2026 is **"The Great Unburdening."**

National Technology Day

- National Technology Day is celebrated annually on **May 11** to commemorate India's successful nuclear tests carried out at Pokhran in 1998.
- **2026 Theme:** **"Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth"**

- National Technology Day is celebrated in India to **commemorate the historic Pokhran-II nuclear tests, conducted on May 11, 1998, under 'Operation Shakti'.**
- This day was officially declared in 1999.

Key Milestones

- On May 11, 1998, India successfully conducted three nuclear tests.
- Subsequently, two additional tests were conducted.
- **India officially became a nuclear-capable nation.**
- The indigenously developed 'Hansa-3' aircraft also undertook a successful test flight.

International Nurses Day

- International Nurses Day is observed annually on **the May 12** which is the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.
- The official theme for the International Nurses Day 2026 is **'Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives'**
- President today conferred the **National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026** to fifteen Nursing professionals at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The award has been given for their **outstanding contribution in the field of nursing.**
- These prestigious awards are presented to Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and Lady Health Visitors serving across Central and State Governments, Union Territories, and voluntary organisations.
- Each award includes a **Certificate of Merit, a cash prize of one lakh rupees and a medal symbolising the nation's gratitude for the invaluable service rendered by these health warriors.**

Mental Health Awareness Week

- Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 is being observed from **11 to 17 May with the theme "Action".**

National Endangered Species Day

- National Endangered Species Day is observed annually on the third Friday of the month of May.
- National Endangered Species Day for the year 2026 is observed on the third Friday of May, on **May 15, 2026.**
- Theme for the year 2026: **"Celebrating America's Wildlife Recovery Stories; Advancing the Endangered Species Act."**

International Day of Light

- International Day of Light is observed annually on **16 May.**
- It commemorates the **first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer Theodore Maiman.**
- Theme for this year: **"Light for a Sustainable Future"**, focusing on sustainability through light-based technologies.

National Dengue Day

- **National Dengue Day** is observed in India every year on **May 16.**
- This day was officially declared by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- The main objective of this day is to **raise awareness about dengue disease** and to strengthen preventive measures before the onset of the monsoon season.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare observes the month of July as **'Anti-Dengue Month'.**
- The official theme for National Dengue Day 2026 is: **"Unite. Act. Eliminate."**

International Museum Day

- International Museum Day 2026 will be observed globally on **May 18, 2026.**

- 2026 theme is “Museums Uniting a Divided World”.

Sikkim's 51st Statehood Day

- Sikkim's 51st Statehood Day was celebrated on **May 16th**.
- Sikkim, which was formerly a monarchy, was integrated as a **full-fledged state of India on May 16, 1975**.
- The **35th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1974** granted Sikkim a unique status as an **"Associate State."** This was a constitutional category utilized only once.
- The **36th Constitutional Amendment Act**, enacted on May 16, 1975, officially made **Sikkim the 22nd state of India**.
- **Article 371F** was inserted to provide special constitutional guarantees safeguarding Sikkim's cultural identity, laws, and land rights.
- In 2016, by converting over **76,000 hectares of land to chemical-free farming**, Sikkim became the world's first 100% organic farming state.

World AIDS Vaccine Day

- World AIDS Vaccine Day 2026 is observed on **May 18** to raise awareness regarding HIV vaccine research and the global fight against AIDS.

World Bee Day

- World Bee Day 2026 will be observed on **May 20, 2026**.
- The theme for this year is: **“Bee together for people and the planet.”**

World Metrology Day

- World Metrology Day is celebrated annually on **May 20**, commemorating the anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in 1875.

- The theme for World Metrology Day 2026 is: "Metrology: **Building Trust in Policy Making**".

Anti-Terrorism Day

- **Anti-Terrorism Day to be Observed on 21st May**.
- The day commemorates the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on 1991.
- The objective behind the observance of Anti-Terrorism Day is to wean away the people from terrorism and violence.

World day for cultural diversity

- Held every year on **21 May**, the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development celebrates not only the richness of the world's cultures, but also the essential role of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development.
- **The United Nations General Assembly first declared this World Day in 2002**, following UNESCO's adoption of the **2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity**.

International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)

- IDB is celebrated on **22 May** annually to commemorate the adoption of the text of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- **“Acting locally for global impact”** is the theme of the 2026 edition of the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB).

World Turtle Day

- May 23 is observed worldwide as **World Turtle Day**, a day dedicated to raising awareness about turtles and tortoises and promoting their conservation.

- The theme for World Turtle Day 2026 is **"Dancing Turtles Rock!"**

World Thyroid Day

- Every year on **May 25**, the world marks World Thyroid Day to spread awareness about thyroid health and highlight the increasing prevalence of thyroid-related disorders across the globe.

World Football Day

- **World Football Day** is observed globally on **25 May** every year.
- The game brings together people from different nations, cultures and generations beyond geographical boundaries

World Dugong Day

- 'World Dugong Day' is observed annually on **May 28th** with the aim of raising global awareness regarding the conservation of dugongs (marine mammals also known as sea cows) and their vulnerable coastal habitats.
- The official theme for World Dugong Day is: **"A Decade Beneath the Waves: Dugongs & Us."**
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) officially recognised **India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay, Tamil Nadu**, during the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Key Points

- The reserve was officially notified in **September 2022 under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- This is India's first marine reserve dedicated to conserving dugongs, a vulnerable marine mammal species.
- Dugongs (Dugong dugon) are marine mammals listed as **Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List**.
- The **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, provides the legal framework for such conservation reserves in India.

World Hunger Day

- 'World Hunger Day' is observed annually on May 28th to raise awareness regarding global food insecurity and to inspire grassroots-level actions aimed at eradicating hunger.
- The theme for World Hunger Day 2026 is: **"The End of Hunger is in Our Hands."**

International Mount Everest Day

- Every year the International Mount Everest Day is celebrated on **May 29**.
- The theme for the Everest Summiters Summit held in celebration of International Everest Day is **"Uniting Voices for the Future of the Himalaya"**.

Goa Statehood Day

- Goa is celebrating its Statehood Day on **May 30**.
- Goa, along with Daman and Diu, was incorporated into the Indian Union and made a Union Territory by the Twelfth Amendment Act of 1962.
- It was on this day in **1987 that Goa was granted full statehood and became the 25th state of the Indian Union**.
- This was enacted by the **56th Constitution Amendment Act**.

World No Tobacco Day

- World No Tobacco Day is being observed on **May 31** to raise awareness against the dangers of using tobacco.
- The day is a global initiative by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to end the use of tobacco.
- The theme for this year is **Unmasking the appeal – Countering nicotine and tobacco addiction**.

REPORTS & INDICES

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 Report

- **Context:** Released by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day (24 April 2026).
- Acts as a performance report card for Gram Panchayats across India.

Top Performing Themes

- Theme 1: Poverty-Free & Enhanced Livelihoods
- Theme 2: Healthy Panchayats

Participation & Coverage

- 97.30% participation rate in PAI 2.0.
- 2,59,867 Gram Panchayats from 33 States/UTs submitted validated data.
- Significant improvement from 80.79% participation in PAI 1.0.

Key Improvements in PAI 2.0

- Unified data entry form for ease of reporting.
- Mandatory Gram Sabha validation to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Auto-integration of data from national portals of Union Ministries.
- Advanced validation mechanisms (soft and cross-checking) for accuracy.
- Real-time dashboards for better monitoring and navigation.
- Vernacular language support for inclusivity.

Significance

- Strengthens grassroots governance and decentralisation.
- Promotes data-driven and transparent decision-making.
- Reinforces the vision of “Viksit Gram Panchayats” (developed villages).
- Encourages inclusive and participatory rural development.

About Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0

- Developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as a data-driven framework to assess the performance of Gram Panchayats.
- Acts as a tool for evidence-based planning, monitoring, and incentivising Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

Purpose and Utility

- Helps States/UTs prioritise development interventions.
- Supports preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPs).
- Identifies high-performing Panchayats as model learning centres.

Coverage and Framework

- Covers over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across India.
- Indicators span 9 thematic areas under Localization of Sustainable Development Goals: Poverty, Health, Child Welfare, Water, Environment, Infrastructure, Social Justice, Good Governance, Women’s Empowerment

Performance Classification

- Based on composite scores, Panchayats are grouped into:
 - Achiever (A+): 90 and above
 - Front Runner (A): 75 to < 90
 - Performer (B): 60 to < 75
 - Aspirant (C): 40 to < 60
 - Beginner (D): Below 40

Significance

- Promotes benchmarking and competitive federalism at grassroots level.
- Enables targeted policy interventions.
- Strengthens transparent, accountable, and data-driven rural governance.

"Women and Men in India 2025"

Report

- **Context:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India, released the 27th edition of its publication titled **"Women and Men in India 2025: Selected Indicators and Data"** at the National Deliberative Summit on "Data for Development"

About the Report

- Provides a **comprehensive gender-based statistical overview**.
- Covers key domains: Population, Education, Health, Economic participation, Decision-making, Violence against women
- Includes metadata for 50 indicators for better clarity on concepts, sources, and methodology.

Key Findings

- **Demographic & Health Indicators**
 - Sex ratio at birth improved from 904 (2017–19) to 917 (2021–23).
 - Infant mortality rate declined steadily for both males and females (2008–2023).
- **Education**
 - Gender parity achieved **from primary to higher secondary levels**.
 - **Gross Enrolment Ratio (Higher Education): Females: 28.5 → 30.2, Males: 28.3 → 28.9 (2021–22 to 2022–23)**
- **Economic Participation**
 - Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) increased for both genders (age 15+).
 - Rural female LFPR rose significantly from 37.5% to 45.9% (2022–2025).
- **Leadership & Employment**
 - Men in managerial roles increased by 73.8% (2017–2025).
 - Women in managerial roles increased by 102.54%, indicating faster growth.

Significance

- Supports evidence-based policymaking.
- Helps design gender-responsive programmes.
- Promotes inclusive and sustainable development by highlighting evolving gender trends.

World Press Freedom Index 2026

- In the World Press Freedom Index 2026, released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), India has secured the 157th position out of 180 countries.
- For the 10th consecutive year, **Norway has retained the top spot**. It is followed by the Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark, and Sweden, which occupy the subsequent positions.
- **Eritrea ranked last (180th)**. Preceding it are North Korea, China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.
- India's ranking has slipped by six places—**from the 151st position in 2025 to the 157th position in 2026**.

World Migration Report 2026

- **Context:** World Migration Report 2026 was released by the **International Organization for Migration**
- Around 304 million people were living outside their country of birth as of mid-2024
- **Mexico–United States remains the world's largest migration corridor** with around 11 million migrants

India-Related Migration Corridors

- **India–United Arab Emirates corridor is the fifth-largest migration corridor in the world**
- Corridor mainly consists of migrant workers employed in Gulf countries
- More than 8 million international migrants live in the UAE, with Indians forming the largest nationality group
- **India–United States corridor ranks sixth globally**. It is the second-largest migration

corridor involving North America after Mexico-US.

- Indian migrants in the US mainly include highly skilled workers and international students
- **Bangladesh-India corridor ranked 11th globally.**
- India-Saudi Arabia corridor also figures among the top 20 migration corridors

Gender Dimensions of Migration

- Gulf countries such as UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have a significantly **higher proportion of male immigrants**
- **India has a higher share of female immigrants than male immigrants**
- India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Indonesia have a larger share of male emigrants
- Male-dominated migration patterns are mainly linked to labour demand in: Construction, Manufacturing, Agriculture sectors in Gulf and Southeast Asian countries.

Significance

- Highlights India's growing role in global migration patterns
- Reflects importance of labour mobility and skilled migration in India's economy
- Demonstrates the economic and strategic influence of the Indian diaspora worldwide

National Crime Records Bureau 2024 report

- **Context** : According to data released by **National Crime Records Bureau**, 13,396 cases of crimes against women and 7,662 cases of crimes against children were registered in 2024.
- Crime rate **per lakh population declined to 418.9 from 448.3**, and overall case registrations fell by 6.0 percent compared to 2023.

Crimes against women **decreased by 1.5 percent to around 4.4 lakh cases**, while cruelty by husband accounted for about 42 percent of such cases, and a new category "Offences against Women and Child" was introduced under BNS.

Crimes against children increased by 5.9 percent to around 1.8 lakh cases, while crimes against senior citizens rose by 16.9 percent, mainly due to theft and fraud.

Crimes against Scheduled Castes decreased by 3.6 percent and against Scheduled Tribes by 23.1 percent, showing a decline in both categories.

Cybercrime surged by 17.9 percent, with fraud accounting for nearly 73 percent of cases, and economic offenses increased by 4.6 percent, mainly due to forgery, cheating, and fraud.

Juveniles in conflict with law increased by 11.2 percent, with around 77.7 percent belonging to the 16-18 age group.

According to the report, the **number of traffic accidents increased from 4.91 lakh in 2023 to 4.95 lakh in 2024**, with 4.52 lakh people injured in 2024. The top three states in terms of fatalities are **Uttar Pradesh (27,071), Tamil Nadu (20,390) and Maharashtra (19,475)**, which account for 13.6 per cent, 10.2 per cent and 9.8 per cent of total deaths in traffic accidents, respectively, and collectively account for 33.6 per cent of all traffic deaths in 2024.

About National Crime Records Bureau

It was established in 1986 based on recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-81), MHA Task Force (1985), and related expert committees.

It functions as the **central repository of crime and criminal data in India to support investigation** and link crimes with offenders.

- It implements major digital policing systems such as **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems**, launched in 2009, connecting over 15,000 police stations across the country.
- It publishes major reports including Crime in India, Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI), and Prison Statistics India.
- **Telangana also reported a high number of zero-enrolment schools**, indicating uneven school distribution and migration-related challenges.
- Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand showed a **large number of students studying in single-teacher schools**.
- Several tribal and rural states continue to face shortages of teachers and inadequate infrastructure.

NITI Aayog Report on India's School Education System

- **Context:** NITI Aayog has released a comprehensive policy report analyzing a decade-long period (2014-15 to 2024-25) of India's school education system.

Key Data/Statistics on School Education

- India manages the world's largest school system, providing education to over 24.69 crore students through 14.71 lakh schools.
- A workforce comprising over 1.01 crore teachers supports this system.
- While student enrollment in **elementary education has reached near-universal levels**, the National Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for secondary education stands at 58.4%.
- Government schools constitute 68.1% of the total schools; these schools provide education to 49.2% of the total student population.

Important State-wise Findings

- **Jharkhand achieved a zero primary dropout rate** in 2024-25, reflecting improvement in school retention.
- States such as Jharkhand, Maharashtra and West Bengal reported **higher pupil-teacher ratios than the national average**, affecting classroom learning quality.
- West Bengal recorded the **highest number of zero-enrolment schools among states**.

Key Findings Related to Tamil Nadu from the Report

- Tamil Nadu recorded **one of the highest enrolment levels in school education**, with around 83.4% participation in the concerned category mentioned in the report.
- The State achieved a **very high school transition rate of about 96.7%**, reflecting strong continuity of students in the education system.
- Tamil Nadu also maintained a **high upper primary to secondary transition rate of approximately 96.6%**, placing it among the better-performing states.
- The State recorded a **low primary dropout rate of 2.7%**, indicating effective retention of children in schools.
- Tamil Nadu was identified among the states with very high infrastructure provision in schools compared to many other states.
- In higher secondary education, Tamil Nadu showed **strong female participation with around 89.1%**, ranking among the leading states in the country.
- The report highlights Tamil Nadu as **one of the better-performing states in terms of educational access, student retention, transition rates and school infrastructure**.

TERI Report on India's Nuclear Energy Vision

- **Context:** This report, titled “**Strategic Pathways for Deploying SMRs**”, states that to reach a nuclear energy capacity of 100 Gigawatts (GW) by the year 2047, India will require an investment of ₹23-25 lakh crore, comprehensive regulatory reforms, and the rapid adoption of Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology.

Key Features of the Report

- To increase nuclear energy capacity by the year **2047**, India will require a massive amount of investment.
- The current nuclear energy infrastructure is primarily designed for large nuclear reactors; this infrastructure must be modified to introduce SMRs and to allow private sector participation.
- The report highlights financial risks, fuel security, shortage of skilled human resources, and public acceptance as major challenges.
- It recommends adopting a ‘hybrid model’ that includes both large-scale conventional nuclear reactors and SMRs.

Current Status of Nuclear Energy in India

- India is currently operating **25 nuclear reactors**.
- The total installed capacity is approximately **8.8 GW**.
- This capacity is projected to **rise to approximately 22 GW by the year 2032**.
- India has set a target to reach a capacity of **100 GW by the year 2047**.

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

- SMRs are modern and small-scale nuclear reactors built using factory-based ‘modular technology’.

India's Initiatives

- India is currently developing **three indigenous SMR designs**.
- A financial allocation of ₹20,000 crore has been made in the Union Budget for 2025-26 for SMR-related research and development activities.
- The target is to bring five indigenous SMRs into operation by the year 2033.

Freedom of the Press in India

- **Context:** According to the 2025 report published by 'International IDEA', global press freedom has de-clined to its lowest level in the last 50 years.
- Similarly, the 'World Press Freedom Index 2026' has noted that the environment for press freedom is currently at its weakest point in the last 25 years.

Constitutional Protection

- In India, freedom of the press is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution; rather, it is considered an integral part of the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a).
- Article 361A provides protection for the fair and substantially accurate reporting of the proceedings of Parliament and State Legislatures.

Judicial Recognition

- The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly affirmed that freedom of the press is an essential component of Article 19(1)(a).
- In cases such as *Ramesh Thapar vs. State of Madras* and *Indian Express Newspapers vs. Union of India*, the Court has emphasized the critical importance of a free press within a democratic framework.
- **India's Position in Global Rankings**
- In the 'World Press Freedom Index 2026', India ranked 157th out of 180 countries; furthermore,

it was categorized under the "very serious" category.

states witnessed a comparatively modest decline of 11.5% and 13%, respectively.

- However, the Government of India has consistently rejected these international rankings, arguing that they are biased and do not accurately reflect the actual ground realities prevailing in the country.

India's Fertility Rate Drops below Replacement Level

- **Context:** According to the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) report for 2024, India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) defined as the average number of children born to a woman has declined further, **dropping from 2.1 to 1.9.**

Fertility Rates in Most Indian States Have Fallen Below Replacement Level

- With the exception of six states Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dropped below the replacement level in all other states.
- The rate is **lowest in Delhi (1.2)**, followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, where the Total Fertility Rate stands at 1.3.
- A **Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.1 is referred to as the "replacement level."** This is because if a woman bears an average of 2.1 children over her lifetime, this is sufficient to replace herself and her husband.
- An analysis of the percentage change observed in the decade preceding this report reveals that Bihar has experienced the smallest decline in its Total Fertility Rate (TFR). **The TFR in Bihar, which stood at 3.2 during 2012-14, dropped to 2.9 during 2022-24 a decline of merely 9.4%.**
- The Total Fertility Rate remains relatively high in two states: **Chhattisgarh and Assam.** These

National Family Health Survey-6 (2023-24)

- **Background:** The National Family Health Survey-6 (2023-24) has been released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- This survey was conducted during the year **2023-24.**
- **Nodal Agency:** International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).
- **Survey Coverage:** The survey was conducted across approximately **6.79 lakh households in 715 districts.**
- **Utility:** It provides **district-level data** regarding population, health, nutrition, and family welfare indicators.

Maternal and Child Health

- **Institutional Deliveries:** Increased from 88.6 percent to 90.6 percent.
- **Antenatal Care (ANC):** The proportion of pregnant women receiving antenatal care increased from 92.6 percent to 95.9 percent.
- **First Trimester Care:** The number of mothers receiving ANC care within the first three months (first trimester) of pregnancy increased from 70.0 percent to 76.2 percent.
- **Minimum Care:** The number of mothers who underwent at least four ANC check-ups increased from 58.5 percent to 65.2 percent.
- **Skilled Deliveries:** Deliveries conducted in the presence of skilled health personnel increased from 89.4 percent to 91.3 percent.
- **Postnatal Care:** The proportion of mothers receiving care within two days of delivery

increased from 79.1 percent to 85.3 percent.

Family Planning

- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** India's Total Fertility Rate remains stable at 2.0.
- **Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR):** This has increased from 66.7 percent to 69.1 percent.

Immunization

- **Full Immunization:** Full immunization coverage for children aged 12 to 23 months has increased from 83.8 percent to 87.1 percent.
- **Minimum Immunization:** More than 96 percent of children have received at least one vaccine dose.
- **Role of Government Hospitals:** 95.6 percent of children received the majority of their vaccinations through government health facilities.
- **Rotavirus Vaccine:** Coverage for this vaccine has increased significantly, rising from 36.4 percent to 85.4 percent.
- **Measles Vaccine:** Coverage for the second dose of the measles vaccine has increased from 58.6 percent to 71.8 percent.

Child Nutrition

- **Stunting:** The prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age has decreased from 35.5 percent to 29.3 percent.
- **Severe Wasting:** This has decreased from 7.7 percent to 5.2 percent.

- **Underweight:** The rate for underweight children has declined slightly, from 32.1 percent to 31.8 percent.

- **Complementary Feeding:** The provision of complementary food to children aged 6 to 8 months has increased from 45.9 percent to 59.5 percent.
- Health Insurance Coverage**

- **Insurance Reach:** The proportion of families covered under health insurance or medical financing schemes has increased from 41.0 percent to 60.2 percent.

- **The "Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana" (PM-JAY) scheme** has been a key driver behind this significant growth.

Women's Empowerment and Financial Inclusion

- **Internet Usage:** The percentage of women who have ever used the internet has doubled, rising from 33.3 percent to 64.3 percent.

- **Bank Accounts:** The proportion of women who independently operate their own bank accounts has increased from 78.6 percent to 89.0 percent.

- **Mobile Phone Usage:** The percentage of women who own and use a mobile phone has risen from 53.9 percent to 63.6 percent.

- **Menstrual Hygiene:** Among women aged 15 to 24, the use of hygienic menstrual protection methods has increased from 77.6 percent to 79.2 percent.

IMPORTANT COMMITTEES

Western Ghats Committees

Madhav Gadgil Committee Report on the Western Ghats – 2011

- The Gadgil Commission, established for environmental research, is named after its chairman, Madhav Gadgil.
- This commission is formally known as the 'Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel' (WGEEP). The commission submitted its report to the Government of India on August 31, 2011.

Recommendations of the Gadgil Committee:

- The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) declared the **entire mountain range as an 'Ecologically Sensitive Area' (ESA)**.
- In its report, the committee classified the 142 taluks situated within the boundaries of the Western Ghats into **Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1, 2, and 3**.
- Since the ESZ-1 zone was considered to be of the highest priority, almost all types of developmental activities (such as mining, thermal power plants, etc.) were restricted within this zone.
- The Gadgil Report recommended that **no permission should be granted** for any new large-scale water storage dams within ecologically sensitive zones.
- The Gadgil Committee Report emphasized that the current framework for environmental governance must be overhauled. Instead of a 'top-down' approach, it called for a 'bottom-up' approach. Furthermore, it recommended the decentralization of power and the granting of greater authority to local self-governing bodies.

- The Committee recommended the establishment of a statutory body—the '**Western Ghats Ecology Authority' (WGEA)**—to function under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The Kasturirangan Committee (2013) on the Western Ghats

- The Kasturirangan Committee was constituted to review the report submitted by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP).
- This committee is frequently referred to as the '**High-Level Working Group**.'
- This refers to the **10-member High-Level Working Group (HLWG) headed by Kasturirangan**.

Recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee Report

- According to the Kasturirangan Report, rather than encompassing the entire geographical expanse of the Western Ghats, **only 37% of the region** (specifically, 60,000 sq. km) should be designated as an '**Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA)**'.
- A complete ban should be imposed on mining, quarrying, and sand extraction activities within the designated Ecologically Sensitive Areas.
- A distinction must be drawn between 'Cultural Landscapes' (areas within the Western Ghats—comprising 58% of the total region—that are occupied by human settlements, agricultural lands, and plantations) and 'Natural Landscapes' (areas of which, according to the Committee, 90% should be brought under the purview of the Ecologically Sensitive Area designation).
- Thermal Power Plants should not be permitted; hydroelectric projects must be authorized only after a comprehensive study.
- Highly polluting "**Red Category**" industries **must be strictly prohibited** in these regions.

- The Kasturirangan Report on the Western Ghats has put forth several recommendations favorable to farmers, including the exclusion of inhabited areas and plantations from the purview of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).
- The Kasturirangan Report had stated that **123 villages fall within the limits of the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).**
- at completely overhauling the physical and digital infrastructure of the Indian judiciary.
- The committee includes senior judges from the Supreme Court and various High Courts, as well as top administrative and technical officials.
- **Established by:** Supreme Court of India.

Modernization of Courts: Supreme Court High-Level Committee

- **Background:** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has announced the formation of a high-level committee led by Justice Arvind Kumar of the Supreme Court. The committee is tasked with preparing a blueprint for modernizing courts nationwide and securing government funding between Rs.40,000 to Rs.50,000 crore for this initiative.
- **Objectives**
 - Identify systemic bottlenecks.
 - Improve facilities for litigants and lawyers.
 - Implement cutting-edge technology for faster case disposal.
 - Bridge the digital divide through 'e-courts' initiatives and construct modern court complexes designed for the 21st century.

About the Justice Arvind Kumar Committee

- This is a **Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee**, a high-level expert group aimed

LATEST APPOINTMENTS

New Leadership at Prasar Bharati

- Context: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has appointed noted lyricist, writer and communication expert **Prasoon Joshi as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati**, India's public service broadcaster.
- It was set up in 1997 as an autonomous statutory body under the Prasar Bharati Act.
- Its main purpose is to deliver broadcasting services that educate, inform, and entertain the public.
- The organisation includes both Doordarshan and All India Radio, which were previously operated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The headquarters of Prasar Bharati is located in New Delhi.

About Prasar Bharati

- Prasar Bharati is the nation's public service broadcasting organisation.

EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Rabindranath Tagore: Life, Contributions and Legacy

- Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta. He was the son of Debendranath Tagore, a prominent leader of the Brahmo Samaj, and Sarada Devi.
- His literary works reflected themes of humanism, nationalism and social change.

National Anthems

- Two of Tagore's famous compositions, "Jana Gana Mana" and "Amar Shonar Bangla," were adopted as the national anthems of India and Bangladesh respectively.

Educational Philosophy and Visva-Bharati University

- Tagore established Visva-Bharati University to promote holistic and experiential learning.
- His educational vision aimed at blending Indian cultural traditions with international values while encouraging creativity and cultural exchange.

Santiniketan and UNESCO Recognition

- Santiniketan was founded by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore in 1863 and later developed by Rabindranath Tagore into a major cultural and educational centre.
- It was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023.

Role in India's Freedom Movement

- Tagore composed several patriotic songs that inspired the Indian independence movement.

- His notable works included "Chitto Jetha Bhayshunyo" ("Where the Mind is Without Fear") and "Ekla Chalo Re," which was admired by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Although he criticised some Gandhian approaches, Tagore played an important role in mediating between Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar on the issue of separate electorates for untouchables.

Protest against Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- Following the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, Tagore renounced his British knighthood as a mark of protest against colonial repression.

Major Literary Works

- Tagore's famous poetry collections include Gitanjali, Manasi, Sonar Tari, Gitimalya and Balaka.
- Gitanjali earned Tagore the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the first Asian Nobel laureate in literature.
- His important novels include Gora, Ghare-Baire and Chokher Bali, which explored nationalism, identity and social reform.
- Tagore wrote influential dramas such as Kal-Mrigaya, Mayar Khela, Visarjan, Valmiki-Pratibha and Muktaadhara.
- Through collections like Galpaguchchha, Tagore portrayed the everyday life and emotions of ordinary people.

Legacy

- Tagore's philosophy of universal humanism, which transcended barriers of nationality, caste and religion, continues to inspire thinkers, writers and reformers across the world.

Sukhdev Thapar

Early Life of Sukhdev Thapar

- Sukhdev Thapar was born on **May 15, 1907**, in the 'Naukhara' area of old Ludhiana in Punjab state.
- His parents were **Ramlal Thapar and Ralli Devi**.

Sukhdev's Role in the Indian Freedom Struggle

- He became a member of two revolutionary organizations namely '**Hindustan Socialist Republican Association**' and '**Naujawan Bharat Sabha**'.
- These organizations aimed to **bring an end to British rule through revolutionary methods**.
- He also participated in the famous prison hunger strike protest in the year **1929**.

Participation in the Saunders Assassination

- Sukhdev was associated with the assassination incident of British police officer **J.R. Saunders**, which was carried out by **Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru on December 17, 1928**.
- This act was undertaken to avenge the death of **Lala Lajpat Rai**, who died due to injuries sustained during a protest against British rule.

Lahore Conspiracy Case Trial

- Sukhdev was included as one of the main accused in the **Lahore Conspiracy Case**.
- This case was officially titled "**The Crown versus Sukhdev and others**".
- The British government accused him of being involved in hatching the plan to throw bombs inside the **Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi on April 8, 1929**.
- He and his fellow revolutionaries were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death.

Execution and Burial

- Sukhdev Thapar, Bhagat Singh, and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged on **March 23, 1931**, at the **Lahore Central Jail**.

Remembrance and Honouring of Sukhdev Thapar

- The '**National Martyrs Memorial**' has been established at the place where the bodies of Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh, and Rajguru were cremated.
- Every year on **March 23, 'Martyrs' Day** (Shaheed diwas) is observed in their memory.

Lyothee Thassar – Important Points

- **Context:** Tamil nadu Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the statue of social reformer Pandit Lyothee Thassar at Gandhi Mandapam in Chennai on the occasion of his 181 birth anniversary.

Early and Political Activity

- Ayothidasa was born on **May 20, 1845**, under the name '**Kathavarayan**'.
- Later, he adopted the name '**Ayothidasa**' in honor of his teacher.
- He mastered Siddha medicine through his family's traditional lineage.
- Ayothidasa was a multifaceted personality who excelled as a writer, journalist, social reformer, Siddha physician, Tamil scholar, and Buddhist scholar.
- To propagate ideas of social reform, he published and edited the journal **Tamizhan** for eight years.
- During the 1870s, he mobilized indigenous communities—including the Todas living in the Nilgiri Hills—and fostered ideas related to the freedom movement.
- In 1891, in collaboration with Rettamalai Srinivasan, he founded the "**Dravida Mahajana Sabha**."

At the Nilgiri Conference held in 1892:

- He put forward the demand for reservation.
- He advocated for representational rights for oppressed communities.
- He emphasized equal rights for men and women.
- He championed widow remarriage, vocational education for women, and reservation and equal rights for women.
- In 1898, he established the "Sakya Buddhist Society" in Madras and subsequently set up its branches across South India.
- In June 1907, he launched the journal *Oru Paisa Tamizhan* to coordinate the activities of this organization.
- He is hailed as the "Father of South Indian Social Reform."
- Pandit Ayothidasa's birth anniversary is celebrated annually as a state event by the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- He vehemently opposed Brahmanism, Vedic rituals, untouchability, and caste-based discrimination.
- His grandfather, Kandappan, was a renowned Tamil scholar and a Siddha physician.
- Kandappan preserved a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Thirukkural*.
- During his time in Ooty, he established the 'Advaitananda Sabha' to propagate the philosophy of Advaita.
- He maintained close ties with Henry Steel Olcott and John Rathinam.
- He strove tirelessly for the educational advancement of oppressed communities.
- He played a pivotal role in the formation of the 'Dravidar Kazhagam' in 1882.
- In 1885, he launched a periodical titled *Dravida Pandiyan*.

Journals of Depressed Classes

- During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Tamil journals were published by intellectuals from the Depressed Classes in Tamil Nadu.
- Suriyodayam (1869), Panchama (1871), Sugirdavasani (1877), Dravidapandian / Dravidan (1885), Dravidamitran (1885), Anror Mitran (1886), Mahavikatatoothan (1888), Dravida Kokilam (1907), Tamilan (1907)

Ideologies of Iyothee Thassar

- These journals became important platforms for Dalit social and political awareness.
- Iyothee Thassar believed that social change was more important than political change.
- He worked towards creating a society without caste discrimination.
- He is considered one of the earliest leaders of the Dravidian movement.
- He is regarded as the first modern revolutionary leader of the Dalit community.
- He became the earliest well-known anti-Brahmin leader in the Madras Presidency.
- He described Dalits as "Casteless Dravidians" because they existed outside the Hindu caste system.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Introduction

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was a renowned Indian social reformer, scholar, and the founder of the Brahmo Samaj.
- Due to his pioneering role in shaping modern Indian society, he is widely regarded as the "Father of the Indian Renaissance." He was born on May 22, 1772, in Radhanagar.

Establishment of the Atmiya Sabha

- In 1814, he established the *Atmiya Sabha* in Kolkata as a forum for intellectual discussions aimed at combating prevalent social evils such

as idol worship, caste discrimination, and meaningless rituals.

Struggle Against the Practice of Sati

- One of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's greatest achievements was his resolute struggle against the cruel practice known as Sati.
- As a result of his efforts, Sati was abolished in 1829 under Governor-General Lord William Bentinck through Regulation XVII.

Women's Rights and Social Reform

- Roy strongly opposed child marriage and polygamy. Furthermore, he consistently advocated for women's rights and female education.

Religious Reform Ideas

- His religious views were rooted in monotheism and rational thought.
- In 1803, he authored the work *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* to promote the concept of a single God and rational religious beliefs.

Brahma Sabha and Brahmo Samaj.

- In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahma Sabha, a reformist movement that rejected idol worship and promoted rationalism, humanism, and social equality. It later came to be known as the Brahmo Samaj.

Other Reformist Organizations

- Roy also established several other reformist organizations, including the Atmiya Sabha (1815) and the Calcutta Unitarian Committee (1821).

Contributions to Education

- In 1822, he founded the Anglo-Hindu School, which combined traditional Indian educational systems with Western science and humanities.
- Later, in 1825, he established the Vedanta College, where both Indian philosophy and modern scientific subjects were taught.

Contributions to Journalism

- Roy actively utilized the field of journalism to disseminate his reformist ideas.

- Following the relaxation of press restrictions by Lord Hastings in 1819, he launched several publications, including *The Brahmanical Magazine* (1821), *Samvad Kaumudi* (1821), and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*.

Political and Economic Reforms

- Politically, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed oppressive British policies and advocated for administrative reforms.
- Furthermore, he criticized the exploitative practices of the Zamindars (landlords) of Bengal and demanded the fixation of fair minimum rents.

Views on Christianity

- While he appreciated the moral teachings of Jesus Christ, he rejected the concept of Christ as an incarnation of God. In his book *The Precepts of Jesus* (1820), he distinguished the ethical teachings of Christianity from its miraculous narratives.

The Split of the Brahmo Samaj

- The Brahmo Samaj subsequently split into two branches in 1866: the Brahmo Samaj of India, led by Keshav Chandra Sen, and the Adi Brahmo Samaj, led by Debendranath Tagore. Other notable leaders associated with this movement included Rabindranath Tagore and Pandit Shivanath Shastri.

Literary Works

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy authored several significant literary works, including *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* (1804), *Vedanta Grantha* (1815), translations of the Upanishads, *A Defence of Hindu Theism* (1820), *The Precepts of Jesus* (1820), *Bengali Grammar* (1826), *The Universal Religion* (1829), and *The History of Indian Philosophy* (1829).

Journey to England and Demise

- In 1830, he traveled to England as the unofficial envoy of the Mughal Emperor, where he received acclaim from the Unitarians and King William

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy **passed away in Bristol in 1833 due to a fever.** He was laid to rest at that very location.

Rash Behari Bose

- **Context:** On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the great revolutionary Rash Behari Bose, the Union Home Minister paid his tributes to him.

About Rash Behari Bose

- Rash Behari Bose was an Indian **revolutionary leader and freedom fighter** who actively struggled against British rule, both within India and abroad.
- He was born on May 25, 1886, in the Burdwan district, currently located in West Bengal.
- While studying at Dupleix College in Chandannagar (which was a French colony at the time), he was deeply inspired by the French Revolution (1789).

Key Contributions

- **Alipore Bomb Case (1908):** He left Bengal to evade the investigation related to this case.
- **Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case (1912):** He helped plan the bomb attack on Viceroy Lord Hardinge; Hardinge was severely injured in this attack.
- **Ghadar Mutiny (1915):** During the First World War, he served as a key organizer of the 'Ghadar' uprising, which aimed to incite a mutiny within the Indian Army.
- **Indian Independence League (IIL):** He convened conferences in Tokyo and Bangkok to establish and expand this organization.
- **Azad Hind Fauj (INA):** In 1942, he helped structure the 'Indian National Army' (INA) as the military wing of the Indian Independence League.
- **Handover of Responsibility to Netaji:** Recognizing that Netaji possessed the capability to lead the final offensive against

British rule, he entrusted the leadership of both the Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army (INA) to Subhash Chandra Bose in 1943.

Awards and Legacy

- He received the '**Order of the Rising Sun' (Second Class)** award from the Government of Japan.
- To honor his memory, the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department issued a **commemorative postage stamp in 1967.**
- **Demise:** Rash Behari Bose passed away on January 21, 1945, due to tuberculosis.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Early Life and Education

- Jawaharlal Nehru was born on **November 14, 1889**, in Allahabad.
- His father, **Motilal Nehru**, served as the **President of the Indian National Congress** on two occasions.
- He studied law at the **Inner Temple in London** and became a barrister in 1912.

Contribution to the Indian Freedom Struggle

- After returning to India in 1912, he joined the Indian National Movement under the **influence of Mahatma Gandhi.**
- He participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)** and was arrested in 1921.
- In 1940, he was selected as the **second Individual Satyagrahi**, following Vinoba Bhave.
- During the Quit India Movement, on August 7, 1942, **he moved the "Quit India" resolution in Bombay.**
- During the INA trials (1945-46), he joined forces with **Bhulabhai Desai and Asaf Ali** to assist in the defense of the INA soldiers.

Congress Leadership

- He became the President of the Congress at the **Lahore Session in 1929**.
- Under his leadership, the Congress adopted the historic **"Purna Swaraj" (Complete Independence) resolution in 1929**.
- At the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress held in 1936, he spoke in **support of socialism**.
- In 1937, he presided over the **Faizpur Session**, which was the first Congress session to be held in a rural setting. Interim Government and Assumption of Office as Prime Minister
- Became the **Prime Minister of the Interim Government in 1946**.
- Served as the **first Prime Minister of independent India from 1947 to 1964**.
- Continued as Prime Minister even **after India became a Republic in 1950**.
- Promoted democracy, secularism, socialism, and a scientific temper.

Economic and Social Policies

- Introduced a **mixed economy model following independence in 1947**.
- **Prioritized heavy industries, dams, and public sector** undertakings during the First and Second Five-Year Plans.

Foreign Policy

- Played a pivotal role in the formation of the **Non-Aligned Movement in 1961**.

Defense and Nuclear Policy

- Supervised the integration of Hyderabad into India through **'Operation Polo' in 1948**.
- Led the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule and its integration into India in 1961.
- Emphasized scientific and technological development, including nuclear research for peaceful purposes.

Literary Works

- Wrote the book **The Discovery of India** during his imprisonment from 1942 to 1946.
- Wrote **An Autobiography (also known as Towards Freedom) in 1936**.
- Wrote **Glimpses of World History in 1934**.
- Wrote **Letters from a Father to His Daughter in 1929**.

Awards and Honors

- Received an honorary doctorate from the **University of Mysore in 1948**.
- Was awarded the **Bharat Ratna in 1955**.
- Received the World Peace Council Prize posthumously in 1970.

Demise and Legacy

- Passed away on **May 27, 1964**.
- Is known as the **"Architect of Modern India."**
- His birthday, **November 14, is celebrated as Children's Day in India**.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

- **Context:** Today, the Prime Minister remembered Veer Savarkar on his birth anniversary. In a social media post, he mentioned that Veer Savarkar's courage and patriotism will always inspire the people.

Early Life

- Widely known as **Swatantryaveer Savarkar**, he was born on **May 28, 1883, in Nashik**.
- He was a revolutionary nationalist, lawyer, politician, writer, and social reformer. He played a key role in India's freedom movement.

Organizations and Revolutionary Activities

- In the year **1899, Savarkar** founded a secret revolutionary group called **'Mitra Mela'**. It was later reorganized as the **'Abhinav Bharat Society'** in 1904.

- While staying in **London in 1906**, he founded the '**Free India Society**' to ignite nationalist feelings among Indian students living abroad.
- He was also closely associated with '**India House**', which was founded by **Shyamji Krishna Varma** and became a hub for anti-colonial revolutionary activities.
- Savarkar supported armed struggle against British rule, promoted guerrilla-style tactics, and was also allegedly linked with the manufacturing of crude bombs. He also provided legal support to Madan Lal Dhingra.
- As a writer, he authored influential works such as '**Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?**' and '**The History of the War of Indian Independence**'. Some of his articles were published under the pen name "Mahratta".
- He opposed the **Quit India Movement**, believing that it would not succeed in achieving independence.
- He also participated in discussions regarding the **Cripps Mission and the Wavell Plan**, emphasizing the importance of national unity.
- Inspired by leaders like **Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal**, Savarkar supported the concept of a united India based on equal rights and patriotism.
- He championed social reforms by opposing untouchability and caste discrimination, promoting inter-caste marriages, supporting the entry of Dalits into temples through initiatives like the Patit Pavan Mandir, encouraging seafaring (crossing the oceans), and supporting reconversion back to Hinduism.

Arrest and Imprisonment

- Savarkar was arrested in 1909 for allegedly conspiring to incite an armed rebellion against the reforms introduced under the Indian Councils Act of **1909**.
- He was deported to India, convicted, and sentenced to two consecutive life imprisonments at the Cellular Jail, infamously known as '**Kala Pani**'.

Political Life and Ideological Views

- After his release, Savarkar became the president of the Hindu Mahasabha from **1937 to 1943**.

Death and Legacy

- In **1964**, believing that his life's mission was fulfilled after India achieved independence, Savarkar chose to fast unto death starting from February 1. He passed away on February 26, 1966.

- To honor his contribution to the nation, the airport in Port Blair was renamed as the **Veer Savarkar International Airport in 2002**.

DEFENCE

Op Netra 1.0

- **Context:** The Indian Army successfully carried out 'Op Netra 1.0', a four-day high-altitude eye care initiative in Leh, benefiting around 950 patients with advanced surgical treatment.

About Op Netra 1.0

- 'Op Netra 1.0' was a specialised advanced surgical eye camp organised by the Indian Army.
- Conducted at the 153 General Hospital in Leh, under the guidance of the Director General Armed Forces Medical Services.
- The main purpose was to deliver specialised ophthalmic care and extend humanitarian medical services to people living in remote, high-altitude areas.
- It focused on overcoming geographical challenges to ensure access to essential healthcare for all.

Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

- **Context :** CINBAX-II 2026 is a joint military exercise between India and Cambodia.
- It is being conducted at the Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Provincial Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu, Cambodia (4–17 May 2026).
- The Indian contingent comprises 120 personnel, mainly from the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment, while the Cambodian contingent has 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army.
- The exercise is based on the UN Charter Chapter VII mandate, focusing on sub-conventional warfare and counter-terrorism scenarios.

- It includes tactical drills, joint planning, field exercises, and validation exercises, with special focus on drone operations, mortars, and sniper tactics.
- The aim is to enhance interoperability, coordination, and operational synergy, while strengthening India–Cambodia defence cooperation and contributing to regional security and stability.

INS Mahendragiri

- INS Mahendragiri (Yard 12654) is the sixth Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) frigate and was delivered to the Indian Navy on 30 April 2026 at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.
- It marks a major milestone in India's indigenous warship design and construction capability under Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- Designed by the Warship Design Bureau and built using the Integrated Construction philosophy, ensuring faster and efficient shipbuilding.
- Equipped with advanced systems including CODOG propulsion, Controllable Pitch Propellers, and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
- Project 17A frigates are multi-mission stealth warships designed for anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare operations. The five already delivered to the Navy are INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Taragiri and INS Vindhyagiri

Agni-VI

- **Context:** The Central Government has announced that the Agni-VI missile an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of striking targets up to 10,000 kilometers away is poised to make history.
- The Agni Missile Series consists of solid-propelled ballistic missiles.

- These missiles are capable of operating across a wide range of distances, ranging from **short-range missiles to Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)**.
- Possessing road and rail mobility, these missiles have an **enhanced chance of survivability during an enemy attack**.
- The development of the Agni missile series **began in the early 1980s** as part of the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
- This project was spearheaded by **former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**.
- **(TARA) weapon system off the coast of Odisha.**
- TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system capable of converting conventional unguided warheads into precision-guided weapons for accurately engaging ground-based targets.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, the modular range extension kit has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat along with other DRDO laboratories.
- It is aimed at improving the range and lethality of low-cost aerial weapons.

About Agni-VI

- The Agni-VI is another powerful **intercontinental ballistic missile**.
- It is currently reported to be in the initial stages of development at the laboratories of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It is expected to be the **newest and most advanced variant in the Agni missile series**.
- It is being designed with the capability to be launched from **both land-based platforms and submarines**.
- It will be capable of striking targets located at distances ranging from **6,000 to 10,000 kilometers**.
- Furthermore, it will possess the capability to carry nuclear warheads equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), **allowing it to strike multiple distinct targets simultaneously**.
- **India Successfully Tests Agni Missile with MIRV Capability**
- **Context:** India has successfully test-fired an advanced Agni missile with the strategic ability to deploy multiple payloads to separate targets simultaneously a milestone that places the country among a select league of global powers.
- The test was conducted from **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha**.

MIRV Technology

- **Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV)** technology enables a single missile to strike several targets located hundreds of kilometres apart.
- In a MIRV system, multiple warheads are released from the missile at varying speeds and along different trajectories toward separate targets.
- Countries known to possess MIRV-capable missiles include United States, Russia, China, France, and United Kingdom. **With the successful test, India has also entered this group of nations.**

Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) Weapon System

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Indian Air Force have conducted the maiden flight-trial of the **Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation**

- Pakistan has also claimed successful tests of its MIRV-capable missile named Ababeel in 2017 and again in 2023.

Details of the Flight Test

- The missile carried multiple payloads aimed at different targets spread across a large geographical area in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Telemetry and tracking were conducted through multiple ground-based and ship-based stations.
- Tracking systems monitored the missile's trajectory from launch until the impact of all payloads.

Successful Achievement

- Flight data confirmed that all mission objectives were successfully achieved during the trial.
- The successful test demonstrated India's ability to strike multiple strategic targets using a single missile system.

Strategic Significance

- The achievement places India among a select group of nations possessing advanced MIRV missile capability.
- The capability significantly strengthens India's strategic and defence preparedness against emerging security threats.
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Army, and industry partners played a major role in the successful mission.

DRDO's Successful Scramjet Combustor Test for Hypersonic Missile Development

- **Context:** Defence Research and Development Organisation achieved a major breakthrough in hypersonic missile technology through the successful long-duration test of an actively cooled full-scale scramjet combustor.

- The test was conducted by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL).

- The trial was carried out at the Scramjet Connect Pipe Test (SCPT) Facility in Hyderabad
- The scramjet combustor achieved a **continuous run-time of more than 1,200 seconds**.
- This performance improved upon the earlier successful test of over 700 seconds conducted in January 2026.

Key Technological Features

- The combustor was fully designed and developed by DRDL with support from Indian industry partners.
- The technology uses a **supersonic air-breathing engine system essential for hypersonic missile propulsion**.
- The system operates using indigenously developed **liquid hydrocarbon endothermic fuel**.
- Advanced high-temperature thermal barrier coating technology was incorporated to withstand extreme heat conditions.
- The project also utilised **advanced manufacturing techniques for high-performance aerospace systems**.

INS Sagardhwani

- **Context:** After successfully completing its mission with the Royal Malaysian Navy, **INS Sagardhwani** departed from Port Klang, Malaysia.
- This voyage focused on professional and **scientific collaboration in the fields of hydrography, marine environmental research, and oceanographic technology**.

About INS Sagardhwani

- INS Sagardhwani is an advanced marine research vessel commissioned into the Navy in July 1994. It was designed for modern marine scientific studies.
- The name "**Sagardhwani**" translates to "**Voice of the Ocean.**" It was chosen to reflect the vessel's marine research mission.
- The ship was designed by the Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) in Kochi and built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).

Pragati 2026

- A joint military exercise involving 13 nations, including **India and Sri Lanka**, has commenced in Meghala-ya.
- The joint military exercise, codenamed 'Pragati 2026', has begun at the Umroi Military Station in the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya.
- Thirteen nations—India, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam—are participating in this exercise.
- The exercise is scheduled to span two weeks, focusing on counter-terrorism operations in semi-mountainous and dense forest terrains.
- The objective of this exercise is to strengthen defense ties through joint training and cultural exchange.
- 'Pragati' is the acronym for 'Regional Armies' Cooperation for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region'. The exercise is being conducted in a spirit of equality, friendship, and mutual respect.

IOS SAGAR Initiative

- **Context:** With the return of INS Sunayna to Kochi on May 20, 2026, the Indian Navy

has successfully concluded the IOS SAGAR initiative.

About the IOS SAGAR Initiative

- IOS SAGAR is a multinational maritime initiative aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation, interoperability, and collective security within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- 16 friendly nations participated in this deployment: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Maldives, Mozambique, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and the United Arab Emirates.
- The initiative was conducted under the theme "**One Ocean, One Mission.**"
- IOS SAGAR reflects India's maritime vision:
 - **SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region.**
 - **MAHASAGAR – Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.**

Agni-I Ballistic Missile

- **Context:** India on May 22 successfully carried out the **test-launch of the Agni-1 short-range ballistic missile from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur.**
- The Agni-1 is a short-range ballistic missile developed as part of India's strategic defense capability and forms an important component of the country's deterrence architecture.

About Agni-I Ballistic Missile

- Agni-I is a medium-range ballistic missile developed by India with a strike range of about **700 to 900 km.**
- It is a single-stage missile powered by solid fuel.
- The missile can carry a nuclear warhead with an approximate payload capacity of **1,000 kg.**

- Recent upgrades include an improved guidance system for better accuracy and an enhanced warhead with greater destructive capability.
- Being road-mobile, the missile can be transported and launched from different locations, making it difficult for adversaries to detect and target.
- **Agni-I was first successfully tested in 2002.**
- It was inducted into service by the **Strategic Forces Command of the Indian Army in 2007.**
- The missile was developed under **India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) launched in 1983.**

'Sanghamitra'

- **Context:** Indian Navy achieved another milestone in indigenous shipbuilding with the launch of Sanghamitra, a Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV).
- The vessel is named **after Sanghamitra, symbolising India's historical and cultural heritage.**
- The vessel was launched at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata.
- Sanghamitra is among 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels.

Purpose of the Vessel

- The indigenously designed and built ships are intended to enhance the Navy's operational strength in multiple maritime roles.

Key Operational Functions

- The NGOPVs will be used for: maritime surveillance, coastal and offshore defence, search and rescue operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), anti-piracy missions, and protection of offshore assets.

Support to Aatmanirbhar Bharat

- According to the Ministry of Defence, the launch strengthens India's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing.
- It also supports the government's: **Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, and the Make in India programme** aimed at promoting indigenous defence production.

Suryastra Rocket System

- **Context:** Defence Minister launched India's first indigenous 300-km Universal Rocket Launching System named "Suryastra".
- He also inaugurated a major private defence manufacturing facility in Shirdi.

About Suryastra

- Suryastra is India's **first domestically developed Universal Rocket Launching System** with a strike range of 300 km.
- The system has been developed to strengthen India's long-range artillery and precision strike capabilities.

Purpose

- The rocket system is intended **to improve operational flexibility and battlefield effectiveness.**
- It supports India's defence modernisation and indigenous weapons development programme.

Features

- Range of the system is around 300 kilometres.
- It belongs to the **category of Universal Rocket Launching Systems.**
- Designed for long-range artillery attack and precision targeting.

Strategic Importance

- The system improves **India's indigenous defence preparedness and combat capability.**
- It represents progress in the development of **advanced home-grown military technology.**
- Suryastra supports the vision of **reducing dependence on imported defence equipment.**

'Kautilya' and 'Q-FORCE' Artificial Intelligence platforms.

- **Context:** In 2026, the Indian Army developed two Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based digital systems: 'Kautilya' and 'Q-FORCE'.

About Kautilya

- **'Kautilya' is an AI-based command intelligence platform** designed to provide support for data analysis and decision-making.
- The 'Kautilya' system utilizes **AI-enabled dashboards and interfaces** based on Natural Language Processing (NLP).
- It processes data related to personnel, weaponry, equipment, logistics, training, rations, and operational readiness.
- **'Kautilya' supports data entry via tablets and also functions as an AI co-pilot for administrative and operational tasks.**

About Q-FORCE

- **'Q-FORCE' is an integrated digital application designed for logistics, inventory management, and supply chain management.**
- The 'Q-FORCE' system integrates various logistics and inventory platforms **to facilitate sustained operations across diverse terrains.**
- The Indian Army has declared 2026 as the **"Year of Networking and Data Centricity."**
- The complete integration of Artificial Intelligence into the Indian Army's operations has been set as a **target to be achieved by 2027.**
- During 'Operation Sindoor', the Indian Armed Forces utilized 23 Artificial Intelligence applications including ECAS and TRINETRA under **'Project SANJAY'.**
- Artificial Intelligence enables machines to perform tasks such as data analysis, pattern recognition, and decision-making support.
- Natural Language Processing (NLP) enables computers to understand and process human language.
- **Project SANJAY is associated with digital integration and AI-driven military operations in India.**

BOOKS & AUTHORS**The Library Man of India: The Story of P.N. Panicker**

- **Context:** Vice President releases book on P.N. Panicker, stresses need to rebuild reading habits.

- Released the book **The Library Man of India: The Story of P.N. Panicker** authored by P. P. Sathyan at Uprashtrapati Bhavan.
- The Vice President paid tribute to **P.N. Panicker**, describing him as a visionary who transformed millions of lives through the power of books and knowledge.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Pulitzer Prize

- **Context :** Indian journalists **Ananth R.K.** and **Suparna Sharma** have been announced as winners of the Pulitzer Prize in the illustrated reporting and commentary category.

About the Pulitzer Prize

- The Pulitzer Prize is considered the most prestigious award in the field of **journalism** in the United States.
- Established in **1917**, the awards are administered by **Columbia University** and the 'Pulitzer Prize Board.'
- The prize is named in honor of the renowned newspaper publisher, **Joseph Pulitzer**.
- Each winner receives a certificate and a cash prize of **\$15,000**. Additionally, the winner in the '**Public Service**' category is awarded a **gold medal**.
- For the year 2025, Pulitzer Prizes were awarded in a total of **23 categories**, including 15 categories in journalism and 8 categories in books, drama, and music.

National Panchayat Awards (NPA) 2025

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** announced the winners of the National Panchayat Awards (NPA) 2025.
- A total of 42 Panchayats from different States and Union Territories were selected for the awards.
- **Kawrthah North Village Council in Mizoram** has secured the top rank at the national level under the "Clean and Green Panchayat" category of the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025**, for its

work in sustainable rural development and environmental conservation.

- The Ministry and the Mizoram government have lauded the recognition, calling it an example of effective grassroots governance and sustainable development.

Categories of Awards

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)

- The award recognises outstanding Gram Panchayats for achievements under the **nine themes of Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)**.
- Awards are given for Rank 1, Rank 2, and Rank 3 under each theme.
- The assessment is linked with Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 scores.

Nine LSDG Themes

- Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods Panchayat
- Healthy Panchayat
- Child-Friendly Panchayat
- Water-Sufficient Panchayat
- Clean and Green Panchayat
- Self-Sufficient Infrastructure Panchayat
- Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat
- Panchayat with Good Governance
- Women-Friendly Panchayat

Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP)

- This award is presented to the best-performing Panchayats on an overall basis.
- Under NPA 2025, 8 Panchayats were selected: 3 Best District Panchayats, 2 Best Block Panchayats, 3 Best Gram Panchayats

Financial Incentives

- Award-winning Panchayats receive financial incentives ranging from ₹50 lakh to ₹5 crore depending on category and level.
- The awards are provided under the **Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP)** scheme.
- IoP is a component of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA).

Special Category Awards

- On National Panchayati Raj Day 2025, Prime presented awards under special categories:
- Climate Action Special Panchayat Award (CASPA)
- Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award (ANPSA)
- Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar (PKNSSP)

Significance of National Panchayat Awards

- The awards aim to recognise and encourage high-performing Panchayats in rural governance and development.
- They promote inclusive, participatory, and sustainable rural development.
- The initiative strengthens local governance, public service delivery, and community participation.
- Since 2023, the awards framework has been redesigned in alignment with the nine LSDG themes to make evaluation more transparent, holistic, and data-driven.

- The awards reinforce the role of Panchayats in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

PM Receives Sweden's Royal Honour

- Prime Minister has been conferred Sweden's distinguished Royal Order of the Polar Star, Commander Grand Cross, one of the country's highest civilian honours.

Prime Minister Conferred with Norway's Highest Award

- Having concluded his visit to Sweden, the **Prime Minister arrived in Oslo**, the capital of Norway, yesterday. On this occasion, **King Harald** conferred upon the Prime Minister Norway's highest honor, the "**Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit**."

International Booker Prize 2026

- Taiwanese author **Yáng Shuāng-zi** and translator **Lin King** won the International Booker Prize.
- **Taiwan Travelogue** wins **International Booker Prize 2026**, a historical romance set in Japan-occupied Taiwan in the 1930s.
- Ms. Yáng and Ms. Lin will split the **£50,000 prize**.

Agricola Medal

- The prestigious Agricola Medal was **presented to the Prime Minister** at the headquarters of the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** in **Rome, Italy**.



Return of the Chola-era Anaimangalam Plates to India

- **Context:** The Chola-era copper plates, known as the Anaimangalam Plates, have been returned to India from the Netherlands.
- The plates were in the possession of Leiden University since 1862. The return ceremony took place in The Hague.
- **The Anaimangalam Copper Plates - A Testament to Chola Glory and Religious Harmony.**

Historical Importance

- The plates are important royal charters from the Chola period.
- They provide key information about relations between the Chola Empire and the Srivijaya Empire.

Historical Importance of the Plates

- The plates belong to the reign of Rajendra Chola I.
- They contain a royal order originally issued by Raja Raja Chola I.
- The inscription granted the village of Anaimangalam as Pallichchandam to support:
 - The Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam.
- They document royal grants issued during the reigns of: Raja Raja Chola I, Rajendra Chola I, Kulottunga Chola I
- They provide evidence of: Chola administration, Maritime diplomacy, Religious harmony, Links between Tamil Nadu and Southeast Asia.

Raja Raja Chola I and the Buddhist Vihara

- The plates record Raja Raja Chola I's grant of land at Anaimangalam village to support a **Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam.**
- During the 21st regnal year of the Great Emperor Rajaraja Chola I (corresponding to 1005 CE), the **village of Anaimangalam—spanning an area of 97 velis (a traditional land measure)** was granted verbally as Pallichchandam (a land endowment bestowed upon religious institutions).
- The vihara was constructed by: **Sri Mara Vijayotunga Varman of Java** the King of the Srivijaya-Kedah Empire.
- This land grant was bestowed upon the **Buddhist monastery known as the 'Chudamani Varma Vihara,' situated in Nagapattinam.**
- The vihara was also known as: **Raja Raja Cholan Perumpalli** during Rajendra Chola I's reign.

Delayed Formal Documentation

- Although the announcement regarding this land grant was made during Rajaraja Chola's own reign, the corresponding epigraphic record was not formally drafted until his passing in 1014 CE.
- The official written document formalizing this grant was finally created during the reign of his son, who succeeded him on the throne.

Role of Rajendra Chola I

- Though Raja Raja Chola I issued the original order, **it was implemented by Rajendra Chola I.**
- The larger Leiden plates contain: **Five Sanskrit plates and Sixteen Tamil plates.**

- All these copper plates are strung together by means of a bronze ring.
- These plates formally recorded the royal grant.
- Religious harmony
- Administrative excellence
- International diplomatic relations and trade
- The cultural richness of the Chola Empire.

Additional Grants by Kulottunga Chola I

- Smaller plates mention further grants made by Kulottunga Chola I to the Buddhist sangha.
- After requests from emissaries of the Javanese kingdom: Kulottunga granted 4,500 kalam of paddy and additional land.
- This was in addition to Raja Raja Chola I's earlier grant of 8,943 kalam of paddy.

Chola Royal Insignia on the Plates

- The plates are bound together by a royal ring bearing Chola symbols:
 - Tiger - emblem of the Cholas
 - Two fish -symbol of the Pandyas
 - Bow - symbol of the Cheras
 - Royal parasol
 - Lamps
 - Chamaras
 - Swastika
- The inclusion of Pandya and Chera symbols signified Chola victory over those kingdoms.

A Symbol of Religious Tolerance

- Rajaraja Chola I was a staunch devotee of Shaivism.
- Despite this, he donated an entire village to support a Buddhist monastery.
- This act stands as powerful testimony to the religious harmony and tolerance practiced by Tamil monarchs during the Chola era.

Historical Significance of the Anaimangalam Copper Plates

- The Anaimangalam copper plates serve as a historical mirror, reflecting the following aspects:
 - The benevolence of Tamil monarchs

Destruction of the Vihara

- The Chulamanivarma Vihara's tower was demolished in 1867 by Jesuit priests with permission from the colonial Madras government.

The inscriptions highlight:

- Maritime diplomacy
- Trade and cultural exchange
- Religious coexistence between Hindu and Buddhist institutions
- Indian Ocean connections during the 11th Century

Discovery and Removal

- The plates were reportedly lost around 300 years ago.
- Investigations revealed that they were likely excavated in Nagapattinam between 1687 and 1700 by the Dutch East India Company (VOC).
- They were removed from India without the consent of the rightful owners.

India's Efforts for Repatriation

- In 2023, the Indian government formally requested the return of the plates.
- The Dutch Colonial Collections Committee concluded that: The plates were removed involuntarily. India had rightful ownership.
- Leiden University accepted the recommendation for unconditional return.

Future Custody

- The plates will be handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India.

- The ASI will decide where the artefacts will be preserved and exhibited in India.

Quad Meeting and Indo-Pacific Cooperation

- **Context:** Japan's Foreign Minister reaffirmed that the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) continues to remain an important strategic platform despite concerns regarding its declining relevance.

Critical Minerals as Top Agenda

- Cooperation in **critical minerals** required for green energy and advanced technologies will be a major focus of the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
- Japan is already collaborating with India on critical mineral projects.

Quad Summit Preparations

- The meeting will also help prepare for the next Quad Summit, which has not taken place since 2024 because of tensions between India and the United States.

About QUAD

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, commonly called the Quad, is a strategic partnership involving four nations – **India, United States, Japan, and Australia.**
- The main objective of the Quad is **to strengthen regional stability, security, and economic collaboration across the Indo-Pacific region.**

- The grouping regularly conducts ministerial and summit-level meetings to deliberate on issues such as maritime safety, infrastructure connectivity, emerging technologies, and resilient supply chains.

- The **Quad first emerged in 2007** during informal discussions held alongside the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings.

- Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe played a key role in proposing the formation of the grouping.

- In 2012, Shinzo Abe introduced the idea of the "Democratic Security Diamond," envisioning strategic cooperation among India, Japan, the United States, and Australia in the Indo-Pacific.

- In 2017, officials from the four countries held the **first revived Quad discussions in Manila on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit.**

- In 2020, the **India-US-Japan Malabar Naval Exercise was expanded to include Australia.**

- This marked the first formal military engagement of all four Quad nations together since the grouping's revival and their first combined naval exercise in more than ten years.

- In 2021, the leaders of the Quad countries met virtually and issued a joint declaration titled **"The Spirit of the Quad."**

SPORTS & GAMES

- **Gurindervir Singh** created history by becoming the **fastest sprinter from India** after recording an **impressive time of 10.09 seconds** in the men's 100-metre final at the Federation Cup held in Ranchi.

CURRENT FACTS

- Tamil Nadu emerged as the leading state in marine fish landings in 2025, as per the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.
- PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE)
- The Election Commission introduced a QR code-based photo identity card system on ECI-Net to eliminate the possibility of any unauthorised persons entering counting centres.
- **Claude Mythos**
 - Claude Mythos is a next-generation frontier AI model developed by Anthropic with advanced reasoning, coding, and technical problem-solving capabilities, surpassing previous AI systems.
 - Developed by Anthropic.
 - Designed to analyze large and complex codebases to identify critical security vulnerabilities.
 - Capable of detecting long-standing and previously undiscovered software flaws (including zero-day vulnerabilities).
- **National Road Safety Education Excellence Awards 2025-26**
 - The National Road Safety Education Excellence Awards 2025-26 recognise schools, institutions, and students for excellence in promoting road safety education.
 - In Tamil Nadu, five institutions were awarded, and 69 students were recognised as Olympiad winners.
 - **National Road Safety Mission for Schools**
 - It is an initiative under the National Road Safety Mission, launched in 2024.
 - Aims to create awareness among school students about road safety and responsible behaviour.
- **Para-Legal Volunteers**
 - Tamil Nadu reports around 8,000 missing children cases annually, rising to about 13,000 cases including other child-related crimes, indicating a significant child protection challenge.
 - The State government has decided to empanel Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) in police stations to support parents, assist in case follow-up, and improve coordination with police authorities.
 - PLVs will provide emotional support, legal guidance, liaison services, post-tracing care for children, and facilitate access to welfare schemes, strengthening victim support systems.
 - The initiative operates under laws such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, with PLVs assigned through district/taluk legal services committees.
 - National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) launched the Para-Legal Volunteers (PLV) Scheme in 2009 to provide legal training to volunteers and ensure access to justice for all sections of society.
 - PLVs act as intermediaries between people and legal institutions, promoting legal awareness and enabling doorstep delivery of legal aid, especially for marginalized groups.
- **Biopharma SHAKTI**
 - Announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, the Biopharma SHAKTI (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology, and Innovation) scheme aims to transform India from a generics-focused industry into a global hub for biologics and biosimilars manufacturing.

- With a financial outlay of ₹10,000 crore over five years (from FY 2026–27), it seeks to build an end-to-end biopharmaceutical ecosystem aligned with the National Biopharma Mission (2017).
- The scheme promotes advanced Non-Animal Methodologies (NAMs) such as organoids, organ-on-a-chip, and 3D bioprinting to improve drug safety prediction, reduce costs, and enhance innovation.
- It prioritises affordable domestic production of therapies for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders.
- It also strengthens infrastructure and human capital through measures such as the establishment of new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs).

▪ **Women Voter Trend in Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2026**

- In Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2026, women accounted for approximately 82% of additional voters, the highest in the last four elections.
- Out of 25.3 lakh additional voters, about 20.8 lakh were women, showing a strong gender gap in voter participation.
- In earlier elections, women's share of additional voters was lower approximately 60% in 2011 and approximately 50% in 2016 and 2021.
- Despite the record share, the absolute increase of women voters (20.8 lakh) is only the third highest, after 2016 (34.4 lakh) and 2011 (22.3 lakh).
- Women turnout increased from 2.32 crore in 2021 to 2.53 crore in 2026, registering about a 9% growth.
- The high share is partly due to greater mobilisation and interest among women voters, while male participation growth remained relatively lower.
- Welfare schemes and targeted promises by political parties are a key factor behind increased women voter participation.

▪ **Sahyog Portal**

- The 'Sahyog' Portal automates the process of issuing notices to intermediaries under the Information Technology Act, 2000 for removal or blocking of unlawful online content.
- It brings together authorised government agencies and intermediaries on a single platform to ensure quick and coordinated action.
- It aims to enable faster content regulation and promote a safer, more secure cyberspace for citizens.
- The United Nations General Assembly declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga in 2014, recognising yoga as a tool for harmony, peace, and global well-being. Yoga has gained global recognition, including its inscription in 2016 on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, highlighting its universal relevance.

▪ **BioE3 Policy**

- The BioE3 Policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) provides a framework to promote cutting-edge technologies and align research for advancing high-performance biomanufacturing across diverse sectors.
- It aims to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and quality in biomanufacturing while accelerating the development of bio-based high-value products, supporting India's Green Growth, LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), and Net-Zero carbon economy goals.
- The policy promotes establishment of BioEnablers such as Bio-AI hubs, biofoundries, and biomanufacturing hubs to strengthen R&D, enable scaling of technologies, and support commercialization of bio-based innovations.

- Six priority thematic sectors identified include bio-based chemicals and enzymes, functional foods and smart proteins, precision biotherapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, carbon capture and utilisation, and marine & space biotechnology.
- India's bioeconomy has shown strong growth, contributing 4.25% of GDP (2023), expanding from \$10 billion (2014) to \$151 billion (2023), and increasing biotech startups from 50 to over 8,500, reflecting rapid sectoral expansion and innovation capacity.

▪ H5N1 viruses

- H5N1 (Avian Influenza / Bird Flu) is a highly infectious and severe respiratory disease in birds caused by a subtype of the Influenza A virus.
- Influenza A viruses are classified based on surface proteins into 18 hemagglutinin (H1-H18) and 11 neuraminidase (N1-N11) subtypes; H5N1 is one such combination.

▪ Hung Assembly

- A Hung Assembly occurs when no single party or pre-poll alliance secures a majority in the State Legislative Assembly.
- In such cases, the Governor exercises situational discretion to invite a leader to form the government.
- Under Article 164(1), the Governor appoints the Chief Minister, but procedures for a hung assembly are not explicitly defined.
- Priority of the Governor is to ensure a stable government with majority support.
- Options before the Governor include inviting:
 - Leader of the largest party, or
 - A coalition that can prove majority on the floor of the House.
- The appointed Chief Minister must undergo a floor test to prove majority support in the Legislative Assembly.
- Relevant provisions:
 - Article 163 – Governor acts on aid and advice, except in discretionary situations.
 - Article 164 – Governor appoints CM and Council of Ministers.
- Governor's decisions are subject to judicial review if found arbitrary or unconstitutional.
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences Delhi has launched the country's first portable MRI system that can be used at the patient's bedside

▪ Model Code of Conduct

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a framework of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India to govern the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.
- To ensure that the processes of campaigning, voting, and counting are conducted in a fair, smooth, and transparent manner.
- To prevent the misuse of government resources and public funds by the ruling party for electoral advantage.
- To curb electoral malpractices, offences, and corrupt activities, ensuring that elections are held with integrity.
- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which guides political parties and candidates during elections, was first drafted by the Kerala government in 1960.
- The Election Commission (EC) formalised it in 1968, revised it in 1974, and added Part VII on the "party in power" in 1979.
- Former Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan enforced it with unprecedented rigour from 1991.

▪ **Procedures for Forming a Government in Tamil Nadu**

- In Tamil Nadu, which comprises 234 constituencies, a minimum of 118 seats is required to form a government.
- A situation in which no single party secures 118 seats is referred to as a 'Hung Assembly.'
- In such a scenario, pursuant to Articles 163 and 164(B) of the Constitution of India, the Governor may invite a party to form the government in any of the following four ways:
 - A pre-poll alliance that has secured a victory.
 - The single largest party that has won the highest number of seats in the election.
 - A post-poll alliance formed by parties joining together after the election.
 - A party forming the government with the external support of other parties.

▪ **Government Formation Procedures**

- The legislative leader of the elected party shall be appointed as the Chief Minister.
- In accordance with the Supreme Court's 1994 verdict in the S.R. Bommai case, the Chief Minister must convene the Legislative Assembly under Article 174 of the Constitution and demonstrate the support of 118 members.
- If a majority is proven, the government shall continue without interruption.
- If the Chief Minister fails to prove a majority, the Governor shall offer the opportunity to the next-largest party.
- If the second party also fails to prove a majority, President's Rule shall be imposed under Article 356, and fresh elections shall be held.

▪ **India's 18th railway zone**

- The Ministry of Railways has created South Coast Railway (SCoR) as India's 18th railway zone. The headquarters is at Visakhapatnam and it will be fully operational from June 1.
- The zone will include Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions along with a new 410-km Visakhapatnam division.
- The project includes 100% electrification and redevelopment of 74 railway stations.

▪ **UDGAM portal**

- UDGAM Portal (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access InforMation) is a centralised online platform developed by the Reserve Bank of India to help the public trace unclaimed bank deposits.
- It enables users to search unclaimed deposits across multiple banks covered under the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEA Fund).
- As of March 2024, 30 banks are integrated, covering about 90% of unclaimed deposits in the DEA Fund.

▪ **Securities and Exchange Board of India**

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established in 1988 as a non-statutory body and became a statutory regulator in 1992 under the SEBI Act, 1992.
- It functions as the principal regulator of India's securities market under the Ministry of Finance, ensuring orderly development of the capital market.
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Regional offices: Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi.
- SEBI's Board consists of 9 members, including a Chairperson, representatives from the Union Government and Reserve Bank of India, and other appointed members.
- The Chairperson is appointed by the Government of India for up to 5 years or till 65 years, based on recommendations of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

- **SEBI performs three core functions:** regulation (framing rules and monitoring markets), development (promoting innovations like demat and electronic trading), and investor protection (preventing fraud and ensuring transparency).
- It has powers to conduct inspections, investigations, impose penalties, regulate intermediaries, and oversee mutual funds and venture capital funds.
- Key initiatives include the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) for awareness and the SCORES portal for grievance redressal.
- **Thirukkural**
 - “To break the greatness and to want the invincibility pride gives effort”.
 - Meaning: One must not become weary or discouraged, thinking, "This undertaking is too arduous to execute." Rather, diligent effort will generate the very greatness and capability necessary to successfully complete it. Chapter: Possession of Diligence
- **Adi Dravidar Welfare Department**
 - The Adi Dravidar Welfare Department was created in 1988 as a separate department from the Social Welfare Department.
 - The aim to uplift the Adi Dravidar people in terms of literacy and socio-economic status and to deliver specific programs aimed at improving their standard of living.
 - The Adi Dravidar Welfare Directorate identifies the requirements of the people and function towards the improvement of basic Amenities in the habitations, issues house site pattas, run of schools and hostel for the Adi Dravidar students, implements pre-matric and post-matric education assistance programs, implements education assistance programs for the students studying in foreign countries and takes care of welfare of Adi Dravidar community.
- **Annal Ambedkar Overseas Higher Education Scholarship Scheme**
 - Scholarship of Rs.36.00 lakh per annum is provided to encourage students to undertake postgraduate and doctoral research studies in educational institutions abroad.
 - Scholarship of Rs.36.00 lakh is given if the annual family income is below Rs.8.00 lakh. Scholarship of Rs.24.00 lakh is given if the family income limit is between Rs.8.00 lakh to Rs.12.00 lakh.
 - The students should be enrolled in Universities of rank of up to 1000 in the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University rankings.
 - Graduate students must be under 35 years of age and full-time doctoral research students must be under 40 years of age on the first day of April (1st April) of the year of applying for scholarship.
 - Last 3 Years Beneficiaries with Expenditure Bar Chart
- **2023 Constitution Bench Judgment**
 - In the Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India judgment (March 2023), the Supreme Court ruled that appointments of the CEC and ECs should be made by a committee consisting of:
 - Prime Minister
 - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha or leader of the largest Opposition party
 - Chief Justice of India (CJI)
 - Court stated that this arrangement would continue until Parliament enacted a law under Article 324(2) of the Constitution.
 - Article 324(2) - The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners

shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.

▪ **SAMARTH Panchayat Portal**

- Digital Platform to empower Panchayats in augmenting and monitoring their Tax/Non-Tax Revenue Sources by streamlining & digitalization of underlying processes and online collection of revenue.
- Aims to Digitally Empower the Panchayats to efficiently collect and monitor revenue under the OSR Framework.
- Shall facilitate in strengthening of the financial capabilities and local governance of panchayats, ensuring improved quality of life for residents at the grassroots level.
- The Punchhi Commission recommended that government formation should be based on the widest legislative support.

• **Order of preference**

- Pre-poll alliance with majority
- Largest single party with support
- Post-poll coalition (all partners in government)
- Post-poll alliance with outside support

▪ **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**

- Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 aims to prevent smuggling and regulate trade in cultural artefacts.
- Defines antiquities as objects over 75 years old, including sculptures, coins, manuscripts, and carvings.
- Implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India and came into force in 1976.
- Sarkaria Commission 1988 have highlighted the importance of giving Governors reasonable time to “explore alternatives with political parties, groups and Independent MLAs” to form a stable government. The phrase “reasonable time” is not defined in the Constitution.
- A nine-judge Bench in the 1994 S.R. Bommai judgment, while endorsing this hierarchy of preference, liberally added that the Governor could either go for the single largest party or “group”. It did not matter whether the “group” was formed before or after the election. It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery if these alternatives fail, and no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government.
- The Supreme Court, in its seven-judge Bench judgment in Rameshwar Prasad versus Union of India 2006, has also cautioned against Governors misusing their office for partisan politics. The case flagged the criticism recorded in the Sarkaria Commission that Governors have, more often than not, used their powers to recommend President’s Rule under Article 356 to “promote the political interests of the party in power at the Centre”.
- **Cyphostemma annamalaii**
 - A new plant species Cyphostemma annamalaii was discovered by students of Annamalai University and their guide.
 - The species is named after Rajah Sir Annamalai.
 - It was found in the southern Eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu, specifically in Villupuram district at Sanjeevi hill (290 ft) at an elevation of 86 m.

- Vitaceae, commonly known as the grape family, includes over 1,000 species across 20 genera. Cyphostemma is the second largest genus with about 250 species, found in tropical and subtropical regions. The plant was discovered at an elevation of 86 m in a tropical dry forest in Panaimalaipettai.

▪ **Chief Election Commissioner Appointment (2023 Act)**

- The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 replaces the 1991 Act and regulates appointment, service conditions, and functioning of the Election Commission.
- In the Anoop Baranwal case 2023, the Supreme Court directed that appointments be made by a panel consisting of the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of India until a law is enacted.
- Under the 2023 Act, the Selection Committee includes the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, thereby excluding the Chief Justice of India.
- Search Committee is headed by the Law Minister and shortlists five candidates, but the Selection Committee can consider names beyond this list.
- Tenure is six years or up to 65 years of age, whichever is earlier, and reappointment is not permitted.
- Salary is equivalent to that of a Supreme Court judge
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge.
- Election Commissioners can be removed on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

▪ **Samagra Shiksha Scheme**

- Samagra Shiksha Scheme is an integrated scheme launched in the Union Budget 2018-19 covering school education from pre-primary to senior secondary (up to Class 12).
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership between the Centre and States/UTs.
- It subsumes earlier schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE).
- It aims to support implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the Right to Education Act, and the National Education Policy.

- Hantaviruses are a group of zoonotic viruses transmitted by rodents. They cause two main diseases: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), which leads to severe respiratory distress, and Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS), which causes internal bleeding and kidney failure.

▪ **Hill Area Conservation Authority (HACA) - 1990**

▪ Formation of HACA

- The Hill Area Conservation Authority (HACA) in Tamil Nadu was established on April 2, 1990.
- It was constituted under a Government Order issued by the Planning and Development Department.
- Its primary objective is to protect the ecologically highly sensitive hill and upland regions from unregulated development.

▪ **Why HACA Was Created in 1990**

- During the late 1980s and early 1990s, rapid urban and industrial growth began to adversely affect the natural ecosystem of the hill areas.
- Consequently Issues such as
 - environmental degradation,
 - destruction of forest ecosystems, and
 - loss of biodiversity became increasingly prevalent.
- To mitigate these adverse impacts and to conserve the natural resources of the hill areas, the Government of Tamil Nadu established HACA.

▪ **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)**

- The Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is a highly contagious and often fatal RNA virus that affects dogs and wild carnivores worldwide.
- It spreads primarily through respiratory droplets (via coughing and sneezing) and causes a disease that impacts multiple body systems, manifesting as fever, respiratory and gastrointestinal disturbances, and – frequently – life-threatening neurological complications.
- Although there is currently no specific cure for this disease, highly effective vaccines are available and currently in use to prevent this infection.

▪ **THIRUKKURAL**

On no right system if man toil and strive,

Though many men assist, no work can thrive

- **EXPLANATION:** The work, which is not done by suitable methods, will fail though many stand to uphold it.
- Thirukkural Chapter: The Manner of Acting with Forethought
- Jharkhand has reached a significant achievement in the field of school education by attaining a zero dropout rate at the primary level during 2024-25. This accomplishment has been highlighted through data associated with the Unified District Information System for Education Plus and a report released by NITI Aayog.

▪ **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme**

- The PM-KISAN Scheme was launched in Feb 2019.
- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), a Central Sector Scheme, aims at providing financial assistance to all cultivable landholding farmer families across the country, subject to certain exclusion criteria.
- Under the Scheme, an amount of Rs. 6000/- is transferred annually in three equal installments of Rs.2000/- directly into the Aadhaar Seeded bank accounts of the farmers.
- A farmer-centric digital infrastructure has ensured the benefits of the scheme reach all the farmers across the country without any involvement of the middlemen, maintaining absolute transparency in registering and verifying beneficiaries.

▪ **"Horse-Trading Deals"**

- A term borrowed from the business world, "horse-trading" has become synonymous with the unethical bargaining practices prevalent in Indian politics.
- It refers to the unethical practice of buying and selling the allegiance of legislators for personal gain or political advantage.

▪ **India has enacted laws to address issues related to party defections and horse-trading:**

- Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule): Introduced in 1985, this law disqualifies legislators who defect from their political parties. However, its effectiveness remains a subject of debate.

- **Voluntary Resignation:** The Supreme Court has clarified that voluntarily giving up one's membership in a political party also constitutes grounds for disqualification.

Thirukkural

Whate'er men think, ev'n as they think, may men obtain,
If those who think can steadfastness of will retain

▪ Explanation

- If those who have planned (an undertaking) possess firmness (in executing it) they will obtain what they have desired even as they have desired it.
- The Union government announced two major appointments, naming Lieutenant-General N.S. Raja Subramani (retd) as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan as the next Chief of the Naval Staff.
- Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based imaging satellite company, said that it would partner with the AI firm Sarvam to launch what is being described as India's first 'orbital data centre' satellite, named Pathfinder.
- The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), a CPSE under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), today formally unveiled Padma Doree, a unique cross-cultural textile initiative that brings together the Eri (Ahimsa) silk traditions of Northeast India with the rich Chanderi weaving heritage of Madhya Pradesh.

▪ Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation

- The Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation (TNWC) was established under the 'Agricultural Produce (Development and Warehousing) Corporations Act, 1956' and commenced its operations on May 2, 1958.
- Subsequently, the operations of this Corporation were brought under the purview of the 'Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962'. Currently, the Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation operates 60 warehouses spread across 7 zones throughout the State.
- The total storage capacity of this Corporation stands at 7.60 lakh metric tonnes.

▪ Coal Gasification in India

- The National Coal Gasification Mission has set a target of converting 100 million tonnes of coal into gas by 2030.
- India's first fertiliser plant based on coal gasification technology is being developed at Talcher and is expected to become operational by December 2027.
- Jindal Steel & Power operates the country's only commercial-scale coal gasification facility at Angul.
- Under commercial coal block auctions, companies are provided a 50% concession in revenue sharing if a minimum of 10% of coal production is utilised for gasification purposes.
- India's first Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) initiative was introduced in Kasta.

▪ Baiga Tribe

- The Baiga Tribe is recognised as one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- The tribe is mainly concentrated in central India, especially in Madhya Pradesh, with smaller populations residing in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
- Their primary language is Baigani, a regional dialect of Chhattisgarhi that carries strong influences from Gondi and Hindi.
- Tattooing holds great cultural significance in Baiga society, with distinct tattoo patterns assigned according to age groups and different parts of the body.

- The Baiga community became the first tribal group in India to receive habitat rights, highlighting their traditional bond and close dependence on forest ecosystems.
 - Part III, Article 26(a) - to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes
 - Part III, Article 19 (1) (g) All citizens shall have the right- to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.
 - Part III, Article 30 - Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions
 - Part III, Article 30 (1) - All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
 - The National Florence Nightingale Awards were instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by nursing personnel to society.

▪ Dengue Fever

- Dengue (also known as "breakbone fever") is a mosquito-borne viral infection.
- While many dengue infections are asymptomatic or cause only mild illness, the virus can occasionally lead to severe complications and even death.
- It is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes carrying one of the four types of dengue viruses (DENV).
- With the exception of transmission from a pregnant woman to her child, dengue is not contagious from person to person.
- There is no specific medication to cure dengue. Treatment focuses on managing the symptoms.

▪ Thirukkural

What one thing merits folly's special name.

Letting gain go, loss for one's own to claim

▪ Explanation

- Folly is one (of the chief defects); it is that which (makes one) incur loss and forego gain.

▪ Difference between LPG and PNG

- LPG is distributed in cylinders, whereas PNG flows directly into homes through pipelines.
- Since LPG is filled under pressure within cylinders, it necessitates periodic refilling; however, PNG is delivered directly to the kitchen via underground pipelines.

▪ Primary Composition

- LPG: Primarily a mixture of Propane and Butane.
- PNG: Primarily Methane; this typically constitutes 85–95% of its composition.

▪ Density

- LPG: Heavier than air.
- PNG: Lighter than air.

▪ Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary to the Governor 2023

- The 2023 judgment in Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary to the Governor laid down key principles on anti-defection disputes involving rival factions within a political party.
- It held that the political party, and not the legislature party, has the authority to appoint the whip and issue directions on voting in the legislature.
- Consequently, any claim by a rival faction within the Assembly that it has its own whip or independent voting direction cannot be accepted as valid.

- The Court further clarified that the numerical strength of competing factions is irrelevant in determining disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.
- At the same time, the Speaker may be required to identify which group represents the original political party, for which the party constitution, rules, and organisational structure outside the House become relevant.
- Importantly, the Speaker cannot decide legitimacy solely on the basis of which faction holds a majority in the Assembly, as such an approach is legally impermissible.
- The Speaker's decision on which faction constitutes the party is only a prima facie finding and has no binding effect on the Election Commission of India.
- Under Paragraph 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, the Election Commission independently decides
 - Party recognition.
 - Allocation of election symbols.
- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act),**
 - The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 derives its genesis from the Supreme Court judgment in *Unnikrishnan vs State of Andhra Pradesh*, which held that education is a fundamental right under Article 21 up to the age of 14 years.
 - This led to the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, which inserted Article 21A, making free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 years a Fundamental Right.
 - The same amendment modified Article 45 (Directive Principles) to focus on early childhood care (0–6 years) and added Article 51A(k), making it a Fundamental Duty of parents/guardians to provide education to children aged 6–14 years.
 - To operationalise Article 21A, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) was enacted, making elementary education a justiciable right.
 - Key provisions include free and compulsory education (6–14 years), no detention policy, teacher qualification via TET, teacher–student ratio of 1:30, and 25% reservation in private schools for disadvantaged groups.
 - The Act also provides institutional mechanisms such as School Management Committees (SMCs), National/State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, and shared financial responsibility between Centre and States for implementation.
- **Whip**
 - A whip is a directive issued by a political party to its MPs/MLAs to ensure attendance in the House and adherence to party's voting instructions on Bills, motions, or resolutions.
 - It is a parliamentary convention (not mentioned in the Constitution), derived from the British practice of "whipping in" members to maintain party discipline.
 - Each party appoints a Chief Whip, who enforces discipline, ensures attendance, and communicates the party's instructions to legislators.
 - Types of whip: one-line (informative, allows abstention), two-line (attendance mandatory), and three-line (strict binding direction to vote as per party line), with the three-line whip used in crucial matters like no-confidence motions and major Bills.
 - Violation of a whip may lead to disqualification under the Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule) by the Speaker/Chairman, subject to exceptions like merger with two-thirds support under the 91st Constitutional Amendment, 2003.
- **Appointment of the CBI Director**

- According to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act of 1946, the Director of the CBI is appointed by the Central Government based on the recommendation of a three-member Selection Committee.
- Members of the Selection Committee:
 - Prime Minister – Chairperson
 - Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
 - Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge nominated by the Chief Justice
- Thirukkural
 - “There is no age for a drunkard; he will slander and destroy his honor”
 - **Meaning:** There is no such thing as an opportune time for those who work to elevate their family/lineage. If they indulge in laziness and worry about their self-respect/pride, the greatness of the family will be ruined.
 - Thirukkural (No. 1028) Chapter: Kudiseiyal Vagai (The Way of Elevating the Family)
- State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu
 - SIPCOT was established in 1971 under the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Act, 1965 to promote medium and large-scale industries in the state.
 - It was created to develop industrial parks, especially in industrially backward regions, with the aim of balanced regional development and employment generation.
 - SIPCOT’s first project was the establishment of the Cuddalore Industrial Complex, inaugurated in 1972.
 - SIPCOT has nurtured the development of 50 Industrial Parks including 8 SEZs, spread over 24 districts in a total extent of about 48,926.48 acres.
- The 16th Finance Commission has, recommending that heatwaves be notified as a national disaster — a designation that would unbolt the door to dedicated central funding.
- **National Testing Agency (NTA)**
 - The National Testing Agency (NTA) is an autonomous, self-sustained body under the Ministry of Education established to conduct transparent and standardized entrance examinations.
 - It was established in 2017 and is registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and is not a statutory body created by an Act of Parliament.
 - NTA conducts major national-level entrance examinations such as JEE Main, NEET UG, and CUET UG. also conducts postgraduate and eligibility examinations including CUET PG, UGC NET, and CSIR UGC NET.
 - It is headed by a Director General (DG), who functions as the Chief Executive Officer, usually of Joint Secretary rank in the Government of India.
- Part XV, Article 324 (2) - The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.
- Part V, Article 141 - Law declared by Supreme Court to be binding on all courts

- Part V, Article 145 (3) - The minimum number of Judges who are to sit for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution or for the purpose of hearing any reference under article 143 shall be five:
 - Provided that, where the Court hearing an appeal under any of the provisions of this Chapter other than article 132 consists of less than five Judges and in the course of the hearing of the appeal the Court is satisfied that the appeal involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution the determination of which is necessary for the disposal of the appeal, such Court shall refer the question for opinion to a Court constituted as required by this clause for the purpose of deciding any case involving such a question and shall on receipt of the opinion dispose of the appeal in conformity with such opinion.
- Article 142 of the Constitution confers discretionary power on the Supreme Court, according to which, it states that the Supreme Court, in the exercise of its jurisdiction, may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
- **Tamil Thai Vaazhthu**
 - Tamil Thai Vaazhthu, written by the scholar Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai in 1891, has been sung at Tamil Nadu government functions since 1970 following an order by former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi.
 - The song is considered secular as it praises Tamil language and culture without promoting any religion.
 - Later, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government led by M. K. Stalin declared Tamil Thai Vaazhthu as the official State song on December 17, 2021 and made standing mandatory, except for persons with disabilities.
- **Historical Background of Vande Mataram**
- Vande Mataram originated in the 1882 Bengali novel Anandamath written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji.
- The novel was translated into English as Abbey of Bliss by Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta in 1906.
- The original novel's context was the Sannyasi rebellion (1763 to 1800).
- A revised translation in 1941 by Basanta Koomar Roy removed several communal references to align with the freedom movement.
- In 1937, a Congress committee decided that only the first two stanzas praising the motherland should be used publicly.
- **India's green ammonia**
 - India aims to produce **5 million tonnes of green ammonia by 2030** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** to reduce imports and enhance energy self-reliance.
 - India has also signed agreements for **724 lakh metric tonnes of green ammonia production for domestic use**, indicating large-scale expansion plans.
 - Ammonia is critical for India's agriculture sector as it is a key input for fertiliser production, especially **Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP)**, linking energy security with food security.
 - India currently imports **over 70% of its 30 million tonnes annual ammonia requirement**, mainly as grey ammonia from countries like Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain.
 - **Grey ammonia production** is highly carbon intensive, emitting **1.9-2.6 tonnes of CO₂ per tonne of ammonia produced**.

- India's grey ammonia production contributes about **25–43 million tonnes of CO₂ annually**, accounting for **5–10% of global ammonia-related emissions** and about **1.2–1.8% of total global greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Transition to green ammonia aligns with India's commitments under the **Paris Agreement** by reducing emissions through renewable hydrogen-based production.

Tamil Nadu Economy Growth

- Tamil Nadu remains a leading industrial state, recording strong post-COVID recovery with real GDP growth of **11.19% (2024–25) and 10.83% (2025–26)**.
- **Manufacturing sector** showed robust growth of **14.74% (2024–25) and 14.22% (2025–26)** during the period, indicating strong industrial momentum.
- The state attracted **₹1.38 lakh crore FDI (Oct 2019–June 2025)**, ranking **fourth in India**.
- **Export performance** is strong, the state **ranks second in Export Preparedness Index**, with exports rising from \$26.16 billion (2020–21) to \$52.07 billion (2024–25).
- **Agriculture** showed recovery with **8.91% growth in 2025–26** after contraction in previous years, but continues to face climate-related vulnerabilities.
- Fiscal deficit rising to **4.91% of GSDP (2020–21)** and debt-to-GSDP at **26.9%**.

Indian Skimmer

- Tawa Reservoir, located within **Satpura Tiger Reserve in Narmadapuram district of central Madhya Pradesh**, has emerged as the **second breeding site of the Indian Skimmer in India**, after the **National Chambal Sanctuary**.
- The Indian Skimmer is listed as **Endangered on the IUCN Red List**, with its global population largely concentrated in India.
- **Indian Skimmer population in India is estimated at 2,000–2,500 individuals**, with a **nearly 50% decline over the last decade**.

Project Saksham

- **National Highways Authority of India** in partnership with Vertis Foundation implements **Project Saksham** to promote inclusive development by **empowering rural women** through structured skill development for sustainable livelihoods and social empowerment.
- The programme operates through **12 training centres** across India, targeting underserved rural communities and providing industry-relevant vocational training with pathways to the formal workforce.
- Beneficiaries earning **₹13,000–₹16,000 per month**, and over 80% participation by women, highlighting strong gender-focused empowerment.

Thirukkural

**The base (vile) resemble human beings;
we have never seen such a striking resemblance among any other two species."**

- Thiruvalluvar is using a touch of sharp irony here. He says that bad or wicked people look so perfectly human on the outside that it is impossible to tell them apart by their appearance. He wittily remarks that this is the most flawless imitation that exists in the world, even though their actions are entirely inhuman.
- Thirukkural (No. 1071) Chapter: **Gayamai**

The Southwest Monsoon

- The Southwest Monsoon serves as India's primary rainy season and acts as a pivotal force driving the country's economy and ecology; furthermore, it accounts for approximately 75% of the nation's total annual rainfall.

- Typically, this monsoon season commences in Kerala in early June and gradually extends across the entire country. By mid-July, most parts of the nation are enveloped by the monsoon rains.
- This monsoon phenomenon arises from the differential heating of land and sea during the summer season.
- The land heats up rapidly, creating a low-pressure zone over Northern and Central India, while the oceanic regions remain relatively cooler, characterized by higher atmospheric pressure.
- This pressure differential causes moisture-laden winds to blow from the southwestern Indian Ocean towards the landmass, thereby bringing rainfall.
- Monsoon systems originating in the Bay of Bengal bring substantial rainfall to Eastern and Northern India.

Since the monsoon winds originate from the southwest direction, this phenomenon is termed the "Southwest Monsoon."

This monsoon system bifurcates into two distinct branches:

- The Arabian Sea Branch, which brings rainfall to Central India and the West Coast.
- The Bay of Bengal Branch, which brings rainfall to Eastern and Northeastern India.

Thirukkural (520)

Let king search out his servants' deeds each day;

When these do right, the world goes rightly on its way

Explanation

Let a king daily examine the conduct of his servants; if they do not act crookedly, the world will not act crookedly.

Pokhran-I

- Operation Smiling Buddha (Pokhran-I) was India's first nuclear weapons test. It was conducted on May 18, 1974, at 8:05 AM (IST) at the Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan, amidst strict military security and secrecy.
- This test utilized an indigenously developed, plutonium-based implosion device, created by Indian scientists through the coordinated efforts of BARC, DRDO, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Indian Army.
- Conducted under the supervision of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the test was officially described as a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE)," reflecting India's policy stance at the time.
- This undertaking demonstrated India's strategic autonomy and indigenous nuclear capabilities. With this achievement, India earned the distinction of becoming the first nation outside **the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5) to conduct a nuclear test.**

About EDII

- Established in 2001, the Entrepreneurship Development and Innovation Institute (EDII), Chennai, stands as a premier organization in Tamil Nadu in the fields of entrepreneurship education and self-employment development.
- EDII was constituted by the Government of Tamil Nadu as a non-profit society.
- It functions under the administrative control of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Department.

Operation Ragepill

- Under 'Operation RAGEPILL', the NCB dismantled a major international drug trafficking network; notably, it seized 'Captagon' a mind-altering substance widely used in the Middle East region in India for the first time.
- Captagon is a highly addictive synthetic stimulant belonging to the amphetamine class.
- Captagon pills contain amphetamine, caffeine, and other chemical substances.
- 'Operation Ragepill' refers to a major drug eradication operation conducted by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of India, which successfully exposed an international drug syndicate.
- Jharkhand is preparing to set up India's first exclusive Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) Research Centre at Palamu Tiger Reserve.
- About Ebola
- Ebola is a serious and frequently fatal viral illness caused by a group of viruses called orthoebolaviruses, previously referred to as ebolavirus.
- It is a highly infectious disease that affects both humans and non-human primates such as monkeys and chimpanzees.
- The disease was first detected in 1976 in regions of southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Ebola outbreaks mainly occur in remote areas of Central and West Africa.
- It is classified as a hemorrhagic fever because the virus damages the body's blood-clotting mechanism, which can result in internal bleeding due to leakage from small blood vessels.

Thirukkural (No. 824) – Chapter: Unsuitable Friendship

**'Tis fitting you should dread dissemblers' guile,
Whose hearts are bitter while their faces smile**

Explanation: One should fear the deceitful who smile sweetly with their face but never love with their heart.

Glanders Disease

- **Causative Agent and Impact:** Glanders, a disease caused by the **bacterium Burkholderia mallei**, primarily affects equine species such as horses, mules, and donkeys. Furthermore, it poses a risk of causing infection in other animals as well as humans.
- **Statutory Notification:** Under the **Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals (PCICDA) Act, 2009**, Glanders has been declared a disease that must be compulsorily reported to the government upon detection.

Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission

- Sickle Cell Disease is a major public health challenge in India.
- It primarily **affects tribal populations**. The disease **causes red blood cells to distort into a crescent (sickle) shape**, obstructing the flow of oxygen to tissues and leading to the dysfunction of multiple organs.
- The Central Government has announced the **National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission with the objective of eradicating Sickle Cell Anemia by the year 2047**.
- This initiative involves a collaborative effort between various Central Ministries and State Governments.
- The mission encompasses raising widespread awareness about Sickle Cell Disease, conducting universal screening, and providing comprehensive care **to 70 million people aged 0 to 40 residing in affected tribal regions**.
- Tamil Nadu stands as a pioneer state in addressing this disease.

- It places particular focus on areas with high tribal populations, such as the Nilgiris and Anaimalai.
- Mandatory screening is conducted for all pregnant women residing in tribal areas.

Gender and caregiving law in India

- **Article 15(3)**- Allows the State to make special provisions for women and children, acting as an exception to the general non-discrimination clauses.
- **Article 16** -Guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of public employment.
- **Article 51A(e)** -To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
- **The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017** remains the most substantive legal protection available to women.
 - The **2017 amendment extended paid maternity leave to 26 weeks** for women with fewer than two surviving children and introduced provisions for crèche facilities in larger establishments.

Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ)

- Madras Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) is a **special economic zone** in Chennai, India.
- It is **one of the seven export processing zones in the country** set up by the central government.
- It was established in **1984** to promote **foreign direct investment**, enhance foreign exchange earnings, and create greater employment opportunities in the region.
- The zone is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industries**.
- On **1 January 2003**, the zone was converted into a special economic zone (SEZ).

Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (Dalhan Mission)

- Mission launched in **October 2025** promised **100% procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masoor at MSP for four years**.
- Under it, **₹11,440 crore** was allocated to **scale up production to 350 lakh tonnes per year in five years** by expanding the area under cultivation.
- But according to the April 2026 data released by the government, the area for sowing pulses grew only 1.26% over last year.
- This is negligible compared to the 10% fall in area between 2021-22 to 2024-25.

Thirukkural (No. 1023) Chapter: The Way of Upholding One's Lineage

**'I'll make my race renowned,' if man shall say,
With vest succinct the goddess leads the way**

Explanation:The Deity will clothe itself and appear before him who resolves on raising his family.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)

- **Objective:**The Act was introduced to ensure stronger measures for preventing unlawful activities carried out by individuals or organizations, to curb terrorist acts, and to deal with matters related to such activities.
- **Activities Considered Unlawful**
Under the Act, the following acts are treated as unlawful activities:
 - Any act aimed at claiming authority or exercising control over any part of India's territory.
 - Any act that threatens the sovereignty, unity, or territorial integrity of India.

- The Central Government has the authority to designate an organization involved in such activities as a terrorist organization.
- Investigations under the Act can be carried out only by police officers holding the rank of DSP, ACP, or higher.
- **Applicability:** The provisions of the Act apply throughout India and are enforceable against both Indian citizens and foreign nationals.
- **Timeline:**
 - A charge sheet may be submitted within a maximum period of 180 days from the date of arrest.
 - The investigation is required to be completed within 90 days.

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)

- An OCI cardholder is a foreign citizen who holds a passport issued by another country and is not considered a citizen of India. Therefore, an OCI holder does not enjoy the constitutional and political rights available to Indian citizens.
- The OCI Scheme was **introduced in 2005** through an amendment to the **Citizenship Act, 1955**. In **2015**, the **Person of Indian Origin (PIO) scheme** was merged with the OCI scheme.
- **An OCI cardholder is not permitted to:**
 - Participate in voting during elections.
 - Become a member of Parliament, Legislative Assembly, or Legislative Council.
 - Hold constitutional offices such as President, Vice President, or Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court.
 - Be appointed to government services or public posts under the Central or State Government.
 - Purchase agricultural land, plantation property, or farmhouses in India.
- **OCI cardholders are entitled to the following benefits:**
 - A lifelong multiple-entry and multipurpose visa for visiting India.
 - Equal treatment with NRIs in selected economic, financial, and educational matters, except in relation to purchasing agricultural or plantation property and issues concerning inter-country adoption of Indian children.
 - Eligibility to apply for Indian citizenship under Section 5(1)(g) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 after completing five years as an OCI cardholder.

Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025

- The SHANTI Bill, 2025 is a proposed Indian law aimed at updating and reforming the country's nuclear energy framework. The legislation seeks to encourage private sector participation, improve regulatory mechanisms.
- The Bill is intended to replace the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.
- **Major Features of the SHANTI Bill, 2025**
 - **Unified Legal Structure:** The Bill combines different areas of nuclear energy regulation and development into one comprehensive and updated legal framework.
 - **Role of the Private Sector:** It permits controlled participation of private companies in the nuclear energy sector, subject to strict supervision and regulations.
 - **Legal Status to AERB:** The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) is given statutory authority to ensure stronger and more effective regulatory oversight.

- **Promotion of Clean Energy:** The Bill supports India's objective of increasing nuclear power generation as part of its clean energy strategy and aims to help achieve 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047.
- **Modified Liability Provisions:** It introduces a revised civil liability system for nuclear accidents, including limits on operator liability and financial support through government-backed compensation funds.
- **Creation of New Bodies:** The legislation proposes the establishment of institutions such as the Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council and the Nuclear Damage Claims Commission for dispute

Broad Gauge Railway Network

- India has achieved a major milestone in railway modernization by completing **99.6 percent electrification** of its Broad Gauge railway network.
- With this achievement, India has surged ahead of several major railway systems, including those of the **European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
- **Railway electrification in India began in 1925. The first electric train was operated between Bombay Victoria Terminus and Kurla Harbour,** laying the foundation for energy-efficient rail transportation.
- Indian Railways aims to achieve **Net Zero emissions by 2030.** This represents one of the earliest global targets set for a national railway system.
- **According to Article 164 (1A)** of the Constitution of India, the number of ministers may constitute up to 15 percent of the total strength of the Legislative Assembly. Accordingly, in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, which comprises 234 members, there is a limit of 35 ministers.
- **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 (PCPNDT Act)**
- Tamil Nadu Private Clinical Establishments (Regulation) Act, 1997

PM-KUSUM

- PM-KUSUM Scheme is a government initiative that supports farmers in installing solar power systems on farmland for self-use and selling surplus electricity to the grid, while also replacing diesel pumps with solar pumps and solarising existing grid-connected pumps.
- The main aim of the scheme is to **promote clean energy in agriculture,** reduce dependence on diesel, and improve farmers' income through renewable energy generation.
- It helps farmers use solar-powered irrigation systems, making farming more eco-friendly and cost-effective, while also allowing them to earn by selling extra electricity to DISCOMs.

National Investigation Agency

- The National Investigation Agency is a special agency set up in India to **investigate terrorism and related crimes.**
- The headquarters of this agency is located in New Delhi.
- The agency has the power to investigate terrorism-related crimes in any part of India, without prior permission from the state governments.
- After the **2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks,** the NIA was established by the '**National Investigation Agency Act, 2008**' enacted by the Parliament.
- Under the **Police Act, 1861,** the Central Government can create a special agency called the '**National Investigation Agency**' to investigate and prosecute the crimes listed in the Schedule to the Act.
- If the Central Government so directs, this agency can also investigate crimes committed outside India.

- **Kerala** stands as the **first state in India** to officially recognize **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** as an independent administrative department within the government structure, by establishing a dedicated department for it at the cabinet level.
- **Tamil Nadu** has become the **second state** in India to create a **Ministry of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.

Thirukkural (Verse 435) – Chapter: Avoiding Faults

His joy who guards not 'gainst the coming evil day,
Like straw before the fire shall swift consume away

Explanation: The prosperity of him who does not timely guard against faults, will perish like straw before fire.

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025

- **Purpose of the Act**
 - Aims to create clarity and balance in India's online gaming sector.
 - It promotes innovation in e-sports and online social games while prohibiting online money games.
 - The Act clearly distinguishes between permissible and prohibited gaming activities.
- **Complete Ban on Online Money Games**
 - All forms of online money games are banned.
 - The ban applies to: Games of chance, Games of skill, Any combination of skill and chance
- **Ban on Promotion and Facilitation**
 - Advertising online money games is prohibited.
 - Promotion and facilitation of such games are also banned.
- **Blocking of Illegal Platforms**
 - Unlawful gaming platforms may be blocked under the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- **Recognition of E-sports and Social Games**
 - The Act officially recognizes: E-sports, Online social games
- **Creation of Regulatory Authority**
 - The Act establishes the Online Gaming Authority of India.

SWAYAM PORTAL

- **SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)** is India's dedicated **MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platform** developed under the initiative of the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**.
- It was introduced in **2017**.
- The platform aims to **reduce the digital gap** by providing quality education to students who were previously unable to benefit from the digital revolution or become part of the knowledge-based economy.
- **SWAYAM is an indigenously created IT platform** that enables learners to access courses **taught from Class 9 to postgraduate level**. These courses can be studied by anyone, anytime and from anywhere.
- The courses available on the platform are interactive in nature and are designed by some of the country's finest teachers. Moreover, all the learning materials are provided free of cost to residents of India.

Ayush Grid Initiative

- The **Ayush Anudan Portal** was introduced under the **Ayush Grid Initiative** to make the submission, evaluation, approval, and tracking of grant proposals completely digital and more efficient.

About the Ayush Grid Initiative

- The Ministry of AYUSH launched the **Ayush Grid Initiative in 2018** as a digital programme aimed at creating an integrated, transparent, and citizen-focused digital system for the AYUSH sector.
- As part of this initiative, several digital platforms have been developed, such as the **Ayush Hospital Management Information System (A-HMIS)** and **e-Aushadhi**.
- The initiative is aligned with the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** and covers areas like education, research, medicinal plant management, drug regulation, and other AYUSH-related services.

Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board

- **Establishment:** Founded in **September 1970** under the **Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1971**.
- Officially renamed from **“Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board”** to Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in September 2021 to better represent urban poor welfare and housing infrastructure.
- The motto of Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board is **“GOD WE SHALL SEE IN THE SMILE OF THE POOR”**.
- **Core Mandate:** Clearing slums, building tenements with proper sanitation, providing affordable multi-story housing, and undertaking resettlement programs across urban Tamil Nadu.

Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- CPGRAMS is an online platform that enables citizens to **submit grievances related to public service delivery at any time**.
- CPGRAMS was created and launched **in June 2007**.
- **Developed by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)**.
- It acts as a single integrated portal **connected with all Ministries, Departments of the Government of India, and State Governments**.
- Every Ministry and State Government has role-based access to manage and resolve grievances through the system.
- CPGRAMS can also be accessed through a dedicated mobile application.
- The platform is integrated with the UMAN platform for easier public access.
- Citizens can track the status of their complaints using the **unique registration number generated** at the time of grievance submission.
- If the complainant gives a **“Poor”** rating, the option to **file an appeal becomes available**.
- The status of the appeal can also be monitored using the grievance registration number.

‘Khet Bachao Abhiyan’

- The campaign promotes soil health, soil test-based nutrient management, and balanced fertilizer use to prevent the degradation of long-term soil fertility.
- **Implemented: Indian Council of Agricultural Research**

- Objectives:
 - **Balanced nutrient use:** Promote soil testing and reduce excess chemical fertilizers; encourage organic farming.
 - **Soil protection:** Use green manure and bio-fertilizers to maintain fertility.
 - **Dealer awareness:** Prevent sale of fake pesticides and substandard seeds.
 - **Crop diversification:** Shift from only paddy-wheat to pulses, oilseeds, and cash crops.

Thirukkural (Verse 667) – Chapter: Firmness in Action

Despise not men of modest bearing; Look not at form, but what men are: For some there live, high functions sharing, Like linch-pin of the mighty car.

Explanation: Let none be despised for (their) size; (for) the world has those who resemble the linch-pin of the big rolling car.

- **Lake Kariba** is the largest artificial reservoir in the world in terms of water volume. It is situated on the Zambezi River and lies **between Zambia and Zimbabwe along their shared border**.
- **Kumbhalgarh Fort in Rajasthan**, often referred to as the “**Great Wall of India**,” has received international recognition after a UNESCO survey identified its 36-kilometre fortification wall as the **second longest uninterrupted and intact wall in the world, after the Great Wall of China**.
- **The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) was established in 1969.**

Padma Awards 2026

- The Padma Awards the country's highest civilian honors are conferred upon individuals who have made exceptional contributions in various fields, including Art, Social Service, Public Affairs, Science and Engineering, Medicine, Literature and Education, and Sports.
- Padma Awards were announced for a total of 131 individuals.
- Padma Vibhushan – 5 recipients
- Padma Bhushan – 13 recipients
- Padma Shri – 113 recipients
- Padma Awards have been announced for **13 individuals hailing from Tamil Nadu**.

Thirukkural

- Plan and perform no work that others may despise;
What misbeseems a king the world will not approve as wise

Explanation

- Let a man reflect, and do things which bring no reproach; the world will not approve, with him, of things which do not become of his position to adopt.

Parambikulam-Aliyar Project Agreement

- This project **aims to transform the drought-prone regions** located in the Coimbatore, Tiruppur, and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu, as well as the Palakkad district of Kerala.
- The project involves **the diversion and integration of eight west-flowing rivers**; of these, **six rivers (Anaimalaiyar, Sholayar, Thunacadavu, Nirar, Peruvuripallam, and Parambikulam) are situated in the Anaimalai Hills**, while two rivers (Aliyar and Palar) are located in the plains.

- On May 29, 1970, the two states jointly signed an agreement, **which came into force with retrospective effect from November 1958.**
- In 2019, during a Chief Minister-level conference held regarding inter-state water agreements, approval was granted to renew this agreement.

About the Sakura Science Program

- This is a prestigious initiative known as the '**Japan-Asia Youth Science Exchange Program**'; it is widely recognized by the name '**Sakura Science Program.**'
- **Launched globally in 2014**, this program aims to cultivate scientific interest among the youth and foster international cooperation.
- **India joined the Sakura Program in 2016.**
- The program is implemented by the '**Japan Science and Technology Agency**' (JST).
- This initiative offers young students an excellent opportunity **to explore cutting-edge scientific fields and immerse themselves deeply in Japanese culture.**

Right to Information Act, 2005

- It serves as a crucial mechanism **for ensuring transparency and accountability in administration.**
- It empowers Indian citizens **to obtain information from public authorities and strengthens the fundamental principles of democracy.**

Objectives of the Right to Information Act

- To promote transparency in the functioning of public authorities.
- To empower citizens by providing them with the opportunity to access information held by the government.
- To curb corruption and foster accountability among public authorities.
- To strengthen democratic principles by ensuring the people's right to be informed about administrative decisions and policies.
- The Shirui Lily Shawl is crafted by the Tangkhul Naga community of Manipur. This design is based on the Shirui Lily, the State Flower of Manipur.
- Manipur's Black Rice (Chak-hao) is a traditional grain that is cultivated by the region's indigenous hill communities. Widely recognized for its nutritional and medicinal properties, Chak-hao reflects the rich agricultural traditions that have been preserved by these tribal communities for generations.

Fort St. George

- Fort St. George is a historic fortress situated in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu.**
- Built by **the British East India Company in 1644**, it was the first English fortress established in India.
- Initially, it served as both **a trading post and a defensive stronghold in the Coromandel Coast region.**
- Constructed using bricks and stones, the fort features thick defensive walls and sturdy gateways.
- Designed for defensive purposes, it is laid out in a rectangular configuration featuring fortified gateways.

Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) was **established in 2023 through the Anusandhan National Research Foundation Act, 2023.**
- It functions under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST).**
- The '**Science and Engineering Research Board**' (SERB) has been subsumed into the ANRF.

- **Objective:** To lay the foundation for, nurture, and promote Research and Development (R&D) activities across universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories throughout India; as well as **to foster a culture of research and innovation.**
- In accordance with the recommendations of the National Education Policy, it serves as an **apex body providing high-level strategic guidance for scientific research in the country.**
- **Fund Mobilization Target:** It aims to mobilize funds amounting to ₹50,000 crore over the 2023–28 period through various channels, including the ANRF Fund, Innovation Fund, Science and Engineering Research Fund, and Special Purpose Funds.

Gond Painting

- Gond painting is a traditional art form belonging **to the Gond tribe, originating from Patanagarh village in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.**
- Gond painting was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag **in April 2023.**
- It is renowned for its intricate patterns of **dots and lines, vivid natural colors, and themes inspired by nature.**

Muga Silk

- Muga silk is popularly known as the **“Golden Silk” of Assam.**
- It is a rare and valuable silk fabric primarily produced in the **Brahmaputra Valley of Assam.**
- Muga silk is widely used in **traditional Assamese attire**, such as sarees, Mekhalas, and Chaddars.
- Muga silk was granted a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2007.**

Thirukkural

- ‘Each hindrance shun’, ‘unyielding onward press, If obstacle be there,’
These two define your way, so those that search out truth declare

Explanation

- Not to perform a ruinous act, and not to be discouraged by the ruinous termination of an act, are the two maxims which, the wise say, from the principles of those who have investigated the subject.
- **Article 142** - Enforcement of decrees and orders of Supreme Court and orders as to discovery, etc

Thirukkural

**When burthens press, it bears; Yet, With unfailing hand
To king due tribute pays: that is the ‘land’**

Explanation

- A kingdom is that which can bear any burden that may be pressed on it (from adjoining kingdoms) and (yet) pay the full tribute to its sovereign.

PAIMANA Portal

- PAIMANA Portal is a flagship digital initiative of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).** The portal was officially launched on 25 September.
- PAIMANA stands for **Project Assessment Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building.**

Purpose of the Portal

- PAIMANA serves as a unified digital platform for:
 - Monitoring infrastructure projects

- Evaluation of project performance
- Dissemination of project-related data
- It aims **to strengthen transparency, accountability, and data-driven governance.**

Key Features

- Provides real-time access to reliable project information.
- Supports evidence-based policy making and efficient governance.
- Tracks implementation status of projects costing ₹150 crore and above.

Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL)

- It is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) operating under the administrative control of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India.
- The Corporation was registered as a **Public Limited Company in September 1987 under the Companies Act, 1956.**
- In accordance with **the Atomic Energy Act, 1962**, and consistent with the plans and policies of the Government of India, the Corporation's objectives include operating nuclear power plants for the purpose of electricity generation and implementing nuclear power projects.
- NPCIL also holds equity capital in **'BHAVINI' another Public Sector Undertaking under the Department of Atomic Energy which is currently implementing the 'Fast Breeder Reactor' program in India.**
- NPCIL is responsible for the design, construction, commissioning, and operation of nuclear power reactors.
- Mission: "Our mission is to attain global excellence in nuclear power technology and contribute to the nation's long-term energy security."

Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017

- As a regulatory framework for the conservation and management of wetlands in India, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** has notified the **'Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017'** under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- This constitutes a significant step taken **to conserve, manage, and maintain the ecological character of wetlands**, without imposing any restrictions on their wise use.
- These Rules not only strengthen the legal framework for environmental concerns but also reinforce the institutional structure through the establishment of State/Union Territory Wetland Authorities and a National Wetland Committee.

The 'Blue Flag' Scheme

- The 'Blue Flag' scheme is a globally recognized **eco-label awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators** that meet high standards across the fields of environmental management, safety, accessibility, water quality, and environmental education.
- This 'Blue Flag' certification is granted by the 'Foundation for Environmental Education' (FEE), based in Denmark, to beaches that fulfill **33 specific criteria** related to cleanliness, aesthetics, and environmental sustainability.
- In 2001, the scheme expanded globally and has since emerged as one of the world's most recognized voluntary eco-awards.
- The selection process is conducted by an international jury representing organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the FEE, and the IUCN.

India's 'Blue Flag' Beaches:

- Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Golden Beach (Odisha), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad and Thalassery (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands), **Kovalam (Tamil Nadu)**, Kadmat Island (Lakshadweep), **Eden Beach (Puducherry)**.

Tamil Nadu Power Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (TNPFDCL)

- The Tamil Nadu Power Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (TNPFDCL) was established on **June 27, 1991**, as a wholly state-government-owned Public Sector Undertaking; it is also registered with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** as a '**Non-Banking Financial Company**' (a deposit-taking institution).
- The Corporation was classified as a 'Public Financial Institution' by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, on January 9, 2007**.
- TNPFDCL primarily mobilizes its funds through **deposits received from the general public**; furthermore, it provides the necessary financial support for infrastructure projects undertaken by TANGEDCO.
- In addition to accepting deposits from the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of various welfare schemes, the Corporation also generates attractive returns for the beneficiaries of these schemes.

Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL)

- **Origin:** Established by the Government of India in 1954, it was the first council set up after independence.
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Textiles.
- **Type:** A government-funded, autonomous, non-profit organization.
- **Role:** It serves as the international face of India's cotton textile sector, facilitating exports across the globe.

Mekedatu Project

- The Mekedatu Project is a proposed multipurpose balancing reservoir and drinking water project initiated by the Government of Karnataka.
- It is located near Kanakapura in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka, close to the Tamil Nadu border.
- The project is situated at the confluence of the Cauvery River and its tributary, the Arkavathi River.
- The project proposes the construction of a concrete gravity dam with a height of 99 meters and a length of 735 meters.
- The reservoir is planned to store approximately 66 TMC feet of water.
- It is expected to generate around 400 MW of hydroelectric power.

Arkavathi River

- Arkavathi River is an important mountain river in Karnataka, and is a major tributary of the Cauvery River.
- It originates from the **Nandi Hills in Chikballapur district of Karnataka**.
- The river flows southwards through **Bengaluru, Ramanagara and Mandya districts**.
- The total length of the river is about **190 km**.
- The river forms the **famous Chunji Falls near Harohivanahalli**.

Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Zone

- The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board in Tamil Nadu has declared an area of about 193.215 hectares in Aritapatti, Madurai district as a biodiversity zone. It is the habitat of about 250 species of birds, anteaters, and devang. Also, the Anaikondan pond built during the Pandava period and several water springs are being protected.
- Kasampatti Veera Temple in Dindigul district, Elathur Lake (37.42 hectares) in Erode district, and Nagamalai Hills have been declared as important biodiversity hotspots.
- About 349 species of biodiversity such as various species of birds, insects, bees, wasps, and rare frogs are being maintained in an area of about 32.22 hectares in Nagamalai Hills.

Thirukkural (No. 672)

Sleep and act: Sleep

The verb to do not sleep.

- **Meaning:** Things that should be delayed should be done with delay; things that should be done quickly without delay should not be delayed.

Thirukkural (No. 428)

Fear is ignorance;

fear is the profession of the wise.

- **Meaning:** Not to fear what is worthy of fear is ignorance; to fear what is worthy of fear is the profession of the wise.
- **Chapter: Possession of knowledge**

Transgender Persons Protection of Rights (Amendment) Act 2026

- It restricts **legal gender recognition** by **shifting away from self-identification to mandatory medical certification** and introduces strict penal provisions to prevent forced gender conversions or coerced identities.

Key Provisions & Amendments

- **Shift from Self-Perceived Identity:** The 2026 Act **removes the right to self-identification**.
- **Narrowed Legal Definition:** It **limits the definition** of transgender persons to specific socio-cultural identities and intersex variations.
- **New Criminal Offenses:**
 - To stop the coercion of individuals into adopting transgender identities, the act introduces new criminal categories.
 - Kidnapping an adult to force a transgender identity is punishable by 10 years to life in prison

Hydrogen-powered train

- Indian Railways is set to introduce the **country's first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell-based train on the Jind-Sonipat** section of Northern Railway in **Haryana**.
- Hydrogen fuel **cell technology** produces electricity through a chemical reaction using hydrogen, with **water vapor being the only emission**, making it a **clean alternative to fossil fuel** based railway traction systems.

Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Re-port 2024.

- **Nationally, 2.1% of women** who got married in 2024 were **below 18 years** of age, while **24.5% married be-tween 18 and 20 years**.
- **Nearly three-fourths - 73.5% married at 21 years or above.**

- Overall, more than one in -four women in India still got married before the age of 21 in 2024, the report showed.
- **Bengal recorded the country's highest proportion** of girls marrying before 18 years at 6.3%, followed by Jharkhand at 4.9%.
- Chhattisgarh was also identified among states where a considerable proportion of girls (2.9%) continue to marry before adulthood.

Thirukkural

**Abroad to guard, at home to punish, brings
No just reproach; 'tis work assigned to kings**

- **Explanation**
 - In guarding his subjects (against injury from others), and in preserving them himself; to punish crime.
- **Chapter: Righteous Governance**

Sanchi Stupa

- The Sanchi Stupa is located in the town of Sanchi, within the Raisen district of the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- It was built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE.
- The sacred bodily relics of Gautama Buddha and his revered disciples are preserved within this stupa.
- The first systematic survey and excavation works at Sanchi were undertaken by Alexander Cunningham in 1851.
- The Sanchi Stupa was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1989.

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) Scheme

- This scheme was launched in 2016 by restructuring the previously existing 'Indira Awaas Yojana' (IAY).
- It aims to provide permanent houses equipped with basic amenities to eligible rural families – specifically those who are homeless, or who reside in temporary-roofed houses comprising zero, one, or two rooms.
- Initially, the scheme targeted the construction of 2.95 crore houses spanning the period from the financial year 2016-17 to the financial year 2023-24.
- The Central Government has extended this scheme for a further five years – from the financial year 2024-25 to 2028-29 – and has set a new target to construct an additional 2 crore houses.
- Beneficiaries are selected based on the housing deficiency parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011.
- Financial assistance of ₹1.20 lakh per house is provided for construction in plain areas.
- Financial assistance of ₹1.30 lakh per house is provided for construction in hilly regions and difficult terrains, including the Northeastern states, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.
- In plain areas, the expenditure for this scheme is shared between the Central and State governments in a ratio of 60:40.
- For the Northeastern and Himalayan states, the financial sharing pattern between the Central and State governments is in a ratio of 90:10.

- For Union Territories without a Legislative Assembly, the Central Government provides 100% of the funding.
- The implementation and monitoring of this scheme are carried out through digital platforms such as the 'AwaasSoft' Management Information System (MIS) and the 'AwaasApp'.
- PMAY-G is a flagship rural housing scheme introduced to achieve the goal of 'Housing for All'.

'Mission Queen Pineapple' Scheme

- This is a coordinated collaborative initiative aimed at promoting Tripura's '**Queen**' pineapple, which holds a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag.
- The scheme is spearheaded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.
- The total financial outlay for this mission is **₹236 crore**.
The scheme will be implemented over a period of three years, spanning from the **second quarter of the financial year 2026** (Q2 FY 2026) to the **fourth quarter of the financial year 2028** (Q4 FY 2028)

Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited (TNGECL)

- Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited (TNGECL) is a newly formed **state-owned public sector undertaking** established by the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- Establishment: Incorporated in **early 2024 under the Companies Act 2013**.
- It was formed by **merging the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA) with the dedicated Renewable Energy Wing of TANGEDCO**.
- It acts as the operational vehicle to hit Tamil Nadu's target of deriving **50% of its total power consumption from green energy and cutting carbon emissions down by 70% by the year 2030**.

Samadhan Didi

- In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Government of India launched "Samadhan Didi", an AI enabled, voice first chatbot for the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), enabling citizens to register grievances simply by speaking in their preferred language.
- The chatbot is designed to help citizens lodge grievances with ease, particularly those who are unsure where to submit a complaint or whom to address it to, and those who are unable to draft complaints in Hindi or English.
- The launch as the "democratisation of the public grievance mechanism", highlighting the Government's commitment to enhancing citizens' access to public services.

Indian National Congress flag adoption (1921)

- The **flag of the Indian National Congress**, which later evolved into the national flag, was adopted on May 31, 1921.
- This symbol of freedom and unity galvanized the nation's struggle for independence from colonial rule.