

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

FEBRUARY 2026 - PART 2



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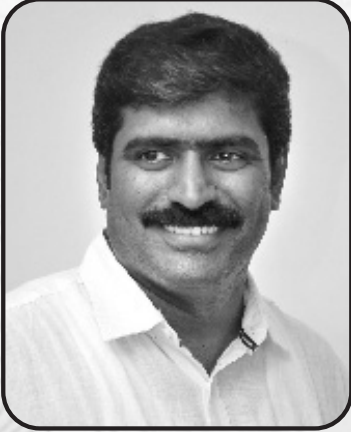
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Preface



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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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SCIENCE

LATEST INVENTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Launch of SAHI & BODH at India AI Impact Summit

- Context: Union Health and Family Welfare Minister launched two digital health initiatives SAHI (Strategy for AI for Health Initiative) and BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI) during the India AI Impact Summit.
- The launch marks a milestone in advancing safe, ethical, and evidence-based deployment of Artificial Intelligence in India's healthcare ecosystem.

Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI)

- The Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India (SAHI) serves as a national-level framework designed to guide the responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence within India's healthcare sector.
- Its purpose is to promote the safe, ethical, inclusive, and evidence-driven use of AI technologies across the health system.
- The framework offers strategic guidance on areas such as governance structures, data management and protection, validation processes, implementation standards, and ongoing monitoring of AI tools.

Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI (BODH)

- The Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI (BODH) has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, in partnership with the National Health Authority.

- It functions as a secure, privacy-protecting benchmarking system that allows comprehensive assessment of AI models using varied, real-world healthcare data, without requiring the actual datasets to be shared.
- Recognized as a digital public good under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, BODH aims to promote confidence, openness, and high standards of quality in the deployment of AI technologies in healthcare.

Yuva AI for All Initiative

- Context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has recently introduced Kaushal Rath as part of the National AI Literacy Programme under "Yuva AI for All."
- The course content is designed to be simple, practical, and engaging, using relatable Indian examples to make AI concepts easier to understand.
- It is offered free of cost on major learning platforms such as FutureSkills Prime, iGOT Karmayogi, and other well-known ed-tech portals.
- Participants who successfully complete the programme receive an official Government of India certificate.

About the Yuva AI for All Initiative

- Yuva AI for All is a programme launched by MeitY under the IndiaAI Mission. It is a unique, nationwide free course aimed at familiarising Indians particularly young people with the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence.
- The programme offers a 4.5-hour self-learning course designed to help students, working professionals, and other interested learners gain a clear understanding of basic AI concepts in an easy and accessible manner.

- Its objective is to equip one crore (10 million) citizens with essential AI knowledge and foundational skills.

Protein-rich 'Designer Rice'

- Context: CSIR-NIIST, an institute under the Central Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, has developed a variety of designer rice, which is designed to help address malnutrition among the population.
- CSIR-NIIST says it is high in nutrients like protein, iron, folic acid and vitamin B12.
- This new rice has 3 times more protein than regular rice.
- It has a low glycemic index (GI), so it causes a slow rise in blood glucose levels; hence, it is safe for diabetics.
- CSIR-NIIST is based in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

Sarvam AI Unveils India's Own LLM

- Context: Union government announced that India would create its own large language model (LLM) similar to ChatGPT and DeepSeek, the Bengaluru-based Sarvam AI unveiled two language models at the AI Impact Summit.
- Sarvam AI, a Bengaluru-based startup, unveiled two new large language models (LLMs) named Vikram.
- The announcement was made at the AI Impact Summit during the models will be open source.
- Two versions launched: 35-billion parameter model and 105-billion parameter model.

Focus on Indian Languages

- A major goal is improving AI performance in Indian languages.
- Addresses the challenge of limited training data in regional languages.
- Demonstrated English-to-Indian language translation at the event.

VoicERA launched at Bhashini National Infrastructure

- Context: VoicERA, an open-source complete voice AI suite, was launched at Bhashini National Language Infrastructure at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.
- VoicERA is an open-source, complete voice AI implementation layer used in India's Bhashini National Language Infrastructure.
- It serves as the national implementation layer for multilingual voice and language AI, enabling scalable deployment of speech and conversational systems across sectors
- It was launched by Digital India Bhashini Division (DIBD) under Digital India Corporation (DIC), MeitY
- Developed in collaboration with EkStep Foundation, COSS, IIIT Bangalore and AI4Bharat.

IIT-Madras Patents Optics-Based Blood Clot Detection Technique

- Context: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) have patented a new optics-based method to detect blood clot formation by measuring changes in reflected light on implant surfaces.
- Haemocompatibility ensures medical devices (stents, heart valves, catheters) do not trigger harmful blood clotting.
- Current techniques (mechanical tilting method and free haemoglobin method) lack precision. The new method improves accuracy and measures clotting time down to milliseconds.

SPACE

Gaganyaan Drogue Parachute Test

- Context: India's first human space mission, Gaganyaan, got a major boost as the Drogue Parachute successfully passed the qualification load test conducted jointly by

DRDO and ISRO at the Rail Track Rocket Sled (RTRS) facility in Chandigarh.

- RTRS is a specialized dynamic test facility of DRDO that is **widely used for high-speed aerodynamics and ballistic evaluations.**

Gaganyaan Project

- ISRO's Gaganyaan Project is India's **first human space mission program.**
- It aims to send a team of 3 astronauts to a low Earth orbit (LEO) of 400 km for 3 days and return them safely to Earth.
- The launch vehicle for this mission is the **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III, also known as LVM-3**
- If the project is successful, India will become the **fourth country in the world to conduct human spaceflight after the US, Russia and China.**

Aditya-L1 Decodes Rare Dawn-Time Geomagnetic Disturbances

- **Context:** Observations and measurements made by **India's maiden solar mission, Aditya-L1,** have helped to decode the unusual dawn-time geomagnetic disturbances during strong solar storms.
- Geomagnetic disturbances **can disrupt satellites, navigation systems, and other technologies.**
- Understanding these variations improves space weather forecasting and preparedness.
- Data from Aditya-L1 and global ground magnetometer networks provided new insights. It helps explain how extreme solar wind conditions alter normal geomagnetic patterns.

Geomagnetic Storms

- Caused by sudden changes in **solar wind charged particles emitted by the Sun.**

- Solar wind pressure impacts Earth's magnetic shield, triggering sharp magnetic field changes.

Gaganyaan Mission

- **India's first mission to send humans into space** and safely return them to Earth.
- **Planned target – 2027.**
- A spacecraft will be sent to an **altitude of 400 km and will be studied for 3 days.**
- If this mission is successful, **India will become the 4th country** to send humans into space after the US, Russia and China.
- Selected astronauts **Prashant Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap, Subhanshu Shukla**
- They were given special **training in Russia.**

Unmanned Missions

- **3 unmanned spacecraft tests** will be conducted before sending humans.
- A humanoid robot **named Vyomitra** will be sent in the first test.

Vyomitra's capabilities

- It can understand and respond to **commands from astronauts.**
- It can understand and work in **English and Hindi.**
- Monitors **air pressure, temperature, environmental conditions,** etc.
- Operates environmental control and warning systems.
- Performs many **human tasks.**
- Maintains continuous **communication with the Earth Command Center.**
- If all unmanned tests are successful, human spaceflight will take place in 2027.

Bharatiya Andarish Station (Indian Space Station)

- After the success of the Gaganyaan project, the **"Bharatiya Andarish Station"** will be

established at an **altitude of 400 km above the Earth.**

- The Indian Space Station is set to be **established by 2035.**

India's early space efforts

- 1963, November 21 – **India launched its first research rocket.**
- 1984, April 3 – **Rakesh Sharma became** the first Indian to go into space in the Soviet Soyuz T-11.

World Space History – Key Events

- 1926, March 16 - American scientist Robert H. Goddard successfully launched the first liquid- fueled rocket.
- 1944, June 20 - Germany's V-2 rocket reached an altitude of 174 km.
- 1957, October 4 - The Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1 (the first satellite).
- 1957, November 3 - **The dog 'Laika' was sent into space by Sputnik 2.**
- 1961, April 12 - **Yuri Gagarin became the first human to go into space.**
- 1969, July 16 - **The United States' Apollo 11 mission to the moon.**

Vikko Sat-1

- Context: In a remarkable achievement, 13 Class XI students from Ariyakudi Government Higher Secondary School in Sivagangai

district, Tamil Nadu, successfully launched a 600-gram mini satellite named Vikko Sat-1, showcasing notable scientific capability.

About Vikko Sat-1

- Vikko Sat-1 is a lightweight mini satellite weighing 600 grams.
- It was created by a team of Class XI students from Ariyakudi Government Higher Secondary School in Sivagangai district, Tamil Nadu.
- The satellite was specially built to identify fungal spores in the stratosphere using five advanced sensors.
- Fungal spores are microscopic biological particles that significantly influence agriculture and environmental processes. When these spores travel through the upper atmosphere and eventually settle, they can affect crop health.
- To gather accurate atmospheric data, the students sent the compact satellite into the stratosphere using a helium balloon.
- The device reached an altitude of 22 km, entering the stratosphere—the second layer of Earth's atmosphere.
- After completing its mission, the payload safely returned to the ground and was recovered without damage, ensuring that the collected air samples could be properly examined in the school's control room.

GEOGRAPHY

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU) Technologies

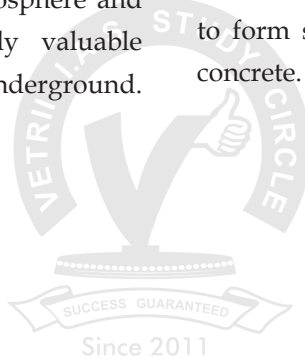
- **Context:** The Union Budget 2026 recently allocated Rs.20,000 crore to scale up carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies over the next five years.
- Carbon capture and utilization (CCU) is a set of technologies designed to capture carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from industrial point sources or directly from the atmosphere and convert them into commercially valuable products instead of storing them underground.

The process involves three main stages:

- **Capture:** CO₂ is separated from the air.
- **Compression and transport:** CO₂ is compressed and transported through pipelines or tankers.
- **Conversion/utilization:** CO₂ is processed into useful products.

CCU Types:

- **Direct utilization:** Use CO₂ as is (e.g., carbonated beverages, enhanced oil recovery).
- **Chemical conversion:** Convert CO₂ into chemicals (urea, polymers) or fuels (methanol).
- **Bioconversion:** Use algae/bacteria to convert CO₂ into biofuels, bio-fuels or feedstock.
- **Mineralization:** React CO₂ with minerals to form solid carbonates for bricks or green concrete.



INDIAN POLITY

Regionalization of Constitution to raise awareness

- **Context:** On the occasion of **International Mother Language Day**, the **Vice President released** the updated Tamil and Gujarati language versions of the Constitution of India and the eighth edition of the **English-Hindi Legal Dictionary**.
- It was said that providing the **Constitution in regional languages** would increase legal awareness and democratic participation.
- Official versions were published in **Bodo, Dogri, Santali and Nepali for the first time in the last 10 years**.
- He cited **Mahatma Gandhi's statement** that language is a bridge to the cultural sensibilities of a country and **Subramania Bharati's emphasis** that Indians should be united in serving Mother India despite speaking many languages.

Constitution of India

- The Constitution of India was adopted on **November 26, 1949**.
- It came into force on **January 26, 1950**, and this date is celebrated as **Republic Day in India every year**.
- The Constitution declares India to be a **sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic**.
- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** is considered the chief architect of the Indian Constitution.

Supreme Court - Rules for Solid Waste Management

- **Context:** The Supreme Court, while hearing appeals filed against the judgments of the National Green Tribunal, has issued **new guidelines for solid waste management to be followed across the country**.
- **A clean and hygienic environment is part of the right to life.** The court noted that negligence in the matter of solid waste can also affect health and economy.
- **District Collectors were ordered to conduct a solid waste management survey and submit a time-bound action report to the Chief Secretary.**
- **Corporations, municipalities and village panchayats were urged to follow the solid waste rules 100%.**
- District Collectors should be given the power to monitor the solid waste handling system and report to the concerned departments.
- **The new rules related to solid waste will come into effect from April 1.** A copy of the order should be given to those who generate excessive waste by March 31.
- Solid waste management rules should be included in the school curriculum and translated into local languages.
- Violations should not only be considered administrative misconduct, but should be subject to fines and strict action.
- In case of repeated violations, criminal cases should be pursued under environmental laws.
- **Local governments should take steps to create awareness among the public and encourage the habit of separating and handing over waste at home.**

Union Cabinet Approves Kerala's Name Change

- Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the name change of the state of **Kerala to Keralam**. After this, the President will send the Kerala Bill 2026 to the state legislature.

Legal Procedure

- The bill will indicate the name change in all languages, **including the 8th Schedule of the Constitution**.
- After the approval of the state legislature, the Union government will introduce the bill in Parliament and pass it.
- Once all the procedures are completed, the **name "Keralam"** will be officially announced.
- The **First Schedule of the Constitution lists the states and union territories**.
- **Article 3** of the Constitution of India empowers the Union to change the name of the existing states.
- **Kerala was formed on November 1, 1956, under the States Reorganisation Act.**
- Before introducing such a bill in Parliament, the President has to hear the views of the concerned state legislature.

States that have changed their names

- **United Provinces became Uttar Pradesh (1950):** The first state to be renamed.
- **Travancore-Cochin became Kerala (1956):** Renamed during the state reorganization.
- **Madras State became Tamil Nadu (1969):** Officially changed on 14 January 1969.
- **Mysore became Karnataka** and was renamed in 1973.
- **Uttarangal was renamed Uttarakhand** in 2007.

Appointment of Chief Justice of the High Court

- Context: The Supreme Court Collegium has decided to transfer the judge who will be appointed as the Chief Justice of the High Court two months in advance.
- The current Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, M.M. Srivastava, will retire on March 5.
- The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the appointment of Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari (from Madhya Pradesh) as the new Chief Justice.
- The judge who will take oath as the Chief Justice of the High Court will be transferred to the High Court two months in advance. This will enable him to know the environment and situation of the concerned High Court and work better before the vacancy occurs there.
- The Supreme Court Collegium has taken this policy decision to strengthen the administration and quality of justice.

Collegium

- The Second Judges Case (1993) established the Collegium system for judicial appointments in India.
- The Collegium is a body for the appointment and transfer of judges in the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Appointment of High Court Judges

- Article 217 of the Constitution: The President appoints a judge of a High Court in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Governor of the state.
- While appointing a judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court is consulted.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Union Cabinet Approves Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0

- Context: The Union Cabinet has recently sanctioned the creation of the **Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0)** with a total corpus of ₹10,000 crore to channel **venture capital into India's fast-growing startup ecosystem.**

About Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0

- FoF 2.0 builds on the success of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0) launched in 2016 under the Startup India initiative, which **aimed to fill funding gaps and stimulate domestic venture capital investments.**
- Under FFS 1.0, the ₹10,000 crore corpus was deployed across 145 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).
- These AIFs collectively invested over ₹25,500 crore in more than 1,370 startups across sectors including **AI, robotics, clean tech, fintech, healthcare, manufacturing, biotech, and space technology.**
- The initiative played a pivotal role **in supporting first-time founders and attracting private capital to strengthen India's venture capital ecosystem.**

Objectives of FoF 2.0

- To expand startup investments beyond major metro cities, ensuring innovation reaches all regions of the country.
- To support startups developing globally competitive technologies, products, and solutions, advancing India's innovation-driven growth agenda.
- To align with the government's **Viksit Bharat @ 2047 vision, fostering economic resilience, enhanced manufacturing, job creation, and positioning India as a global innovation hub.**

Core Sector Growth Slows to 4% in January

- Context: Growth of India's eight key infrastructure sectors slowed to 4% in January (two-month low). It was 5.1% in January 2025 and 4.7% in December 2025.
- Crude oil and natural gas output recorded negative growth in January.
- Production growth of coal and cement moderated to 3.1% and 10.7% during the month under review against 4.6% and 14.3%, respectively, in January 2025.
- However, fertilizer, steel and electricity output recorded a positive growth during the month.

IIP Outlook

- ICRA Ltd. expects Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth to slow.
- IIP growth likely to ease to 5.5% in January from 7.8% in December.
- Slowdown described as broad-based, with 7 of 8 sectors showing weaker YoY performance.

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAC)

- Context: **India and France** have signed an Amending Protocol to update the 1992 Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAC) to align it with international tax standards.

About the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAC) 1992

- It is also known as a double taxation avoidance agreement or tax treaty.
- It is designed to ensure that the same income is not taxed in both the country where it is earned and the country where the taxpayer is resident (country of residence).

Key Features of the Revised India-France DTAC

- Capital Gains Taxation:** It gives a company full taxing rights on gains arising from the sale of its shares to the country of residence.

- **Revised dividend rates:** Replaces the standard 10% rate with a split rate of 5% for holders of at least 10% of the company's capital and 15% for all other cases.
- **MFN clause removal:** Formally removes the most-favoured-nation (MFN) clause, ending interpretation conflicts and ensuring that treaty benefits are limited to specific agreed terms.
- **BEPS integration:** Incorporates provisions from the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Multilateral Instrument (MLI) to prevent tax avoidance by multinational enterprises.
- **Enhanced cooperation:** Updates the rules on exchange of information and introduces a new article on assistance in tax collection to combat financial evasion.
- **Service Permanent Establishment (PE):** Expands the scope of permanent establishment by including service PE and aligns the definition of fees for technical services with international models.

Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP)

- Context: The 5th National MSME Council recently assessed the implementation status of the World Bank-assisted RAMP Programme.
- Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

About RAMP

- RAMP is a World Bank-supported Central Sector Scheme designed to strengthen the performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- It seeks to improve their access to markets, finance, and technology by expanding and improving the reach of existing schemes of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME).
- The RAMP programme aims to boost MSME productivity and competitiveness by encouraging technology adoption, innovation, digital transformation, better market linkages, improved credit access, and environmentally sustainable practices.

Objectives

- Promote stronger collaboration between the Central and State Governments for MSME growth and development.
- Improve the impact of existing MoMSME initiatives, particularly those focused on technology upgradation.
- Develop and deepen the receivables financing ecosystem for MSMEs.
- Strengthen the functioning of the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), including extending credit guarantees for environmentally sustainable (green) initiatives and women-led micro and small enterprises.
- Minimize the problem of delayed payments faced by micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

Indian Economic Growth 2025-26

- Context: The Indian economy has registered a growth of 7.8 percent in the third quarter (October-December) of the current financial year 2025-26.

- Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Method of calculation

- The economy has registered a growth of 7.8 percent in the third quarter of the current financial year.
- The economic growth in the same period last year was 6.2 percent.
- This growth was 8.2 percent in the previous second quarter.
- The central government has now changed the base year in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculation method from 2011-12 to 2022-23.
- According to the new calculation method, India's overall growth in the current financial year is estimated to be 7.6 percent. This is higher than the previously projected 7.4 percent.

TAMIL NADU

INITIATIVES / SCHEMES

International Vallalar Conference

- Context: Chief Minister announced that the **birth anniversary of Vallalar will be celebrated for three days every year**. The conference is organised by **Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department**. Also inaugurated the complete portions of **Vallalar International Centre in Vadalur**.
- He also announced the establishment of a **centre for research on the saint in Chennai**. It would come up at the **HR&CE Department headquarters in Nungambakkam**.
- Vallalar's book titled **Spiritual Alchemy** would be brought out by the **HR&CE Department and Vallalar Annadhanam Centres will be established in Mettukuppam, Karunguzhi and Marudhur**.
- His verses, progressing from intense devotion to universal compassion and social reform, **were compiled as the Thiruvartupa**.
- Stressing compassion toward all living beings as the highest virtue, he also authored a prose treatise **titled Jeevakarunya Ozhukkam**.
- Advocating the worship of the Divine as radiant grace—"Arutperunjothi," the Supreme Light of Compassion—he established the **Samarasa Suddha Sanmarka Sathya Gnana Sabha in 1872 near the Dharma Salai, on land gifted by the people of Vadalur**.
- In recognition of his enduring legacy, the Government of India released a commemorative **postage stamp in 2007**.
- Later, in 2021, Chief Minister announced that **October 5, Vallalar's birth anniversary, would be observed annually as "Dhaniperunkarunai Naal," commemorating his 200th birth anniversary and honouring his message of boundless compassion**.

About Vallalar

- Ramalinga Swamikal, widely revered as **Thiruvartuprakasa Vallalar**, arose in 19th-century Tamil Nadu as a **radiant force against ignorance and social injustice**.
- A visionary reformer, he challenged **rigid caste hierarchies and harmful superstitions, striving to unite people through spiritual compassion and equality**.
- In **1865, at Vadalur**, he founded the **Samarasa Suddha Sanmarkka Sangam**, followed by the establishment of the **Sathya Dharma Salai in 1867**.
- Just as he worked to relieve physical hunger, he also sought to eradicate ignorance by founding two learning centers—the **Samarasa Veda School and the Sanmarkka Bodhini**.
- Solar Power Generation Project**
- Context: Solar power generation project is to be **implemented in government offices across Tamil Nadu**.
- Solar panels are being installed on the roofs of buildings such as corporation, municipal offices, collector offices, government hospitals, schools and colleges.
- The work is being done by **contracting companies through the Green Energy Corporation**, and the contract was issued last year.
- The project is being implemented in government offices in **Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram and Chengalpattu districts in the first phase**.

- The electricity generated will be spent on primary office use, and the remaining electricity will be purchased by the Electricity Board.
- Priority is being given to hospitals.
- The work will be completed soon and power generation will start.

Prime Minister's Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- The Central Government launched the Prime Minister's Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli yojana on 15 February 2024.
- The scheme aims to install solar panels on the roofs of one crore houses in residential areas at a cost of Rs. 75,021 crore by the financial year 2026-27.
- Under this scheme, households will be given subsidy to install solar panels on their roofs. The subsidy will cover up to 40% of the cost of the solar panels.
- This scheme is implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India.

'Tamilar Thadam' Website

- Context: The Minister of Minority Affairs and Overseas Tamil Welfare, from the Chief Secretariat, launched the online repository 'Tamilar Thadam' for the welfare of Tamil diaspora.
- It helps in recording and sharing historical news, research articles, migration notes, and historical events related to the migration of Tamil diaspora living around the world.

Tamil Manam Project

- **Context:** Under the Tamil Manam Project, appointment orders have been issued to 10 art instructors who have been selected to work in 8 countries including Reunion, Maldives, Indonesia, Malawi and Cambodia.

Tamil Manam Project

- The Tamil Nadu government has launched a new project called "Tamil Manam" for the Tamil communities living in the neighbouring countries.
- Under this project, trained teachers and Tamil artists will conduct training classes directly and teach Tamil language and cultural arts to the neighbouring Tamils.
- 8 countries have been selected; these include Reunion, Maldives, Indonesia, Malawi and Cambodia.

Tamil Nadu Climate Summit 4.0

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu State Budget will be formulated to integrate climate action across schemes implemented by all departments to ensure climate considerations are embedded in governance at every level, said Chief Minister at the Tamil Nadu Climate Summit 4.0.

State-Level Emission Reduction Targets

- Tamil Nadu to formulate State-level Determined Contributions (SDCs) to cut carbon emissions by 2030.
- Modelled on India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.
- Clear targets with concrete implementation measures to be defined.

Expansion of Green Cover

- Distribution of five lakh sandalwood saplings across Tamil Nadu.
- Aim to increase forest and green cover to combat climate change.

Promotion of Green Technologies

- Joint investments by industries and government institutions.

- Focus on adoption of clean and green technologies to reduce emissions.
- PwDs will receive services through a pre-booked appointment, thus reducing waiting times

Dugong Conservation Initiative

- Foundation laid for the International Dugong Conservation Centre in Thanjavur.
- Intended to strengthen marine biodiversity and dugong conservation efforts.

Launch of TN-SHORE Scheme

- Launched the Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources and Blue Economy (TN-SHORE) initiative.
- ₹1.7 crore earmarked as revolving funds and micro-credit support.
- Support extended to 34 mangrove conservation committees.
- ₹25 lakh each distributed to three mangrove forest protection committees in Killai, Cuddalore district.

Viluthugal - Integrated Service Centre

- Context: The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu inaugurated 105 "Viluthugal - Integrated Service Centres" at the Secretariat on 16.02.2026, providing integrated services with accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu is implementing the Viluthugal Integrated Service Centres project with World Bank funding under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Scheme.
- 6 services are provided to meet the daily rehabilitation needs of PwDs at the Revenue Divisional Centres: Special Education, Optometry, Hearing and Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Psychotherapy
- Special Education, Physiotherapy, and Psychological Counseling are provided at the Regional Centres

Tamil Nadu Rights Project

- The Tamil Nadu Rights Project (Tamil Nadu Rights) is an initiative launched with the assistance of the World Bank, which aims to empower PwDs through comprehensive rehabilitation services, social registration, and livelihood support.
- Implemented by the Department of PwDs, it aims to create an inclusive ecosystem.

Deployment of Tethered Drones to Prevent Elephant

- Context: Following the success of AI-based cameras in preventing elephant deaths on railway tracks over the past two years, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department with support from the Tamil Nadu Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Corporation has now deployed tethered drones.
- It will prevent the elephants from approaching the railway tracks in Madukarai Forest Range.
- The drones will operate 24 hours a day, each tethered drone is equipped with a thermal camera capable of 360 degree rotation and can detect the elephant movement up to two kilometres away.

Hi-Tech Labs in Government-Aided Schools

- Context: Tamil Nadu School Education Minister inaugurated 654 hi-tech laboratories. It enhance teaching and learning using video, audio, and digital tools.
- Mechanical laboratories have been set up in government schools to develop problem-solving skills and teamwork skills of students of classes 6-9.

- The labs would support the implementation of schemes such as **Targeted Help for Improving Remediation and Academic Nurturing (THIRAN)** and the **Tamil Nadu School Programme for AI, Robotics & Knowledge of Online Tools (TN SPARK)**.
- It aimed at **integrating AI education into the curriculum for Classes 6-9** across 3,000 government schools with functional Hi-Tech labs.
- Launching in the **2025-26 academic year**, the program will deliver foundational education in **Computer Science and AI by leveraging 8,209 Hi-Tech Labs and 22,931 Smart Classrooms** already established statewide.

Languages Scheme

- The Tamil Nadu government has implemented the “**Languages Scheme**” to **improve the English proficiency of students of classes 6-8**.
- High-tech laboratories in all **government middle, high and higher secondary schools** are being used for this.
- The scheme helps students improve their **listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) skills** through self-paced learning in a digital manner.
- Supported by partners like Microsoft, Intel, Cognizant, Namma School Namma Ooru Palli, and Teach for India (PMU), TN SPARK is expected to benefit over 7 lakh students in its pilot phase.

SimpleGov

High-tech laboratories

- High-tech laboratories and efficient classrooms **using ICT technology** have been set up in all government schools.
- High-tech labs facilitate teaching and learning with **video, audio and digital tools**.
- The laboratories are equipped with audio-visual and digital tools **aimed at making classroom teaching more interactive and helping students better understand textbook content**.
- AI, mechanical engineering and coding programs like **TN SPARK for grades 6-9** have been implemented in these labs.
- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu government recently launched the **simplification, digitisation, and process re-engineering** of a total of **55 government services, as part of the second phase of the SimpleGov initiative**. On February 13, Chief Minister launched the initiative during a function in Chennai.
- SimpleGov is a governance reform initiative **launched in 2023** by the Government of Tamil Nadu to streamline and simplify administrative processes across departments.

Core Objective

- Systematically simplify rules, procedures, approvals, and service delivery mechanisms
- Reduce bureaucratic delays and enhance transparency
- Improve ease of access to public services

TN SPARK

- The **Tamil Nadu School Programme for AI, Robotics & Knowledge of Online Tools (TN SPARK)** is a pilot initiative by the **Department of School Education (DSE), SCERT, and Samagra Shiksha (SS)**.
- **Focus Areas**
 - Process Re-engineering – Removal of redundant steps and outdated rules
 - Digitization – Promoting online applications and approvals

▪ Time-bound Service Delivery – Ensuring faster approvals

▪ Transparency & Accountability – Clear guidelines and reduced discretion

Impact Areas

▪ G2C (Government to Citizen)

- Simplified access to citizen services (certificates, licenses, welfare schemes)
- Reduced documentation requirements
- Faster grievance redressal

▪ G2B (Government to Business)

- Streamlined approvals and clearances
- Improved ease of doing business
- Reduced compliance burden

▪ G2G (Government to Government)

- Simplified inter-departmental coordination
- Standardized procedures
- Reduced file movement and duplication

Cross-Sectoral Applicability

- Citizen service delivery
- Welfare scheme implementation
- Business-facing approvals
- Inter-departmental administrative processes

e-Vadagai 2.0 Mobile App

▪ **Context:** The Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, launched the enhanced mobile app e-Rent 2.0 at Madhikonpalayam, Dharmapuri district.

Purpose of the App

- Simplify the process for farmers to rent agricultural machinery.
- Improve service delivery using modern technology.
- Increase the use of agricultural machinery and implements.

Features

- Farmers can book agricultural machinery online from their location.
- Direct contact between farmers and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society machinery or private machinery owners.
- Eliminates intermediaries, reducing additional costs.
- Ensures transparency and reliability in service delivery.

Political Training Initiative for Women

- **Context:** In an effort to democratise political knowledge and deepen political consciousness of women, **The Penn Collective (TPC)**, a non-governmental organisation, is organising political training and mentorship for women.
- **Open to women from all political parties as well as independent candidates.**
- Encourages digital engagement and content creation to enhance civic presence and local visibility.

Aim of the Initiative

- **The initiative, Thenkoodu,** seeks to promote political awareness and leadership among women.
- It plans to mentor **100 women and transwomen aspiring to contest in the 2026 local body elections.**
- Focus on building a strong network of grassroots women leaders.

Tamil Nadu Forms Steering Committee for Human Resources for Health

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu government has set up a **State-level Steering Committee** to prepare a comprehensive **Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategy.**

- To strengthen the **State's public healthcare workforce through systematic planning and governance.**
- Initiative launched under the **World Bank-supported Enhanced Health Service Delivery Program (EHSDP).**
- The application has been developed to enhance the **operational efficiency of the police in crime detection, investigation, supervision, and data-driven policing** by leveraging emerging technologies.
- The DFCS enables digital collection, validation, and storage of fingerprint records.

Objectives of the HRH Strategy

- Identify and address gaps in: Recruitment, Capacity-building, Workforce distribution, Retention of health workers
- Improve availability, skills and long-term retention of healthcare staff across public facilities.

Three-Tier Implementation Structure

- Micro Level - Technical Working Groups (TWGs)
 - Responsible for detailed planning, data analysis and drafting of the strategy.
- Meso Level - Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
 - Provides expert inputs, reviews drafts and refines policy recommendations.
- Macro Level - State-Level Steering Committee
 - Final decision-making body for approval, governance and overall supervision.

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) 2.0

- **Context:** Chief Minister is set to launch the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) 2.0 and the Digital Fingerprint Collection System (DFCS).**
- These projects are of strategic importance and align with the **digital governance and police modernisation initiatives.**
- These projects will be formally launched at all the police station/First Information Report registering units across the State on that day.

Tamil Nadu's first Dark Sky Park

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu government has announced the launch of the State's first Dark Sky Park at the Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest in Kolli Hills in Namakkal district.
- Dark Sky Park is a protected landscape with minimal artificial light pollution, enabling clear observation of celestial bodies such as the moon, stars and planets.
- Kolli Hills, with its elevated terrain, dense forest cover and low urban light disturbance, offers ideal conditions for night-sky preservation and astronomical observation.
- The project, announced in the Assembly on June 25, 2024, was established at a cost of ₹1 crore after assessing ecological suitability and sky visibility at the Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest.
- The park is equipped with three advanced telescopes for structured sky-watching sessions and solar panels to power on-site operations sustainably.

Chennai Ula 2.0

- **Context:** 6 special electric air-conditioned tourist buses have been launched under the name "Chennai Ula 2.0".
- 5 traditional buses under the name "Chennai Ula" have been in operation since January 14.
- Ticket fare is Rs. 100 - one ticket can be used for the entire day. You can also get an electronic ticket through the "Chennai One" app.

- Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) was established in 1971.
- Tamil Nadu ranks second in India in terms of tourist arrivals.

Chennai One

- Chennai One is a mobile app launched on September 22, 2025.
- The app acts as an integrated platform for planning and booking trips across the city of Chennai.

ENVIRONMENT

Integrated Landbird Survey

- Context: **Integrated Landbird Survey** was conducted on 14th and 15th February 2026.
- The survey was conducted at least 25 locations in each forest division using a 2 km long line transect method.
- Detailed data on birds in various habitats was collected using **direct counting and acoustic survey methods**.
- The main objective is to **generate robust scientific data for long-term monitoring and conservation planning across the state**.
- Since Tamil Nadu is a major biodiversity hub for **both domestic and migratory birds**, **bird conservation and monitoring is a priority in the state**.
- The Tamil Nadu government is implementing projects such as **India's first Hornbill Conservation Centre at the Anaimalai Tiger Reserve (ATR), Raptor Research Centre under the Advanced Institute of Wildlife Conservation (AIWC), and the Marakkanam International Bird Conservation Centre**.

Scientists Urge Withdrawal of Mamallan Reservoir Project

- **Context:** A group of 22 experts including ecologists, hydrologists, ornithologists, and marine biologists wrote to Chief Minister **requesting withdrawal of the proposed Mamallan Reservoir project in the Kovalam-Nemmeli backwaters**.
- The scientists warned that implementing the project would cause irreversible damage to a vital coastal wetland ecosystem.

Importance of Tidal Exchange

- Tamil Nadu's own 'Ecosystem Health Card' for wetlands and the Department of Environment's publication on **lagoon ecosystems show that brackish wetlands depend on tidal exchange**.
- Restricting tidal flow, they noted, alters salinity, temperature, and circulation, limiting marine biodiversity.

Ecological Nature of the Backwaters

- The **Kovalam-Nemmeli system** is described as a tidal marsh ecotone, connected to the Bay of Bengal through the Kovalam and Kokilamedu inlets. **It is not an isolated freshwater body**.
- The southern stretch near **Mamallapuram** remains ecologically active due to ongoing tidal inflow.
- The Nemmeli stretch shows early degradation, mainly due to roads and bund construction.

Indian Grey Hornbill

- Context: In a public poll conducted by the Forest Department, the Indian Grey Hornbill was selected as the 'Bird of Tirupattur' district in Tamil Nadu, receiving more than 41,000 votes.

About the Indian Grey Hornbill

- The Indian Grey Hornbill is a commonly found hornbill species across the Indian subcontinent. It is usually seen in pairs.
- The bird has predominantly grey plumage with a pale grey or whitish underside. Its beak is black or dark grey and features a casque that curves along with the bill.
- It is found throughout the Indian subcontinent—from northeast Pakistan and southern Nepal to northwest Bangladesh, and across most parts of India, except Assam.
- The species plays a vital role in maintaining ecosystems by acting as an important seed disperser.
- According to the IUCN, it is classified as **Least Concern**.

POLITY

State Information Commission

- **Context:** Two more **Information Commissioners** have been appointed in the Tamil Nadu State Information Commission.
- The new Information Commissioners are: Retired Indian Administrative Service Officer Atulya Mishra and Retired Indian Police Service Officer Abhay Kumar Singh
- They will hold office for a period of three years from the date of their assumption of office.
- Retired Indian Police Service Officer Shakeel Akhter is serving as the **State Principal Information Commissioner**.
- **State Information Commission**
 - It is a **statutory body** established under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.
 - The State Information Commission is headed by a State Chief Information Commissioner,

and there are a maximum of 10 State Information Commissioners.

- Should not be a member of Parliament or a State Legislative Assembly.

- **Tenure:** They shall hold office for three years or till the age of 65, whichever comes first.

- **Appointment:** They are appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Committee
 - The Chief Minister as Chairman
 - The Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly
 - A State Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister.

- The Chief Minister as Chairman
- The Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Assembly

- A State Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister.

- **Removal:** The Governor may remove the State Chief Information Commissioner or the State Information Commissioner from office under certain conditions. They are:

- If declared bankrupt

- If convicted of a crime of moral turpitude

- If engaged in paid work outside official duties

- If physically or mentally unfit

- If receiving financial or other benefits that would affect the position

ECONOMY

Tamil Nadu Economic Survey 2025–26

- **Context:** The Chief Minister released the Tamil Nadu Economic Survey for the year 2025-26 prepared by the State Planning Commission.

- Tamil Nadu's economic growth is **11.19 percent**. This is **almost twice the national average growth rate**, according to the Economic Survey.

- The Economic Survey further states that the **per capita income in Tamil Nadu has increased to Rs. 3.62 lakh**. This is **1.77 times higher than the national average**.
 - The manufacturing sector has registered a **growth rate of 14.74 percent**. This is three times higher than the national average of 4.5 percent.
 - **Tamil Nadu ranks first among all states, contributing 15 percent to the country's total manufacturing employment.**
 - **₹1.57 lakh crore has been spent on education, health and social welfare schemes.**
 - While labour force participation has **increased to 72.1 percent, unemployment has come down to 3.5 percent.**
 - Tamil Nadu has set a target of becoming a **trillion dollar economy with strong manufacturing capacity and human capital.**
 - Exports of merchandise from Tamil Nadu have almost **doubled to \$52.07 billion. Foreign direct investment has also increased.**
 - New plans for the development of the **maritime economy of Tamil Nadu, which has a coastline of 1,076 km.**
 - **Tamil Nadu ranks first in the production of cotton and sugarcane**
 - **Tamil Nadu ranks first in the export of electronics, textiles and leather**
- Trillion-Dollar Economy Target**
- **Tamil Nadu can become a \$1 trillion economy by 2031** if it sustains a 16% nominal growth rate (2024–25 level), assuming a 2% annual appreciation of the dollar against the rupee. If the dollar rises by 3.5% annually, the milestone may be delayed by one year.
- **The report was prepared by the State Planning Commission and submitted to Chief Minister.**
- Balanced Growth Model**
- The Survey describes Tamil Nadu's model as **combining economic growth with social justice.**
 - **Double-digit growth was driven mainly by the secondary (manufacturing) sector.**
 - The report highlights both strong performance and areas needing attention to achieve twin goals
 - \$1 trillion economy
 - Developed-country-level per capita income
- Macroeconomic Performance**
- GSDP (2024–25): ₹31.19 lakh crore
 - Nominal growth: 16%
 - Real growth: 11.2% (highest among major States)
 - Per capita income: ₹3.62 lakh (1.77 times national average)
 - Ranked third among States in per capita income.
 - India's GDP growth: 6.49% (2024–25) → 7.4% (2025–26).
 - Global growth in 2025: 3.3%.
- Manufacturing Strength**
- Real manufacturing growth: **14.74% (2024–25) more than three times the national average of 4.5%.**
 - Average manufacturing growth (2021–22 to 2024–25): **9.38% (highest in India).**
 - **Contributes 15% of India's total factory workforce, as noted in the Economic Survey of India 2025-26.**

Sectoral Contribution (2024–25)

- **Primary:** 13.4% to Tamil Nadu's Gross State Value Added
- **Secondary:** 33.1%
- **Services:** 53.6%, the services sector also registered a strong performance, achieving a double-digit real growth of 11.3% in 2024-25.

Inflation Trends

- Urban inflation declined from 5.2% (2023–24) to 2.5% (2025–26).
- Rural inflation fell from 5.8% to 2.1%.
- Food inflation plummeted to 0.003% in 2025–26.
- Government subsidies on essentials helped stabilise prices.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- Tamil Nadu continues to rank among the top Indian States in attracting foreign direct investment.
- While India's overall FDI equity inflows declined from \$46.03 billion in 2022-23 to \$44.42 billion in 2023-24 amid global uncertainty and tighter financial conditions, Tamil Nadu defied the trend.
- Tamil Nadu's FDI in-flows increased steadily from \$2,169 million in 2022-23 to \$2,436 million in 2023-24, and further to \$3,681 million in 2024-25.

Women & Marriage Trends in Tamil Nadu – Economic Survey 2025–26

- **Context:** Tamil Nadu's marital landscape is still characterised by the prevalence of consanguineous marriages, according to the State's Economic Survey 2025-26 of the State Planning Commission (SPC).
- Tamil Nadu reports 28% highest incidence among its peer States - Kerala, Karnataka,

Gujarat and Maharashtra.

- As per estimates based on reports and data of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, Karnataka with 26.6%, Maharashtra (14.8%), Gujarat (6.4%) and Kerala (4.4%). The all-India average is 10.8%.

Child Marriage Situation

- The report also says the concept of child marriages is still in vogue and has been defined by women, aged from 20 to 24 at the time of the survey, as getting married before the age of 18.
- In rural areas, the proportion of such women is 15.2%, and in urban areas, it is 10.4%. The State's average stands at 12.8%, while the all-India average is 23.3%.
- The median age of women (in the age group of 25-29) at first marriage is 22 against the all-India average of 19.7.

Educational Attainment

- In terms of access to education, female literacy among women aged 15-49 has reached 84%, with 24.3% completing 12 or more years of schooling.
- These have been exceeded - only by Kerala (97% and 30.4% respectively). The figures of all-India average are 71.5% and 16.6%.

Access to Economic Resources

- 92% of women have their own bank/savings account (above national average).
- 74% aware of microcredit programmes.
- 18% have availed loans – showing strong financial inclusion.

Maternal Health Concern

- 9.9% pregnancies end in non-live births (higher than Kerala's 6.5%).
- Indicates gaps in maternal health conditions and quality of care.

Tamil Nadu Interim Budget 2026-27

- Context: Tamil Nadu Finance Minister presented the Interim Budget for 2026-27, while high-lighting the achievements of the government in the last five years.
- The Finance Minister presented the interim budget of the Tamil Nadu government at Rs. 2.55 lakh crore for the financial year 2026-27.

Revenue Deficit

- The revenue deficit is estimated to come down to Rs. 48,696.32 crore in the Interim Budget Estimates for 2026-27.
- The revenue deficit is expected to come down to Rs. 42,964.61 crore in 2027-28 and Rs. 35115.33 crore in 2028-29. This will pave the way for additional capital expenditure.

Debt Burden

- The total borrowing is planned to be Rs. 178,308.05 crore. Out of this, the government will repay public debt worth Rs. 60,418.42 crore, so the outstanding debt as on March 31 next year will be Rs. 1071770.34 crore.
- **This is 26.35 percent of the GDP.**
- It is expected to further decline to 25.30 percent in 2027-28 and 25.43 percent in 2028-29.

Special Project Implementation Department

- Rs.17,088 crore has been allocated for the Special Project Implementation Department.
- So far, 48,65,050 skill certificates have been issued to college students under the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme in Tamil Nadu. The selected students have participated in international training in countries like England, Japan and South Korea.
- Assistance and incentives are being provided to Tamil Nadu youth to ensure maximum success in the Central Civil Services Examination.

- Out of the 59 Tamils who succeeded in the Civil Services Examination held in 2025, 52 were beneficiaries of the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme.

Water Resources Department

- In the interim financial statement of the Tamil Nadu government, Rs. 10,076 crore has been allocated for the Water Resources Department.
- In the Cauvery Delta, Parambiku M. Aliyar. Thamiravaruni Vaigai basins for irrigation facilities have been carried out at a cost of Rs. 498 crore.
- Flood control measures have been taken at a cost of Rs. 1,518 crore in Chennai and surrounding areas.
- Permanent flood control works have been carried out at a cost of Rs. 362 crore to prevent flood damage due to storms and heavy rains in other parts of Tamil Nadu.

Higher Education Sector

- Rs.8,505 crore has been allocated for the Higher Education Sector in the Interim Budget.
- In order to maintain social justice in higher education, the government has borne the education and food fees of 54,301 students who have been admitted to government schools under the 7.5 percent reservation for vocational education, and Rs. 1.512 crore has been spent so far.
- Tamil Nadu is at the forefront of higher education enrollment in the country, with 47 percent, almost double the national average.
- Like the Puthumai Penn, the Tamil Puthalvan provides Rs. 1,000 per month for higher education for men. So far, 5,40,511 students have benefited from this program.

Public Health Department

- The Finance Minister said that Rs. 22,090 crore

has been allocated for the **Health and Public Health Department**.

- Under the People's Health Search Scheme, 2.55 crore beneficiaries have been **provided with first-time medical services** and 4.75 crore have been provided with continuous services.
- **5,11,916 lives have been saved through the 'Innuvir Kaapom-Nammai Kaakum 48' scheme.** Rs. 493 crore has been spent for this.
- **17,82,687 people have benefited from 1,206 Nalam Kaakum Stalin Medical Camps conducted across the state. In the last five years alone, an insurance amount worth Rs. 6,374 crore** has been released under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Insurance Scheme.
- Under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Fund, financial assistance of Rs. 4,042 crore has been provided to 34,40,550 women in the last five years.
- **The Tamil Nadu government has received a UN award for its effective work in the People's Health Project.**
- Youth Welfare and Sports Development Department
- Rs 718 crore has been allocated for the Youth Welfare and Sports Development Department in the Interim Budget Estimates
- Under the Kalaingar Sports Kits Scheme, 16,798 sports kits have been provided to 12,525 village panchayats with a financial allocation of Rs. 86 crore.
- Rs. 176 crore has been provided as a high incentive to 5,403 sportsmen and sportswomen who have brought glory to Tamil Nadu by winning medals in national and international competitions.
- In the last five years, Chief Minister's Cup sports competitions have been organized and

winners have been given a prize money of Rs. 101 crore.

- Rs. 43 crore has been allocated for organizing Chief Minister's Youth Sports Festival-Idhu Namma Attam 2026 competitions at the state level.

Magalir Vidiyal Payanam

- The Tamil Nadu government has allocated Rs. 4,00 crore for Magalir Vidyalyal Payanam Scheme in the interim budget.
- In the last five years, steps have been taken to purchase 12,087 new buses at an estimated cost of Rs. 6.121 crore. Buses are being operated on 1,603 routes to connect areas adjacent to cities.
- Rs. 4,000 crore for Magalir Vidyalyal Payanam Scheme and Rs. 1.782 crore for Students' Bus Travel Scheme, making a total of Rs. 13.062 crore for the Transport Department.

Welfare of Differently Aabled

- Rs.1,417 crore has been allocated for the Disabled Welfare Department.
- **For the first time in the country, the Tamil Nadu government has brought appropriate amendments in the laws to appoint disabled people as members in local bodies.** Through this, 3,632 disabled people have taken charge as appointed members in local bodies so far.
- **While 4 %reservation** is being given to the differently-abled in government employment through direct appointment, the government has now ordered reservation in the promotion system as well.
- **A monthly maintenance allowance of Rs. 2,000** is being provided to the differently-abled who are unable to take care of themselves.

Welfare for Senior Citizens

- Under the **Anbu Cholai** scheme, Anbu Cholaies have been set up as day care centers for **senior**

citizens in 25 places to alleviate the suffering of old age.

- Recently, with the noble aim of ensuring that differently-abled and elderly people can get goods without any hassle, **this government has implemented the Thayumanavar scheme, which provides direct delivery of goods to their homes.**
- So far, 27 lakh 40 thousand 709 eligible beneficiaries have benefited under this scheme.

School Education Department

- Rs.48,534 crore has been allocated for the School Education Department in the Interim Budget.
- Under the **Professor Anbazhagan School Development Scheme**, 3,771 classrooms, 107 laboratories, 4 boys' hostels and 4 girls' hostels have been constructed and inaugurated at a cost of Rs.673 crore.
- Work on setting up **modern libraries** at a cost of Rs.902 crore has been undertaken.
- **The Kalaigarn Centenary Library is functioning in Madurai. New libraries are being set up in the cities of Coimbatore, Trichy, Cuddalore, Salem and Tirunelveli.**
- **Tamil Nadu Model Schools are functioning in 38 districts with boarding and lodging facilities.**
- In the last four years, 2,358 students have been admitted in 50 departments in 93 leading educational institutions. Out of these, 41 students are studying in IITs.
- Another 17 students are studying in Japan, Taiwan, and Malaysia on full scholarships.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

- The government has announced that steps have been taken to provide bank loans of Rs. 10.70 lakh crore to MSMEs in the last five years.

- So far, Rs. 405 crore in loans and Rs. 83 crore in subsidies have been provided under the **Kalaigarn Handicraft Scheme. The first phase of the Gold and Jewellery Park in Coimbatore** is being carried out at an estimated cost of Rs. 81 crore.
- **The number of startups registered in Tamil Nadu has increased 5 times in the last five years alone.**
- Bank loans of Rs. 10.70 lakh crore have been provided to MSMEs. **18 new industrial parks have been created.**
- In the interim budget, Rs. 1.943 crore has been allocated for the MSME sector.

New museums

- Following the **Keezhadi and Porunai museums**, new museums are being set up in many parts of Tamil Nadu at a cost of Rs. 285 crore.
- **The excavation results have shown that the technology of extracting iron from iron ore was introduced in the Tamil Nadu region, which has attracted national and global attention.**
- The world-class Keezhadi and Porunai museums have already been opened. The Keezhadi Open Air Museum has also been opened recently.
- **The Chola Museum in Thanjavur, the Chola Museum in Gangaikonda, the Noyyal Museum in Erode, the Navai Museum in Ramanathapuram, the New Bronze Museum and Indus Valley Civilization Museum in Egmore, Chennai, and the Tamil Cultural Museum in Tiruvannamalai** are being set up at a cost of Rs. 285 crore.

Kalaigarn Magalir Urimai Thogai

- **Under the Kalaigarn Magalir Urimai Thogai,**

Rs. 1,000 is paid directly to the bank accounts of women every month. About 1.31 crore women are beneficiaries of this scheme.

- To ensure uninterrupted access to the amount in the coming months, a total of Rs. 5,000 was paid in one installment, including Rs. 3,000 for the months of February, March and April and Rs. 2,000 as a special summer amount. For this, Rs. 6,500 crore was released in a single day.
- **The facility of free travel in government buses has been provided through the 'Vidiyal Payanam' scheme, which reduces the travel expenses of women.**
- **So far, 881 crore women have travelled. Through this, they get an average saving of up to Rs. 888 per month.**

Integrated Renewable Energy Policy

- Finance Minister said that a new integrated renewable energy policy will be released soon to improve the green energy capacity of Tamil Nadu.
- New plans are being prepared to generate 100 billion units of renewable green energy considering the future power demand.
- Tenders for battery storage projects with a capacity of **1,000 MWh for green power supply have been finalized.**
- Rs.18,091 crore has been allocated for the energy sector in the Interim Budget.

70 percent revenue from commercial taxes

- **The interim budget report has stated that 70 percent of the Tamil Nadu government's own tax revenue will come from commercial taxes.**
- The total revenue in the interim budget for the year 2026-27 is Rs. 3,44,575 crore. Of this, the state's own tax revenue is Rs. 2,29,579 crore.
- 70 percent of the revenue is generated from commercial taxes, 13.9 percent from stamp

duty and deed registrations, 6 percent from excise clearance, 6.5 percent from taxes on vehicles, and 2.9 percent from others.

This tax revenue will increase by 11.15 percent in the interim budget.

- The total expenditure is Rs. 3,93,272 crore, of which capital expenditure is Rs. 59,562 crore.

State Disaster Management Authority

- A state disaster management authority with modern facilities is being set up at a cost of Rs. 50 crore, the budget statement said.
- **The Tamil Nadu government is taking several precautionary measures to deal with disaster situations.**
- **An Urban Disaster Management Authority has been formed for the Greater Chennai Corporation and is working to effectively deal with the threat of natural disasters.**

- Three regional relief centres have been set up and are functioning in Chennai and its suburbs at a cost of Rs. 36 crore to reduce the time for rescue and relief operations and to stock relief materials in advance.

Tamil Nadu Semiconductor Mission

- **The Tamil Nadu Semiconductor Mission will be implemented by 2030** at a cost of Rs. 500 crore under the five-year action plan, the budget statement said.
- 54 industrial parks are operating in many districts of Tamil Nadu on 49,468 acres. Work has been underway to acquire an additional 28,392 acres of land.
- **New Tidal Parks are being set up at Trichy, Madurai and Hosur at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,070 crores. Tidal Neo Mini IT Parks have been completed in Villupuram, Thanjavur, Salem, Thoothukudi, Tiruppur, Vellore and Karaikudi.**

- Mini IT parks are being set up at a cost of Rs. 388 crore in Namakkal, Tiruvannamalai, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Erode, Nagapattinam, Karur and Pudukkottai. This will create 25,500 new jobs.
- **Work is underway to set up a quality semiconductor technology centre and a semiconductor design competence centre in collaboration with IIT Madras.**
- In the interim budget, a budget of Rs. 4,282 crore has been allocated for the industry and commerce department.
- **Women's Self-Help Groups were formed in 1989 by Chief Minister Karunanidhi.** So far, 6,23,529 groups have been provided with bank loans worth Rs. 1,47,718 crores.
- 19 hostels have been built with modern facilities for the safe stay of rural women.
- **Due to Tamil Nadu's leading position in safe childbirth, the maternal mortality rate is 35 per 1,00,000 and the infant mortality rate is 12 per 1,000, which is lower than the national average.**
- **The Tamil Nadu Women's Employment and Security Project were developed and operates with the assistance of the World Bank to promote women's economic participation and empowerment.**

Kalaignar Kavanu Illam Project

- **It has been announced that 8 lakh concrete houses will be built in Tamil Nadu by 2030 under the Kalaignar Kavanu Illam Project.**
- **The aim of this project is to make Tamil Nadu a slum-free state.**
- So far, 1,71,000 houses have been completed and construction work on 29,000 more houses is underway.
- **Due to the great response from the people, the Chief Minister has announced that an additional 1 lakh houses will be built.**
- 1,14,488 houses built by the government till 2001 have been repaired and reconstructed at a cost of Rs. 969 crores.

Puthumai Penn Thittam

- **The Puthumai Penn Thittam promotes women's education and helps them continue their education from school to higher education.**
- **Under this scheme, girls studying in government and government-aided schools from class VI to XII receive Rs. 1,000 every month.** So far, 6,95,296 girls have benefited from it.
- **Translation Projects**
- Under the Muthamizhaarignar Translation Project, 160 books have been translated into Tamil, including medical, engineering and educational books.
- Under the Dravidam Project, 74 books have been translated into Tamil of the best books published in foreign languages such as English.
- **The works of Periyar and Ambedkar have been published in many foreign languages, so far books have been published in 21 languages including English, French, Arabic, Hindi, Gujarati.**
- **27 volumes of Ambedkar's works have been translated into Tamil and published as a public edition.**
- The Development of Computer Tamil and the International Mathematical Tamil Seminar were successfully held in India, which has not been done in any other state.

- The Sangamam-Namma Uru festival, which provides opportunities for folk artists, is being held in Chennai and major cities.
- The Samathuvap Pongal festival is celebrated in all districts with great success.

Cancer detected at an early stage

- The Finance Minister said that 1,929 people were diagnosed with cancer at an early stage through the efforts of the Tamil Nadu government.
- Cancer detection camps were held in 23 districts on behalf of the government; due to this, 79.17 lakh people were tested.
- Immediate treatment is being provided to 1,929 people who were detected; this helps in the effort to detect cancer at an early stage.
- A scheme to provide cervical cancer vaccination to girls below the age of 14 was launched by the Chief Minister.
- Kanchipuram Arignar Anna Cancer Hospital will be upgraded to a referral center at an estimated cost of Rs. 398 crore.

Discount on registering property in the name of women

- 1% reduction in registration fee for houses, plots and agricultural lands worth Rs. 10 lakhs registered in the name of women. So far 3,71,705 women have benefited
- 41% of working women across the country work in factories in Tamil Nadu
- 19.34 lakh students have benefited under the breakfast scheme in government schools. ₹1,284 crore has been spent in the last four years and children's attendance and learning have improved
- Under the Anbu Karangal scheme, children who have lost their parents are given ₹2,000 per month to continue in school without

dropping out until the age of 18. So far 10,637 children have benefited

- Subsidy is provided to them to engage in self-employment under the Transgender Promotion Scheme. They have been encouraged to join the Home Guard.

Ungaludan Stalin Thittam

- 10,000 camps have been conducted across the state under the Ungaludan Stalin Thittam.
- So far, 38.53 lakh petitions have been received and 38.48 lakh petitions have been resolved.
- The Chief Minister's Address Department acts as a grievance redressal system for the public to easily access the government administration.
- 4,835 camps were conducted under the previous project, Chief Minister with the People, and 23.50 lakh petitions were resolved.
- Through the new project, services are provided to all sections of the population in urban and rural areas in all districts.

High-speed internet infrastructure in 95% of villages

- High-speed internet infrastructure work has been completed in 95% of the 12,525 village panchayats in Tamil Nadu, that is, 11,953 villages.
- This high-speed internet is provided using a fiber optic network.
- In October last year, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin addressed the Gram Sabha meetings held in 10,000 villages online.
- In the Interim Budget, ₹219 crore has been allocated for the Information Technology and e-Digital Services Department.

Chennai Metro Phase-II Issue

- Centre approved Chennai Metro Rail Phase-II under 50:50 cost-sharing model.

- State paid ~₹29,500 crore towards Union share.
- Amount reflected in State's outstanding debt, affecting debt-to-GSDP ratio and borrowing capacity.

Fiscal Indicators (Interim Budget Estimates 2026-27)

- Outstanding debt projected at ₹2, 10.71 lakh crore.
- Revenue receipts estimated at ₹2, 34,400 crore (11.26% increase).
- Revenue expenditure projected at ₹2, 39,300 crore (3.79% increase).

INTERIM AGRICULTURE BUDGET 2026-27

Highlights of Budget

- Context: An interim budget of Rs. 47,248 crore has been presented to the agriculture sector for the financial year 2026-27 in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.
- **For the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu, a separate budget was presented for the agriculture sector in 2021-22, in which ₹34,220 crore was allocated.**
- The allocation for the agriculture sector in 2025-26 has been increased to ₹45,661 crore, an increase of ₹1,587 crore over the previous year.
- **Tamil Nadu ranks first in the national level in the production of sorghum, second in the production of sorghum, and fifth in the production of small grains.**
- The Small Grains Movement is being implemented as a five-year plan from 2023-24; so far, 12.84 lakh farmers have benefited from a fund of ₹178 crore.
- Small grains have been cultivated in an area of 20 lakh acres; 3.36 lakh acres of cluster demonstration plots have been set up and

90 small grains value addition centres have been established.

Maize production increased from 26 lakh metric tons to 27 lakh metric tons.

Allocation of Rs. 707 crore under Kalaignar's All Village Integrated Agricultural Development Scheme, benefiting 61 lakh farmers.

Development of 58,712 acres of fallow lands into arable land.

21.35 lakh farmers benefited under the Mannuir Kaathu Mannuir Kaapom scheme.

900 metric tons of traditional seeds were produced under the Jayaraman Traditional Paddy Varieties Conservation Movement, distributed to 70 thousand farmers.

About 2 lakh new free electricity connections have been provided to farmers in the last 5 years.

Irrigation facilities have been provided to 3.48 lakh hectares of agricultural land.

Tamil Nadu ranks first in the country in the production of cassava and jasmine, and first in the productivity of amla, cabbage and radish; Second place in productivity of tapioca, jasmine, jackfruit, guava

In the last 5 years, GI applications have been made for 41 unique products, out of which 9 products have been granted GI: Sholavandhan betel, Panrutti jackfruit, Panrutti cashew, Virudhunagar sambavathal, Ramanathapuram Chithiraikkar rice, Puliyangudi lemon, Chettikulam small onion, Thooyamalli rice, Kaundhapadi country sugar

Increase in Double-Cropping Area

Area under double-cropping rose to 13.99 lakh hectares in 2024-25.

- Increase of nearly 2 lakh hectares compared to 2019–20.
- Attributed to government initiatives addressing climate change and natural calamities.

Budget Allocation for Agriculture

- Interim Agriculture Budget 2026–27 outlay: ₹2,47,248.24 crore.
- Allocation for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Department: ₹47,248.24 crore.

Steady rise in allocation:

- ₹2,34,220 crore (2021–22)
- ₹2,45,661 crore (2025–26)

Growth in Agricultural GSVA

- Average Gross State Value Added (GSVA) in agriculture increased from 1.36% (2012–13 to 2020–21) to 3.03% (2021–22 to 2024–25).
- GSVA at constant (2011–12) prices rose by 9.97%, reaching ₹2,59,11,708 lakh in 2024–25.

Focus on Farmers' Welfare

Schemes aimed at

- Increasing farmers' income
- Enhancing production and productivity
- Ensuring food and nutrition security
- Promoting sustainable agricultural development

Expansion of Tree & Forest Cover

- Target: Increase State's tree and forest cover to 33%.
- Agroforestry promoted under the Green Tamil Nadu Mission.

Achievements in last five years:

- 3.24 crore saplings produced and distributed.
- 2.24 lakh acres brought under agroforestry.

Policy Changes & Crop Protection

- The Tamil Nadu Rosewood Trees (Conservation) Act, 1994 not extended beyond February 13, 2025, to encourage rosewood cultivation.
- Guidelines formulated and enforced for culling wild boars to protect crops.

Water & Land Resource Development

Over the last five years:

- 68,930 traditional waterbodies renovated.
- 1 lakh supply and irrigation canals desilted.
- 29,800 check-dams constructed.
- 31,325 groundwater recharge systems established.
- 83,015 plantation works completed involving 2.78 crore saplings.

Salem Javvarisi (Sago)

- **Context:** APEDA facilitated the **first-ever direct export of GI-labelled Salem Javvarisi from Tamil Nadu to Canada**, marking a major milestone for producer-led exports.

- Salem Javvarisi is a starch-based food product made from cassava.

- It is native to the Salem district of Tamil Nadu, known as Javvarisi Nilam.

- Salem Javvarisi was granted GI in March 2023

Agriculture and Processed Food Products

Export Promotion Authority (APEDA)

- APEDA is a statutory body under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

- It was established under the **Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Promotion Authority Act, 1985**.

- It is the **apex body** for agricultural export promotion in India.

NATIONAL - NEWS

AI Impact Summit

- Context: Prime Minister will inaugurate the **India AI Impact Expo 2026**, which includes pavilions from 13 other countries **the first such event in the Global South** which will end on Feb 20.
- The summit will push for equitable access to AI resources, adding that India is focusing the summit on a **human centric approach**.
- It marks the **fourth AI Summit after summits in the U.K, South Korea and France**.
- The AI impact event will feature exhibitions and live demonstrations of AI technology and start-ups, which are structured across three thematic chakras- **"People, Planet and Progress"**.
- **The conference will be held under 7 themes: Human Capital, Science, Democratization of AI Resources, Resilient Innovation and Energy, Inclusive Social Empowerment, Safe and Trustworthy AI and AI for Economic Development and Social Well-Being.**

Previous Conferences:

- The AI Security Conference was held in Bletchley Park, UK in 2023 to explore the impact of emerging AI technology.
- After that, AI conferences were held in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, in 2024, and in Paris, the capital of France, in 2025.
- This is followed by this year's **AI Impact Summit in India**, where **65 percent of the population is under the age of 35**.

NGT Clears Great Nicobar Mega Project

- Context: A Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) cleared the **₹2.92 lakh crore**

Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project, citing its strategic importance and stating there was no valid ground to interfere.

- The Union government opposed public disclosure of the HPC report, citing strategic, defence, and national importance. The NGT accepted this position, noting the project's importance to India.
- The NGT said that the **environmental clearance granted to the project has adequate safeguards** and therefore there are no grounds to interfere with it.
- **The Environment Ministry must protect coral reefs along the coast, ensure coral regeneration using proven scientific methods, prepare and approve an implementation plan.**

About the Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project

- **The Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project was conceptualised by NITI Aayog and formally launched in 2021.**
- It seeks to develop a large-scale infrastructure hub comprising an **International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT)**, a new green-field international airport, a planned township, and a gas and solar-based power plant.
- The project includes a **container terminal, an integrated city, an airport for military and civil use, and a 450MVA gas and solar power plant.**
- The project is being executed by the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)**.
- Strategically, the initiative supports India's long-term maritime and economic objectives under **Maritime Vision 2030** and is identified as a flagship development programme within the **broader Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 roadmap**.

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

- **The National Green Tribunal (NGT), set up in 2010**, is a dedicated judicial forum created to ensure the swift resolution of environmental disputes in India.
- It deals with matters concerning **environmental protection, conservation of forests, and enforcement of environmental rights, and has the authority to award compensation for harm resulting from environmental violations.**
- The tribunal **aims to dispose of cases within six months**, functioning in accordance with the **principles of natural justice.**
- Its structure includes a Chairperson, along with Judicial Members and Expert Members, allowing for a well-rounded and informed decision-making process.

VAYYU Virtual Research Centre

- **Context: IIT Madras is launching a virtual research centre called VAYYU** in collaboration with the Finnish Meteorological Institute to study air quality, weather and climate change. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed for this.

The areas of research of the centre are

- Aerosol dust layer and meteorological interactions
- Interactions between the **Himalayan atmosphere and cryosphere layers**
- **Urban air quality** and its changes
- Regional hydro-climate
- Snow formation and glacier melt
- **Impacts of aerosols on air quality in Indian cities**
- The centre will serve as a leading **research centre to monitor and better understand the evidence** related to climate and air quality.

First private sector helicopter FAL

- **Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron** virtually inaugurated the **Tata Advanced Systems' Final Assembly Line (FAL) for the Airbus H125 helicopter.**
- The facility in **Vemagal, Kolar district in Karnataka**, is **India's first private-sector helicopter FAL.**
- This is the **first time India's private sector** will undertake the **manufacturing, integration, testing and maintenance of a sophisticated rotary wing platform.**
- The civil H125 will first be built at this facility and in future the military variant of the helicopter could also be built.
- **The first localised H125 is expected to be delivered early 2027** and will also be available for export across South Asia.

Centenary Celebrations of Ol Chiki Script

- **Context: President of India** inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the **ol chiki script.**
- The **Ol Chiki script** was created in 1925 by **Raghunath Murmu** exclusively for writing the Santhali language.
- It enabled Santhali to shift from a primarily oral tradition to a structured written form.
- Prior to the development of **Ol Chiki, Santhali was written in scripts such as Roman, Bengali, Odia, and Devanagari.**
- Santhali, written in the **Ol Chiki script, received official status by being added to the Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution of India through the **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003.**
- In a significant step toward promoting linguistic equity, **the Constitution of India**

was translated into Santhali in December 2025, using the Ol Chiki script.

Bhirrana Site and Its Significance

- Context: Recent radiocarbon dating studies at **Bhirrana in Haryana suggest that the Harappan Civilisation in the Indian subcontinent** may date back more than 8,000 years, making it one of the oldest known urban cultures.
- It situated along the ancient (paleo) channels of the Ghaggar River.

Hakra Ware Culture

- Featured carefully plastered underground dwelling pits dug into natural soil.
- The distinctive pottery assemblage known as Hakra ware.

Early Harappan Phase

- Construction of houses using mud bricks.
- Pottery classified into six fabric types, comparable to those found at Kalibanga-I.

Early Mature Harappan Phase

- Notable changes in town planning and settlement pattern.
- The settlement was protected by a **mud-brick fortification wall**.

Mature Harappan Phase

- Presence of steatite seals and other typical Harappan artifacts.
- Evidence of standardized Harappan cultural materials.

Bee Corridors

- Context: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has announced plans to create **the country's first "Bee Corridors" along National Highways**.

About Bee Corridors

- Bee corridors are uninterrupted stretches of vegetation designed to support pollinators.
- They include flowering trees and plants that provide nectar and pollen year-round.
- The goal is to create a supportive habitat for bees along highway networks.

Importance of the Initiative

- The project aims to ease the growing environmental pressures affecting honeybees and other pollinating insects.
- By improving food sources and habitat connectivity, it strengthens pollinator populations and overall ecological balance.

80 Years of the RIN Revolt

- Context: 18 February 2026 marks the 80th anniversary of the Royal Indian Navy Revolt, a brief yet highly significant armed uprising that reflected militant anti-colonial sentiment and remarkable Hindu-Muslim unity during the closing phase of British rule in India.

About the Revolt

- The uprising witnessed participation from more than 20,000 naval ratings.
- The movement began at HMIS Talwar in Bombay and quickly expanded to naval bases in Karachi, Madras, Cochin, Visakhapatnam, Calcutta, and the Andaman Islands.
- The revolt was initially triggered by sailors at HMIS Talwar in Bombay due to:
 - Poor-quality food and inadequate pay.
 - Racial discrimination and ill-treatment by British officers.
 - The arrest of a sailor who had written the slogan "Quit India" on the ship.

India's New International Subsea Digital Gateway

- **Context:** This is a joint infrastructure project aimed at creating a new global undersea cable gateway at **Visakhapatnam (Vizag)**, supported by a **five-year investment of \$15 billion in AI-driven digital infrastructure**.
- The project proposes a **direct fibre-optic connection from Vizag to Chennai, extending further to South Africa**. This route connects the American East Coast to Vizag via Africa.
- Another direct cable between **Vizag and Singapore will provide a South Pacific route**, linking the American West Coast through Australia to India.
- The initiative will complement the Blue subsea cable, Raman subsea cable, and Sol subsea cable, which together create a digital corridor from the American East Coast to Mumbai via the Red Sea.

Undersea/Submarine Communication Cables

- These are **fibre-optic cables laid along the ocean floor to carry internet and communication data across continents**. They form the **backbone of the global digital network**.
- Over **95% of international data traffic passes through such cables**, which can transmit multiple terabits of data per second.
- They consist of numerous thin **optical fibres made of glass or plastic that transmit data as light signals with minimal signal loss**.
- The cables are protected by steel armouring, waterproof layers, and repeaters that amplify signals over long distances.
- India has already implemented submarine optical fibre links between **Chennai and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and between**

Kochi and Lakshadweep, to enhance connectivity in island regions.

'MANAV' Vision for Artificial Intelligence

- **Context:** The 'MANAV' vision was unveiled by the Prime Minister at the India AI Impact Summit in 2026. It is a **human-centric governance framework for transparent, inclusive and responsible development of Artificial Intelligence**.

5 key pillars of the MANAV vision

- **Morality**
 - Justice and ethical basis in AI development
 - Protection of human dignity and rights
- **Accountable governance**
 - Transparent policy and regulation
 - High accountability for AI institutions
 - Clear security protocols are essential
- **National sovereignty**
 - Value of data sovereignty
 - Clear and secure data architecture for AI training
- **Accessibility and inclusion for all**
 - AI technology should be available to all sections of society
 - Inclusive development objective
- **Trust, Safety, and Legality at the centre of AI deployment**
 - AI systems should operate within a legal framework
 - Security and reliability ensured

Rare Earth Permanent Magnet Production

- **Context:** The **Union Coal and Mines Minister** said that the production of rare earth permanent magnets in India will start this year itself.

- The Union Cabinet has approved a project with a budget of ₹7,280 crore to **produce 6,000 metric tonnes of magnets per year**.
- The Central Government is making serious efforts to reduce import dependence on **rare earth elements like neodymium and praseodymium**.
- This is being implemented as **part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- It has been decided to set up new plants in the states of **Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Gujarat** to address the shortage of rare earth extraction and refining plants in the country.
- Work has already started in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.
- Rare earth permanent magnets play a **key role in the manufacture of electric vehicles, wind turbines, electronic devices, aerospace and defence equipment**.
- Rather than limiting efforts to pilot projects, the initiative focuses on comprehensive transformation by aligning national policies, strengthening data systems, enhancing technical expertise, and mobilizing investments.

Significance of the Initiative

- **Accelerating Energy Transition:** AI can improve the integration of renewable sources, minimize transmission losses, and enhance forecasting of solar and wind generation.
- **People-Centered Energy Systems:** AI-powered platforms can make energy access more inclusive, transparent, and efficient for citizens.
- **Policy and Data Coordination:** The mission promotes harmonized regulations, shared data frameworks, and coordinated financing among member countries.
- **India's Strategic Role:** As ISA's founding member and host nation, India reinforces its position as a global leader in combining digital innovation with climate action, linking solar diplomacy with AI-driven governance.
- **Boost to Decentralized Renewables:** AI tools can enhance grid reliability, reduce costs, and support faster adoption of decentralized renewable energy, allowing countries to move beyond outdated infrastructure models.

ISA Launches Global AI Mission

- **Context: The International Solar Alliance (ISA)** unveiled the Global Mission on AI for Energy at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, aiming to **speed up the use of artificial intelligence in clean energy systems across its 120+ member nations**.
- The initiative highlights the importance of digital public infrastructure, such as India's Energy Stack, in driving the energy transition.

AI for Energy Mission

- The mission places **digital ecosystems and citizen-focused platforms** at the heart of transforming the energy sector.
- It seeks to unite **governments, private companies, financial institutions, and multilateral agencies to expand AI-enabled clean energy solutions** on a large scale.

Bharat GI

- **Context: The 'Bharat GI' initiative, a national program aimed at promoting India's Geographical Indication (GI) products internationally, was showcased at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.**

About Bharat GI

- Bharat GI acts as a unifying brand that presents India's distinctive GI products, such as Coorg Coffee and Darjeeling Tea, to global audiences.

- Launched by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce.
- Utilizes AI-based tools for product traceability and market analysis.
- It's objective is to enable artisans and producers to directly connect with international buyers, expanding global reach and visibility of Indian GI products.
- Consensus-building approach similar to the **G20 New Delhi Summit**
- Commitments are voluntary and non-binding

Guiding Philosophy

- Based on the principle of "**Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya**" (**Welfare for all, Happiness for all**)
- Emphasises equitable sharing of AI benefits globally
- Focus on inclusive and democratic AI growth

AI Impact Summit (2026)

- **Context:** At the **AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, 85 countries and three international organisations signed the New Delhi Declaration**, aiming to build broad global consensus on the future of Artificial Intelligence governance.
- The International AI Summit held in New Delhi confirmed investments of \$270 billion (₹24 lakh crore).
- Five pillars were emphasized: ethics, responsible governance, national sovereignty, access for all, and legal use.
- The New Delhi Declaration was adopted at the conclusion of the AI Summit. The declaration has **7 key pillars**
 - Democratization of AI resources
 - Economic growth and social well-being
 - Safe and trustworthy AI
 - Use of AI for science
 - Access to social empowerment
 - Human capital development
 - Resilience and innovative AI systems
 - Broad International Consensus
- **Signed by 85 countries + 3 international organisations**
- Major powers including the **United States and China endorsed the declaration**

Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine

- **Context:** To strengthen India's National Immunization Program, the Union Health Minister launched the **Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) vaccine at the Central Research Institute, Kasauli.**
- **Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) vaccine** is a booster vaccine that protects individuals against tetanus and diphtheria.
- It is usually given **after childhood immunization to maintain long-term immunity.**

Types of Vaccines

- **Td vaccine - protects against tetanus and diphtheria only.**
- **Tdap vaccine - protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough), especially recommended for pregnant women and caregivers of children.**

About Tetanus and Diphtheria Diseases

- Tetanus is caused by the **bacterium Clostridium tetani**. It is found **in soil and animal waste.**
- It enters the body through cuts and causes symptoms such as **muscle stiffness, spasms, and "lockjaw."**
- In severe cases, it can be fatal. However, it can be prevented with **vaccination and booster doses.**

Diphtheria

- Caused by the bacterium **Corynebacterium diphtheriae**. It is spread through **respiratory droplets**.
- It can cause a coating in the throat that blocks breathing. If left untreated, it can affect the **heart and nervous system**.
- The incidence of this disease has been significantly **reduced through vaccination programs**.

Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor

- **Context:** The Prime Minister officially launched **India's first Namo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)** and dedicated the entire **82-km Delhi-Meerut Namo Bharat corridor to the nation**.

About Namo Bharat

- **Namo Bharat is India's first regional rail service** designed to connect major urban centres across the National Capital Region (NCR) through a high-speed rail network spanning 82 kilometres **between Delhi and Meerut**.
- It is a rail-based, **high-speed, high-frequency and environmentally sustainable transport system**.
- The trains have a design **speed of 180 km per hour** and an average operational speed of about 100 km per hour, significantly reducing travel time and improving connectivity across the NCR.
- The project is being executed by the **National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC)**.
- The system aims to offer a **fast, safe and comfortable commuting experience**, while

promoting greater use of public transport through smooth integration with other transit services in the region.

India's Organ Donation and Transplantation Framework

- **Context:** India has recorded a fourfold rise in organ transplants, increasing from fewer than 5,000 procedures in 2013 to almost 20,000 by 2025.
- The country's deceased organ donation rate remains under 1 donor per million people, which is considerably lower than Spain's rate of around 48 donors per million.

Organ Donation and Transplantation Framework in India

- The **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA), 1994** provides the legal basis for regulating the removal, storage, and transplantation of human organs and tissues in India.
- The **National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP)** works to strengthen and promote deceased organ donation through a structured three-tier system at the national, regional, and state levels.
- An **Aadhaar-linked National Organ and Tissue Transplant Registry** has been established to enable secure, transparent, and nationwide registration of organ donation pledges.

Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN)

- **Tamil Nadu is one of the first States to initiate Cadaver Transplant in 1995 after the Transplantation of Human Organs Act was passed in the year 1994.**

- Cadaver Transplant Program was started by the then **Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr.Kalaignar.M.Karunanidhi in the year of 2008.**
- First State to provide **financial assistance** for any transplant to needy people through Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Scheme up to 22 lakhs.
- **First State to start Liver Transplant** in Stanley Government Medical College and Hospital.
- First State in the country to streamline organ allocation.
- First State in the country to clarify Medico legal procedures related to Organ Donation from Brain Dead Donors.
- **First state to undertake many combined transplants like Pancreas & Kidney, Liver & Kidney, Heart & Lung etc.**
- **First State to have won the Best State Award in Organ Donation & Transplantation six times in a row from the Government of India.**
- First State in the country to achieve **Guinness World Record for the largest Organ Donation awareness talk** for 3005 participants held on 24.10.2018.
- First State in the country to achieve **Asia Book of Records for the largest number of participants in Marathon for Organ Donation Awareness** held at Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu on 17.08.2019 in which more than 12,000 people participated.
- Under India's partnership with **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Gardasil vaccines**, which are approved by India's drug regulator and widely used internationally, have been made **available for the national programme.**
- The government to provide **the vaccine free of cost to eligible girls across all States and Union Territories.**
- **Cervical cancer** remains the **second most common cancer among women** in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases reported annually.

Tamil Nadu HPV Vaccination Programme

- Tamil Nadu introduced the **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme.**
- The initiative will initially be implemented in **four districts** reporting higher incidence of cervical cancer - **Ariyalur, Perambalur, Tiruvannamalai, and Dharmapuri.**
- In the first phase, around 27,000 children in these districts will receive the initial vaccine dose.
- In total, nearly 3.38 lakh girls across 38 districts are expected to be covered under the scheme.
- The vaccination campaign **targets girls between 9 and 14 years of age to help prevent cervical cancer.**

National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0)

- **Context:** The Union Finance Minister has unveiled the **National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0)**, aiming to raise ₹16.72 lakh crore through asset monetisation during the period 2025-26 to 2029-30.

About NMP 2.0

- **Context:** The nation-wide programme will **target girls aged 14 years**, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus.
- NMP 2.0 expands upon the earlier National Monetisation Pipeline (2021-2025) by setting out a fresh monetisation plan for FY 2026-2030.

Nationwide HPV Vaccination Programme

- The strategy focuses on **leasing or monetising already operational brownfield public assets**—such as highways and railway infrastructure—to attract private investment.
- The funds generated will be channelled into building new **greenfield infrastructure projects**, without increasing government borrowing or imposing new taxes.
- The framework has been **prepared by NITI Aayog** in coordination with various ministries.
- It operates under the guidance of the **Ministry of Finance** and is overseen by the Core Group of Secretaries on Asset Monetisation (CGAM), chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.

Key Objectives

- Unlock nearly ₹5.8 lakh crore in private capital to support capital expenditure (capex).
- Apply best practices and lessons learned from NMP 1.0 to ensure streamlined procedures and timely implementation.
- Direct monetisation proceeds to the Consolidated Fund of India, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), or State governments, as applicable.

PM Surya Ghar Scheme Achieves Major Rooftop Solar Milestone

- **Context:** Recently, the **Prime Minister highlighted that 30 lakh households** have adopted rooftop solar systems under the **PM Surya Ghar initiative**, marking an important achievement in India's clean energy transition.
- **Gujarat ranks first in rooftop solar installations.** It is followed by Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

About PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG: MBY)

- The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana was launched by the Government of India in

February 2024.

- It seeks to facilitate rooftop solar (RTS) installations in **one crore households in the residential sector by FY 2026-27**.
- Eligible households can apply through a dedicated national portal to install solar panels, **making access to clean energy simpler and more affordable**.
- To boost participation, the **scheme offers collateral-free loans up to ₹2 lakh** at a subsidised interest rate of 6.75%, provided through 12 Public Sector Banks.

President Unveils Bust of C. Rajagopalachari

- **Context:** The President of India inaugurated a bust of **C. Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Rajagopalachari was the first and only Indian** to serve as Governor-General after Independence.

About C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji)

- C. Rajagopalachari Born in 1878 in **Thorapalli, Tamil Nadu. Entered public service in 1917 as the Chairman of the Salem Municipality.**
- His meeting with **Mahatma Gandhi in 1919** significantly influenced his political journey. He gave up his successful legal practice to join the national movement.
- Actively participated in: **Protests against the Rowlatt Act, The Non-Cooperation Movement, The Vaikom Satyagraha, The Civil Disobedience Movement.**
- He was imprisoned five times between **1912 and 1941** for his involvement in the struggle.
- **Post-Independence Roles**

- Served as the last Governor-General of India until 1950.
- Held office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu from 1952 to 1954.

- Established the Swatantra Party in 1959, promoting classical liberal economic principles.
- He was the author of well-known English retellings of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and wrote Ramayana – Chakravarti Thirumagan in Tamil.
- He Awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1954 for his significant contributions to public life and literature.

United Nations Road Safety Financing Initiative

- **Context:** The United Nations has initiated a road safety financing initiative in collaboration with four Indian states. Funding support for the project will come from the UN Road Safety Fund.
- The programme will be carried out in Rajasthan, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Assam under the supervision of the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office.
- Its primary aim is to strengthen both national and state-level capabilities to effectively implement road safety action plans.
- The initiative also seeks to lower the number of road crash fatalities and serious injuries that often result in long-term disabilities.
- India records the highest number of road accident deaths globally, with approximately 153,972 fatalities each year and a mortality rate of 15.4 per 100,000 people, as reported by the World Health Organization.
- Families often lose primary earners, while the country as a whole suffers economic losses estimated to exceed 3% of GDP each year.

SUJVICA

- **Context:** On the occasion of its 40th Foundation Day, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) introduced SUJVICA.

About SUJVICA

- SUJVICA is an AI-powered biotechnology product data portal created by DBT in partnership with Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE).
- It functions as a digital trade statistics and intelligence platform, offering verified and well-organized data on biotechnology product imports.
- The portal presents detailed, sector-specific information covering biochemical products, industrial enzymes, and various other biotech-related imports.
- By delivering structured and reliable insights, SUJVICA helps researchers and startups pinpoint high-value imported products, evaluate import dependence, and focus on strengthening domestic research and development efforts.

MeitY Launches Blockchain India Challenge

- **Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has introduced the Blockchain India Challenge, a nationwide programme designed to promote blockchain-driven digital governance solutions.
- The Blockchain India Challenge seeks to motivate Indian startups to design permissioned blockchain solutions tailored for government applications.
- Its broader goal is to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service delivery systems.
- The programme is being executed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) with backing from MeitY.

- Startups recognized by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, working in collaboration with government departments, will be eligible for phased financial assistance to develop ten high-impact blockchain use cases across ten categories.
- As a part of the Rail Tech Policy the minister launched the high-tech round-the-clock Rail Tech Portal to engage start-ups, innovators and industry in addressing emerging challenge in the railways.

The initiative emphasizes

- Strong regulatory oversight
- Enhanced security and reliability
- Transparent audit mechanisms
- Tamper-resistant record-keeping
- A unified and consistent data source across platform

Rare Earth Minerals from Mine Waste

- **Context:** South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a subsidiary of 'Coal India', has started studying the possibility of extracting rare earth minerals from coal mine waste.
- The aim of this initiative is to reduce dependence on China, which is the leader in the global supply of rare earth minerals.
- 7 old mine waste dumps in the states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have been selected for the study.
- **52 Reforms in 52 Weeks: Major Reforms in Indian Railways Aiming for Systemic Improvements in Efficiency, Governance, and Service Delivery.**
- **Focus on Safety – Consequential train accidents reduced by ~90% (135 in 2014-15 to 11 in 2025-26); aiming to bring it down to a single digit.**
- **AI & Tech Boost – Accelerating AI and advanced tech use for safety, maintenance, and operations.**
- **Talent & Training Revamp – Exploring innovative methods for talent management and skill development of employees.**
- **Food & Catering Upgrade – Major reforms for better food quality, catering, and onboard services.**

India-Israel Partnership for a Multi-Layered Air Defence Shield

- **Context:** The Prime Minister of India's recent visit to Israel has given fresh momentum to defence cooperation, particularly in advanced weapons technology and missile defence under the proposed Mission Sudarshan Chakra framework.
- The initiative gained urgency after Operation Sindoor, during which India encountered drone and missile threats from Pakistan.
- In response to evolving aerial and missile challenges, India has envisioned the Sudarshan Chakra missile shield as a long-term national security project targeted for completion by 2035 under the Make in India programme.

Sectors where rare earth minerals are used:

- Electric vehicle batteries
- Solar and wind power generation
- Military equipment
- Mobile phone and electronic device manufacturing

Rail Tech Policy

- **Context:** Railway Minister rolled out two more reforms the Rail Tech Policy and second phase of e-RCT (Railway Claims Tribunal) under the government 52Reforms in 52 Weeks initiative

- The plan is to establish a comprehensive, layered air defence network by integrating cutting-edge systems such as Iron Dome, Iron Beam, Arrow, and David's Sling with India's existing platforms like S-400, Barak-8, and Akash.
- This integrated shield would secure India's land borders and extensive coastline against a wide spectrum of threats.

Sudarshan Chakra

- Sudarshan Chakra is envisioned as a multi-tiered, indigenously driven air defence programme. This layered architecture aims to ensure seamless protection across varying threat ranges and altitudes.
- It will combine:
 - Long-range systems such as the S-400 and Project Kusha,
 - Medium-range platforms like MRSAM/Barak-8,
 - Short-range defences including Iron Dome,
 - Future-directed laser-based weapons such as Iron Beam and DURGA-II for economical interception of drones and low-flying targets.

India–Germany Climate Partnership

- India and Germany have jointly introduced a €20 million Large Grant project under the International Climate Initiative.

About the International Climate Initiative

- Launched in 2008, the International Climate Initiative is Germany's principal funding platform for global climate action.
- It finances projects focused on climate mitigation, adaptation strategies, and biodiversity conservation across more than 150 partner countries.

- Among its 14 priority partner nations are India, Brazil, China, South Africa, Indonesia, and Mexico.

New India–Germany Project Objectives

- The €20 million programme concentrates on safeguarding India's most climate-sensitive ecosystems by encouraging nature-based approaches to strengthen long-term environmental resilience.
- The initiative complements India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), including the goal of achieving 50% power generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
- It also aligns with the objectives of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), particularly missions related to sustaining the Himalayan ecosystem and promoting sustainable habitats.

Key regions identified under the project include

- The Himalayas – threatened by glacier retreat and frequent landslides.
- The Western Ghats – biodiversity-rich areas facing deforestation pressures.
- North-East India – ecologically fragile zones vulnerable to soil erosion.
- Island ecosystems such as the Andaman & Nicobar Islands – at risk from rising sea levels.

Him-CONNECT

- Context: The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change formally opened the 25th edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS), organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), along with the launch of Him-CONNECT.
- The central theme of this year's summit is "Transformations: Vision, Voices, and Values for Sustainable Development."

About Him-CONNECT

- Him-CONNECT aims to reduce the gap between research and real-world application in the Himalayan region.
- It connects Himalayan researchers with start-ups, industry leaders, investors, and policymakers to promote innovation and implementation.
- The platform has been established by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to strengthen research-to-action linkages.
- It facilitates the transformation of research supported under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) into practical and scalable sustainable development solutions.

E20 Petrol Mandate from 2026

- Context: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has directed oil marketing companies to blend up to 20% ethanol (E20) with petrol from April 1, 2026.
- The order was issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, along with the Motor Spirit and High-Speed Diesel Order, 2005.
- E20 petrol should meet the specifications of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) with a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95.
- The order aims to standardize high-octane fuel across all states and union territories for modern engine requirements and environmental targets.
- The 2022 amendment to the National Biofuel Policy, 2018, increased the target deadline for 20% ethanol blending from 2030 to Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2025-26.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation

- Context: The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) marked the beginning of

its 75th Foundation Year celebrations in New Delhi.

- ESIC is a statutory social security organization established under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, and functions under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- The ESI Act draws its foundation from the recommendations of the B.P. Adarkar Committee, which examined health insurance for industrial workers.
- ESIC administers the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Scheme, which provides medical care and cash benefits to workers earning up to ₹21,000 per month.
- The scheme follows a self-sustaining health insurance model, financed through fixed contributions made by both employers and employees based on wages.

State Innovation Mission

- **Context:** The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has introduced the country's first State Innovation Mission (SIM) in Tripura.

About State Innovation Mission (SIM)

- SIM has been launched as part of the approved AIM 2.0 programme under NITI Aayog's State Support Mission (SSM) framework.
- Originally set up in 2016 by NITI Aayog, AIM seeks to encourage a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the country.
- Its major initiatives include Atal Tinkering Labs, **Atal Incubation Centres, and Atal Community Innovation Centres, among others.**
- The State Innovation Mission is envisioned as a long-term institutional framework that will assist **States and Union Territories** in developing strong, inclusive, and region-specific innovation ecosystems.

- These ecosystems are intended to align both with **national goals and local capabilities.**

NATIONAL SCHEMES

PM RAHAT Scheme

- **Context:** The Government of India has recently introduced the **PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme** to strengthen emergency medical care for road accident victims across the country.
- The scheme focuses on ensuring immediate life-saving treatment, providing assured financial support to hospitals, and creating an organized emergency response framework for people injured in road accidents.

Integration with Emergency Services

- The scheme is linked with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS 112). Accident victims or Good Samaritans can dial 112 to identify the nearest empanelled hospital and request ambulance services without delay.

Cashless Treatment Coverage

- Every eligible road accident victim, irrespective of the type of road on which the accident occurred, is entitled to cashless medical treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh per person.

Digital Implementation Framework

- The scheme is executed by integrating the Electronic Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) system of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with the Transaction Management System (TMS 2.0) managed by the National Health Authority. This ensures streamlined processing and transparency.

Hospital Reimbursement Mechanism

- Payments to hospitals will be made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAf).

- If the vehicle responsible for the accident is insured, compensation will be sourced from contributions made by general insurance companies.

- In cases involving uninsured vehicles or hit-and-run incidents, expenses will be covered through budgetary support provided by the central government.

Grievance Redressal System

- Any complaints related to the scheme will be handled by a designated Grievance Redressal Officer appointed by the District Road Safety Committee, which is chaired by the District Collector or District Magistrate.

Prime Minister's Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- **Context:** Gujarat (with 5.6 lakh), Maharashtra (4.5 lakh) and Uttar Pradesh (3.7 lakh) are at the top in terms of the number of households using the Prime Minister's Surya Ghar : Muft Bijli Yojana.

- The Central Government launched this scheme on February 13, 2024. The main objective of this scheme is to provide up to 300 units of free electricity by installing solar panels on the roofs of houses.

- The scheme aims to install solar systems in one crore houses by March 2027.

- The Central Government is providing a one-time financial assistance of up to ₹78,000 per house,

- Under this scheme, more than 23 lakh rooftop solar systems with a capacity of about 8,691 MW have been installed across the country in the last 2 years.

- This project is implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India.

Bharat VISTAAR Scheme

- Context: Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare rolled out Phase-1 of the AI-driven Bharat VISTAAR initiative in Jaipur, Rajasthan, during the AI Summit held in Delhi. The scheme aims to digitally strengthen and support farmers across the country.

About the Scheme

- Bharat VISTAAR is a multilingual, AI-powered conversational advisory platform.
- It enables farmers to raise agriculture-related queries through basic mobile phones or smartphones and receive prompt responses.
- To transform agriculture into a more accessible, cost-effective, and technology-oriented sector.
- To provide AI-based customised guidance and enhance farmers' self-reliance.

Helpline Facility

- Farmers can call **155261** to obtain instant assistance in their regional language.
- Currently available in **Hindi and English**, with plans to expand to **11 languages**.
- The service also allows farmers to **check up-to-date mandi prices nationwide**.

Unified Digital Platform

- The system integrates multiple databases and services into a single interface, including Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) knowledge resources, India Meteorological Department, (IMD) weather data, AgriStack infrastructure, Market price information, Various government welfare schemes

Digital Farmer ID

- A digital Farmer Identity Card will securely store farmers' data.

- It will link essential services such as Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and the Soil Health Card program.

Services Offered

- Advisory support on soil testing, seed selection, fertiliser use, irrigation methods, loans, insurance, and scheme entitlements.
- Aims to boost farm productivity while lowering risks.

Additional Measures

- A farmer-focused **AI Hackathon** was organised to encourage agri-tech innovation.
- The **Agri Kosh AI Strategy Roadmap** was also introduced to outline future directions for AI in agriculture.

"One Plant Per Day" Initiative

- **Context:** A Union Minister recently commemorated the completion of five years of the "One Plant Per Day" pledge, which began as a personal environmental commitment and has evolved into a proposed nationwide green campaign.

About One Plant Per Day

- The One Plant Per Day Resolution is a **green initiative launched in 2021** by **Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India**, through which he committed to planting at least one sapling every day.
- The initiative seeks to **inspire both individuals and communities to take part in tree plantation drives**, turning personal ecological responsibility into a broader people's movement.

- It was led by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Ministry of Rural Development**.

Significance

- Transforms individual initiatives into collective climate action and encourages public involvement.
- Contributes to expanding green cover, conserving biodiversity, and strengthening climate resilience.
- Fosters eco-friendly social practices, such as presenting saplings instead of traditional gifts, thereby embedding sustainability into daily life.

Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme

- **Context:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has announced a 50% cut in benefits under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme, effective immediately.

About RoDTEP Scheme

- The RoDTEP scheme was introduced in 2021 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to support Indian exporters.

Policy Change

- RoDTEP replaced the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS).
- The earlier MEIS programme provided fixed export incentives, which were considered inconsistent with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules because they were viewed as trade-distorting subsidies.

Fundamental Principle

- The scheme is based on the global trade concept that taxes and duties should not be passed on to exports.
- In other words, exported goods should be free from domestic tax burdens so they can compete internationally at their actual production cost.

WTO-Compliant Framework

- Unlike MEIS, which functioned as a direct subsidy programme, RoDTEP follows a remission-based approach.
- It reimburses exporters for embedded taxes and levies using pre-determined average rates, ensuring compliance with WTO norms.

Dual Administrative Structure

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), operating under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, identifies eligible products and specifies the applicable rates.
- Meanwhile, the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance handles the disbursement of refunds.

E-Scrip Mechanism

- Benefits are issued as transferable electronic scrips via the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway platform.
- Exporters may use these e-scrips to pay Basic Customs Duty or trade them in the open market.

CBDC Scheme for Food Subsidy

Distribution

- **Context:** India has launched the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) based food subsidy distribution pilot scheme under the Pradhan

- Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in Puducherry.
- This marks a significant reform in the delivery of food subsidy through the Public Distribution System (PDS) by integrating digital rupees into the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) framework.
 - Digital currency or e-cash transaction is a digital mechanism for money transactions. It is implemented by the Reserve Bank of India.
 - The CBDC based subsidy will be directly credited to the digital wallets of the beneficiaries in the form of tokens.
 - The tokens can be used to purchase food grains at authorized fair price shops.
 - The scheme is being implemented in Puducherry in collaboration with the Reserve Bank of India, Public Finance Management System (PFMS), Government of Puducherry and Canara Bank.
- The scheme aims to provide 5 kg of food grains (wheat or rice) free of cost to every person covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013, in addition to the 5 kg of subsidized food grains already provided through the Public Distribution System (PDS).
 - It was initially announced for a period of three months (April, May and June 2020). Later, it was extended till September 2022.
 - **Ministry of Finance is the nodal agency.**

ECI Net

- Context: "ECI Net" is a new app launched by the Election Commission of India.
- It will help you to know the voter registration details instantly.
- You can see the vote counting progress and results live.
- It will provide **real-time information not only on the election day** but also on the counting day.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

- In view of the economic disruptions caused by COVID-19, free food grains were provided under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).
- It is an open app that can be downloaded and used by the public.
- It is an attempt to increase **transparency in the election process.**

AWARDS & HONOURS

BBC Indian Sportswoman Award

- Indian cricket star **Smriti Mandhana** has been named the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025**.
- **Chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh** also made headlines by winning the **Emerging Player of the Year award**.

BAFTA Awards

- India created history at the 79th British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) with **Boong, a Manipuri film directed by Lakshmi Priya Devi**, winning the country's first award on the prestigious stage, considered the British equivalent of the Oscars.
- The movie won the award in the **Best Children and Family Film category**.

2025 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

- **Context:** The 475-year-old **Our Lady of Grace Cathedral in Vasai, Maharashtra, has won the 'Award of Merit'** at the 2025 UNESCO

Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

- This 16th century Portuguese church in Papadi village was given the honour for its traditional, cement-free restoration with the help of local people
- The award was established by **UNESCO in 2000** to promote best practices in cultural heritage conservation across Asia and the Pacific.

Indian Prime Minister Receives Israel's Highest Parliamentary Honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was presented with the **Speaker of the Knesset Medal, Israel's top parliamentary award**.
- He became the **first international leader** to be honoured with this distinction by the Israeli Parliament.
- The award recognises his leadership in strengthening **strategic ties between India and Israel**.
- It also acknowledges his efforts in expanding **cooperation in trade, innovation, defence, and technology sectors**.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- The Vice President released the book **"The Sage who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons and Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru"** written by **Member of Parliament Dr. Shashi Tharoor**.

Thathumbum Tamizh Perumitham

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has written a book titled **"Thathumbum Tamizh Perumitham"**, which explains the 5,000 years of cultural pride of Tamils as revealed through excavations at Keezhadi and Porunai.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Ramakrishna Jayanti

- Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Jayanti 2026 commemorates the birth of the saint on **18 February 1836**.

Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti

- Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti 2026 will be celebrated on **19 February 2026** across India, especially in Maharashtra, to honour Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire.

Tamil Literary Renaissance Day

- The birth anniversary of U.V. Saminathar, also known as Tamil Thatha, is celebrated on **February 19** as Tamil Literary Renaissance Day.

Arunachal Pradesh - Statehood Day

- Statehood Day is celebrated in **Arunachal Pradesh every year on 20 February** to commemorate the day on which **Arunachal Pradesh was granted statehood in 1987**.
- The **55th Amendment (1986)** to the Constitution of India granted statehood to Arunachal Pradesh (came into effect on 20 February 1987) and **Article 371-H provides special privileges**.

Mizoram - Statehood Day

- **Mizoram Statehood Day is celebrated annually on 20 February** to commemorate the establishment of Mizoram as the **23rd state of India on 20 February 1987**.
- Mizoram enjoys special privileges under **Article 371G of the Constitution of India**, enacted by the **53rd Amendment Act of 1986**.

World Day of Social Justice

- **World Day of Social Justice 2026**, observed on **February 20**, is celebrated under the theme "Renewed Commitment to Social Development and Social Justice".

International Mother Language Day

- **International Mother Language Day 2026** observed on **February 21**, under the theme "Youth voices on multilingual education"
- Each year, UNESCO publishes the State of the Education Report for India, focusing on a specific themes. This year, which is the seventh edition (2025), **Bhasha Matters: Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education**, brought together global research, new national evidence and practical lessons to explore the state of **Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education in India**.

World Peace and Understanding Day

- **World Peace and Understanding Day 2026** will be commemorated on **23 February**, celebrating the founding of Rotary International in Chicago in 1905.

Central Excise Day

- India will celebrate Central Excise Day 2026 on **24 February 2026** to commemorate the enactment of the historic Central Excise Act, 1944.
- The occasion honours the role of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in effective tax administration and revenue generation.

Tamil Nadu State Girl Child Protection

Day

- **February 24**, the birthday of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, is celebrated as 'Girl Child Protection Day'.

- Three district administrations that excel in their performance in increasing the girl child sex ratio are recognized with awards and certificates on the Tamil Nadu State Girl Child Protection Day on February 24 every year
- The occasion aims to increase public awareness about the conservation challenges faced by polar bears and highlight the serious risks they encounter as a result of climate change.

World NGO Day

- World NGO Day is celebrated globally on **February 27, 2026**

National Science Day

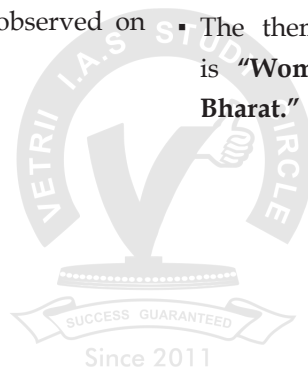
- **India observes National Science Day 2026** to commemorate the discovery of the **Raman Effect by Sir C. V. Raman in 1928.**
- The occasion is celebrated annually on **28 February** to recognize his groundbreaking contribution to science.
- The theme for National Science Day 2026 is **"Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat."**

TRAI Foundation Day

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) observed its 29th Foundation Day on **20 February 2026, commemorating its inception in 1997.**
- One of the major themes discussed at TRAI Day 2026 was: **Network Slicing and Net Neutrality.**

International Polar Bear Day

- International Polar Bear Day is observed on **February 27.**



Since 2011

REPORTS & INDICES

Global Mind Health 2025 Report

- Context: According to the Global Mind Health 2025 Report, which covers 84 countries, India ranks 60th globally in mental health and well-being among young people aged 18 to 34.
- Their Mental Health Questionnaire (MHQ) score is 33.
- In contrast, Indians aged 55 and above score 96, ranking 49th globally.

EMINENT PERSONALITIES

U.V. Saminathar

- Uttamadhanapuram Venkatasubaiyar Saminathar was born on **19 February 1855 in Uttamadhanapuram**
- He learned Tamil from **Sadagopa Iyengar and Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai and rose to become a Tamil scholar.**
- He worked as a teacher at Kumbakonam College for 23 years from 1880, and at **Madras State College** for 16 years from 1903, and became the principal of Meenakshi Tamil College in 1924.
- He searched for, **identified and arranged Sangam period manuscripts and gave book form to more than 90 books**, and collected more than 3000 manuscripts.
- He published the book **Seevaka Chintamani in 1887.**
- His **autobiography 'En Charithram'** was serialized in the **Ananda Vikatan** magazine during 1940–42 and published as a book in 1950.
- He received the **title of Mahamahopadhyaya** in 1906 and the **title of 'Munaivar'** from the **University of Madras in 1932.**
- He was hailed by the people as **"Tamil Thatha"** for his service to Tamil.
- The Government of India issued a commemorative postage stamp on 18 February 2006.
- His house in Uttamadhanapuram is maintained as a memorial house.

J. Sivashanmugam Pillai

- Born in **February 1901**, Pillai, a postgraduate in humanities and an alumnus of the Loyola and the Presidency Colleges, was an **ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi.**
- In **July 1937**, he joined the Congress. He was also elected to the Legislative Assembly from the **Chennai (South-Central) constituency.**
- On November 9, 1937, on a motion moved by Congress stalwart S. Satyamurti, **Pillai was unanimously elected Mayor, thus becoming the first Dalit to hold the office.**
- Despite being in the Congress, **he did not boycott committees constituted by the British government to consider constitutional reforms.** For example, he had represented issues and problems of the SCs to the Simon Commission.
- J. Sivashanmugam Pillai was the first Scheduled Caste member to become the Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker in 1946.
- He demitted the office in **1955 to become Member of the UPSC and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1962**

Maruthu Pandiyas – Heroes of

Sivagangai

Birth and Early Life

- **Periyamaruth born in 1748 and Chinnamaruth in 1753.**
- Parents: Palaniappan Servai Ponnathal from Mukkulam village, Virudhunagar district.
- Both brothers were **trained in military service.**

Conflict with the British

- British waged war because the **Sivagangai princes did not pay tribute to the Nawab of Arcot.**

- King Muthuvaduganatha died a martyr in the war.
- Eight years later, Rani Velunachchiar, aided by the Maruthu Pandiyas, Hyder Ali, and Tipu Sultan, reclaimed power.

Titles and Honours

- The British conferred the special title of “Servaikars” on the Maruthu Pandiyas.

Capture and Execution

- Captured by the British in Cholapuram forest on 19 October 1801.
- Hanged on 24 October 1801.

Commemoration

- For the 2024-25 Department of Public Relations grant, a statue of the Maruthu brothers will be installed in Sivagangai district to honor their decisive fight against the British for the liberation of the motherland.

Rajagopalachari

- Rajaji was born on 10 December 1878 in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu.
- He actively participated in the cooperation movements against the Rowlatt Act. He participated in protests including the Vaikom Satyagraha and the Salt Satyagraha.
- 1937-1940: He was the Chief Minister of Madras Province.
- He opposed Mahatma Gandhi’s decision to quit the White Movement during the British war against Germany.

- He tried to find a solution by negotiating with Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the All India Muslim League. This plan was called the “C. R. Formula”.

- 1946: He was appointed as the Union Minister for Industries, Education and Finance in the Interim Government.

- He served as the Governor of West Bengal in 1947-48.

- He was the first and last Governor General of India from 21 June 1948 to 26 January 1950.

- Rajaji passed away on December 25, 1972, at the age of 94.

R. Nallakannu

- R. Nallakannu was born on 26 December 1925 in Srivaikundam (united Tirunelveli district) in a farming family.

- Joined the Communist Party of India in 1944.

Political & Social Work

- Served as the President of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Workers Union for about 25 years.

- Tamil Nadu State Secretary of the Communist Party of India for 13 years.

- Also served as a member of the party's Central Committee and the President of the National Control Committee.

- Received the Ambedkar Award of the Government of Tamil Nadu in 2017.

- Received the “Thakaisal Tamilar” Award of the Government of Tamil Nadu in 2022.

DEFENCE

Exercise Milan

- Context: The Indian Navy will host the International Fleet Review and Exercise MILAN in Visakhapatnam. The navies of QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) will also be among the participants.
- This is the first time Exercise MILAN and the IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium) engagement are being held simultaneously.
- Exercise MILAN is a biennial multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy since 1995, aimed at fostering naval diplomacy, interoperability, and regional maritime cooperation.

Exercise Vajra Ghaat

- Context: The Indian Army's Southern Command conducted the exercise Vajra Ghaat at Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer district demonstrating the combat capabilities of the K9 Vajra self-propelled artillery gun system in desert warfare conditions.
- Exercise was spearheaded by White Tiger Division, focusing on validating refined Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) aimed at enhancing battlefield survivability and operational effectiveness.
- Drill showcased the Army's ability to deploy heavy artillery assets swiftly in the harsh terrain of the Thar Desert.

Indigenous Gas Turbine Project

- Context: The Minister for Defence recently visited the Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) in Bengaluru, a laboratory under the DRDO. During the visit,
 - About Gas Turbine Engines
 - A gas turbine engine is a type of internal combustion engine that produces power by burning fuel in compressed air to rotate a turbine.
 - Additional air is used to cool the hot gases before they pass through the turbine section.
 - It has three main components:
 - Compressor – compresses incoming air.
 - Combustion chamber – mixes compressed air with fuel and burns it at constant pressure.
 - Turbine – hot gases expand and spin the turbine to generate mechanical power.

Gas turbines are widely used in

- Aircraft propulsion systems (jet engines)
- Electricity generation plants
- Operating compressors in oil and gas pipelines

Indian Army Showcases Indigenous AI Innovations

- Context: During the India AI Summit, the Indian Army presented a variety of home grown AI-powered technologies designed for both defence operations and civilian applications, highlighting their dual-use potential.
- Major Innovations Displayed
 - EKAM (AI-as-a-Service): A secure, indigenous AI cloud framework operating in an air-gapped environment to safeguard sensitive data and maintain data sovereignty.
 - PRAKSHEPAN: An AI-based weather and disaster forecasting platform offering

- early warnings for hazards such as floods, landslides, and avalanches.
- **XFace:** An artificial intelligence-driven facial recognition solution for identity authentication and security surveillance.
 - **SAM-UN:** A geospatial intelligence and AI-supported situational awareness tool used for operational planning, disaster management, and integrated command centres.
 - **Driver Fatigue Detection System:** An AI-enabled device that monitors driver alertness and issues warnings to prevent accidents caused by drowsiness.
 - **AI-in-a-Box:** A compact, portable edge AI system that can function securely in isolated or connectivity-limited environments.
 - **Vehicle Tracking System:** An AI-supported fleet management solution aimed at improving logistics efficiency and operational monitoring.
 - **AI Examiner:** A digital evaluation system that automates testing, grading, and feedback for educational and training institutions.
 - **Nabh Drishti:** A mobile telemetry-enabled platform providing instant data reporting and visual representation in real time.
 - **Deepfake Detection & AI Cybersecurity Tools:** Advanced systems developed to identify manipulated media, prevent cyberattacks, detect malware, and secure critical digital assets.

India Assumes Chairmanship of IONS

- Context: India has taken over the chairmanship of the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** from Thailand.

About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- Established in **2008** as a **voluntary maritime initiative by the Indian Navy.**

- Created to **strengthen naval cooperation and coordination among countries bordering the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**

- Functions as a platform for enhancing trust, dialogue, and interoperability between member navies.

Exercise Vajra Prahar 2026

- **Context:** The 16th edition of **Exercise Vajra Prahar** will be conducted jointly by the **Indian Army and the United States Army** at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh.
- Exercise Vajra Prahar reinforces India-US military cooperation, enhances combat **synergy between elite forces, and improves readiness to address emerging security threats.**

About the Exercise

- A bilateral Special Forces drill between **India and the United States.**
- Aims to **strengthen defence collaboration and strategic partnership between the two nations.**
- Enhances interoperability, coordination, and combined operational preparedness.
- Facilitates sharing of special operations tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs).

INS Krishna

- **Context:** The **Indian Navy commissioned INS Krishna**, the inaugural vessel in a series of three indigenous Cadet Training Ships (CTS), at the L&T Shipyard located in Kattupalli, Chennai.
- INS Krishna is **the first vessel in a series of three indigenously developed Cadet Training Ships (CTS).** It has been designed and constructed by Larsen & Toubro (L&T).

- The primary objective of INS Krishna is to enhance the Indian Navy's training ecosystem.
- It offers a focused environment where cadets can practice navigation, seamanship, and ship-handling skills.
- This prevents operational warships from being diverted away from active service for training duties.
- Provision of necessary weapons, technologies, training.
- Prevention of terrorists, supporters and financiers in India.
- Cooperation with the world
 - Information exchange and counter-terrorism agreements with foreign countries.
 - Coordination in international activities.

PRAHAAR: India's First National Anti-Terror Policy

- **Context:** The Union Home Ministry (MHA) has released India's first national counter-terror policy titled PRAHAAR. It outlines a structured National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy.
- The policy clearly states that India does not associate terrorism with any specific religion, ethnicity, nationality or civilisation.
- Threats across Water, Land & Air
 - India faces terrorist threats on all three fronts – water, land and air.
 - Critical sectors protected include: Power, Railways, Aviation, Ports, Defence, Space, Atomic energy.
- Cross-Border & Global Terrorism
 - The policy highlights "sponsored terrorism" from across the border.
 - Mentions threats from global terror outfits such as: al-Qaeda, Islamic State
 - Notes use of drones and advanced technology in regions like Punjab and J&K.

Objectives and key features

- Measures to prevent terrorist attacks
 - Efforts to plan and prevent attacks in advance.
 - Quick Response at the time of attack.
 - Integrated operation of central, state and district security agencies.
- Social rehabilitation and welfare schemes
 - Rehabilitation works in the affected areas.
 - Joint operation of doctors, psychologists, lawyers, voluntary organizations to restore the society.
 - Welfare schemes like education, housing, employment, credit assistance to reduce the environment conducive to terrorism.
- Legal and security measures
 - Criminalization of terrorist acts.
 - Security measures in prisons.
- Cyber & Digital Threats
 - Warns that criminal hackers and hostile nation states target India through cyber-attacks.
 - Terror groups use: Social media, Encrypted messaging apps, Dark web, Crypto wallets.
 - Highlights challenges in preventing misuse of CBRNED (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive, Digital) materials.
- National & International Cooperation
 - Emphasises inter-state coordination and uniform anti-terror structure across States.

- Calls for international and regional cooperation to tackle transnational terrorism.

India's counter-terrorism framework

- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967
- National Investigation Agency (NIA)
 - NIA is a statutory body established under the NIA Act 2008 and functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Global Terrorism Index

- The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) for 2025 has been released by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**.
- **India is ranked 14th** in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) for 2025.

Strela-10 VSHORADS Test

- **Context:** The Air Defence personnel carried out an intense live firing exercise of the **Strela-10 Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) at the Pokhran Field Firing Range**.
- The drill, held in the desert region of Rajasthan, showcased a **high level of operational preparedness and accuracy in tackling low-altitude airborne threats**.

Operational Capabilities

- With an effective strike **range of nearly 6 to 10 km**, the system can effectively counter:
 - **Low-altitude aircraft and Helicopters**
 - **Advanced threats such as unmanned aerial vehicles (drones)**

Dharma Guardian

- **Context:** Dharma Guardian, the **7th annual joint military** exercise between the **Indian Army** and the **Japan Ground Self-Defense**

Force, has begun at the Overseas Training Centre in **Chaupatia, Uttarakhand**.

Objective of the exercise

- Strengthening coordination for **joint military operations in a semi-urban environment**.
- Improvement in **physical fitness, joint planning and tactical exercises**.
- Use of **modern technology and enhancement of efficiency**.

Key features

- Establishment of temporary operational bases.
- Creation of reconnaissance and surveillance network.
- Establishment of mobile vehicle checkpoints.
- Search operations.
- Military operations by helicopter.

INS Anjadip

- **Context:** The Indian Navy will commission its latest sub-hunter INS Anjadip as part of a 16 ship indigenous programmes to plug gaps in anti-submarine warfare.

Strategic Significance

- Anjadip is the third vessel in a series of eight ASW-SWC ships being constructed under this project.
- The programme is a major boost to the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative in the defence sector.
- The ship has been constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, highlighting India's growing self-sufficiency in warship production.

Core Role and Capabilities

- Often described as a "Dolphin Hunter," the vessel is specially designed to detect, pursue, and eliminate hostile submarines operating in shallow coastal regions.

- It is fitted with advanced indigenous weapons and sensors, including the Hull Mounted Sonar 'Abhay,' as well as lightweight torpedoes and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) rockets.
- In addition to its primary anti-submarine duties, the ship can undertake coastal monitoring, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), and Search and Rescue (SAR) missions.
- T-90 battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, K-9 Vajra and Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Dhruv are among the assets involved.

Light Combat Helicopter Prachant

- **Context:** The President flew the indigenously designed Light Combat Helicopter Prachant at the Air Force Base in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

About Prachant

- Prachant is India's first indigenous multirole combat helicopter.
- It was developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- It is designed for the Indian Armed Forces operating in deserts and mountainous areas.
- It can fly up to 700 km.
- It has the highest flight ceiling among all the attack helicopters in the world and can therefore take off and land at an altitude of 5,000 meters.
- This helicopter is capable of carrying lethal weapons and destroying targets.

Agni Varsha

- **Context:** The Indian Army's Southern Command conducted Exercise Agni Varsha at the Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan.
- It is a large-scale, firing and maneuver military exercise to test operational readiness and integrated combat capabilities in a desert environment.
- The exercise includes Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), counter-drone solutions, modern artillery and network surveillance assets.



SPORTS & GAMES

FIDE Freestyle Chess World Champion

- World number one **Magnus Carlsen** has been crowned the **2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World**

Champion, defeating Fabiano Caruana 2.5–1.5 in the final held in Weissenhaus.

Qatar Open 2026

- **World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz** defeated Arthur Fils to clinch the title at the Qatar Open.

INTERNATIONAL

India, France Agreements

- **Context:** India and France signed 21 agreements and preliminary agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various sectors including defence, high-tech, key minerals.

Various agreements signed

- 21 agreements and preliminary agreements to enhance bilateral cooperation in various sectors including **key minerals, defence, high-tech, renewable energy, health and investment** were signed.
- The agreement between **Bharat Electronics and France's Safran to manufacture the Humvee missile in India** includes a double taxation avoidance agreement to encourage mutual investment.

India joins Pax Silica Alliance

- **Context:** India is to join US-led strategic alliance Pax Silica at the fifth India Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit marking major step in New Delhi's evolving **technology and economic partnership with Washington**
- India's entry into the initiative which is aimed at **building resilient supply chains for critical minerals and AI**, is expected to formalised at the India AI Impact Summit.
- Pax Silica launched in December 2025 Pax Silica seeks to establish a secure, innovation-driven ecosystem from raw materials and critical minerals to semiconductors and AI Infrastructure.

- India's entry into Pax Silica signals a sharpening **focus on technology-led economic security and recalibration of its strategic alignments** amid intensifying global competition over AI and critical resources.

India-UK Offshore Wind Partnership

- **Context:** India and the United Kingdom have set up the **India-UK Offshore Wind Taskforce under the India-UK Vision 2035** framework and during the 4th Energy Dialogue.
- The objective is to **fast-track collaboration in developing offshore wind energy**.

Three major pillars have been identified:

- **Ecosystem Planning and Market Structure**
 - Focus on seabed leasing mechanisms, regulatory clarity, and ensuring predictable revenue models to attract investors.
- **Infrastructure and Supply Chains**
 - Emphasis on upgrading port infrastructure and promoting domestic manufacturing capabilities to support offshore wind projects.
- **Financing and Risk Management**
 - Mobilising blended finance, encouraging institutional investments, and reducing project risks through supportive financial instruments.

Linkage with Green Hydrogen Mission

- Offshore wind power can supply **clean electricity to coastal industrial zones and green hydrogen hubs**.
- **Under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, India has already achieved competitive hydrogen production costs**, enhancing the viability of such integration.

Offshore Wind Energy

- Offshore wind energy involves generating electricity using wind turbines installed in

- sea or ocean waters, where wind speeds are generally stronger and more stable than on land.
- According to the National Institute of Wind Energy, India has an estimated offshore wind potential of around 70 GW, mainly along the coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
 - India's total non-fossil fuel power capacity has crossed 272 GW, including more than 141 GW from solar energy and about 55 GW from wind power.
 - The National Offshore Wind Energy Policy provides the overall regulatory framework. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy serves as the nodal ministry.
 - The current (2024–25) bilateral trade value is \$12 billion, with exports of \$6.77 billion and imports of \$5.47 billion.
 - A key agreement on the purchase of rare earth minerals was signed.
 - Several agreements were signed in sectors including **steel, trade, MSMEs, health, traditional medicine.**
 - Both countries pledged to strengthen cooperation in sectors such as **defence, energy, technology, investment.**
 - Efforts are underway to set up an eight-member public infrastructure centre in Brazil. Priority will be given to AI, supercomputers, semiconductors.

India-Brazil Bilateral Trade

- Context: The target is to increase the value of bilateral trade between India and Brazil to \$20 billion in the next 5 years from Rs. 1.81 lakh crore.
- Cooperation in hydrocarbons, renewable energy, and ethanol blends accelerated.



CURRENT FACTS

- From 2012-23 to 2023-24 Tamil Nadu's economy grew at an average real rate of 6.37%, compared with the national average of 6.1%.
- During 2024-25 its Gross State Domestic Product registered a growth of 11.2% according to the Reserve Bank of India's Handbook of Statistics on Indian States.
- IUCN Status of Lion-tailed macaque (or wanderoo)- Endangered, CITES: Appendix I, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
- HAMMER (Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range) developed by Safran electronics & Defence and integrated with the IAF Rafale fighters is a stand-off precision guided air to ground weapon designed for strikes against hardened and high value targets.
- Tamil Nadu is the growth capital of India, at 11.19% Tamil Nadu growth is nearly twice the national average.
- Manufacturing grew at 14.74% and that is more than three times the national average of 4.5%.
- Tamil Nadu leads India in manufacturing employment accounting for 15% of the nation's factory workforce.
- Per capita income reached Rs.3.62 lakh, which is 1.77 times the national average.
- Unemployment declined to 3.5%, while labour force participation rose to 72.1%.
- Tamil Nadu has set its sights on becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2030.
- Agriculture contributes Rs.1.9 lakh crore to the economy. Tamil Nadu ranks first in Ragi and Sugarcane yields.
- Every district in Tamil Nadu covered by one or more industrial corridors. Tamil Nadu is the only state in India to achieve this.
- The service sector grew at 11.3%. From IT to logistics to hospitality, growth is broad based.
- Rs.54 lakh crore invested in capital expenditure, Roads, ports, logistics, metro expansion infrastructure that powers industry and connects people.
- Social sector spending rose to Rs.1, 57, 864 crore.
- Merchandise exports nearly doubled to reach US\$ 52.07 billion. Tamil Nadu ranks first in electronics, textiles and leather exports.
- FDI inflows has increased to US\$ 3,681 million, even as national inflows slowed.
- Part XII, Article 293- Borrowing by State
- The appointment of the Justice Rajamannar Committee in 1969 by former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi with A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and P. Chandra Shetty as its members which, drew national attention to Centre-State relations.
- To improve the relations between the Centre and the State governments, a commission headed by Justice Sarkaria was constituted on behalf of the Central Government in 1983, the Venkatachalaiah Commission in 2000 and the committee headed by Justice Poonchi in 2004.
- In the judgment given by the Supreme Court in the S.R. Bommai case in 1994, it was said that 'federalism is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- The Constitution of India has been amended 106 times

- Article 124 of the Constitution provides that judges of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President after consulting the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- Article 217 provides that judges of a High Court shall be appointed by the President after consulting the CJI, the Chief Justice of the High Court and Governor of the State.
- Article 130 of the Constitution provides that the seat of the Supreme Court shall be in Delhi or such other place(s) as appointed by the CJI with the approval of central government.
- The collegium consists of the CJI with four senior judges of the SC for appointments to the Supreme Court, and the CJI with two senior judges for appointment to the High Courts.
- The collegium initiates the proposal for appointment of judges to the higher judiciary and sends the recommendation to the Central government.
- The Centre may return a recommendation in case of any objection. However, if the collegium reiterates the recommendation, the appointment should be made.
- Kerala - Declares tidal flooding as a state-specific calamity. This decision is the first time in India that tidal flooding has been officially recognised as a calamity by a state.
- Talagirishwara Temple
 - The 1,300-year-old Pallava-era paintings at the Talagirishwara Temple at Panamalai in Villupuram was constructed by Pallava King Narasimhavarman II.
 - The paintings resemble those at the Ajanta Caves, and are believed to be older than the paintings at Chithannavasal.
- Maveeran Alagumuthu Kone
 - He was one of the earliest freedom fighters from the Tamil land.
 - A polygar, he resisted the British in southern Tamil Nadu.
 - He was executed by the British in 1759.
 - The State government installed his statue near the Egmore railway station, and the Centre released a stamp in his honour in 2015.
- National Fossil Wood Park
 - The National Fossil Wood Park at Tiruvakkarai is a notified national geo-heritage monument located in Villupuram district and
 - Established in 1940, the park houses rare fossilised wood specimens that date back about 20 million years.
- The Madras Presidency Radio Club was formed in May 1924 by a band of dedicated amateurs led by C.V. Krishnaswamy Chetty.
- Slender loris
 - The Kadavur Wildlife Sanctuary was established on 11,806 hectares in Dindigul and Karur districts by the Tamil Nadu government to protect the slender loris.
 - This small nocturnal and arboreal mammal spends most of its life in trees.
 - Listed as endangered by the IUCN, it is largely found in the Eastern Ghats.
- Temple Entry Authorisation Act (1939)
- Sales Tax Act (1939)
- Devadasi Abolition Act (1947)

- Anbukarantal Thittam: 10,637 children who lost their parents receive Rs. 2000 per month to continue their education.
- Anbucholai Thittam: 28 Day Care Centers for Senior Citizens.
- Transgender Welfare
 - Monthly pension increased to Rs. 1,500
 - Appointment in the Village Guard
 - “Aran Illam” for the protection of transgenders
 - Higher education scholarship
- India ranks third in the world in chip exports.
- Bela Gram in Maharashtra's Bhandara district was recognized as India's first net-zero panchayat during Mumbai Climate Week 2026 for its sustainable and carbon-neutral efforts.
- Tetrodotoxin (TTX) is one of the most powerful neurotoxins known, which is very heat-stable. This toxin has no known antidote and ingestion leads to severe, often fatal, paralysis.
- Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023
- The Sholinganallur Assembly constituency in Chengalpattu district continues to have the highest number of electors, estimated at 5, 36,991.
- The Harbour constituency in Chennai district has the lowest number of electors, at 1,16,896.
- **Padma Bhushan Winners 2026**

Name	Field	State
K. R. Palaniswamy	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
S. K. M. Maeilanandhan	Social Work	Tamil Nadu

- **Padma Shri Winners 2026**

Name	Field	State
Ms. Gayatri Balasubramanian & Ms. Ranjani Balasubramanian (Duo)	Art	Tamil Nadu
H V Hande	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
K Ramasamy	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu
K Vijay Kumar	Civil Service	Tamil Nadu
Othuvaar Thiruthani Swaminathan	Art	Tamil Nadu
Dr. Punniamurthy Natesan	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
R Krishnan (Posthumous)	Art	Tamil Nadu
Rajastapathi Kaliappa	Art	Tamil Nadu
Ms. Sivasankari	Literature and Education	Tamil Nadu
Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam	Art	Tamil Nadu
Veezhinathan Kamakoti	Science and Engineering	Tamil Nadu
K Pajanivel	Sports	Puducherry

- **Tamil Nadu Model School initiative**

- Launched during 2021-22, the scheme has been expanded to all districts to provide residential education to 800 students.

- In the past four years, 2,358 students of these schools and 206 students of Adi Dravidar and tribal welfare schools went on to pursue higher education.
- Adding that 41 of them were pursuing courses at IIT, while 22 were pursuing higher education abroad with full scholarship
- Tamil Nadu's first telemetry study, launched in early January 2026 at the Besant Nagar turtle hatchery, involves flipper tagging to track post-nesting movements, identify migratory routes, and map feeding habitats in the Bay of Bengal.
- A two-day Soybean Festival was organised at Chumoukedima, Nagaland, under the theme "From Field to Feast".
- Achievements of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department
 - Free meals programme, launched by Chief Minister for conservancy workers in urban local bodies.
 - Tholkudi programme, civic amenities were improved at their habitations at a cost of Rs.1,000 crore.
 - Iyothee Thass Pandithar Habitation Development Scheme, infrastructure at over 8,500 habitations was improved at a cost of Rs.910 crore.
 - Over 1,000 women benefited from the Nanilam Magalir Nila Udamai Thittam
 - Under the En Kalloori Kanavu initiative, 111 students of government tribal residential schools and 26 students of Adi Dravidar welfare schools obtained admission to premier educational institutions such as IIT and NIT.
- The Delhi government is going to implement the Centre's 'Rah-Veer' scheme to motivate citizens to assist seriously injured road accidents.
- The Tamil Nadu Animal Welfare Board (TNAWB) is planning to establish six animal shelters across the State under the Vallalar Palluyir Kappangal Scheme for abandoned, injured, and rescued animals.
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960
- The South-East Asia Region (SEARO) accounts for the second-highest cervical cancer incident (new cases) and death rate among WHO regions, with India contributing over 65% of the burden
- For the first time in Census 2027 operations, "working maps" shall be generated with the latest available satellite imagery to enable clear identification of habitations and settlements on the ground.
- Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the Varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox
- Palamu Tiger Reserve launches 'Vanjeevi Didi' initiative for women to protect wildlife.
- The Assam government has introduced land title grants to over one lakh landless families and public institutions under Mission Pasundhara 3.0.

