

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

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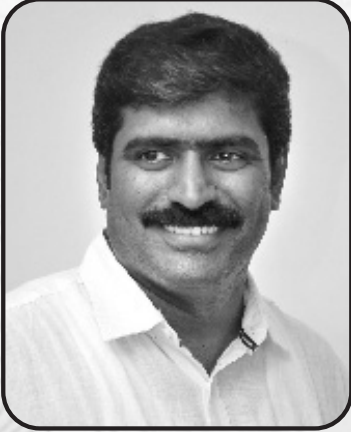
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Preface



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Vetrii IAS Study Circle.

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My Dear Aspirants,

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

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

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

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

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

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INDEX

SCIENCE

General Science

1. Salar de Pajonales 01
2. Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV) 01
3. Stem Cell Therapy 01

Latest Inventions In Science & Technology

4. Inherited Genetic Risk in Indian Breast Cancer 01
5. Floating LiDAR Buoy System 02
6. Smog-Eating Photocatalytic Coatings 02
7. Model Context Protocol (MCP) 03
8. Akasha300 3D Printer 03
9. India's First Repository for Psychiatric Disorders: CALM-Brain 04

Space

10. NavIC Setback: Failure of Atomic Clock on IRNSS-1F 04
11. ISRO – Cryogenic Engine Test 05
12. Agnikul's Agnite Engine 05

GEOGRAPHY

Environment And Ecology

1. Cheetah Reintroduction Programme 06
2. Silent Valley National Park 06
3. Olive Ridley Turtle Conservation 06

Physical Geography

4. Earthquake Risk Debate in Himalayan and Northeastern India 07

INDIAN POLITY

1. Controller General of Accounts 08
2. Rajya Sabha Election 08
3. Opposition Moves No-Confidence Motion against Lok Sabha Speaker 08
4. Euthanasia Case 09
5. Chief Election Commissioner Removal 09
6. Governor of Tamil Nadu 10
7. Supplementary Demands for Grants 10
8. Postal Ballot Facility from Home for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities 10

9. Singing 'Vande Mataram' Has Not Been Made Mandatory - Supreme Court	11
10. Cauvery Water Management Authority	11
11. Gujarat - Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026	12

INDIAN ECONOMY

1. India's GST Collection Rises 8.1% in February	14
2. India's Industrial Growth	14
3. Government Bank Dashboard and Government Bank Manual	15
4. Sixteenth Finance Commission (2026- 31)	15
5. SEBI to Strengthen Market Surveillance Using AI	16
6. 18% increase in foreign direct investment	16
7. India's Export Growth and Sector-wise Performance	17
8. Economic growth of states	17
9. RBI Conducts Open Market Operations to Increase Liquidity	18
10. Consumer Price Index Inflation	18
11. Minimum Support Price	18
12. India-China Trade	19
13. Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)	19
14. Index of Eight Core Industries	20
15. India's Media & Creative Economy	20
16. Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme	22
17. India's Inflation Target Extended (2026- 2031)	22
18. Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction	23
19. Reduction in Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on Fuel	23
20. Payments Vision 2028	24

TAMIL NADU

Initiatives /Schemes

1. Naagam app	25
2. Project to create Maragatha Pooncholai in 100 villages	25
3. Chennai Valarchi Thittam	25
4. Tamil Nadu Policy and Governance Experiential Learning Centre (TNPAGE)	25
5. Senior Citizens' Home	26
6. Thiranagam	26
7. Naan Mudhalvan Project Centres	26
8. Agroforestry Policy	26
9. Tamil Nadu Integrated Drinking Water Redressal Centre	27

10. Tamil Nadu Launches Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme and Major Development Initiatives	27
11. Welfare, Conservation and Cultural Initiatives in Tamil Nadu	27
12. Kanavu illam Thittam	28
13. Kalaingar Kanavu Illam Scheme	28
14. TNExpat	29
15. HPV Vaccination Programme	29
16. Tamil Nadu Unveils Statue Reflecting Growth of Education Sector	30
17. TN-CReSt Website	30
18. Udangudi Thermal Power Station	30
19. TNSCST - ICMR Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	31
20. Tamil Virtual Academy	31
Polity	
21. New Governor Appointments in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu	32
22. New Chief Justice of Madras High Court	32
23. Tamil Nadu - Merchant Shipbuilding Policy	33
24. Tamil Nadu State Information Commissioners	33
History & Culture	
25. Jain Archaeological Sites in Tamil Nadu	33
26. ASI Approves Excavations	34
27. Vembakottai excavations	34
28. The Irular Tribe Festival	35
29. Toda tribe festival	35
Environment	
30. Synchronised Vulture Census	35
31. Black Soldier Fly (BSF) Technology for Urban Organic Waste Management	35
32. Prosopis juliflora	36
Awards	
33. Kalaichemmal Award	36
34. Sahitya Akademi Award 2025	36
Committee	
35. Expert Panel Formed in Tamil Nadu to Frame Pet and Community Dog Rules	37
Report / Survey	
36. Cauvery Basin Faces Decline Despite Warming Climate	37

NATIONAL - NEWS

1. Discontinuation of Rice Fortification	39
2. Micron Technology's Semiconductor Assembly, Test, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) plant	39
3. Bureau of Energy Efficiency	40
4. Expansion of FRA Cells into Project Monitoring Units	40
5. Amorphous Metal Plant	40
6. Football for Schools (F4S) Initiative	40
7. Cabinet Committee on Security	41
8. NITI Aayog - JICA SDG Cooperation	41
9. Megalithic Rock-Cut Chamber Discovery	42
10. Kerala Language Bill	42
11. Andhra Pradesh Draft Population Management Policy to Raise Fertility Rate	42
12. Raisina Dialogue (2026)	43
13. India orders refiners to boost LPG production	43
14. Indian Cities Exceed PM2.5 Limits	43
15. NITI Aayog - UNICEF Partnership to Improve Maternal and Child Nutrition	44
16. India's first riverine lighthouses	44
17. India's Commitment to Eliminate Cervical Cancer	45
18. Moonshot project	45
19. SWAYATT	45
20. Jal Jeevan Mission	46
21. Madurai Airport Upgraded to International Status	46
22. Nationwide Darknet Drug Racket Busted by NCB	47
23. Anavaran System for Tracking Deforestation Stopped	47
24. New Welfare Schemes for Persons with Disabilities	47
25. SHINE App	48
26. Government Invokes Essential Commodities Act	48
27. Defence Forces Vision 2047	49
28. National Highways Green Cover Index	49
29. Proton Accelerator Project	50
30. National Leprosy Eradication Programme	50
31. ISRO Partners with AIIMS for Space Medicine Research	51
32. Kisan Credit Card	51
33. PM-SETU Scheme	51

34. Bug Bounty Programme	52
35. India's First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre	52
36. GeodCon-26	53
37. Digital Twin system	53
38. Small Modular Reactors	54
39. International Solar Alliance	54
40. SWAMIH Fund	54
41. Purple Fest	55
42. Great Indian Bustard (GIB)	55
43. Sujal Gaon ID	56
44. Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP)	56
45. National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC)	57
46. Samridh Gram Phyigital Services Pilot Project	57
47. Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)	58
48. Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary	58
49. Self Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams (SATHEE App)	59
50. Dimethyl Ether (DME) - An Alternative Fuel	59
51. India's First National Report on Nagoya Protocol Implementation	59
52. India's Innovation Landscape	60
53. Gajapati Empire	60
54. Samarth Incubation Programme	61
55. Election Commission of India	61
56. Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers	62
57. Revamped Mission Vatsalya Portal	62
58. National Geo-heritage Site	63
59. India's Bioeconomy Growth	63
60. Translation of the Kondrai Vendhan Text	64
61. Urea Supply Threatened by West Asia Conflict	65
62. Prakriti 2026	65
63. GARBH-INi Programme	65
64. LPG ATM	66
65. Strategic Petroleum Reserves	66
66. India's Updated Climate Targets	67
67. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	67
68. AI in Disaster Management	68

69. Transgender Rights Bill	68
70. PRISM-SG Portal	69
71. India's Target: Producing 5,000 Tons of REPM by 2030	69
72. Khelo India Tribal Games	70
73. National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna	70
74. OPU-IVF-ET technique	70
75. ASI Begins Excavation at Balirajgarh	71

NATIONAL SCHEMES

1. Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) Scheme	72
2. Pink National Common Mobility Card	72
3. India's first 'Ring Metro'	72
4. Divyang Sahara Yojana and Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana	72
5. Gyan Bharatam Mission	73
6. Lower Kopili Hydropower Project	73
7. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme	74
8. Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)	74
9. PM POSHAN	75
10. Krishi Sakhi Initiative	75
11. Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme	76
12. Coconut Promotion Scheme	76
13. Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) Scheme	77
14. Project Insight (PI)	77
15. Domestic Manufacturing of Rare Earth Magnets	77
16. Agri-Photovoltaics (AgriPV) in India	78
17. PRARAMBH 2026	79
18. Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) Scheme	79
19. UDAN Scheme	79
20. Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme	80
21. Nasha Mukh Vidyalaya	81
22. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana	81
23. National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026	82
24. The Shakti Sadan Scheme	82
25. PM e-Drive Scheme	82
26. Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0	83
27. PM-KUSUM 2.0 to Include Battery Storage	83

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Wildlife Day	85
2. World Hearing Day	85
3. National Security Day	85
4. World Obesity Day	85
5. International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness	85
6. International Women's Day	85
7. CISF Raising Day	85
8. No Smoking Day	85
9. Dandi March Day	85
10. World Kidney Day	85
11. Pi Day	85
12. World Consumer Rights Day	86
13. National Vaccination Day	86
14. World Social Work Day	86
15. Ordnance Factory Day	86
16. International Day of Happiness	86
17. World Down Syndrome Day	86
18. International Day of Forests	86
19. World Poetry Day	86
20. World Puppetry Day	86
21. World Day for Glaciers	86
22. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	87
23. World Water Day	87
24. Shaheed Diwas	87
25. World Meteorological Day	87
26. World TB Day	87
27. International Day for the Right to Truth	87
28. Earth Hour 2026	87
29. Mahavir Jayanti	87

REPORTS AND INDICES

1. Innovators Business Environment Index 2026	88
2. National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26	88
3. Fiscal Health Index (FHI)	88
4. UN Report on Child Mortality (2024)	89
5. World Happiness Report	89
6. India's Sports Equipment Sector	89
7. Global Terrorism Index 2026	89
8. Consumer Justice Report	90
9. Unified District Education Survey Report	90
10. World Air Quality Report 2025	90
11. IED Food Security Index	91
12. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)	91
13. Maternal Mortality Rate in India	92
14. Energy Statistics India 2026	92

EMINENT PERSONALITIES

1. Ayya Vaikunda Swamikal	94
2. Meenambal Sivaraj	94
3. Krishnammal Jagannathan	95
4. Shyamji Krishna Varma	95

AWARDS AND HONOURS

1. Jnanpith Award	96
2. BCCI Naman Awards 2026	96
3. Sangita Kalanidhi award	97
4. Sahitya Akademi Award 2025	97
5. Academy Awards	97
6. Stockholm Water Prize	97

DEFENCE

1. Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)	98
2. Mudh-Nyoma Air Force Station Upgrade	98
3. Shtil Missile System	98
4. Operation Sankalp	99
5. Exercise LAMITIYE 2026	99

6. Air Droppable Container	100
7. Operation Sankalp	100
8. Sea Dragon	100
9. National Defence Industries Conclave (NDIC) 2026	101
10. Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR	101
11. INS Taragiri	101
12. Shaurya	102
13. Vayu Baan	102
14. Operation Urja Suraksha	102
15. IMEX TTX 2026	103
16. P-8I Aircraft	103
17. Dweep Shakti	104
BOOKS AND AUTHORS	104
SPORTS AND GAMES	
1. Ranji Trophy 2025-26	105
2. Men's National kabaddi	105
3. ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026	105
4. India's Grandmaster	105
5. World Athletics Indoor Championship	105
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	
1. G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting: India's Participation	105
CURRENT FACTS	106

SCIENCE

GENERAL SCIENCE

Salar de Pajonales

- **Context:** Researchers are studying gypsum deposits in the mineral **Salar de Pajonales**, found on Earth and Mars.

About Gypsum

- Gypsum is a sedimentary rock composed mainly of calcium sulfate dihydrate ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and anhydrite (CaSO_4).
- It usually forms in large basins with evaporate minerals such as **anhydrite and halite**.
- In India, **marine gypsum is extracted from salt pans during salt production, mainly in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.**

Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV)

- **Context:** Scientists have developed antibodies that **effectively block Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV) in preclinical studies.**
- Epstein-Barr virus is also known as **Human Herpes Virus 4 or HHV-4**
- It is a **double-stranded DNA** virus that infects approximately 95% of adults worldwide.
- It is transmitted mainly through **saliva, and can also be transmitted through blood transfusions or organ transplants.**
- It is considered a potential trigger for multiple sclerosis and is associated with cancers such as **Burkitt lymphoma**, as well as gastric and nasopharyngeal cancers.

Stem Cell Therapy

- **Context:** The **National Medical Commission (NMC)** has mandated that prior approval must be obtained before undertaking unconventional stem cell therapies and research.

About Stem Cells

- Stem cells are unique cells capable of generating specialized cells, such as those found in blood, bone, and muscle.
- They play a crucial role in tissue repair and various bodily functions.

Types of Stem Cells

- **Embryonic Stem Cells (Pluripotent):** These possess the capacity to differentiate into any type of cell. They are derived from embryos or umbilical cord blood.
- **Tissue-Specific Stem Cells (Multipotent/Unipotent):** These generate only those cells specific to their respective tissues.
- **Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs):** These are cells created in a laboratory setting. They are engineered to function similarly to embryonic stem cells for the purposes of research and drug testing.

About Stem Cell Therapy

- Stem cell therapy also referred to as regenerative medicine aims to repair damaged tissues.
- In India, stem cell therapy is regulated under the **'National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research 2025,'** which were jointly drafted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

LATEST INVENTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Inherited Genetic Risk in Indian Breast Cancer

- **Context:** **One in four Indian breast cancer patients** carries an inherited genetic variant linked to cancer risk, with the majority of these variants occurring outside the well-known **BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.**

- 24.6% (nearly one in four) Indian breast cancer patients carry at least one pathogenic or likely pathogenic inherited genetic variant linked to cancer risk.
- Study conducted by **Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M)** in collaboration with Karkinos Healthcare, Kumaran Hospital (Chennai), and Chennai Breast Centre.
- The reflected signals are analysed to determine wind behaviour and movement.
- This enables the collection of accurate, real-time data, even in locations where conventional tools are less effective.
- It can record detailed wind data up to about 300 metres above sea level, which is higher than many traditional systems.

Researchers screened 97 cancer susceptibility genes, including:

- BRCA1 and BRCA2
- 15 genes linked to the homologous recombination repair (HRR) pathway
- Special emphasis on RECQL, an emerging gene associated with breast cancer and known for population-specific patterns.
- Overall, 67% of all positive findings were in non-BRCA genes, highlighting broader genetic diversity in inherited risk.

Floating LiDAR Buoy System

- **Context:** The National Institute of Ocean Technology recently carried out a successful test of an indigenously developed Floating LiDAR Buoy System off the coast of Muttom.

About the System

- It is an advanced ocean-based device designed to monitor wind conditions over marine areas.
- The system integrates a floating buoy platform with LiDAR technology.
- It works by using laser beams to precisely assess atmospheric parameters.
- Developed to observe wind patterns and atmospheric conditions at sea.
- It measures wind speed, direction, and variation at different altitudes above the ocean surface.
- The buoy remains afloat on the sea and emits laser pulses into the atmosphere.
- These pulses reflect off particles in the air and return to the system.

Significance

- Enhances weather forecasting accuracy.
- Helps in better monitoring of storms and cyclones.
- Contributes to climate studies and understanding ocean-atmosphere interactions.

Smog-Eating Photocatalytic Coatings

- **Context:** The Delhi government partnered with **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** to study "smog-eating" photocatalytic coatings for roads.

About Smog-Eating Photocatalytic Coatings

- Designed to neutralize harmful air pollutants like **nitrogen dioxide and volatile hydrocarbons, which contribute to toxic smog**
- Typically made with **titanium dioxide (TiO₂)**
- Low-cost, chemically stable, and compatible with conventional construction materials
- TiO₂-based construction materials can break down harmful gases and aid environmental cleaning
- Uses photocatalytic activity to **combat pollution**

Mechanism

- Light energy activates the coating
- Converts **toxic gases and organic pollutants into less harmful or harmless substances**
- Helps make air and water cleaner

Model Context Protocol (MCP)

- **Context:** The Government has introduced a Model Context Protocol (MCP) server to facilitate linking of Artificial Intelligence tools with Official Statistical databases.
- The newly launched MCP server allows access to verified Government data through Artificial Intelligence applications and platforms, with the National Statistical Portal e-Sankhyiki.
- The Beta version of the MCP server which included 7 key statistical products (such as the Periodic Labour Force Survey, Consumer Price Index, Annual Survey of Industries, Index of Industrial Production, National Accounts Statistics), has now been extended for 21 products available on the eSankhyiki portal.

About Model Context Protocol (MCP)

- The Model Context Protocol (MCP) is an open-source framework that enables Artificial Intelligence systems to seamlessly connect with external data sources, tools, and operational workflows.
- It serves as a standardized interface through which AI models can securely access and interact with databases, applications, or even local files.
- MCP was first introduced as an open standard in late 2024. Later, in early 2026, the Government of India rolled out its own version tailored for use in official statistical systems.
- Its primary goal is to bridge the gap between AI systems and real-world data sources. By doing so, it allows AI applications to generate more precise, reliable, and context-aware outputs by utilizing up-to-date, authenticated data instead of depending only on pre-trained information.

Akasha300 3D Printer

- **Context:** Indian startup delivers Akasha300 3D printer to the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Valiyamala.
- **Can print rocket parts and functional prototypes for high-performance engineering.**
- Supports rapid prototyping and research in environments where conventional manufacturing is limited.
- Developed with support from Space Technology Innovation and Incubation Centre (STIIC), IIST. Backed by Kerala Startup Mission.

Significance

- Strengthens India's self-reliance in advanced additive manufacturing.
- Targeted for space and high-end industrial applications.
- Enables faster, precise, and reliable prototyping of complex components.

Technical Features

- Multi-material extrusion system for complex engineering materials.
- Dual-extrusion technology **operating up to 350°C (future upgrade to 500°C).**
- Modular extruder design allows addition of more extrusion systems.
- **Heated bed up to 110°C (upgradeable to 150°C).**
- Enclosed chamber maintains temperatures up to 80°C for stable printing.
- Suitable for high-performance materials requiring strict thermal control.

Applications

- Functional components and prototypes for propulsion systems.

- Materials research and next-generation manufacturing technologies.
- Supports R&D and space sector innovation.

SPACE

NavIC Setback: Failure of Atomic Clock on IRNSS-1F

- **Context:** The last working atomic clock on IRNSS-1F stopped functioning on 13 March 2026, according to Indian Space Research Organisation.
- This failure weakens India's regional navigation system NavIC, which relies on **atomic clocks to provide accurate positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) services.**

Role of atomic clocks

- Atomic clocks enable satellites to **calculate precise signal timing, which is essential for determining location accurately.**
- **IRNSS-1F, launched in March 2016,** completed its 10-year design mission life on 10 March 2026, though the satellite can still provide one-way broadcast messaging services.
- After the latest failure, only 3 satellites have working atomic clocks.
- The original atomic clocks used in NavIC satellites were imported from SpectraTime.
- NavIC provides navigation services over India and up to 1,500 km beyond its borders, unlike global systems such as Global Positioning System.
- ISRO plans to deploy new satellites with indigenously developed rubidium atomic clocks. NVS-01 (May 2023) - carries India-made rubidium clock.

Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)

- To meet the positioning, navigation and timing requirements of the nation, **ISRO has established a regional navigation satellite system** called Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

India's First Repository for Psychiatric Disorders: CALM-Brain

- **Context:** With the aim of enhancing research, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illnesses, India has launched CALM-Brain the country's first digital data repository.

About CALM-Brain

- CALM-Brain is an acronym for the **'Comprehensive Data Repository on Brain Structure and Function in Psychiatric Disorders.'**
- It has been jointly developed by NIMHANS, the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), and the Rohini Nilekani Centre for Brain and Mind.
- By utilizing large-scale datasets, it aims to improve the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of neuropsychiatric disorders.
- It covers major conditions such as substance addiction, bipolar disorder, dementia, OCD, and schizophrenia.
- It seeks to identify biomarkers and biological mechanisms to facilitate early diagnosis and personalized treatment.

NIMHANS

- The **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences is located in Bengaluru, Karnataka.**
- It was established under the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru Act, 2012.**
- It functions as the **apex center for mental health and neuroscience education in India,** serving as a premier medical and research institution with autonomous status.

- NavIC was erstwhile known as **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**.
- NavIC is designed with a constellation of 7 satellites and a network of ground stations operating 24×7 .
- Three satellites of the constellation are placed in geostationary orbit, at 32.5°E , 83°E and 129.5°E respectively, and four satellites are placed in inclined geosynchronous orbit with equatorial crossing of 55°E and 111.75°E respectively, with inclination of 29° (two satellites in each plane).
- The ground network consists of control centre, precise timing facility, range and integrity monitoring stations, two-way ranging stations, etc.
- NavIC SPS signals are interoperable with the other global navigation satellite system (GNSS) signals namely GPS, Glonass, Galileo and BeiDou.
- The test confirmed the engine's capability to be reignited after reaching space.
- Consequently, a powerful engine required for the Gaganyaan mission and future heavy rocket launches is now ready.

About Cryogenic Engines

- A cryogenic engine is a type of rocket engine that utilizes **liquefied gases as both fuel and oxidizer**.
- The term "cryogenic" implies that the gases must be stored at **extremely low temperatures (below -150°C)**.
- **Liquid Oxygen (LOX) and Liquid Hydrogen (LH₂)** are the propellants commonly used in these engines.

Agnikul's Agnite Engine

- **Context:** Indian private space company **Agnikul Cosmos** has achieved a significant breakthrough by successfully conducting a test firing of its Agnite engine.

About Agnite Engine

ISRO – Cryogenic Engine Test

- **Context:** A cryogenic engine test was conducted at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in **Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district**.
- The cryogenic engine was successfully tested at sea level, generating a thrust of 22 tons.
- Prior to this, the engine had only been tested up to a thrust level of 19 tons.
- **This engine is utilized in the upper stage of the LVM3 rocket.**
- This test was conducted to upgrade the C-32 stage, enabling it to carry heavier satellites into space.
- The C-32 engine used in this test set a new record by successfully undergoing hot testing 20 times.
- Agnite is recognized as the largest single-piece rocket engine **produced using 3D printing technology**.
- Both Agnite and Agnilet are semi-cryogenic engines developed by Agnikul through advanced 3D printing methods.
- The engine is constructed using Inconel, a specialized **high-strength alloy capable of withstanding extremely high temperatures and stress**.
- These engines are specifically designed to power the booster stage of Agnikul's Agnibaan launch vehicle.

GEOGRAPHY

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Cheetah Reintroduction Programme

- **Context:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change released nine cheetahs (6 females, 3 males) into enclosures at Kuno National Park.
- This was the **third batch of cheetahs to arrive from an African nation** after the first batch of eight big cats from Namibia in September 2022, and another 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

About Project Cheetah

- India initiated Project Cheetah in 2022 to bring back cheetahs, which had been extinct in the country for more than seven decades.
- The programme functions under Project Tiger and is recognized as the **world's first effort to relocate a large wild carnivore across continents.**

Objectives

- **Re-establish Cheetah Populations:** Create stable, self-sustaining breeding groups of cheetahs in protected areas that fall within their former natural range in India.
- **Ecosystem Restoration:** Use the cheetah as a flagship species to revive and conserve grasslands, open forests, and savanna landscapes.
- **Boost Local Economies:** Encourage eco-development and wildlife tourism to generate

employment and improve livelihoods of communities living near these habitats.

- **Community Participation & Conflict Reduction:** Increase public awareness, involve local communities in conservation efforts, and minimize incidents of human-wildlife conflict.

Silent Valley National Park

- **Context :** A comprehensive bird survey conducted in Silent Valley National Park recorded 192 bird species

About Silent Valley National Park

- Silent Valley National Park is situated along the southwestern corner of the Nilgiri Hills in southern India, within the state of Kerala.
- The park forms the core area of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012.

Olive Ridley Turtle Conservation

- **Context:** The Wildlife Management Authority and officials of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh have successfully protected nearly 20,000 Olive Ridley turtle eggs on Hope Island.

Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is located in the estuarine region of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh.
- It harbors India's second-largest mangrove forests.
- This sanctuary was established in 1978.

Olive Ridley Turtles

- Olive Ridley turtles are known for their mass nesting behavior, referred to as Arribada.

- The Olive Ridley turtle is classified as a 'Vulnerable' species by the IUCN and is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Earthquake Risk Debate in Himalayan and Northeastern India

- **Context:** Scientists, engineers, and government officials are reviewing whether earthquake risks to structures in the **Himalayan and northeastern** regions are being overestimated. A report is expected to be submitted to the Cabinet Secretariat.

Withdrawal of Updated Standards

- The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** withdrew the revised **IS 1893 (2025)** guidelines after concerns that stricter norms could significantly impact ongoing and future infrastructure projects like metro systems.

Seismic Zoning in India

- India is divided into **four seismic zones (II to V)**, with **Zone V (Himalayan region)** being the most vulnerable.
- Strong earthquakes (magnitude 8) have occurred here, capable of causing severe structural damage.

Higher Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA)

Values Proposed

- The updated model suggests PGA values ranging from **0.15 g to 0.75 g** (and even higher globally), compared to lower values in current Indian standards.

Global Comparison

- Countries like Japan and the U.S. design for higher acceleration values (around or above 1 g), while India's current standards are considered relatively low.



INDIAN POLITY

Controller General of Accounts

- **Context:** In New Delhi, the Controller General of India launched the Government Bank Dashboard and the Government Bank Manual to improve government banking transactions.

Controller General of India

- The Controller General of India serves as the **Principal Accounting Advisor Government of India.**
- It was set up in **October 1975.**
- The Controller General of Accounts oversees the management of the central government treasury and conducts internal audits.
- It functions under the **Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance.**

Rajya Sabha Election

- **Context :** The Election Commission of India (ECI) has **announced the schedule for the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha, which will be held to fill 37 seats set to fall vacant across 10 States in April 2026.**

Election process of Rajya Sabha

- The **maximum strength** of the Rajya Sabha is **250 members.**
- **12 members are nominated by the President of India** for their expertise in literature, science, art, or social service.
- The **remaining members are elected representatives of States and Union Territories.**
- Members are **elected indirectly by the elected members of State Legislative Assemblies (MLAs).**
- The election is conducted through the **system**

of proportional representation by means of the Single Transferable Vote (STV).

- **MLAs of Delhi and Puducherry** elect Rajya Sabha members from their respective Union Territories.
- Some Union Territories such as **Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, and Ladakh** do not have representation in the Rajya Sabha.
- **Jammu and Kashmir** has representation in the Rajya Sabha.
- Unlike the **Lok Sabha**, whose members are **directly elected by citizens**, Rajya Sabha members are **indirectly elected by elected representatives of State Assemblies.**

Rajya Sabha Member Qualification

- **Minimum age** to become a Rajya Sabha MP is **30 years.**
- A candidate must be an **elector in a parliamentary constituency of the State or Union Territory** from which they are contesting.
- The **term of office is six years.**
- **One-third of the members retire every two years**, ensuring periodic renewal.
- The Rajya Sabha is a **permanent House and is never dissolved.**

Opposition Moves No-Confidence

Motion against Lok Sabha Speaker

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha took up a resolution moved by the Opposition seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla, with both the Treasury and Opposition benches trading sharp accusations over the neutrality of the Chair.

The process for removal of the Speaker

- According to **Article 94(c)** under the Constitution, the Speaker can be removed only

through a resolution passed by a majority of all the members of the Lok Sabha, not merely those present and voting.

- This high threshold reflects the intent to safeguard the stability and dignity of the office.
- The process begins when a member submits a written notice to the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha seeking removal.
- **At least 14 days' notice** must be given before the motion can be taken up. Once admitted, the motion requires the support of at least 50 members to proceed for discussion in the House.
- The procedural framework governing this process is laid down in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, specifically Rules 200 to 203.
- The rules mandate that the resolution must clearly state the charges against the Speaker.
- During the debate on such a motion, the Speaker may participate in the proceedings as a member of the House, and while the Speaker can vote on the resolution in the first instance, he/she cannot exercise their vote in case of a tie.
- No-confidence motions against the Speaker have been extremely rare in India's parliamentary history. **Only three such attempts** have occurred – in **1954, against G. V. Mavalankar; in 1966, against Hukam Singh; and in 1987, against Balram Jakhar.** In all three cases, the motions failed.

Euthanasia Case

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India has allowed passive euthanasia.
- Harish Rana was in a coma for 13 years, so his parents filed a petition seeking permission for euthanasia.

- The Supreme Court of India, a bench of Justices J.P. Parthiwala and K.V. Viswanathan, allowed the removal of life-sustaining devices based on the recommendation of a medical committee.
- The constitutional basis for passive euthanasia in India is found in Article 21 of the Constitution of India.
- It guarantees the 'right to life and personal liberty'. The Supreme Court has interpreted this right to include not just survival but also living with dignity.

Chief Election Commissioner Removal

- **Context:** Opposition parties are considering moving a motion to remove **Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar from office.**
- As per Article 324(5) of the Constitution of India, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed from office only on the basis of the procedure and reasons used for the removal of a Supreme Court judge.

Process for removal of Chief Election

Commissioner

- A resolution seeking removal can be introduced in either House of Parliament.
- The resolution requires the support of at least 100 members in the Lok Sabha or at least 50 members in the Rajya Sabha.
- Once the resolution is passed, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha will constitute an inquiry committee to investigate the allegations.
- If the inquiry committee confirms the allegations, the resolution will be put to a vote in Parliament.
- The resolution must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting in

both the Houses. After both houses approve the resolution, the **President will issue the final order of impeachment.**

Governor of Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** Kerala Governor **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**, who was appointed by **President Droupadi Murmu** to discharge the functions of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, assumed his gubernatorial office at Lok Bhavan in Chennai.
- **Chief Justice of the Madras High Court Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari** administered the oath of office to Mr. Arlekar.
- **Part VI, Article 153-** Governors of States. There shall be a Governor for each State: Provided that nothing in this article shall prevent the appointment of the same person as Governor for two or more States.
- The Governor is the **chief executive authority of a state**. However, similar to the President at the national level, the Governor mainly functions as a ceremonial or constitutional head.
- The Governor also acts as a representative of the central government, which gives the position a dual character.
- Generally, every state has its own Governor. However, the **7th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956** permits the appointment of the same individual as Governor for two or more states.
- Although the Governor is largely a nominal head of the state executive, the office plays a significant role in the state's political system through a range of **executive, legislative, and judicial powers.**

Supplementary Demands for Grants

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha has cleared the second set of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2025–26. During this process, Union Finance Minister, **proposed the establishment of an Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF).**

Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF)

- The proposed ESF will have an allocation of Rs.1 lakh crore.
- Its objective is to enable India to deal with global economic shocks, unexpected supply-chain disruptions, and other external crises.

About Supplementary Demands for Grants

- These are additional funds sought by the government when the amount initially approved by Parliament through the Appropriation Act for a particular service during the financial year proves inadequate.
- The proposal is presented by the President before both Houses of Parliament and must be approved before the end of the financial year.
- Part V, Article 115- Supplementary, additional or excess grants

Postal Ballot Facility from Home for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities

- **Context:** As per the regulations of the Election Commission of India, individuals aged 85 and above, as well as persons with disabilities, are permitted to cast their votes via **postal ballot from the comfort of their homes, Form 12D has been issued for this purpose.**
- Those unable to contact polling station officials directly may convey their information by calling the **helpline number 1913.**

About Postal Ballots

- Under Section 60 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the facility of postal voting is extended to voters who are unable to appear in person.
- Eligible voters must submit an application to the Returning Officer (RO) within the specified timeframe.

Eligible Categories as per the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961

- **Special Voters:** Dignitaries such as the President, Governors, and Ministers.
- **Service Voters:** Personnel belonging to the Armed Forces, Paramilitary Forces, and government employees posted abroad.
- **Election Duty Personnel:** Officials, police personnel, and media representatives.
- **Absentee Voters:** Individuals aged 85 and above, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), and essential service personnel.

Absentee Voters – Section 60(c), RPA, 1951

- In 2019, the Election Commission of India (ECI) introduced a new category designated as "Absentee Voters."
- This category comprises the following individuals:
 - **Senior citizens aged 85 years or above.**
 - Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with a disability level of 40% or higher.
 - Individuals infected with COVID-19 or those exhibiting symptoms of the infection.
 - Persons engaged in essential services. This includes the following categories of personnel: Railways, Telecommunications, Electricity, Health (Medical Services), Transport, Aviation, and the Fire Department.

- Journalists authorized by the Election Commission who are engaged in news gathering on election day.

Singing 'Vande Mataram' Has Not Been Made Mandatory - Supreme Court

- **Context:** The Supreme Court ruled that, in accordance with a circular issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, **singing 'Vande Mataram' is not mandatory.**
- The circular serves merely as a guideline regarding the rendition of the song at government functions and in schools.
- The circular does not specify any penal provisions for failing to sing the song.

About 'Vande Mataram'

- On **January 24, 1950**, 'Vande Mataram' was officially adopted as the National Song of India by the Constituent Assembly of India.
- It was first published in **Bangadarshan in 1875** and was subsequently incorporated into **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, Anandamath, in 1882.**
- In **1896**, **Rabindranath Tagore** introduced the song to the public by singing it for the first time at the **Indian National Congress session held in Calcutta.**
- The Constitution of India does not explicitly mention the National Song. However, **Article 51A(a)** mandates respect for national symbols.
- In **1907**, **Bhikaji Cama** unfurled the **tricolor flag** for the first time outside India, at Stuttgart in Berlin the words 'Vande Mataram' were inscribed on that flag.

Cauvery Water Management Authority

- **Context:** The Cauvery Water Management

Authority (CWMA) has ordered the **Government of Karnataka to release 2.5 TMC** (Thousand Million Cubic feet) of water to Tamil Nadu during the month of April.

- This order has been issued based on the **final verdict delivered by the Supreme Court in 2018 regarding the sharing of Cauvery water.**
- The 2018 Supreme Court verdict allocated **404.25 tmcft to Tamil Nadu and 284.75 tmcft to Karnataka**, while also declaring the Cauvery a national asset.
- Two bodies the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) operate to implement the Supreme Court's verdict.
- **River water disputes fall under Article 262 of the Constitution of India.**

Cauvery River Water Tribunal

- This Tribunal was constituted in 1990 under the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.**
- It was established by **the Central Government to resolve the water-sharing dispute among the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry**

Cauvery Water Management Authority

- Exercising the powers conferred by Section 6A of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, the Central Government notified the 'Cauvery Water Management Scheme' in 2018.
- Through this scheme, the 'Cauvery Water Management Authority' (CWMA) and the 'Cauvery Water Regulation Committee' (CWRC) were constituted.
- The Cauvery Water Management Authority implements the Tribunal's verdict as well as

the modified orders issued by the Supreme Court.

- It ensures the storage, allocation, regulation, and control of Cauvery water.
- It ensures that the State of Karnataka releases water at the prescribed levels at the Biligundlu inter-state border point.

About the Cauvery River

- The Cauvery River **originates at Talakaveri in the Kodagu district of Karnataka; it flows through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu for a distance of approximately 800 km before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.**

Tributaries of the Cauvery River

- **Left-bank tributaries:** Harangi, Hemavati, Shimsha, Arkavathi.
- **Right-bank tributaries:** Lakshmana Tirtha, Kabini, Suvarnavathi, Bhavani, Noyyal, Amaravathi.

Gujarat – Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026

- **Context:** Gujarat has become the second state following Uttarakhand to pass the bill Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in 2026.

About the Uniform Civil Code

- It aims to replace religion-specific personal laws by introducing a uniform, common law that applies equally to all individuals, regardless of their religion, caste, creed, gender, or sexual orientation.

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 44 of the Indian Constitution serves as a directive principle, guiding the State to endeavor to secure a Uniform Civil Code for citizens throughout India.

- Matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance are listed in the Concurrent List (List III) of the Seventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution.

Current Status of UCC in India

- Currently, a Uniform Civil Code is not in force on a nationwide basis in India.
- **Uttarakhand was the first state in independent India** to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
- **Goa follows a common civil code system based on the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867.**

The Supreme Court's Stance

- In cases such as **Shah Bano (1985)** and **Sarla Mudgal (1995)**, the Supreme Court of India

has recommended the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code.

- In the **Shayara Bano vs. Union of India (2017)** case, the Supreme Court ruled that the practice of **Triple Talaq was unconstitutional and violated the dignity and equality of Muslim women.**

21st Law Commission of India (2018)

- In 2018, the 21st Law Commission of India stated that, at this stage, a Uniform Civil Code is “neither necessary nor desirable.” Furthermore, it recommended undertaking reforms in personal laws to ensure gender justice.



INDIAN ECONOMY

India's GST Collection Rises 8.1% in February

- **Context:** Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections increased by 8.1% year-on-year, crossing Rs.1.83 lakh crore in February.

Domestic vs Import Revenue

- Gross domestic revenue rose 5.3% to approximately Rs.1.36 lakh crore.
- Gross revenue from imports jumped 17.2% to Rs.47,837 crore, driving overall growth.

Net GST Collection

- Net GST revenue stood at over Rs.1.61 lakh crore, reflecting a 7.9% annual increase.

GST Rate Rationalisation

- GST rates on about 375 items were reduced.
- The earlier four tax slabs (5%, 12%, 18%, 28%) were merged into two main slabs – **5% and 18%**.
- A **new 40% slab** was introduced for select ultra-luxury goods and tobacco products.

India's Industrial Growth

- **Context:** India's industrial activity slowed to a three-month low of 4.8% in January 2026, dragged down by a broad-based slowdown across manufacturing, mining, electricity, and consumer-facing sectors.

Manufacturing Sector

- Growth eased to 4.8% in January 2026.
- Down from 8.4% in December 2025.
- Also lower than 5.8% in January 2025.

Mining Sector

- Growth slowed to 4.3% in January.
- This follows two months of accelerating growth.

Electricity Sector

- Growth moderated to 5.1% in January.
- Down from 6.9% in December 2025.
- Still higher than 2.4% in January 2025.

Infrastructure Sector

- Growth accelerated to 13.7% in January 2026.
- Fastest expansion since August 2023.
- **The only broad sector showing improved momentum.**

About Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** is a key economic measure that tracks short-term movements in the output of a selected group of industrial products in India. It indicates how the country's industrial sector – **comprising manufacturing, mining, and electricity** – is performing over time.

- Published by the **National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, Government of India.

- **Base Year:** Currently uses **2011–12 as the base year** (updated from the earlier base year of 2004–05).

- Covers three major sectors: **Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity.**

- **Objective:** Designed to track industrial output trends, support government policy formulation, and serve as an early signal of overall economic momentum.

- **Frequency of Release:** Published every month, typically with a lag of about one month.

- **Economic Significance:** Plays an important role in assessing sector-wise growth patterns, understanding inflationary pressures, and evaluating the broader progress of industrial development in the country.

Government Bank Dashboard and Government Bank Manual

- **Context:** The Ministry of Finance has introduced the **Government Bank Dashboard and the Government Bank Manual** to strengthen governance and streamline operations in banks that manage government-related transactions.

Government Bank Dashboard

- A unified digital system designed to monitor government banking transactions and track fund utilisation in real time, ensuring greater transparency and efficiency.

Government Bank Manual

- A comprehensive guideline document that lays down uniform procedures, reporting requirements, and strict timelines for reconciliation, applicable to both public and private sector banks handling government business.

Objective

- These measures seek to eliminate procedural confusion, reduce operational vulnerabilities, and create consistent performance standards across all participating banks.
- The initiatives mark a shift from a corrective, after-the-fact supervisory approach to a preventive framework focused on continuous, real-time monitoring and stronger institutional accountability.

Sixteenth Finance Commission (2026–31)

- **Context:** The Sixteenth Finance Commission (16th FC), **chaired by Arvind Panagariya**, submitted its final report covering the award period 2026–31.
- The Finance Commission of India is constituted under **Article 280** of the Constitution to

regulate fiscal relations between the Union and the States.

- Its task includes determining: Vertical devolution (Centre–State tax share), and Horizontal distribution formula (division among states).

Vertical Tax Devolution – 41%

- The Commission retained the states' share of the divisible central tax pool at 41%, continuing the arrangement recommended by the 15th FC.

Revised Horizontal Distribution Formula

- Introduced a 10% weight for Contribution to GDP, calculated using the square root of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
- This replaces the earlier Tax Effort parameter used in previous formulas.

Grants to Local Governments – ₹7.9 Lakh Crore

- Significant allocations to rural and urban local bodies.
- 80% as unconditional basic grants.
- 20% tied to performance metrics.

Disaster Management Funding – ₹2.04 Lakh Crore

- Recommended corpus for State Disaster Relief and Mitigation Funds.
- Cost-sharing pattern: 75:25 (Centre: State) for general states, 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern states.

Urbanisation Incentive

- Proposed a Rs.10,000 crore “Urbanisation Premium”.
- Objective: Encourage integration of peri-urban villages into larger municipal bodies to support planned urban growth.

Fiscal Consolidation Roadmap

- Centre to reduce fiscal deficit to 3.5% of GDP by 2030–31.

- States required to strictly maintain a 3% of GSDP deficit ceiling

SEBI to Strengthen Market Surveillance Using AI

- Context:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has decided to intensify oversight of stock market manipulation and cyber-enabled financial frauds by leveraging advanced technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The move aims to detect irregular trading patterns, insider misconduct, and digital fraud more effectively.

About SEBI

- SEBI is the apex regulator of India's securities and capital markets.
- Initially set up in 1988, it was granted statutory authority through the SEBI Act, 1992.
- It functions under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Objectives

- Safeguard the interests of investors in securities.
- Foster orderly growth and development of the capital market.
- Ensure proper regulation of stock exchanges and other securities market intermediaries.

Composition of SEBI

- A Chairperson appointed by the Central Government.
- Two officials nominated from the Ministry of Finance.
- One representative from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Five additional members, with at least three serving as whole-time members.

Powers of SEBI

Quasi-Judicial Authority

- SEBI can adjudicate cases involving fraudulent activities and unfair trade practices.
- It has the authority to issue orders and penalties to ensure fairness and integrity in the securities market.

Quasi-Executive Authority

- Empowered to inspect account books, records, and documents of market participants.
- Can conduct investigations, enforce compliance, and initiate action against entities violating regulations.

Quasi-Legislative Authority

- Authorized to frame regulations and guidelines to protect investors.

18% increase in foreign direct investment

- Context:** Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India increased by **18% to US\$ 47.87 billion (\$47.87 billion)** in the first three quarters of the current financial year 2025-26.

- Investment from the **US has doubled to \$7.80 billion** compared to the same period in the financial year 2024-25.

- Singapore is at the top of the total investment** with \$17.65 billion. It is followed by the US and Mauritius.

- Maharashtra continues to be at the top** with \$15.38 billion in attracting foreign investment state-wise.

- Karnataka (\$11.20 billion), Gujarat (\$5.00 billion), Tamil Nadu (\$3.89 billion), and Haryana (\$3.84 billion) are in the top five.

India's Export Growth and Sector-wise Performance

- **Context:** India has built a **strong and resilient export-driven economy** by utilising its sound banking sector, substantial foreign exchange reserves, and a stable current account position.
- **Overall Exports:** India's total exports **increased by 6.15%** year-on-year, reaching \$720.76 billion during April–January 2025–26.
- **Services Exports:** Exports in the services sector rose to \$354.13 billion, registering a 10.57% year-on-year growth.
- **Trade Partnerships:** According to the UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2025, India ranks third among Global South economies in terms of diversity of trade partnerships, after China and the United Arab Emirates.
- **Free Trade Agreements:** Over the past three years, India has finalised nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) covering 38 countries.
- **Market Access:** These FTAs grant mostly duty-free access to markets that together account for around 70% of global GDP.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** Often called the “Pharmacy of the World,” India ranks **third globally in pharmaceutical exports** by volume and 11th by value.
- **Automobiles:** The automobile sector, which provides employment to over 30 million people, recorded around 30% growth in exports from FY21 to FY25.
- **Textiles:** India stands as the sixth-largest exporter of textiles and apparel, contributing about 4% to global textile exports.
- **Defence:** Defence exports have increased nearly 23 times, rising from less than ₹1,000 crore in 2014 to ₹23,622 crore in FY25, with exports now reaching more than 100 countries.

Economic growth of states

- **Context:** Among the 4 largest economic states of India, **Maharashtra has recorded the lowest economic growth in the last 4 years.** However, Maharashtra still ranks first in terms of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
 - The GSDP of Maharashtra is estimated to be Rs. 42,67,771 crore in the financial year 2024–25.
 - **Karnataka has topped the list with a growth of about 65%** in the post-Corona period (2021–22 to 2024–25).
 - Karnataka's GSDP has increased from Rs. 17,02,227 crore to Rs. 28,09,063 crore.
 - **Gujarat has come second with a growth of 48%.**
 - Gujarat's economic value has increased from Rs. 18,79,826 crore to Rs. 27,90,000 crore.
 - **Tamil Nadu has secured the third position with a growth of 47%.**
 - **The GSDP of Tamil Nadu has increased from Rs.21,36,351 crore to Rs.31,55,096 crore.**
- ## Sector-wise Export Performance
- **Electronics:** In FY25, electronics became India's third-largest export category, following engineering goods and petroleum products.
 - **Mobile Phones:** India has become the **second-largest manufacturer of mobile phones globally**, with production increasing 28 times between FY15 and FY25.
 - **Petroleum:** India holds the **7th position worldwide** in refined petroleum exports and is also counted among the top five refining countries.

RBI Conducts Open Market Operations to Increase Liquidity

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) carried out Open Market Operations (OMO) by purchasing Government Securities (G-Secs) worth ₹50,000 crore to add liquidity to the banking system.

Open Market Operations (OMO)

- Open Market Operations are monetary policy instruments used by the RBI to control the amount of liquidity in the financial system.
- Through OMOs, the RBI buys or sells Government Securities in the open market.

Types of OMO

- **OMO Purchase:** When the RBI purchases government bonds from banks, money flows into the banking system, thereby increasing liquidity.
- **OMO Sale:** When the RBI sells government bonds to banks, money is taken out of circulation, helping to reduce excess liquidity in the market.

Government Securities

- Government Securities are tradable financial instruments issued by the Central or State Governments to borrow funds from the market.

Types of G-Secs

- **Short-term securities:** Known as Treasury Bills, which usually have a maturity period of less than one year.
- **Long-term securities:** Referred to as government bonds or dated securities, with maturity of one year or more.

Issuance in India

- The Central Government issues both Treasury Bills and long-term bonds.

- State Governments issue only long-term securities, commonly called State Development Loans (SDLs).

Consumer Price Index Inflation

- **Context:** The country's retail inflation rose to 3.21% in February. In January, it stood at 2.74%.
- This information is indicated by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) statistics released by the National Statistics Office.
- The rise in the prices of food items is the primary reason for the increase in inflation.
- Food inflation, which was 2.13% in January, rose to 3.47% in February.
- Inflation was recorded at 3.37% in rural areas and 3.02% in urban areas.

About Retail Inflation

- Retail inflation refers to the rise in the prices of goods and services (such as food, clothing, housing, and fuel) that consumers purchase from stores for their daily use.
- It is measured using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Minimum Support Price

- **Context:** The Central Government has issued an order stating that State Governments must not provide any additional incentive amounts over and above the Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed for agricultural produce.

About Minimum Support Price

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a price fixed by the Government of India to ensure that farmers receive a minimum guaranteed income when market prices decline.
- It was introduced during the Green Revolution in 1966–67 with the aim of boosting

- **agricultural production and ensuring food security.**
- The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** recommends this price based on economic and agricultural factors. The final decision regarding this is taken by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**.
- To provide financial support to farmers, the **government fixes the MSP for a total of 22 crops.**
- This includes **14 Kharif crops, 6 Rabi crops, and 2 commercial crops.**
- Based on the prices of Mustard and Copra (dried coconut kernel), this support price is also extended to Toria and De-husked Coconut, respectively.

India-China Trade

- **Context:** Border trade between India and China resumes after a hiatus of six years.
- The trade is being conducted through the **Lipulekh Pass** in the state of Uttarakhand.

Timeline of India-China Relations

- **1950:** Diplomatic relations were established between **China and India.**
- **1954:** The **“Panchsheel” agreement**-comprising five principles was signed between China and India.
- **1962:** A brief border war took place between India and China. This conflict arose over the **disputed regions of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **1976:** Full diplomatic relations were restored after a gap of 15 years.
- **1984:** A **“Most Favoured Nation” (MFN) agreement** for trade was signed.

- **2005:** Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao expressed support for India securing a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.
- **2006:** The **Nathu La Pass** was reopened for trade.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)

- **Context:** The Government of India has introduced CGSMFI-2.0 with a total corpus of Rs.20,000 crore.

About CGSMFI-2.0

- The scheme aims to offer **credit guarantee support to eligible Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** so they can finance NBFC-MFIs and other MFIs, which in turn provide loans to new and existing small borrowers.

NBFC-MFI Definition

- These are non-deposit taking NBFCs that must allocate at least **75% of their assets to microfinance loans**, which are collateral-free loans given to households with an annual income of up to Rs.3 lakh.

Management

- The scheme is administered by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC), which is fully owned by the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance.

Duration

- It will remain in force until June 2026 or until guarantees worth Rs.20,000 crore are issued, whichever comes first.

About Microfinance

- Microfinance involves providing small-scale financial services such as loans, savings, and

insurance to individuals and small enterprises who do not have access to formal banking systems.

Significance of Microfinance in India

Financial Inclusion and Poverty Reduction

- It bridges the gap left by traditional banking institutions by integrating low-income populations into the formal financial sector.

Support to MSMEs and Entrepreneurship

- It promotes small businesses by offering customized loans without requiring collateral.

Women Empowerment

- Women make up around **95% of borrowers in the microfinance sector**, highlighting its role in improving their economic independence (Economic Survey 2025–26).

Index of Eight Core Industries

- **Context:** The growth rate of the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) **declined to 2.3% in February (year-on-year), compared to 4.7% in January.**
- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is released by the Office of Economic Advisor, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Sectors Showing Growth

- **Cement** production increased by 9.3%
- **Steel** output rose by 7.2%
- **Fertilizer** production grew by 3.4%
- **Coal** production went up by 2.3%
- **Electricity** generation saw a marginal rise of 0.5%

Sectors Showing Decline

- Crude oil production **decreased by 5.2%**
- Natural gas output fell by **around 5%**
- Petroleum refinery products recorded a slight decline

Overall Significance

- The **eight core industries together account for more than 40% of the weight in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, making their performance a key indicator of overall industrial growth.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The IIP is an economic measure that tracks **short-term changes in the production volume of a set of industrial goods in India.**
- It indicates the performance of the industrial sector, covering manufacturing, mining, and electricity.
- Released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India.**
- **Base Year: 2011–12** (updated from the earlier base year 2004–05).
- Sectors Included - **Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity**
- Designed to monitor industrial output, guide policy-making, and serve as a leading indicator of overall economic activity.

- Frequency of Release: Published monthly, typically with a one-month time lag.
- Used to assess sector-specific growth, evaluate inflationary pressures, and track the overall development of the industrial sector.

India's Media & Creative Economy

- **Context:** Union Minister of Railways of India unveiled three new initiatives aimed at strengthening India's media, broadcasting, and digital sector and promoting the "orange economy", or the creative economy.

- The creative economy includes industries where economic value is generated primarily from creativity, culture, technology, and intellectual property.
- The platform marks a shift from content viewing to active content participation, making WAVES OTT a platform not only for viewing but also for creation.

The three initiatives are

- **National AI Skilling Initiative** in partnership with Google and YouTube through the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT)
- MyWAVES, a citizen creator platform on WAVES OTT
- Advanced Electronic Programme Guide and in-built satellite tuners in television sets for enhancing access to **DD Free Dish services**.
- MyWaves will support multiple formats including short videos, vertical videos and episodic content, and will offer a multilingual interface across Indian languages.
- MyWAVES is expected to serve as an important platform for emerging creators and storytellers from across the country

Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner in Television Sets

National AI Skilling Initiative

- This initiative is being implemented through the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), and is aimed at strengthening AI capabilities in areas such as animation, visual effects, gaming, comics (AVGC) and media technology.
- The curriculum will include modules on the art of storytelling, YouTube best practices, and advanced training using AI tools such as Gemini 3, Nano Banana, Veo, and Vertex AI.
- The initiative will support creators, media professionals, students and developers in building future-ready skills and contribute to India's emergence as a global hub for digital content and innovation.
- The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting** has introduced television sets with built-in satellite tuners along with a new, user-friendly programme guide (EPG).
- With this initiative, viewers will be able to watch DD Free Dish channels directly on their television sets without the need for a separate set-top box, thereby reducing additional costs, wiring, and the hassle of multiple remotes.
- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is leading these efforts as part of its commitment to promoting the '**Orange Economy**', strengthening public broadcasting along with improved accessibility, and building an AI skilled, future ready workforce for the M&E Sector.

MyWAVES

- MyWaves, a new feature within the WAVES OTT platform that will enable citizens to create, upload and share content.
- MyWaves is designed as a structured platform for user-generated content (UGC) that will also support participation in national initiatives such as the Create in India Challenge.
- **Prasar Bharati** continues to play a key role in improving public broadcasting, while IICT will drive the AI skilling programme for the creative sector, and WAVES OTT will provide a platform for citizen participation and content creation including dovetailing of the Create in India challenge.

Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme

- **Context:** The Government has revised the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS) to provide enhanced support to MSME manufacturers and exporters, in alignment with the Budget 2025-26 provisions.

About MCGS

- **Launched:** January 2025
- **Purpose:** Provide credit guarantee support to MSMEs for purchasing equipment/machinery
- **Guarantee Coverage:** 60% by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited
- **Credit Limit:** Up to ₹100 crore per eligible MSME
- **Beneficiaries:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Key Modifications

- **Upfront Contribution:** Refundable 5% upfront contribution, with 1% refundable each from 4th year onwards, subject to loan performance
- **Eligibility Expansion:** Now includes Service Sector MSMEs
- **Project Cost for Machinery/Equipment:** Minimum cost requirement reduced to 60% of project cost (earlier 75%)
- **Guarantee Tenure:** Guarantee valid for 10 years

Special Provisions for Exporters

- **Eligible Units:** Profitable exporters with at least 25% of sales turnover from exports in each of the last 3 years, meeting export realisation criteria
- **Guaranteed Loan Amount:** Rs.20 crore
- **Upfront Contribution:** 2% of loan (max Rs.40 lakh), refundable 1% each in 4th & 5th year

- **Guarantee Coverage:** 75% of defaulted amount
- **Guarantee Fee:** 1st year: Nil, Subsequent years: 0.50% of loan outstanding

India's Inflation Target Extended (2026–2031)

- **Context:** The Union government asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to target retail inflation at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side for another five years ending March 2031.

Continuation of Existing Policy

- This is the second extension of the same inflation target framework.
- Initially introduced in 2016, valid until 2021.
- Extended again in 2021, and now continued till 2031.

Policy Framework

- Inflation targeting was formally adopted in 2016, giving the Reserve Bank of India the responsibility to control price rise.
- The framework operates through the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), a six-member body.

About Retail Inflation

- Retail inflation means the increase in prices of everyday goods and services that people purchase for personal consumption – basically, what consumers pay in markets and stores.
- It is tracked using the Consumer Price Index, which monitors the price movement of a fixed basket of commonly used items.
- Base year: In India, 2024 is currently used as the reference year for calculating CPI.
- The figures are published every month by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- The Reserve Bank of India tries to keep retail inflation within 2% to 6%, maintaining a

balance between price stability and economic growth.

Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India infused ₹55,837 crore into the banking system through a 3-day Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction to ease tightening liquidity conditions.

About Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auction

- VRR is a monetary policy mechanism used by the RBI to supply funds to banks when cash in the system is limited.
- Unlike the fixed-rate repo, the interest rate in a VRR is determined through competitive bidding among banks.
- The RBI announces the total funds available for lending (e.g., ₹1 lakh crore) and the duration of the repo (e.g., 3 days).
- Banks submit bids specifying the amount they want to borrow and the rate of interest they are willing to pay.
- Funds are allocated starting from the highest bid down to the cut-off rate, which is the lowest accepted rate.
- Banks pledge government securities as collateral, which they repurchase at the end of the repo period.

Aim of VRR

- **Liquidity Management:** Ensures banks have sufficient funds to meet day-to-day requirements.
- **Stabilizing Interbank Rates:** Prevents the Call Money Rate the rate at which banks lend to each other from rising sharply above the policy repo rate.

Reduction in Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on Fuel

- **Context:** The Union Government has lowered the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on petrol and diesel in response to rising global crude oil prices.
- The SAED on petrol has been cut from 13 per litre to 3 per litre, while the duty on diesel has been reduced from ₹10 per litre to zero.
- These reductions are intended to offset the impact of crude oil prices exceeding \$100 per barrel and to avoid a sudden increase in retail fuel prices.
- This move supports Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) by enabling them to keep fuel prices stable without facing extra financial pressure.

About Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED)

- SAED is an indirect tax imposed by the Central Government, mainly on petroleum products.
- It is levied under Section 147 of the Finance Act, 2002, and applies to items listed in the Fourth Schedule of the Central Excise Act, 1944.
- The Ministry of Finance reviews and adjusts SAED rates every two weeks, depending on trends in international crude oil prices.
- SAED is often used as a windfall tax to capture excess profits earned by oil producers during periods of high global oil prices.
- When global prices rise, reducing SAED helps prevent Oil Marketing Companies from transferring the burden to consumers through higher fuel prices.
- Higher SAED on exports discourages companies from exporting fuel when there is a risk of domestic shortages.

- The revenue collected from SAED is retained entirely by the central government and is not shared with state governments.

Payments Vision 2028

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India has unveiled its “Payments Vision 2028” report, titled Shaping India’s Payment Frontier.
- This new roadmap replaces the earlier 4Es vision (Everyone, Everywhere, Every time) of 2025 and shifts the emphasis toward strengthening user trust in the payment ecosystem.

About RBI Payments Vision 2028

- It is a detailed policy framework and strategic plan aimed at guiding the future development of India’s payment systems.
- The focus moves beyond expanding access to achieving global leadership, while ensuring that the digital payments ecosystem remains secure, interoperable, and resilient to evolving cyber risks.
- The initiative is led by the Reserve Bank of India.
- Its core objective is to empower users while ensuring strong protection against fraud and risks.

Key Features

- Suggests a unified system for Trade Receivables Discounting Systems to improve

MSME financing and support export-focused small businesses.

- A centralized mechanism that allows users to easily transfer their payment instructions when changing bank accounts, enabling account portability.
- Introduces an option to turn digital payment modes (like UPI, IMPS, etc.) on or off, similar to controls available for debit and credit cards, to reduce fraud risks.
- Proposes a system where both the sending and receiving banks share responsibility in case of unauthorized transactions, enhancing customer protection.
- Plans to implement Cyber Key Risk Indicators for non-bank payment entities to detect and prevent potential security threats early.
- Recommends a single-window approval system for international payments and regular comparison of transaction costs and speeds with global standards.
- Focuses on improving the security of physical cheques while introducing electronic cheques to combine reliability with faster processing.
- Envisions an AI-driven payments data repository to enhance transparency and support research-based policymaking.
- Recognizes smaller players through a continuous regulatory sandbox to encourage innovation in niche payment solutions.

TAMIL NADU

INITIATIVES / SCHEMES

Naagam app

- **Context:** Naagam app, a new mobile platform designed to streamline snake rescue operations and strengthen scientific data collection.
- Unveiled in July 2025 by senior officials of the Forest Department, the app was meant to facilitate technology-driven wildlife rescue efforts in the State.
- The Forest Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT) to manage the application and conduct structured training programmes for rescuers.
- The new app is expected to streamline rescue requests and ensure quicker response times, in addition to generating data to study rescue patterns and snake distribution.
- Currently, access to the app is limited to trained rescuers, with new features being added ahead of the public launch.
- The application is modelled after SARPA, Kerala's snake rescue platform.

Project to create Maragatha Pooncholai in 100 villages

- **Context:** 23 new Maragatha Pooncholai were opened in 10 districts under the leadership of the Ministry of Forests and Environment.

"Maragatha Pooncholai in 100 Villages"

Project

- "Maragatha Pooncholai in 100 Villages" Project was announced in 2022-23.
- The objective is to create one hectare of community forest in every village under the Green Tamil Nadu Movement.

- Each Margatha Pooncholai will function as a village forest, ecological recreation complex and environmental learning centre.
- With the 23 new complexes, a total of 98 Maragatha Pooncholai have been established in Tamil Nadu.
- The project will increase rural green cover, improve groundwater levels, conserve biodiversity, create ecological commons accessible to the public and strengthen climate resilience.
- The Green Tamil Nadu Movement aims to increase the forest and tree cover of Tamil Nadu to 33% of the state's land area.

As per ISFR 2023 released by FSI, the forest and tree cover of Tamil Nadu is

- Forest Area: 26,450 sq km (20.34%)
- Area of trees: 5,371 sq km (4.13%)
- Total area of forest and trees: 31,821 sq km (24.47%)

Chennai Valarchi Thittam

- **Context:** The Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated the Chennai Middle School building, bus stand and sports complex, built by CMDA at a cost of Rs. 53 crore under the North Chennai Development Project.
- This project is a special project implemented with a budget of ₹1,000 crore over 3 years (2023-26) for infrastructure and social development in the North Chennai region of Tamil Nadu.
- The project aims to modernize basic facilities such as health, education, drinking water, electricity, sports, housing and roads.

Tamil Nadu Policy and Governance Experiential Learning Centre (TNPAGE)

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu Policy and Governance Experiential Learning Centre

(TNPAGE), built by the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission under the **Singara Chennai 2.0 fund**, was inaugurated on the **Nungambakkam Highway in Chennai**.

- TNPAGE is the first governance experiential learning centre set up in India.
- It is designed as a public knowledge platform that provides easy-to-understand and virtual experiences of government policies, development indicators and governance decisions.

Senior Citizens' Home

- **Context:** Chief Minister inaugurated a home for senior citizens established by the **Arulmigu Devi Balamman and Ilankaliamman Temple at Kolathur in Chennai**.
- **TVS Motor** is providing funds for the maintenance of the home which would accommodate those aged above 60 and whose families could not afford their maintenance.
- In 2021, the government said it would construct homes for senior citizens at three temples at **Kolathur in Chennai, Palani, and Palayamkottai in Tirunelveli**.

Thiranagam

- **Context:** Thiranagam set up in 23 districts of Tamil Nadu were inaugurated via video conferencing.
- Thiranagam were set up in 23 districts to coordinate activities under the **Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation and the Tamil Nadu Women Employment and Security Scheme**.
- These will function as one-stop centres for **skill development, career guidance and employment related services**.

Naan Mudhalvan Project Centres

- **Context:** **11 Naan Mudhalvan Project** University Operational Centres of Tamil Nadu were inaugurated via video conferencing.
- Naan Mudhalvan Project Operational Centres have been set up in **11 government universities including Anna University**.
- These centres will help in developing the skills of students and guiding them according to the industry requirements.

About Naan Mudhalvan Project

- The project was launched on **1 March 2022**.
- It is a project implemented by the **Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation**.
- It is a flagship initiative designed to provide **training, skill development and career guidance to over 10 lakh students and youth** across the state annually.

Agroforestry Policy

- **Context:** Chief Minister released the **Tamil Nadu Agroforestry Policy 2026**, aimed at promoting the cultivation of high value trees such as teak, sandalwood, red sanders and rosewood on agricultural land parcels, simplifying procedures for harvesting and marketing timber and expanding the **states forest and tree cover to 33%**.
- The policy aims to ensure ecological resilience by promoting trees that improve soil health, conserve water and enhance climate resilience, aligning with the goals for environmental sustainability and integrated growth.

Objectives

- Improve forest cover
- Increase farmer's income
- Strengthen sustainability
- Creation of a new board for promoting agroforestry
- Simplify procedures for harvesting and marketing timber

Trees to be promoted for cultivation

- High value trees like Sandalwood, red sanders, rosewood
- Timber species like teak, mahogany, Vengai, poovarsu, Kumil, Vagai, Sisoo
- Industrial wood species such as alianthus, acrocarpus, silver oak, melia, casuarina
- Oilseeds like neem, pungam, punnai, simarouba, mahua
- Non-timber forest product trees like naval, palamyhra, tamarind, kadukal

Tamil Nadu Integrated Drinking Water

Redressal Centre

- **Context:** The Chief Minister inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Integrated Drinking Water Redressal Centre 'Punal' to take action on complaints related to drinking water supply across Tamil Nadu.
- This centre has been set up to receive all complaints related to drinking water supply across Tamil Nadu at one place.
- This centre has been established by the Tamil Nadu Drinking Water Supply and Drainage Board.
- The public can report their complaints through the toll-free number 1916, Punal website.

Tamil Nadu Launches Women

Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme and Major Development Initiatives

- **Context:** Chief Minister has launched the Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES), designed by the MSME Department, which aims to encourage one lakh women to take up entrepreneurship in five years.

Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme

- Scheme for women / Transgender entrepreneurs, especially from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Applicants must be of age between 18-55 years. No minimum educational qualifications required
- Manufacturing / Trading / Service projects with maximum Project costs Rs.10.00 lakh.
- Individual Based Capital Subsidy @ 25% of the Project cost (Maximum Rs.2.00 lakh)
- Must be a Domicile of Tamil Nadu. No Ceiling on Income Limit
- Kalaingar Kaivinai Thittam women beneficiary intended to avail loan for expansion can top up under this scheme.

Welfare, Conservation and Cultural Initiatives in Tamil Nadu

- Chief Minister virtually inaugurated welfare centres for construction workers and elderly citizens, set up by the Labour Welfare and Skill Development Department.
- Chief Minister released the Tiruchirappalli Master Plan 2045 and the Thoothukudi Master Plan 2045.

- Chief Minister laid the foundation for the construction of a **Mangrove Conservation Centre at Pichavaram in Cuddalore district**, an **International Migratory Bird Centre at Marakkanam in Villupuram district** under the Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources and Blue Economy, and a **Conservation Centre for the Nilgiri Tahr in Coimbatore**.
- Chief Minister also presented the Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh Wildlife Conservation Award to the son of late veterinarian **Vaidyanathan Krishnamurthy**.
- The Tamil Nadu government had nationalised the works of late **Periyarist V. Anaimuthu and writer Erode Tamilanban**.
- Chief Minister also released the translation of **73 works of B.R. Ambedkar from Marathi to Tamil**.

Kanavu illam Thittam

- Context: Three writers were given high-income category flats by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board under the **Knavi illam Thittam**.

Writers who were given houses

- Thayammal Aravanan**, winner of the Classical Tamil Award
- Ponnilan**, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994 for his **novel Puthiya Darishanagal**
- A.R. Venkatachalapathy**, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2024 for his book **"Tirunelveli Ezhuchiyum, VOC 1908"**

About Kanavu illam thittam

- The Tamil Nadu government's **Kanavu illam thittam** has been implemented **since 2021**.
- The **Kanavu illam thittam** is an initiative by the **Tamil Nadu government** to encourage **writers from Tamil Nadu who have received**

national awards such as the Jnanpith, Sahitya Akademi, state literary awards, and awards from renowned global organizations to provide houses in their district of residence or in the district of their choice.

Those eligible to apply under this project

Sahitya Akademi Award

- Tamil writers who receive the **Jnanpith Award**
- Members of the Central Institute of Semmozhi Tamil Research Tamil writers who have received and are receiving awards such as the **Tolkappiyar Award**

- Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi Classical Tamil Award**

Nobel Prize

Kalaignar Kanavu Illam Scheme

- Context: The Chief Minister announced that a total of 7 lakh houses will be built for the poor in Tamil Nadu by 2030.
- Under the "Kalaignar Kanavu Illam" scheme, **5 lakh houses will be built in rural areas and 2 lakh houses in urban areas by 2030**.

Development Plans of TN government

- Under the "Nalamudan Tamil Nadu 2030" plan, steps will be taken to provide adequate health insurance to all and special medical camps will be held for early detection of diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer.
- Special measures will be taken to **reduce maternal mortality and mental health counseling centers will be set up in every district**.
- In the agriculture sector, it is planned to **increase the net cultivation area to 50 lakh hectares and provide soil health cards to 43 lakh farmers**.

- **Organic farming will be expanded to 17,000 hectares and bio-farming to one lakh hectares.**
- To improve water conservation, micro-irrigation will be expanded to 21 lakh hectares and **1,000 rainwater harvesting structures will be set up in the Western and Eastern Ghats.**
- Steps will be taken to increase food production to 125 lakh metric tons.
- 1,000 model schools will be expanded under the **“Vetri palligal Scheme”.**
- In all government and government-aided schools Smart classrooms will be set up and steps will be taken to **increase the enrollment rate in higher education to 90 percent by 2030.**
- Artificial intelligence technologies will be introduced in the education sector and AI labs will be set up in every educational institution.
- It was said that steps will be taken to **provide housing land patta to every Adi Dravidian and tribal family without a house.**
- It was announced that a new scheme called **“Uttamar Gandhi Model Villages”** will be introduced to **improve rural development.**
- By 2030 The target has been set to make **Tamil Nadu a trillion dollar economy state** by the year.

TNExpat

- **Context:** Industries Minister of Tamil Nadu, launched **TNExpat**, a digital platform for expatriates and international visitors.
- The platform **helps global users explore living, working, culture, and lifestyle in Tamil Nadu.**
- The website is available in **five languages** to reach a wider international audience.
- **Guidance Tamil Nadu**, the State’s investment promotion agency, is setting up a dedicated **“Expat Desk” to support expatriates.**
- The initiative aims to improve ease of living and integration for foreign professionals in the State.

HPV Vaccination Programme

- **Context:** The State government’s Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme reached **81% coverage in the four pilot districts of Ariyalur, Tiruvannamalai, Perambalur and Dharmapuri.**
- The HPV vaccination programme was launched on **January 27 by the Tamil Nadu State government.**
- Target Group: **14-year-old girls** are being vaccinated to protect against Cervical Cancer caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV).
- Pilot Districts: The programme started in **Ariyalur, Tiruvannamalai, Perambalur, and Dharmapuri.**
- The vaccination programme, which was started in the four districts in campaign mode, was conducted in **government and government-aided schools.**
- Nationwide Initiative: **The Government of India launched a national HPV vaccination campaign on February 28.**
- Vaccination Facilities: Vaccines are now available at Primary Health Centres, Government Hospitals, and Government Medical College Hospitals.
- Vaccine Used: **A single-dose Gardasil HPV vaccine is given to 14-year-old girls.**
- **Cervical cancer is mostly caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection.**

- In Tamil Nadu, **Dharmapuri and Perambalur** have the highest incidence of cervical cancer. That is, 36 per lakh women are affected in those districts.
- The rate is next to that in Ariyalur at 29.9. As far as Chennai is concerned, it is 13 and the total cervical cancer incidence rate in Tamil Nadu is 14 per lakh.

About Cervical Cancer Vaccination

- The HPV vaccination program for **girls aged 9-14 years** was launched in Tamil Nadu on January 27, 2026.
- For the first time in India, free cervical cancer vaccination has been administered to pre-pubescent girls in **Tiruvannamalai, Ariyalur, Perambalur and Dharmapuri** in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu Unveils Statue Reflecting Growth of Education Sector

- **Context:** Chief Minister inaugurated the “**Katranai Thoorum Arivu**” statue installed at Marina Beach at a cost of Rs1.43 crore.
- The statue installed by the **Tamil Nadu Text book and Educational Services Corporation** is aimed at showcasing the development of the state’s education department.
- The release noted that TN continues to excel in the field of education through continuous improvements in educational planning, administration and infrastructure from **class I to XII**.
- In the centre of the sculpture, a man and a woman are seen rising towards the sky. They are depicted overcoming the barriers of poverty, circumstance and geography.
- **The sculpture symbolizes the moment when learning transforms one’s aspirations and dreams into achievements.**

▪ The figures of a boy, a girl and a differently-abled student at the base of this sculpture complex affirm that education is a birth right for every child and that no learner is left behind.

▪ From this strong base, figures representing the diverse life paths that education opens up rise up – a doctor, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, a woman pilot, an engineer and a sports person.

▪ Learning empowers a person to serve society, lead, innovate and excel. The banner below the statue states that the lesson all of this teaches us is that if a child is educated, their future will be bright.

TN-CReSt Website

- **Context:** Adyar Cancer Research Institute has launched a new website called TN-CReSt.
- This website has been created to **monitor cancer incidence in Tamil Nadu**.

Key Features

- Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry data can be easily **accessed online by the public and researchers**.
- Its objective is to help in collecting and **analyzing cancer data**.

Udangudi Thermal Power Station

- **Context:** The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu inaugurated a new thermal power station **established at Udangudi in the Thoothukudi** district, built at a cost of ₹13,077 crore.
- This power station comprises two units, each with a **capacity of 660 megawatts**.
- It is a high-efficiency thermal power station constructed using **supercritical technology**.
- To facilitate the transport of coal to the power station, a jetty has been constructed in the open sea, located 9 kilometers offshore.

- Since a reduced quantity of coal is required to generate one unit of electricity, carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by 25–30%.
- Through this project, the state's power generation capacity will increase, thereby reducing the need to procure electricity from the open market.
- It receives funding through the Department of Health Research, which functions under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- The ICMR plays a pivotal role in guiding, coordinating, and promoting biomedical research across India.

TNSCST – ICMR Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

- Context: The **Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology (TNSCST)** and the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen initiatives related to **medical research and development projects within academia and the bio-industry**, as well as to enhance Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection.
- This agreement was established with the specific objective of reinforcing medical research, development, and the protection of Intellectual Property.
- It will facilitate the protection of biomedical innovations emerging from academic institutions and help promote technology transfer.
- **Tamil Nadu has emerged as a leading state in India** in terms of the highest number of patent applications filed.
- This agreement was signed in New Delhi under the guidance of NITI Aayog.
- **The Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology was established by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1984 as an autonomous institution.**

Indian Council of Medical Research

- **Established in 1911**, it is one of the oldest medical research institutions in the world.

Tamil Virtual Academy

- **Context:** The Minister for Information Technology and Digital Services inaugurated three new webpages.
- On behalf of the Tamil Virtual Academy, the following webpages have been created: **“Tamizhil Peyargal”**, **“Naatudamai Noozhgal”** and **“Tamil Nadu Panpaatu Min Nilavarai Yaedu”**
- These webpages have been hosted on the official website of the Tamil Virtual Academy.
- The **“Tamizhil Peyargal”** page features a collection of Tamil names suitable for children, along with their corresponding meanings and explanations.
- The **“Naatudamai Noozhgal”** page contains the biographies and literary works of authors whose works were nationalized during the period from 1963 to 2025.
- The **“Tamil Nadu Panpaatu Min Nilavarai Yaedu”** page is being populated with information regarding temples, archaeological sites, and historical monuments.
- In the initial phase, information pertaining to the districts of **Madurai, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, Sivaganga, and Theni** has been added.

About Tamil Virtual Academy

- It was originally established as the **“Tamil Virtual University”** under the **Tamil Nadu Co-operative Societies Act**.

- The “Tamil Virtual University” was subsequently renamed as the “Tamil Virtual Academy” on **July 16, 2010**.

POLITY

New Governor Appointments in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi has been appointed as the new Governor of West Bengal. **The President has announced that Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar will additionally hold the post of Governor of Tamil Nadu.**

About the Governor

- The **7th Amendment to the Constitution of 1956** allows the appointment of the same person as Governor of two or more states.
- The Governor is appointed under **Article 155 of the Constitution**.
- He must be a citizen of India.
- He must be at least **35 years of age**.
- The Governor must not be a member of Parliament or any State Legislature.
- **Article 153** of the Constitution of India: There shall be one Governor for each State. However, nothing in this Article shall prevent the appointment of the same person as Governor of two or more States.

New Chief Justice of Madras High Court

- **Context:** Justice Arvind Dharmadhikari has been appointed as the new Chief Justice of Madras High Court.
- The appointment of the Chief Justice of a High Court in India is governed by **Article 217 of the Constitution of India**.

About the Chief Justice of the High Court

- The Chief Justice of the High Court of India is **appointed by the President of India under Article 217 of the Constitution**.
- He must be a **citizen of India**.
- He must have served in a judicial capacity in India for **at least 10 years**.
- **Tenure:** He will remain in office till the **age of 62 years**.
- The President will consult both the **Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India and the Governor of the concerned state** while making this appointment.
- **Resignation:** If a judge wishes to resign voluntarily, he must submit his resignation **letter to the President of India**.
- His tenure will automatically end if he is appointed as a **Supreme Court judge or transferred to another High Court**.

Tamil Nadu - Merchant Shipbuilding Policy

- **Context:** Tamil Nadu launched a **Merchant Shipbuilding Policy** to promote large-scale shipbuilding and maritime industry development.
- The initiative aims to position **Tamil Nadu as a leader in shipbuilding in India** and support the country's transition to a **high-growth, developed economy**.
- **Guidance Tamil Nadu**, the State's investment promotion agency, is playing a key role in implementing the policy.
- A **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** named NSHIPTN will be created under SIPCOT with participation from the Union government.
- The SPV will **develop infrastructure, enter joint ventures, lease assets, and support capital raising** for shipbuilding projects.

- The State government may **participate in equity up to 49% in shipyards** or lease assets up to **20% of project cost**.
- **Two shipbuilding clusters** are planned in **Thoothukudi** and **Cuddalore**.
- The government signed an **MoU with Hyundai (South Korea)** to develop a shipyard at Thoothukudi.
- Another yard may be developed by public sector companies such as **Cochin Shipyard Limited** or **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited**.
- The policy includes **training institutions for shipbuilding engineers and skilled workers** (welding, erection, electrical work).
- The initiative aims to build a **complete maritime ecosystem including supply chains, manpower training, and housing for workers**.

Tamil Nadu State Information Commissioners

- Context : The **Governor administered the oath of office to two new State Information Commissioners** to the Tamil Nadu Information Commission.
- In exercise of the powers conferred by **subsection (3) of section 15 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (Central Act 22/2005)**.
- The **Governor has appointed retired IAS Atulya Mishra and retired IPS officer Abhay Kumar Singh** as State Information Commissioners to the Tamil Nadu Information Commission.

State Information Commission (SIC)

- It is a **statutory body** established under the **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005**.
- The State Information Commission consists of a **State Chief Information Commissioner**

and a **maximum of 10 State Information Commissioners**.

- The **Governor appoints the State Chief Information Commissioner and State Information Commissioners** on the recommendation of a **selection committee comprising the Chief Minister (Leader), the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and a Cabinet Minister nominated by the Chief Minister**.
- Their term of office is **three years or up to the age of 65 years**.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Jain Archaeological Sites in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** Jain archaeological remains have been identified in **37 districts of Tamil Nadu**, covering around 480 sites. Many of these sites require urgent preservation and protection.

Cave Structures and Ancient Heritage

- Over 200 hill sites in Tamil Nadu contain cave structures where Jain monks **lived for more than 2,500 years**.
- Brahmi inscriptions, including one from the **3rd century BCE**, confirm the antiquity of Jain presence.
- **Jainism is believed to have existed in Tamil Nadu even before Chandragupta Maurya**.

Protected Monuments Status

- **Out of 200 hill sites:**
- 48 sites are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), mostly declared during the pre-Independence period.
- Around 25 sites were declared protected by the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department after Independence.

Government and Community Initiatives

- A memorandum has been submitted to district Collectors seeking preservation measures.
- The Tamil Nadu government supports conservation efforts with assistance from the State Archaeology Department.
- **A Jain Heritage Centre is being established in Madurai, with work already underway.**
- Awareness campaigns have been conducted across all districts over the past 14 months.
- **The State is home to over 50,000 Tamil Jains.**

ASI Approves Excavations

- **Context:** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has permitted the **Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA)** to conduct excavations at eight historical sites in Tamil Nadu.
- Keeladi Excavation Continues: Permission includes the **11th phase of excavations at Keeladi**, a major archaeological site linked to the ancient Tamil civilisation.
- The ASI had earlier approved underwater archaeological surveys near Poompuhar in September 2025.
- Poompuhar was historically known as Kaveripoompattinam, an ancient port city linked to early Tamil maritime trade.

Excavations will also take place at

- **Pattinamarudhur** in Thoothukudi district
- **Karivalamvanthanallur** in Tenkasi district
- **Manikollai** in Cuddalore district
- **Adichanur** in Villupuram district
- **Vellalore** in Coimbatore district
- **Telunganur-Mangadu** in Salem district
- **Nagapattinam**

Vembakottai excavations

- **Context:** Fragments of **torpedo jars** believed to have been used in Roman and West Asian

regions for **transporting liquids such as olive oil and wine** have been unearthed during excavations at the Vembakottai archaeological site.

- The Vembakottai excavations carried out in three phases by the state archaeology department have yielded several rare artefacts including terracotta seals, glass beads, conch bangles, microlithic tools, terracotta earrings, figurines, rings, discs and ivory items.
- The findings of the torpedo jar fragments is considered significant, as such jars are historically associated with overseas trade, especially in the Roman and West Asian regions.
- The presence of these fragments proves that ancient Tamil merchants traded along the **Vaippar river basin with foreign regions.**

Artifacts Unearthed So Far at the Vembakkottai Excavation Site

- The site is situated in the **Virudhunagar district.**
- **Gold ornaments were discovered** here at depths ranging from 1.15 meters to 1.59 meters. One of these artifacts is conical in shape, while the other is rectangular.
- To date, over 1,300 artifacts have been unearthed, including an ivory die, a terracotta smoking pipe, an earring, and a stone weight.
- A **Carnelian intaglio (seal stone) engraved** with the image of a humped bull was discovered at this site. This marks only the second instance in the history of archaeological excavations in Tamil Nadu where such a stone has been found.
- Previously, a similar seal stone—engraved with the image of a wild boar—was discovered at **Keeladi, near Madurai.**
- Carnelian stones are typically found **only in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat.**

Furthermore, the 'intaglio' carving technique is of Roman origin.

- It is noteworthy that the Carnelian seal stones discovered at both **Keeladi and Musiri belong to the Sangam period.**

The Irular Tribe Festival

- **Context:** The **Masi Magam festival** holds immense significance for the Irular community and serves as a vibrant expression of their deep-rooted cultural heritage.

About the Irular Tribe

- The Irular tribe is found inhabiting the lower slopes and forests at the foothills of the **Nilgiris Mountains in Tamil Nadu.**
- They constitute the second-largest tribal group in the region, following the Badagas.
- This tribal community engages in the collection and production of honey, fruits, medicinal herbs, roots, resins, and natural dyes.
- In recent times, the Irular people have also become involved in catching and collecting snakes to harvest their venom.
- In Tamil Nadu, they have been officially categorized as a "Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group" (PVTG).

Toda Tribal Festival

- **Context:** In the Nilgiris, the Toda tribal people renovated a traditional temple and participated in the '**Narsners Kumbabishekam**' (Consecration) festival with songs, dances, and offerings.

About the Toda Tribe

- The Todas are one of the most ancient ethnic groups inhabiting the **upper plateau of the Nilgiri Hills in Tamil Nadu.**
- **They are divided into five clans:** Peiki, Pekkan, Kuttan, Kenna, and Thodi.
- They possess a **unique language of their own, though it lacks a written script.**

- They reside in small villages (settlements) known as '**Munds**'.

- Their society follows a patrilineal lineage system and is further divided into two exogamous divisions: **Tharthazoll and Theveioll.**

- Their primary livelihoods are buffalo rearing and traditional embroidery work.

- Their unique **embroidery crafted** on white cloth using red and black threads—was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2013.

- Every year, at the end of December or the beginning of January, they celebrate a buffalo festival known as '**Modhweth**'.

ENVIRONMENT

Synchronised Vulture Census

- **Context:** Synchronised Vulture Census will be conducted at forest land scapes of **Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka** to assess population in the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.**

- **India is home to nine vulture species, seven of which are recorded in Tamil Nadu,** including White-rumped, Long-billed and Red-headed vultures that have established breeding populations.

- This will be the fourth synchronised survey. The survey will use vantage point counts and nest monitoring.

Black Soldier Fly (BSF) Technology for Urban Organic Waste Management

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission has recommended the state government to adopt Black Soldier Fly (BSF) bioconversion technology for solid waste management on a pilot basis in five cities particularly Chennai.

- In its report titled Organic Waste Management in Urban Tamil Nadu released the commission noted that Chennai which generates 5000 tonnes of waste per day accounted for more than one third of the total 14,600 tonnes produced daily across Tamil Nadu.
- BSF is a non-pest, non-vector insect species. Unlike common houseflies BSF do not transmit diseases, bite, or sting and are not attracted to human habitation.
- BSF uses the feeding capacity of its larvae to rapidly cover organic waste into valuable products such as protein meal, insect oil and frass fertiliser.
- The larvae can consume up to four times their body weight in waste daily and reduce waste mass by 50-80% while producing near-zero methane emissions as the process involves an aerobic mechanism.
- **Kochi undertook large scale biomining** and introduced BSF technology to process municipal wet waste, becoming the first Indian city to deploy it at a municipal scale with success.
- The commission urged the state government to allocate funds to launch the BSF technology on a pilot basis in **Chennai and also in Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy and Salem** before scaling up across Tamil Nadu.

Prosopis juliflora

- **Context:** In a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** filed for the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* (Seemai Karuvelam), the Madurai Bench of the High Court has constituted a special committee—comprising retired High Court Judges A. Selvam and V. Bharathidasan—to monitor the tree removal operations.

Prosopis juliflora (Seemai Karuvelam)

- The *Prosopis juliflora* is a rapidly growing, invasive plant species that poses a grave threat to water sources, soil fertility, and biodiversity.
- It is a shrub or a small tree (of the Mesquite variety) belonging to the Fabaceae family.
- It is native to Mexico, South America, and the Caribbean islands.
- It is considered one of the most detrimental invasive plant species affecting arid and semi-arid regions.

AWARDS

Kalaichemmal Award

- **Context:** Kalaichemmal Award is presented every year by the **Department of Art and Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu**.
- This award is given to the best artists in the fields of **traditional and modern style painting and sculpture**.
- The award carries a prize money of Rs. 1 lakh, a copper plate, and a certificate of appreciation.
- **6 best artists are selected for this award every year.**

The awardees for the year 2025–2026 are:

- Traditional Painting - **M. Balasubramanian**
- Traditional Sculpture - **D. Srikanda Sthapathi, D. Padmanaban**
- Modern Style Painting - **G.Vilvanathan, M. Raja**
- Modern Style Sculpture - **S. Shanthi**

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

- Tamil writer and essayist **S. Tamilselvan** has won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2025 in the **literary criticism category**. The award is for his book, **Tamizh Sirugathaiyin Thadangal**, which traces the history of Tamil short stories.

- The book **Tamizh Sirugathaiyin Thadangal** comprehensively examines the evolution of the Tamil short story from 1913 to 1970.
- The book has been published by **Bharathi Puthakalayam**.
- He was born on May 27, 1954, in Nagalapuram, **Thoothukudi District**.
- His first poem, titled *Oru Naal Diary* was published in 1972.
- Mr. Tamilselvan, editor of the **literary magazine Semmalar**.
- Mr. Tamilselvan, a former president and general secretary of the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artistes Association, also served as a **State committee member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)**.
- In 2008, he received the **Best Story Writer Award from the Government of Tamil Nadu**.
- His short story, *Veyilodupoi*, was made into a **film titled Poo**.
- **Tamizh Sirugathaiyin Thadangal** begins with V.V.S. Iyer, whose *Kulathankarai Aalamaram* is considered the first Tamil short story.

His other works

- **Arasiyal Enakku Pidikkum**, which explains Left-wing politics in simple terms
- **JindabadJindabad**, recounts a trade unionist's experience in politics
- **Thiruppiaditha Varalaru** is a 1,000-page account of the 100-year history of the communist movement and the empowerment of peasants in the erstwhile composite Thanjavur district.

COMMITTEE

Expert Panel Formed in Tamil Nadu to Frame Pet and Community Dog Rules

- Context: The Tamil Nadu Government has

formed an **expert committee** to draft "**Pet and Community Dog Bye-laws.**"

- The objective is to **regulate or ban aggressive and dangerous dog breeds** to ensure **public safety**.
- The decision was taken based on proposals from the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services and Greater Chennai Corporation**.
- The **Union Government of India** had earlier identified certain dog breeds as **ferocious and dangerous to human life**.
- The Union government recommended **banning the import, breeding, and sale** of such dog breeds, including crossbreeds.
- The panel will be **headed by the Director of Municipal Administration**, with the **Chief Executive Officer of the Tamil Nadu Animal Welfare Board** as **Member-Secretary and Convenor**.
- The Union government has already notified:
 - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Dog Breeding and Marketing) Rules, 2017
 - Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2018.

REPORT/SURVEY

Cauvery Basin Faces Decline Despite Warming Climate

- **Context:** The Cauvery river basin may see approximately **3.5% reduction in water flow between 2026–2050**, unlike most major Indian rivers expected to gain flow due to climate change.
- Northern counterparts brace for floods, according to a study by researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Gandhinagar**.

- The study finds that the Cauvery experienced a **28% decline in streamflow between 1951 and 2012**, based on data from Kollegal, their analysis on actual river flows between 1951 and 2012, measured at nine stations representing nine major river basins.
 - The nine rivers are the Cauvery (measured at Kollegal), the Ganga (Farakka), Brahmaputra (Bahadurabad), Indus (Bhakra), Godavari (Polavaram), Krishna (Kurundwad), Mahanadi (Basantpur), Narmada (Mandleshwar), and Tapi (Burhanpur).
 - **1990: Establishment of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT).**
 - Tribunal took 17 years to deliver its **final order (2007)**.
 - Estimated total water availability: 740 tmcft (in a normal year).
 - Water shares were allocated among basin states based on this estimate.
 - **2018 Supreme Court verdict finalized allocations**
 - **Tamil Nadu: 404.25 tmcft**
 - **Karnataka: 284.75 tmcft**
 - The Cauvery river was declared a **national asset** by the Supreme Court.
- Cauvery Water Dispute**
- Decades of disputes between **Karnataka and Tamil Nadu led to legal intervention.**



NATIONAL - NEWS

Discontinuation of Rice Fortification

- **Context:** Rice fortification has been halted following findings from a study conducted by the **Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur**.
- The study revealed that extended storage of fortified rice under government distribution systems reduces its effective shelf life, thereby weakening the expected nutritional benefits.
- Researchers observed that several factors significantly affect the quality and stability of **Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) and fortified rice**. These include moisture levels, temperature, storage environment, relative humidity, and the type of packaging used.

About Food Fortification

- Food fortification refers to the intentional addition of essential micronutrients—such as **vitamins and minerals**—to commonly consumed foods to enhance their nutritional value and improve overall public health.

Regulatory Framework and Initiatives

- Guided by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** through the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018.
- Fortified foods are distributed through government welfare schemes such as the **PM-POSHAN Scheme and other food safety net programmes**.
- By **March 2024**, all custom-milled rice supplied under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** and related schemes had been replaced **with fortified rice, with distribution planned until December 2028**.

Examples of Fortified Foods

- Wheat flour and rice enriched with **Iron, Vitamin B12, and Folic Acid**

- Milk and edible oil fortified with **Vitamins A and D**
- Double fortified salt containing **Iodine and Iron**

Micron Technology's Semiconductor Assembly, Test, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) plant

- **Context:** Prime Minister inaugurated **Micron Technology's Semiconductor Assembly, Test, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) plant in Sanand, Gujarat**.
- The event signalled the commencement of commercial manufacturing and marked an important advancement in India's semiconductor ambitions.
- The Prime Minister termed the facility a landmark development, **highlighting India's transition from being largely software-driven to emerging as a strong player in hardware manufacturing**, thereby deepening its integration into the global semiconductor supply chain.

Micron ATMP Sanand: Boost to India Semiconductor Mission

- The Sanand ATMP unit is among the most sophisticated **semiconductor investments in India**.
- ATMP refers to the crucial processes of **assembling, testing, marking, and packaging chips** before they are supplied to international markets.

Strengthening India's Semiconductor Ecosystem

- The inauguration advances the goals of the **India Semiconductor Mission 2.0**, which seeks to establish a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem nationwide.
- The Prime Minister stressed the strategic importance of semiconductors in the era of artificial intelligence, remarking that just as oil shaped the 20th century, microchips will define the 21st century.

- So far, 10 semiconductor projects have been cleared under the **Semicon India Programme, with more units planned in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, and Punjab.**
- The Micron Sanand facility will manufacture **DRAM and NAND memory products**, which are vital components for AI technologies, data centres, smartphones, and advanced computing systems.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- **Context:** The Bureau of Energy Efficiency, under the Ministry of Power, celebrated its **25th Foundation Day**, highlighting a significant milestone in India's journey toward efficient energy use.

About Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- BEE is responsible for formulating and executing energy conservation policies and programs in India, serving as the nodal institution for driving sustainable energy use.
- It acts as the national agency for **promoting energy efficiency and reducing energy intensity across all sectors.**
- Established: **1 March 2002 under Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- Statutory body under the **Ministry of Power, Government of India.**

Objectives

- Lower the energy intensity of India's economy.
- Promote self-regulation and market-driven approaches for energy conservation.
- Enable sustainable development by encouraging efficient energy use in all sectors.

Expansion of FRA Cells into Project Monitoring Units

- **Context:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs had launched funding for Forest Rights Act (FRA) Cells under the DAJGUA programme.
- **Objective:** Strengthen implementation of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006** by providing

additional staff, speeding up forest rights claims, maintaining records, and digitising titles.

Reasons for the Change

- Separate FRA cells were reportedly increasing costs.
- Multiple policy-specific cells created coordination challenges.
- A unified PMU system is expected to improve efficiency and streamline communication.

Concerns and State Response

- Some States expressed concerns about closing existing FRA cells.
- Odisha has already ordered closure of FRA cells in 50 sub-divisions.
- Chhattisgarh is exploring restructuring options under the new PMU model.

Amorphous Metal Plant

- **Context:** Japan-based Proterial plans to invest USD 80 million to set up India's first amorphous metal plant in **Srinagar, Andhra Pradesh.**
- The initial production capacity of the unit will be 30,000 tonnes per annum, eventually expanding to 1 lakh tonnes.
- **Amorphous metal is a non-crystalline, electrical grade steel, which is mainly used to improve energy efficiency in transformers.**
- It is used in power distribution transformers, energy-efficient electrical equipment, and in grid modernization and integration of renewable energy.

Football for Schools (F4S) Initiative

- **Context:** The Union Minister of State for Education attended and led a football distribution programme in West Bengal under the Football for Schools (F4S) initiative.

About F4S

- F4S is an international programme introduced in 2019 by Federation Internationale de

Football Association (FIFA) in partnership with UNESCO.

Objective

- The initiative seeks to embed football within the school system to expand educational access and foster children's learning, personal growth, and empowerment through sports.

Implementation in India

- In India, the programme is coordinated by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) under the Ministry of Education. It is implemented with support from the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

Target Coverage

- Globally, F4S aims to reach around 700 million children, ensuring that at least half the beneficiaries are girls. India has pledged to extend the programme to approximately 25 million children.

Policy Convergence

- The initiative complements the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aligns with international commitments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA).

Cabinet Committee on Security

- **Context:** Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to assess the developing situation in West Asia.

About the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- The CCS is India's highest decision-making authority on issues concerning national security and defence.
- It is led by the Prime Minister.
- Its core members generally include: The Home Minister, The Defence Minister, The Finance Minister and The External Affairs Minister
- The National Security Advisor (NSA) functions as the principal coordinator at the secretary level for matters handled by the CCS.

Responsibilities of the CCS

▪ Defence & National Security

- Examines both internal and external security threats.
- Takes key decisions on defence preparedness, military operations, and intelligence coordination.

▪ External Relations & Strategic Affairs

- Frames policies related to foreign affairs.
- Reviews strategic international partnerships and security cooperation.

▪ Nuclear & Space Matters

- Supervises important policy decisions regarding nuclear capability and space programmes.

▪ Senior-Level Appointments

- Clears appointments to top positions in defence forces and intelligence organizations.

NITI Aayog – JICA SDG Cooperation

- **Context:** NITI Aayog and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) formalised the Record of Discussions (RoD).

- The agreement launches Phase II of the Japan-India collaboration on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Aim of the Project: To enhance policy design and execution mechanisms for achieving SDGs.

Encompasses six priority sectors:

- Global partnerships
- Health and nutrition
- Education
- Agriculture and water management
- Financial inclusion and skill development
- Core infrastructure

Planned Interventions

- Exchange programmes between Indian and Japanese stakeholders.

- Training and institutional capacity-building initiatives.
- Joint knowledge-sharing platforms and forums.
- Documentation and replication of successful best practices.

Megalithic Rock-Cut Chamber Discovery

- **Context:** A 2,000-year-old laterite rock-cut burial chamber from the Megalithic era was discovered during construction work in Panayal. The site lies in the Kerala region, which has many ancient Megalithic archaeological remains.

Laterite Rock-Cut Chambers

- These are underground burial chambers carved directly into laterite rock formations.
- They served as funerary spaces where the dead were buried along with objects such as pottery or tools.
- Such burials reflect the ritual practices and beliefs about life after death among Megalithic communities.

Purpose of the Chambers

- These chambers were mainly used for secondary burial practices.
- After initial burial rituals, the bones of the deceased were later collected and placed inside the chamber.
- Grave goods such as pottery, iron implements, and beads were included, possibly to help the soul in the afterlife.

Different Local Names

- In Kerala and nearby areas, these structures are referred to by various traditional names:
- Muniyara – meaning hermit's chamber
- Pandava Cave – associated with the legendary Pandavas
- Peeranki Cave – also called cannon cave
- Nidhikuzhi – meaning treasure pit
- Kalppathayam – meaning stone box or stone granary

Kerala Language Bill

- **Context:** The Governor has approved the Language Bill-2025, which will make Malayalam the official language in the state of Kerala.
- According to this bill, Malayalam has been made compulsory as the first language in government and government-aided schools till class 10.
- The bill states that the language rights of linguistic minorities like Tamil and Kannada will be protected.

Constitutional Provisions

- Part XVII, Articles 343 to 351 of the Constitution of India specify the official languages of India.

Part XVII, Article 345 of the Constitution of India

- Official language or languages of a State.
- The legislature of a state may adopt one or more languages in use in the state or Hindi as the language to be used for any official purpose of the state.

Part XVII, Article 346 of the Constitution of India

- Official language for communication between a state and another state or between a state and the Union Government.

Part XVII, Article 347 of the Constitution of India

- Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State.
- The President may order the declaration of any language as officially recognized throughout the State or in any part of the State.

Andhra Pradesh Draft Population Management Policy to Raise Fertility Rate

- **Context:** Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, introduced the Draft Population Management Policy in the State Assembly.

- **The policy aims to increase the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) from 1.5 to the replacement level of 2.1.**
- Objective: **Reverse the declining fertility trend** and prepare the State for an ageing society **by 2047.**
- The policy is proposed to be implemented from **April 1, 2026.**
- The government proposed an incentive of **₹25,000 to encourage families to have a third child.**
- A **“Poshana - Shiksha - Suraksha”** package will be provided for families with a third child:
 - ₹25,000 incentive at the time of delivery
 - ₹1,000 monthly assistance for five years
 - Free education up to 18 years for the child
- The Chief Minister warned that declining fertility could lead to a shrinking workforce and economic challenges.
- If the trend continues, about 23% of the State’s population may become elderly in the future.
- The policy also aims to nearly double women’s labour force participation to boost the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by 15%.
- **Tamil Nadu (TFR 1.4) and Kerala (TFR 1.6) were cited as examples of States with declining fertility rates.**
- Countries like **Japan, Italy, and South Korea** were mentioned as facing challenges due to very low TFRs.

Raisina Dialogue (2026)

- Context: The 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue (2026), India’s leading conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, has commenced in New Delhi.
- The Raisina Dialogue, launched in 2016, is an annual multilateral forum that discusses issues related to global governance and international cooperation.

- The event is jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.
- The theme for 2026 is **“Samskāra: Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement”**, which emphasises the role of civilisational values in shaping global engagement, cooperation, and development.
- Chief Guest: Alexander Stubb, the President of Finland, is attending as the chief guest.

Key Focus Areas:

- The discussions revolve around six major pillars, including:
 - Shifting global power dynamics
 - Governance of oceans and cyberspace
 - Climate challenges and sustainability
 - Artificial intelligence and digital governance

India orders refiners to boost LPG production

- **Context:** In the wake of the escalating war in the Middle East, the central government has issued an emergency order to oil refineries to increase LPG production to prevent a shortage of cooking gas in India.
- The order has been issued using the **emergency powers granted under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.**
- The central government has instructed all public and private oil refineries to increase LPG production using chemicals like **propane and butane.**
- At the same time, refineries have been banned from using these chemicals to manufacture petrochemicals.

Indian Cities Exceed PM2.5 Limits

- **Context:** 204 out of 238 Indian cities recorded average PM2.5 levels above the **Indian standard of 40 µg/m³ during the last winter, according to Central Pollution Control Board**

(CPCB) data analysed by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

- Ghaziabad was the most polluted city with an average PM_{2.5} level of 172 µg/m³, followed by Noida (166 µg/m³) and Delhi (163 µg/m³).
- The analysis used data from **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) of CPCB from October 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026.**
- No city met the World Health Organization (WHO) PM_{2.5} standard of 5 µg/m³.
- Among major Indian cities, Delhi (163 µg/m³), Kolkata (78 µg/m³), Mumbai (48 µg/m³), and Chennai (44 µg/m³) recorded winter PM_{2.5} levels above the national standard, while Bengaluru (39 µg/m³) was slightly below the limit.
- **Chamarajanagar in Karnataka was the cleanest city with an average PM_{2.5} level of 19 µg/m³.**
- Among the 10 cleanest cities, eight were from Karnataka, and one each from Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya.

NITI Aayog - UNICEF Partnership to Improve Maternal and Child Nutrition

- Context: NITI Aayog and UNICEF India signed a **Statement of Intent (SoI)** to strengthen **health and nutrition conditions in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks.**
- The partnership is aimed at **improving the nutritional status of mothers and children in underdeveloped and underserved areas of the country.**
- It is intended to **speed up development progress** under the Aspirational Districts Programme and Aspirational Blocks Programme.
- The initiative will focus **on upgrading Anganwadi infrastructure, strengthening**

the capacity of frontline workers, increasing the use of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and promoting nutrition awareness among communities.

- Through UNICEF's **IMPAct4Nutrition (I4N) platform, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds** will be directed towards community-level nutrition programmes.
- The collaboration encourages **evidence-based nutrition strategies** to improve public health and contribute to building a **healthy and productive population in line with India's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.**

Aspirational Districts Programme (2018)

- It is launched by the NITI Aayog
- It aims to improving key **social and economic indicators in 112 districts** by ensuring **better coordination between central and state government schemes.**

Aspirational Blocks Programme (2023)

- It is launched by the NITI Aayog on January 7, 2023.
- It is a **decentralised governance model** created to **strengthen service delivery and ensure complete access to essential government services in 500 blocks.**

India's first riverine lighthouses

- Context: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) is indeed constructing **India's first set of riverine lighthouses along the Brahmaputra River in Assam** to enhance navigation on National Waterway-2.
- The initiative aims to **ensure safe round-the-clock inland navigation and encourage river tourism along the Brahmaputra waterway.**
- The project is being implemented jointly by the **Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships** and the **Inland Waterways Authority of India.**

- Four lighthouses will be established at **Bogibeel, Pandu, and Silghat on the south bank, and Biswanath Ghat on the north bank.**
- These lighthouses will **operate on solar energy and include sensors to monitor weather and river conditions for better navigation safety.**
- The project will **support cargo transport on National Waterway-2 and help lower logistics costs in Northeast India.**
- **National Waterway 2** is situated on the **Brahmaputra River in Assam.**
- It extends for around **891 km from Dhubri to Sadiya.**

India's Commitment to Eliminate Cervical Cancer

- Context : The Union Health Minister reiterated India's commitment to achieving the **World Health Organization 90-70-90 targets** for the elimination of Cervical Cancer by 2030.
- The goal is to ensure **90% of girls receive the complete course of the Human Papillomavirus Vaccine before the age of 15.**
- It also aims for **70% of women to be screened with a reliable test by age 35 and again by age 45.**
- Additionally, **90% of women with precancerous conditions should receive treatment, and 90% of women with invasive cervical cancer should be provided proper medical care.**
- Cervical Cancer is caused by the **human papillomavirus (HPV).**

About HPV Vaccination

- It is launched on **February 28, 2026**, aims to immunise **around 12 million 14-year-old girls each year.**
- Under the programme, the **Gardasil Quadrivalent** will be provided **free of cost in a single dose** to protect against **Human Papillomavirus infection.**

Moonshot project

- Context : The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Pratiksha Trust have launched a **"Moonshot" project** aimed at developing **AI-based brain co-processors to support stroke rehabilitation.**

About Moonshot Project

- The **Moonshot project** aims to develop advanced **brain-computer technologies** to assist or restore brain functions lost due to neurological disorders.
- It focuses on helping **stroke survivors regain movement and coordination**, especially functions like reaching and grasping.
- The project seeks to develop **AI-driven closed-loop neural devices** that can decode brain signals and stimulate brain activity to aid recovery.

SWAYATT

- Context: Government e-Marketplace (GeM) celebrated **7 years of the SWAYATT initiative** to promote inclusive public procurement in India.

About SWAYATT

- **SWAYATT (Startups, Women and Youth Advantage through e-Transactions)** was launched on **19 February 2019.**
- The initiative aims to enable **startups, women entrepreneurs, youth, MSEs and Self Help Groups (SHGs)** to participate directly in government procurement.
- It focuses on solving three key challenges **access to markets, access to finance, and value addition opportunities.**
- Through GeM's digital platform, sellers can **connect directly with government buyers**, reducing entry barriers.
- Dedicated portals such as **Startup Runway** and **Womaniya** improve visibility of startups and women-led enterprises.

- The initiative strengthens **inclusive economic growth and digital public procurement in India.**

Jal Jeevan Mission

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the **Ministry of Jal Shakti's Jal Jeevan programme to 2028** and provisioned more money to meet its goal of **providing a minimum amount of daily potable water to every rural household in the country.**
- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) was introduced in **2019 with the objective of ensuring Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) that supply 55 litres of drinking water per person per day to every rural household in India by 2024.**
- The mission promotes planning at the village level and encourages active involvement of local communities in making decisions related to water supply systems.
- Under the programme, at least 50% of the members in the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) / Pani Samiti must be women, ensuring gender participation in water management.

About Jal Jeevan Mission

- The earlier National Rural Drinking Water Programme was reorganized and merged into the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Nodal Ministry: The mission is implemented by the **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Funding Pattern (Centre–State Sharing)

- **90:10:** For Himalayan States such as **Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and for North-Eastern States.**
- **100% Central Funding:** For Union Territories.
- **50:50:** For all other States in India.

Major Achievements of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- Since the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, more than 12 crore rural households have been provided with piped drinking water connections, compared to 3.23 crore households earlier, according to the Economic Survey 2024–25.
- States that have reached **100% tap water coverage** include Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Telangana, and Mizoram.
- **Union Territories with full coverage** are Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Puducherry, where every rural household now has access to piped drinking water.

Madurai Airport Upgraded to International Status

- **Context:** Madurai airport was officially declared an **international airport**, following the union cabinet's approval and the issuance of formal orders **by the Airport Authority of India.**
- Marking a major milestone for aviation connectivity in **Southern Tamil Nadu.**

Major Benefits

- Direct international air connectivity to global destinations for the people of Southern districts of Tamil Nadu
- Easier access for international tourists and devotees visiting Madurai and nearby pilgrimage sites
- Boost to tourism, automobile, rubber, chemical and granite industries of the region
- Promotion to trade and investment opportunities; contributing to local economic development

Nationwide Darknet Drug Racket Busted by NCB

- Context: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has dismantled a nationwide drug trafficking network known as “**Team Kalki**”, which had been operating across India through the **Darknet** since **January 2025**.

About Darknet

- The darknet refers to a hidden section of the internet that cannot be accessed using regular web browsers or common search engines.
- Access to this network requires special software such as Tor, along with specific configurations or permissions.
- It provides high levels of anonymity, as users’ identities and locations are concealed through encryption techniques.
- The darknet forms a small portion of the larger Deep Web.

Anavaran System for Tracking Deforestation Stopped

- **Context:** The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** has reportedly stopped issuing the fortnightly alerts produced by its **AI-driven Anavaran Deforestation Alert System**, which was designed to track forest cover loss almost in real time.

About Anavaran Deforestation Alert System

- **Anavaran is an artificial intelligence-based platform** created by the Forest Survey of India to monitor deforestation activities.
- It analyzes satellite data along with **machine learning techniques** to identify areas where forest cover has been reduced.
- The system sends alerts to State Forest Departments every **15 days** to help them respond quickly to forest loss.
- It was introduced as a **pilot initiative in 2024** to improve near real-time monitoring of forests.

Technology Used

- The system operates on the **Google Earth Engine (GEE) platform**.
- It processes data from Sentinel-2 optical satellite imagery, which provides 10–20 metre spatial resolution.
- It also uses **Sentinel-1 Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** data, allowing forest monitoring even during cloudy weather or monsoon conditions.

New Welfare Schemes for Persons with Disabilities

- **Context:** During a post-budget webinar, highlighted two new initiatives – **Divyang Sahara Yojana** and **Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana** – introduced in the Union Budget 2026–27 under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Divyang Sahara Yojana

- The objective of this scheme is to ensure affordable availability of advanced assistive devices for persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) so that they can lead more independent lives.
- It will support the **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)** in boosting production of assistive equipment by incorporating artificial intelligence and modern technologies.

- **Assistive Marts:** Dedicated retail-like centres will be created where beneficiaries can view, try, and select suitable assistive devices according to their requirements.

- **Service Hubs:** Existing **Pradhan Mantri Divyasha-Vayoshri Kendras (PMDVKs)** will be upgraded to provide evaluation, custom fitting, repair, and maintenance services.

Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana

- This programme focuses on providing skill development training aligned with industry needs, enabling persons with disabilities to secure respectable employment opportunities.

- Priority Sectors: Training will be offered in areas such as Information Technology (IT), Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC), Hospitality, and Food & Beverage services.
- Digital Linkage: The registration process for skill training will be integrated with the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** and the **PM-DAKSH Portal** to streamline access and monitoring.

SHINE App

- **Context:** The Indian Railways introduced the **SHINE App** on **International Women's Day (March 8, 2026)** to enhance workplace safety and support women employees across the organisation.
- This step aims to create a safer and more supportive working environment.

About the SHINE App

- SHINE stands for Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment.
- The application enables women employees to report cases of sexual harassment directly through the Human Resources Management System (HRMS).

Key Features

- The SHINE app provides a dedicated digital platform for women staff in Indian Railways to submit complaints of workplace harassment quickly and securely.
- It is integrated with the HRMS platform used by railway employees for personnel-related services.
- Through the Employee Self-Service (ESS) portal, women employees can file complaints directly online.
- Once submitted, the complaints are automatically forwarded to the appropriate committees responsible for addressing such issues.

Objective

- The initiative aims to simplify the reporting process, ensure confidential handling of complaints, and make sure that cases reach the concerned authorities promptly for action.

Government Invokes Essential Commodities Act

- **Context:** Due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia and disruptions in LNG shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, **the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955** by issuing the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026.

Key Provisions of the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026

Four-tier priority system

- Gas distribution will follow a four-level priority framework. The allocation for each sector will be determined using the average natural gas consumption recorded over the previous six months.

Reallocation of gas supplies

- If shortages occur, gas may be diverted from lower-priority sectors such as petrochemical industries and power plants to higher-priority sectors that require assured supply.

About the Essential Commodities Act, 1955

- The **Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955** was enacted to monitor and control the production, supply, distribution, and pricing of essential goods.
- Its purpose is to ensure that such commodities remain available to the public at reasonable prices and to curb practices like **hoarding, black marketing, and excessive profiteering, especially during times of scarcity or crisis.**
- The Act gives the Central Government—and in certain situations state governments—

the authority to intervene in markets when necessary.

- This helps safeguard consumer interests and maintain food and energy security across the country.

Commodities Covered Under the Act

- The central government has the authority to designate particular goods as essential commodities.

Typical items under this category include

- Food grains such as rice, wheat, and pulses
 - Edible oils and sugar
 - Petroleum and petroleum-based products
 - Fertilisers and pharmaceutical drugs
 - LPG and natural gas
- The government can add new items or remove existing ones from the list depending on national needs and circumstances.

Defence Forces Vision 2047

- **Context:** The Minister of Defence, unveiled a document titled “**Defence Forces Vision 2047: A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military.**” The report was prepared by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff to outline the long-term transformation of India’s armed forces.

Objectives of Defence Forces Vision 2047

Preparation for future warfare

- The vision focuses on equipping the military to deal with modern and multi-domain conflicts, including areas such as cyber operations, space security, artificial intelligence, and information warfare.

Link with national development goals

- The transformation of India’s defence capabilities is aligned with the country’s **larger ambition of becoming a developed nation by 2047.**

Key Elements of the Roadmap

Integrated and multi-domain military structure

- The plan proposes building a flexible and unified military system capable of operating effectively across land, sea, air, cyber, and space domains.
- Greater coordination in operational planning among the three services is expected to enhance efficiency and responsiveness.

Stronger jointness among the services

- A central component of the vision is improved collaboration and synergy between the **Army, Navy, and Air Force.**
- Better coordination in strategy, operations, and capability development will help strengthen overall operational effectiveness.

Promotion of defence self-reliance

- The roadmap supports the government’s **Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative by encouraging domestic defence manufacturing and reduced dependence on imports.**

Focus on advanced technologies

- The document highlights the increased use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber tools, and advanced surveillance capabilities to modernise the armed forces.

Phased implementation strategy

- The roadmap suggests a step-by-step implementation plan, identifying short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities for strengthening critical military capabilities.

National Highways Green Cover Index

- **Context:** The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**, in collaboration with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, has published the first-ever Annual Report on the **National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26.**

About the National Highways Green Cover Index

- The evaluation uses high-resolution satellite sensors to identify **chlorophyll levels in vegetation, allowing for a scientific and technology-based assessment of greenery** along national highways.
- The NH-GCI score is represented as a percentage, which reflects the **share of land within the Right of Way (RoW) of national highways that is covered by vegetation.**
- The index tracks the extent of green cover on both sides of highways, analysing it at a detailed scale of one kilometre segments.
- In this assessment, nearly 30,000 km of national highways across 24 states were examined for the period between July and December 2024.

Proton Accelerator Project

- **Context:** The state of Andhra Pradesh will host a **high-energy proton accelerator in Visakhapatnam** as part of India's long-term nuclear research and development programme.
- A proton is a **subatomic particle carrying a positive electric charge** and is present within the nucleus of every atom in all chemical elements.
- The development of the proton accelerator forms a part of **India's long-term nuclear energy strategy.**
- It represents a critical and strategically significant technology, which may require several decades before reaching full operational capacity.
- The facility will create **high-energy neutrons** through spallation reactions, enabling the conversion of India's large thorium reserves into uranium fuel that can be used in nuclear reactors.

About the Proton Accelerator Project

- The proposed high-energy proton accelerator in **Visakhapatnam will produce high-energy neutrons**, which can be used to transform thorium into uranium fuel for nuclear reactors.
- The location is considered advantageous due to Visakhapatnam's strong technological infrastructure and proximity to the sea, which can help in cooling the facility.
- The project will operate in association with the **Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT).**

National Leprosy Eradication Programme

- **Context:** According to the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) has played a significant role in **lowering the prevalence of Leprosy in India.**
- NLEP is a **centrally sponsored scheme** designed to eliminate leprosy from the country. It has now been incorporated into the National Health Mission (NHM) and functions under the MoHFW.
- The programme aims to achieve **"Leprosy Mukta Bharat" by 2027**, which is **three years earlier than the 2030 target set under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- Efforts toward final elimination are guided by the National Strategic Plan and Roadmap (2023–2027), which focuses on reaching the last-mile cases.
- **India officially eliminated leprosy as a public health concern in 2005**, and the current prevalence rate stands at **0.57 per 10,000 people.**

Key Components of NLEP Standardised Treatment

- Government health facilities provide free

Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) consisting of **Rifampicin, Dapsone, and Clofazimine.**

- India has also designated leprosy as a notifiable disease and updated its **treatment guidelines in 2025** in accordance with World Health Organization standards.

Disability Support

- Through Disability Prevention and Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR) services, patients receive reconstructive **surgery, protective footwear, and a welfare assistance of ₹12,000 for those undergoing surgery.**

Awareness Campaign

- The Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC) is conducted every year on **30 January, observed as Anti-Leprosy Day**, to raise awareness and combat social stigma.

Digital Monitoring

- The Nikusth 2.0 digital platform enables real-time reporting and tracking of patients, thereby improving national surveillance and monitoring of leprosy cases.

ISRO Partners with AIIMS for Space

Medicine Research

- Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) for cooperation in space medicine and research.
- According to the ISRO, the MoU aims to promote joint research with a objectives of advancing human health, performance and safety during human space missions.
- “This cooperation is targeted to conduct ground and space-based studies to develop multidisciplinary space medicine expertise, medical devices, procedure and protocols to maintain health and performance under extreme environments as well as advance healthcare for the nation”.

Kisan Credit Card

- Context:** The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) provides timely, affordable, and collateral-free credit to farmers, including small, marginal, tenant farmers and SHGs/JLGs.

About Kisan Credit Card

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, **launched in 1998**, was created to make it easier and faster for farmers to obtain short-term institutional credit for agricultural production.
- The scheme offers financial assistance for **working capital and investment in allied agricultural activities.**
- It also supports expenses related to post-harvest processes and marketing, thereby providing farmers with broader financial backing to **improve their agricultural income.**
- Under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), **the maximum loan limit has been increased to ₹5 lakh**, while the amount of collateral-free credit available to each borrower has been raised to ₹2 lakh.

PM-SETU Scheme

- Context:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has set up a National Steering Committee (NSC) as the highest decision-making body to oversee and guide the **Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability through Upgraded ITIs (PM SETU) Scheme.**

- The main objective of this scheme is to **strengthen the country's skill development system by modernizing and upgrading Industrial Training Institutes and improving employment opportunities for trainees.**

About PM-SETU Scheme

- The Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme introduced to **improve and strengthen India's vocational training system.**

- The scheme focuses on modernizing the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) network by **upgrading 1,000 government ITIs across the country into advanced training centres** that are better aligned with industry requirements.
- To **encourage responsible reporting of security issues** and strengthen public confidence in digital infrastructure such as the Aadhaar system.

Key Features

- The programme includes **20 selected ethical hackers and cybersecurity specialists** with significant experience in identifying digital security flaws.
- Participants will examine **important UIDAI digital platforms** such as the UIDAI official website, the myAadhaar portal, and the Secure QR Code application to identify potential vulnerabilities.
- Security flaws will be classified into Critical, High, Medium, and Low categories, and rewards will be provided according to the seriousness of the vulnerability discovered.
- The initiative is being implemented in collaboration with ComOlho IT Private Limited, a firm specializing in cybersecurity solutions.

Bug Bounty Programme

- Context: **Unique Identification Authority of India** has introduced its **first organized Bug Bounty Programme to enhance the cybersecurity framework of the Aadhaar ecosystem.**
- This programme adds an extra level of protection to existing security practices, including security audits, vulnerability assessments, penetration testing, and continuous monitoring.

India's First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre

- **About the Bug Bounty Programme**
- A Bug Bounty Programme is a **cybersecurity initiative** in which organizations invite ethical hackers and security experts to detect weaknesses in their digital systems.
- These participants are given incentives for responsibly reporting vulnerabilities before they can be misused by cybercriminals.
- **Context:** India has initiated the establishment of the **country's first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre in Andhra Pradesh.**
- This facility is being developed by the company 'Sagar Defence Engineering'.
- It is situated at the Juvvaladinne fishing harbour in Andhra Pradesh.
- This project marks a significant milestone in **strengthening India's maritime and defense manufacturing capabilities.**

Aim

- To improve the **security of digital platforms** by identifying potential vulnerabilities in advance.

- It will support the development of indigenous autonomous maritime technologies.
- Geospatial data enabled by the policy supports infrastructure development, urban planning, disaster response, and national security initiatives.

GeodCon-26

- **Context:** GeodCon-26 is the first national conference in India dedicated to geodesy, organised to deliberate on recent scientific progress in geospatial science. The conference took place at the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) in New Delhi.

Geodesy

- Geodesy is the scientific discipline that studies the **Earth's shape, dimensions, gravitational field, and accurate positioning on its surface.**
- It forms the fundamental scientific basis for **cartography, satellite navigation, and geographic positioning systems.**
- Geodesy plays a crucial role in planning infrastructure, managing disasters, monitoring climate changes, and ensuring national security.
- Precise geodetic measurements are essential for satellite-based navigation systems such as **NavIC and Global Positioning System (GPS),** along with other satellite technologies.
- Geodesy acts as the core scientific backbone of the **geospatial ecosystem, enabling accurate Earth observation and spatial data interpretation.**

About National Geospatial Policy 2022

- The policy aims to boost **India's geospatial sector by enhancing accessibility to geospatial data and encouraging technological innovation.**
- It makes geospatial information more open and accessible, allowing government bodies, private firms, researchers, and citizens to use such data more freely.
- The policy encourages greater involvement of private companies and startups in developing geospatial technologies and services.

Digital Twin system

- **Context:** The V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority in Tamil Nadu has become **India's first major port to introduce a Digital Twin system.**

- A Digital Twin refers to a real-time virtual representation of a physical asset, infrastructure, or system, allowing continuous monitoring and analysis.

- The platform combines information from multiple technologies such as IoT sensors, GPS tracking systems, LiDAR mapping, drone surveillance, and CCTV networks to build an interactive digital model of the port.

- This system enables real-time tracking and visualisation of port operations, including berth availability, ship movements, crane operations, and storage yard usage.

- An AI-driven monitoring mechanism helps forecast possible failures in cargo-handling equipment, which improves operational efficiency and reduces vessel turnaround time.

About V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority

- VOC Port, earlier known as **Tuticorin Port,** is an artificial deep-water port that functions throughout the year. It is located in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu.

- The port is named after **V. O. Chidambaram Pillai,** who established the **Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906,** regarded as India's first indigenous shipping enterprise.

- VOC Port is also being developed as a Green Hydrogen production and export hub under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission.**

Small Modular Reactors

- Context: India is working on three types of indigenous Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) as part of the **Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat**.

About Small Modular Reactors

- SMRs are compact nuclear fission reactors with a power output of up to 300 MWe, which is roughly one-third the capacity of traditional nuclear reactors.
- The indigenous SMR designs are being developed by the **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)**.
- As of early 2026, only **Russia and China have operational SMR facilities**.
- India's Recent Nuclear Power Reforms
- **India plans to increase its nuclear energy capacity from 8.18 GW to about 100 GW by the year 2047.**
- Under the Nuclear Energy Mission, the **country aims to develop at least five domestically built SMRs by 2033.**
- The **SHANTI Act, 2025** permits private companies to participate in the nuclear power sector.
- The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has been given statutory authority, strengthening its role as an independent regulator for nuclear safety and oversight.

International Solar Alliance

- Context: The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** launched the **Green Hydrogen and Storage Start-up Challenge 2026**.
- The initiative aims to **identify and support innovative startups** that are developing advanced technologies in green hydrogen production and energy storage systems.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- ISA is a global intergovernmental body committed to promoting the large-scale adoption of solar energy in order to support the transition towards a **carbon-neutral world**.
- The alliance was established in 2015 through a joint initiative of **India and France during the COP21 Climate Conference held in Paris**.
- Its headquarters is located in **Gurugram, India**.
- ISA follows the **"Towards 1000 Strategy"**, which seeks to mobilise **USD 1,000 billion in investments in solar energy by 2030**, while providing clean energy access to 1,000 million people and facilitating the installation of 1,000 GW of solar power capacity worldwide.
- This initiative is expected to reduce global solar-related emissions by around **1,000 million tonnes of CO₂ every year**.
- The alliance currently includes **125 member and signatory countries**.

Four Strategic Pillars

- **Catalytic Finance Hub:** Works to unlock and channel large-scale investments for solar energy projects.
- **Global Capability Centre and Digitisation:** Encourages innovation, digital solutions, and skill development in the solar sector.
- **Regional and Country-Level Engagement:** Focuses on customised actions and support for different countries and regions.
- **Technology Roadmap and Policy:** Promotes the adoption and deployment of emerging solar technologies through policy guidance.

SWAMIH Fund

- Context: The **Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Investment Fund (SWAMIH)** has become an important government initiative **aimed at supporting India's housing sector**.

About SWAMIH

- **Introduced in 2019**, the SWAMIH Fund provides last-mile funding to housing projects that are stuck due to financial difficulties.
- The scheme is **sponsored by the Ministry of Finance**.
- It is administered by SBICAP Ventures Ltd., an investment management company belonging to the State Bank Group.

Impact and Outcomes

- The initiative has helped complete more than 58,596 housing units so far.
- Over 1 lakh homes are expected to be delivered, benefiting around 2.38 lakh individuals.

Purple Fest

- **Context:** Rashtrapati Bhavan organised the **Purple Fest to honour the talents and accomplishments of Divyangjan (persons with disabilities)** and to encourage a more inclusive society.

About Purple Fest

- Purple Fest is an inclusive event conducted by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** to acknowledge and celebrate the abilities, achievements, and ambitions of persons with disabilities.
- The festival seeks to raise awareness, uphold dignity, and ensure equal opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.
- Participants displayed their artistic skills through various cultural performances held at the Open Air Theatre.
- The programme focused on **spreading awareness about the rights, dignity, and abilities of persons with disabilities**.

- The event promoted the involvement of civil society groups, institutions, and citizens in supporting and empowering Divyangjan.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- **Context:** Project Great Indian Bustard has **entered the fourth year of its captive breeding programme**, with around 70 birds currently maintained in captivity to support the species' conservation.

About Great Indian Bustard

- The Great Indian Bustard is an agro-grassland bird native to the Indian subcontinent.
- Its main population is found in Rajasthan, with smaller populations present in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.
- It is an **omnivorous bird belonging to the Otididae family**.
- The species shows sexual dimorphism, meaning males and females differ in appearance.
- In Rajasthan, the bird is popularly **known as Godawan**.
- The species faces threats such as **illegal hunting and collisions with high-voltage power lines**, which significantly affect its population.
- The species is also protected under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme through a dedicated species recovery programme.

Protection Status

- IUCN: Critically Endangered
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- CITES: Appendix I

Sujal Gaon ID

- **Context:** Union Minister for Jal Shakti, recently introduced the Sujal Gaon ID to strengthen digital monitoring of rural drinking water infrastructure.

About Sujal Gaon ID

- Sujal Gaon ID is a **unique digital identification system** designed to digitally map assets related to rural piped drinking water supply.
- These IDs have been created across 31 States and Union Territories and are connected to about 67,000 Sujalam Bharat IDs.
- Each Sujalam Bharat ID **combines the infrastructure ID of a scheme and the service area ID**, forming a complete digital record of rural water service delivery.
- The system is integrated with the **Sujalam Bharat national digital architecture**, enabling end-to-end mapping of the rural water supply chain from source to tap through unique IDs assigned to every village or service area.
- The initiative has been introduced by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti under the Jal Jeevan Mission**.

Key Facts about Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- The Jal Jeevan Mission was launched on **15 August 2019**.
- Its objective is to provide safe and sufficient drinking water to all rural households through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs)**.
- The programme follows a community-driven approach and emphasises Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities to promote awareness and participation.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

Funding Pattern

- Centre-State sharing: 50:50
- Himalayan and North-Eastern States: 90:10

- Union Territories: Entire funding is provided by the Central Government

Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP)

- **Context:** The Government of India has introduced the **Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP)** to speed up the removal of legacy waste dumpsites in cities across the country.

About DRAP

- DRAP is a one-year focused initiative aimed at **quickly clearing long-standing waste dumps in urban areas**.
- The programme adopts a systematic and accelerated strategy to eliminate large garbage dumps and recover the land for beneficial purposes such as parks, public amenities, and waste-management facilities.
- **Launched in November 2025**
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**
- The programme is being carried out **under Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban 2.0**.

Objectives

- Ensure complete removal of dumpsites within one year after adoption.
- Speed up the treatment and disposal of legacy waste while preventing the formation of new dumping grounds.
- Restore valuable urban land and improve environmental quality and public health.

Key Features

- Contributes to the target of eliminating all dumpsites by September 2026 under SBM-U 2.0.
- The programme prioritises 214 large dumpsites located in 202 urban local bodies, which together hold around 80% of the country's legacy waste.

- The Centre provides ₹550 per tonne as Central Financial Assistance (CFA) for treating legacy waste.

5P Implementation Framework

- The programme operates through five pillars – **Political leadership, Public financing, Partnerships, People’s participation, and Project management.**

National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC)

- Context: NMDC Limited has achieved a milestone by becoming the **first mining company in India to produce 50 million tonnes of iron ore** in a single financial year (2025–26).

About NMDC

- NMDC Limited is a **Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** functioning under the **Ministry of Steel.**
- It is **India’s largest iron ore producer** and plays a major role in the development of the country’s mineral resources.
- **Established: 1958, Headquarters: Hyderabad**

Objectives

- To identify, develop, and responsibly utilize mineral resources within India.
- To maintain a stable domestic supply of iron ore for the steel sector.
- To contribute to India’s target of increasing steel production **capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030.**

Major Functions

- **Iron Ore Mining:** Operates large-scale mechanised mines primarily in Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.
- Undertakes geological surveys and exploration activities to discover and assess mineral deposits.
- **Diamond Mining:** Manages India’s only mechanised diamond mine located in Panna.

- Uses scientific mining techniques and environmental management practices to ensure responsible resource extraction.

Samridh Gram Phygital Services Pilot Project

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Communications, will inaugurate the Samridh Gram Phygital Services Pilot Project at Umri village.

About Samridh Gram Phygital Services Initiative

- Samridh Gram is a pilot initiative designed to deliver integrated services in rural areas through a **“phygital” model, combining physical service centres with digital platforms.**
- It plans to establish Samridh Kendras at the village level that will function as hubs for providing a range of citizen services using digital connectivity.
- Implemented by: Department of Telecommunications
- The project is built upon the **digital infrastructure of BharatNet, one of the world’s largest rural broadband connectivity programmes.**
- The initiative is being tested in three villages representing varied socio-economic conditions: **Umri, Narakoduru, Chaurawala**
- Each Samridh Kendra is planned to cater to several nearby villages within a radius of about 5 km.

Objectives

- To demonstrate how BharatNet connectivity can support the delivery of integrated government and public services at the village level.

- To create a scalable model for rural digital transformation by integrating digital infrastructure, governance services, and community participation.
- BharatNet Connectivity: Utilises high-speed rural broadband to ensure efficient digital service delivery.
- Formulate and update adoption regulations and related guidelines whenever required.
- Perform the responsibilities assigned to India's Central Authority under the Hague Convention on inter-country adoption.
- Carry out additional duties assigned by the government.

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

- **Context:** The Central Adoption Resource Authority has issued nationwide guidelines aimed at **improving adoption procedures, ensuring the proper maintenance of records, and protecting the identity and rights of adopted children.**

About Central Adoption Resource Authority

- The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a **statutory organisation** functioning under the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India.
- It obtained statutory status through Section 68 of the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.**
- CARA mainly manages the adoption process for orphaned, abandoned, and surrendered children through a network of approved adoption agencies.
- It serves as India's Central Authority for inter-country adoptions, following the provisions of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, which **India ratified in 2003.**

Functions of CARA

- Encourage domestic adoptions and support **inter-state adoptions** in collaboration with state authorities.
- Supervise and regulate inter-country adoptions involving children from India.

Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Context:** Recently, the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** identified nine new species during a faunal survey conducted in the **Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary.**

About Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary

- The sanctuary is situated in the **state of Tamil Nadu.**
- It lies along the **Tamil Nadu-Kerala border and acts as a buffer zone for the Periyar Tiger Reserve.**
- The sanctuary supports rich biodiversity, with numerous plant species and a wide range of wildlife.
- The vegetation varies from scrub forests at the foothills to **thick evergreen forests and shola grasslands at higher elevations.**
- Important plant species found here include Banyan tree, *Syzygium zeylanicum*, *Nothopegia vajravelui*, *Memecylon flavescens*, *Symplocos oligandra*, *Symplocos wynadense*, and *Meiogyne ramarowii*.
- The sanctuary hosts several animals such as elephants, tigers, leopards, Nilgiri tahr, gaur, spotted deer, barking deer, sambar deer, wild boar, porcupine, Nilgiri langur, and lion-tailed macaque.
- The **wood snake is a species endemic to Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary**, meaning it is found only in this region.

Self Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams (SATHEE App)

- **Context:** The SATHEE App has been developed by the **Ministry of Education in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur.**
- It is a free digital learning platform **aimed at helping students prepare for various competitive examinations.**

Key Features

- Offers high-quality study resources such as video lectures, mock tests, study materials, and previous years' question papers.
- Designed especially to support students who cannot afford costly coaching institutes.
- Provides a structured and guided approach to exam preparation.
- Content is developed by subject experts from IITs and other reputed institutions.
- Acts as a comprehensive platform for students preparing for entrance and recruitment exams.
- The name SATHEE stands for Self Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams, highlighting its focus on self-evaluation and learning support.
- The app supports preparation for several major national-level exams, including: **JEE, NEET, CUET, CLAT, SSC exams, RRB exams, IBPS exams, ICAR entrance exams**
- With its wide range of exam coverage and free access to quality content, the SATHEE App has emerged as a multi-purpose and inclusive platform for competitive exam preparation in India.

Dimethyl Ether (DME) – An Alternative Fuel

- **Context:** Researchers at **CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory developed a patented method to convert methanol into Dimethyl**

Ether (DME), reducing reliance on imported cooking fuel.

About Dimethyl Ether

- DME is a synthetically produced fuel that serves as an **alternative to diesel fuel.**
- It is designed for use in **specialty modified Compression Ignition (Diesel) engines.**
- It possesses a very high **Cetane number**, which indicates its excellent combustion properties.
- Under normal atmospheric conditions, DME exists as a **colour less gas.**
- It burns cleanly, generating very low emissions of pollutants such as **Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Sulfur Oxides (SOx)**, and particulate matter.

Applications and Significance

- It delivers thermal efficiency comparable to that of conventional fuels.
- In terms of performance, it serves as an excellent alternative to diesel.
- It can be adapted to serve as an alternative fuel for standard diesel engines currently operating in India.

India's First National Report on Nagoya Protocol Implementation

- **Context:** India has recently submitted its **first National Report (NR1) on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol** to the CBD Secretariat, marking an important step in strengthening its biodiversity governance efforts.

About the National Report

- The report was prepared by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** in partnership with the National Biodiversity Authority and covers the period from November 2017 to December 2025.
- Between 2017 and 2025, India granted a total of 12,830 Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) approvals.

- Of these, 5,913 were issued by the National Biodiversity Authority, while 6,917 were granted by State Biodiversity Boards and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils for the commercial use of biological resources.

Nagoya Protocol

- The Nagoya Protocol is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- The CBD is an international treaty that was adopted at the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Earth Summit) in 1992 and came into force in 1993**.
- Its main goal is to ensure the **fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources**, thereby supporting biodiversity conservation and its sustainable utilisation.
- The Nagoya Protocol was adopted in **2010 and became operational in 2014**.

Scope of the Protocol

- It applies to genetic resources such as plants, animals, and microorganisms.
- It also covers traditional knowledge associated with these resources.
- Additionally, it addresses benefits generated from their use, including research and commercial applications.

Core Principles

- Access:** Users must obtain Prior Informed Consent (PIC) from the providing country before accessing biological resources.
- Benefit Sharing:** The benefits derived must be shared in a fair and equitable manner based on Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT).
- Compliance:** It ensures that the use of resources follows the conditions set under PIC and MAT.

India's Institutional Framework

- India's ABS system functions under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, and is supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 and ABS Regulations, 2005.
- It operates through a three-tier structure: the National Biodiversity Authority at the national level, State Biodiversity Boards/ Union Territory Biodiversity Councils at the state level, and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the grassroots level.
- Additionally, India has issued 3,556 Internationally Recognized Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs), accounting for more than 60% of the global total.

India's Innovation Landscape

- Context:** India's improving position in global innovation rankings stands in contrast to its weak foundational factors, highlighting structural shortcomings and the necessity for greater involvement from the private sector.

Current State of India's Innovation Ecosystem

- India secured the **38th position out of 139 economies** in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025.
- In 2024–25, domestic applicants **contributed 62% of total patent filings**; however, India still trails behind countries like China and the United States in overall filings.
- Gross expenditure on research and development remains low at 0.65% of GDP.
- India stands at **101st out of 119 economies** in terms of employment opportunities for women with higher education qualifications.

Gajapati Empire

- Context:** A recently unearthed **15th century Telugu inscription in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh**, has been linked to the Gajapati rulers of Odisha.

About the Gajapati Empire

- The Gajapati Empire (c. 1434–1541 CE) was a prominent medieval Hindu kingdom established by **Kapilendra Deva in Odisha**. The term “Gajapati” translates to “Master of Elephants.”
- At the height of its power in the 15th century, the empire stretched from the **Ganges River in the north to the Kaveri River in the south**.
- The rulers were strong patrons of the **Odia language**, and it was during this period that **Sarala Das composed the first Odia version of the Mahabharata**.
- The Gajapatis played a key role in enhancing the Jagannath Temple at Puri and also built the Kapilesvara Temple in Bhubaneswar.
- Although mainly followers of Vaishnavism, they practiced the Hari-Hara tradition, integrating the worship of both Shiva and Vishnu.
- **Prataparudra Deva** the last significant ruler of the dynasty, during whose reign the Vaishnava saint **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** arrived and influenced the region.

Samarth Incubation Programme

- **Context:** The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) recently hosted a Demo Day in New Delhi, showcasing 18 startups selected under its Samarth Incubation Programme.

About C-DOT and the Programme

- C-DOT is an autonomous research and development institution in the **field of telecommunications, established in 1984 under the Ministry of Communications**.
- The Samarth Incubation Programme, **introduced by C-DOT in 2025**, provides financial assistance along with infrastructure support to startups recognized by DPIIT.

- The programme is carried out with support from Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), functioning under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), along with TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs)**.
- Its primary aim is to **encourage homegrown innovation and help early-stage startups** move from the idea stage to market-ready solutions.
- The initiative targets sectors such as telecom software, cybersecurity, next-generation networks like 5G and 6G, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and quantum technologies.

Election Commission of India

- **Context:** The Election Commission of India has introduced additional digital facilities-accessible **via online portals and mobile applications**-for filing nomination papers for state legislative assembly elections (including those in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry) as well as by-elections.
- Nomination papers can be **filed using the Suvidha App**. This application was upgraded to **Suvidha 2.0 in 2024**.
- This service has now been integrated into the **ECI Net Portal platform**.
- **ECINET** is a comprehensive digital interface currently being developed by the Election Commission of India (ECI). It consolidates over 40 mobile and web applications-currently in use-into a single unified platform.

About the Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India conducts elections for the **Parliament, State Legislative Assemblies, the President, and the Vice President of India**.

- It was constituted under **Article 324 of the Constitution of India**.
- It is a **permanent constitutional body established on January 25, 1950**.
- Initially a single-member body, it currently functions as a multi-member body comprising a Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commissioners.
- Operating as a **multi-member body since October 1, 1993**, decisions within the Commission are taken based on a majority vote. The members are **appointed by the President of India**.
- Their tenure is for a **period of 6 years or until they attain the age of 65**, whichever occurs earlier.
- Their salary and status are equivalent to those of **Judges of the Supreme Court of India**.
- The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed from office by the President of India—with the approval of the Parliament—following a procedure similar to that adopted for the removal of a Supreme Court Judge.
- **January 25th is celebrated as National Voters' Day**.
- This condition was later included in the Code on Social Security, 2020 under Section 60(4).
- Adoption procedures regulated by the **Central Adoption Resource Authority rarely allow adoption of infants below three months**.
- Consequently, most adoptive mothers were excluded from maternity leave benefits, making the provision ineffective in practice.
- The **age-based restriction was found to be arbitrary and discriminatory**.
- It violates **Article 14 (right to equality) and Article 21 (right to life and dignity)** of the Indian Constitution.
- The Court affirmed that adoption is a legitimate and equal form of parenthood, and adoptive mothers must not be treated differently from biological mothers.

Revamped Mission Vatsalya Portal

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has launched the **Revamped Mission Vatsalya Platform**- an integrated digital platform for **child protection services across India**.
- It aims to ensure the care, protection, rehabilitation, and development of children through an integrated and technology-driven system.
- This platform integrates previous services—such as **Khoya-Paya and TrackChild**—into a single digital interface.
- It facilitates coordination among relevant stakeholders at the state and district levels, including Child Protection Units, Child Welfare Committees (CWC), and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB).
- It enables the real-time monitoring, data management, and efficient implementation of child protection schemes.

Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India has ruled that **all women who adopt children are eligible for 12 weeks of paid maternity leave**, irrespective of the child's age.
- Maternity benefits in India are governed by the **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**. Through the 2017 amendment, adoptive and commissioning mothers were, for the first time, granted 12 weeks of paid leave.
- However, a limitation was imposed this benefit applied only **if the adopted child was younger than 3 months**.

- The platform maintains digital records regarding child care plans, case histories, rehabilitation measures, and services for children under both institutional and non-institutional care.
- The **CARINGS portal**- which digitizes adoption procedures- has now been integrated with the Mission Vatsalya website.

Mission Vatsalya

- This is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched in the year 2021-22 for the protection and welfare of children.
- Coordinating Ministry: **Ministry of Women and Child Development.**
- It serves as a guiding framework aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, specifically those pertaining to child welfare and protection.
- **Objective:** To ensure the care, protection, rehabilitation, and development of children, guided by the motto: **"Leave no child behind."**

Constitutional Provisions for Child Protection

- **Article 15(3):** Empowers the State to enact special laws and schemes for children.
- **Article 21A:** Guarantees free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14.
- **Article 23:** Prohibits human trafficking, forced labour, and bonded labour.
- **Article 24:** Prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14 in hazardous occupations.
- **Article 39(f):** Ensures the healthy development and dignity of children, as well as protection against exploitation.
- **Article 45:** Mandates that the State shall endeavour to provide Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children up to the age of 6.

Legal Framework for Child Protection

- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** Focuses on the care and rehabilitation of children in vulnerable situations.
- **POCSO Act, 2012**
- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006:** Aims to prevent child marriages and render such marriages illegal.
- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016:** Prohibits child labour while regulating it under certain specific conditions.

National Geo-heritage Site

- **Context:** The hilly terrain surrounding the **Kalinjar Fort in Banda** has recently been officially designated as a "National Geo-heritage Site" by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

About Geological Survey of India (GSI)

- The Geological Survey of India was established in **1851 by Sir Thomas Oldham.**
- In addition to identifying geo-heritage sites and national monuments, the GSI conducts geological surveys and research across India.
- The Ministry of Mines provides policy guidance and administrative support to the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

Kalinjar Fort

- Kalinjar Fort is situated in the Banda district of the state of **Uttar Pradesh.**
- It is surrounded by the **Vindhya mountain range and the Ken River.**

India's Bioeconomy Growth

- **Context:** India's bioeconomy has grown significantly – from about **\$10 billion in 2014 to more than \$195 billion in 2025**- showing the

country's rapid rise as a global biotechnology center.

About Bioeconomy

- The bioeconomy refers to the use of biological resources, supported by knowledge and innovation, to create goods, services, and processes across various sectors while ensuring sustainability.
- It includes areas such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food industries, biotechnology, and bioenergy.

Subsectors of India's Bioeconomy

- **BioPharma:** Focuses on creating healthcare products and services like medicines, medical equipment, and lab-grown tissues or organoids.
- **BioAgri:** Involves the development of genetically engineered crops and animals, advanced farming techniques, and bio-based agricultural products (e.g., Bt Cotton).
- **BioIndustrial:** Deals with producing bio-based chemicals and materials using enzymes, biosynthetic methods, and recombinant DNA technology.

Growth of India's Bioeconomy

- Over the past decade, **India's bioeconomy has grown nearly 20 times**, showing strong progress in biotechnology.
- **India stands 3rd in the Asia-Pacific region and 12th globally in biomanufacturing.**
- It contributes **around 5% to the country's GDP**, reflecting its rising economic importance.
- The sector is divided into four main parts: BioIndustrial (47%), BioPharma (35%), BioAgri (8%), and BioResearch (9%).

Major Government Initiatives

- **BioE3 Policy** (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment): Encourages eco-friendly biomanufacturing and bio-based

industries, with focus on smart proteins, targeted therapies, and climate-resilient farming.

- **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund:** A ₹1 lakh crore fund designed to promote advanced technology innovation and support startup growth.

- **Startup and Incubation Support:** Expanding biotech clusters and innovation centers across the country.

- **Inclusive Talent Development:** Promotes participation from tier-2 and tier-3 cities, women entrepreneurs, and young scientists.

Translation of the Kondrai Vendhan Text

- **Context:** A national workshop regarding the translation of **Avvaiyar's Kondrai Vendhan was held at Banaras Hindu University (BHU).**

- This workshop was jointly organized by the **Department of Indian Languages and the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT).**

- **The Central Institute of Classical Tamil** is actively engaged in the task of translating Tamil literary works into other languages.

- As a first phase of this initiative, **Avvaiyar's Aathichoodi** has been translated into more than **60 Indian and foreign languages.**

- Through Visva-Bharati University, the **Pudiya Aathichoodi, authored by Subramania Bharati, has also been translated into several languages.**

- Currently, the translation of Avvaiyar's Kondrai Vendhan is underway.

- The work is being translated into various languages listed in the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, as well as into the languages of the Northeastern states.**

- It is also being translated into 12 foreign languages, including Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Korean, and Sinhala.

- This endeavor serves to strengthen cultural connections across different languages.
- **The primary objective of this project is to translate the work into more than 40 languages.**

Urea Supply Threatened by West Asia Conflict

- **Context:** The ongoing West Asia conflict has disrupted LNG and fertiliser supply chains, posing risks to India's urea production just before the Kharif cropping season.

India relies heavily on West Asia for

- LNG used in domestic urea manufacturing
- Direct urea imports, accounting for 71% of total imports from the region

About Urea

- Urea is a nitrogen-rich chemical compound with the formula $\text{CO}(\text{NH}_2)_2$.
- It contains 46% nitrogen, making it the most concentrated and widely used nitrogenous fertiliser.
- Made from ammonia and carbon dioxide using the Haber-Bosch method and urea synthesis process
- Natural gas (LNG) is a key input as it provides hydrogen for ammonia production
- India has transitioned from naphtha/fuel oil-based plants to gas-based plants

Benefits of gas-based production

- Higher efficiency
- Lower emissions
- Supports sustainable fertiliser production

Prakriti 2026

- **Context:** 'Prakriti 2026' an international conference on carbon markets organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (under the Ministry of Power) and the Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) was held in New Delhi.

- This serves as a flagship event conducted under the aegis of the 'Bharat Electricity Summit 2026,' with a specific focus on carbon markets and climate action.
- The conference aimed to facilitate discussions on carbon markets, climate finance, and green growth, placing particular emphasis on mobilizing finance and strengthening global partnerships to achieve the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets outlined in the Paris Agreement.

Key Initiative - Carbon Market Infrastructure

- Launch of the Indian Carbon Market portal to facilitate and regulate carbon trading within India.
- Strengthening the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) as a pivotal market-based mechanism.

Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

- This is a market-based mechanism operating under the **framework of the Indian Carbon Market (ICM)**.
- Its objective is to **mitigate Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions** by establishing a price for carbon and enabling carbon trading.
- It serves as a successor to the Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, shifting the focus from mere energy efficiency to tangible emission reduction.
- Under this scheme, Carbon Credit Certificates (CCC) are issued, wherein 1 CCC represents an emission reduction equivalent to 1 tonne of CO_2 .

GARBH-INi Programme

- **Context:** The Union government recently presented the findings of the **decade-long**

GARBH-INi programme at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.

- GARBH-INi (Interdisciplinary Group for Advanced Research on Birth Outcomes), supported by the Department of Biotechnology, is the **largest pregnancy cohort study conducted in India.**
- It tracks more than 12,000 pregnant women to examine the causes of preterm births and identify genetic indicators that can help predict the likelihood of early delivery.
- The initiative **aims to enhance maternal healthcare and lower neonatal mortality by developing indigenous, AI-based solutions.**
- In terms of implementation, Phase I began in 2015 with the enrollment of pregnant participants. Phase II, launched in 2021, followed their children through the critical first 1,000 days after birth.
- **Garbhini-GA2 is an indigenous AI model created specifically for Indian women by IIT Madras and THSTI to precisely estimate fetal age.**
- Additionally, **GARBH-INi-DRISHTI** serves as a data-sharing platform that offers access to biospecimens and clinical datasets for researchers working in the field of maternal and child health.

LPG ATM

- **Context: India's first fully automated LPG ATM**, called the Bharatgas Insta LPG Machine, has been recently introduced in Gurugram.
- It has been developed by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) as a pilot project under its Bharatgas initiative.
- The system operates as a round-the-clock, self-service kiosk where registered consumers can

make digital payments and receive a filled LPG cylinder within 2–3 minutes.

- The machine supplies modern 15 kg fibre composite cylinders, which are lighter than traditional ones (about 31 kg).
- These cylinders are corrosion-resistant and semi-transparent, allowing users to easily check the gas level.
- This initiative offers an alternative method of LPG distribution and promotes technological advancement and innovation in the fuel retail sector.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves

- **Context: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** informed the Rajya Sabha that India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) are currently at 64% of their total capacity.

About Strategic Petroleum Reserves

- These are massive reserves of crude oil stored underground to ensure energy security and for use during times of supply disruptions.
- This initiative emerged following the global oil crisis of 1973.
- These reserves are managed by **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL)**, a subsidiary operating under the Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB).
- This constitutes an integral part of India's energy security strategy. Furthermore, it aligns with the objective of maintaining a reserve equivalent to **90 days of consumption, as recommended by the International Energy Agency (IEA).**

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) –

Locations

- **Phase-I:** Located at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), and Mangaluru and Padur (Karnataka).

- **Phase-II:** Expansion works are planned for Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur in Karnataka.
- However around 25% of actual electricity generation is non-fossil.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) –

Objective

- The SPRs aim to ensure energy security by providing a short-term buffer capable of meeting India's crude oil requirements for approximately 9.5 days during emergency situations.
- This serves to safeguard the nation's economy against global oil price fluctuations.
- Carbon sink: 1.97 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent created (2005–2019).
- Forest & tree cover: 24.6% (2021), up from 21% in 2005 (still below 33% goal).
- Emissions intensity reduced by 36% (2005–2020).

Conference of Parties (CoP)

- Conference of Parties is a body of nations that convenes annually to discuss climate issues and transition their economies away from fossil fuel.

India's Updated Climate Targets

- **Context:** India has pledged that by 2035, 60% of its installed electric capacity will comprise non-fossil sources.
- **India and Argentina were the only two G-20 countries** that had not announced a 2035 NDC as of December 31, 2025.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are climate action targets submitted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- They are part of commitments under the Paris Agreement to reduce global warming.
- A total of 128 parties, representing about 78% of global greenhouse gas emissions, had submitted new NDCs by that date.

India's New 2035 Climate Targets

- 60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources.
- 47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP (from 2005 levels).
- Increase carbon sink to 3.5-4 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- **Context:** By referring to Article 51A (g), courts have highlighted that the freedom to run a business also carries a duty to protect and restore the environment.

About Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- CSR is a framework where companies operate in a way that benefits society and the environment, while remaining accountable to stakeholders.

Current 2030 Targets

- 50% installed power capacity from non-fossil sources.
- 44% reduction in emissions intensity.
- Carbon sink target: To increase its carbon sink to 2.5 billion tonnes - 3 billion tonnes.

It broadly covers four areas:

- Environmental responsibility
- Ethical practices
- Philanthropic activities
- Economic/financial responsibility

India's Climate Progress

- Around 52% installed capacity already from non-fossil sources (target achieved early).

CSR in India

- Under Companies Act 2013 Section 135, certain companies are legally required to spend on CSR.

- Eligible companies must allocate **at least 2% of their average net profits** (from the past three years) toward CSR initiatives annually.
- The **Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring compliance.**
- CSR helps balance profit-making with social responsibility, encouraging businesses to contribute positively to society.
- Real-time flood alerts are provided via digital platforms, using rainfall-based predictive models.

Risk Mapping & Decision Support

- The National Disaster Management Authority has developed **Web-DCRA and DSS tools.**
- Dynamic risk maps support cyclone preparedness and evacuation strategies.

Article 51A(g) -Environmental Duty

- Article 51A(g) is a Fundamental Duty under Part IVA of the Constitution.
- Introduced through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, it requires citizens to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, rivers, lakes, and wildlife.
- Courts have connected this duty with Article 21, thereby expanding the right to life to include a clean and healthy environment.

Remote Sensing & Hazard Mapping

- The National Remote Sensing Centre created Flood Hazard Atlases.
- AI combined with satellite imagery is used to identify high-risk areas.

Avalanche Forecasting & Geo-Intelligence

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation uses AI for:
 - Predicting avalanches
 - Detecting hazards via remote sensing
 - Developing autonomous forecasting systems

AI in Disaster Management

- **Context:** The Government of India emphasized the growing role of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in managing disasters**, following the passage of the **Disaster Management (Amendment) Act, 2025.**
- AI and Machine Learning are being applied across all stages of disaster management including preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery **to improve forecasting, decision-making, and coordination.**

Transgender Rights Bill

- **Context:** Transgender Rights Bill proposes major amendments to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 to strengthen legal safeguards.
- Eliminates the earlier provision that allowed individuals to identify their gender without external approval.
- Introduces a medical board, led by senior medical officials, to help certify transgender identity.
- Brings in stricter penalties for crimes against transgender persons, including severe punishments up to life imprisonment.
- Alters the structure of the National Council for Transgender Persons by including rotating representation from States and Union Territories.

Weather Forecasting & Early Warnings

- The India Meteorological Department uses AI/ML for **7-day weather predictions.**
- Cyclone tracking and intensity forecasting are carried out **under Mission Mausam.**

Flood Forecasting & Hydrological Modelling

- The Central Water Commission applies AI for short-term flood predictions.

Key Issues and Criticisms

- Moves away from self-identification, placing control with authorities instead of individuals.
- May leave out groups like transmen, non-binary, and gender-diverse persons from protection.
- Requirement of medical verification is viewed as intrusive and harmful to dignity.
- Risks treating gender identity as a medical condition, possibly leading to discrimination or harassment.
- Criticized for being passed without detailed review or sufficient input from the transgender community.

PRISM-SG Portal

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways recently introduced the PRISM-SG Portal in New Delhi.

About the Portal

- PRISM-SG (Portal for Rail-Road Inspection & Stages Management - Steel Girders) is designed to improve efficiency, transparency, and coordination among multiple agencies involved in infrastructure projects.
- The portal has been created to digitize approval and inspection procedures related to the construction of Road Over Bridges (ROBs).
- It incorporates components such as the Quality Assurance Plan (QAP), Welding Procedure Specification Sheet (WPSS), and inspection of steel girders during fabrication stages.
- It allows complete online handling of processes, including document submission, examination, query generation and resolution, approvals, inspection scheduling, and uploading of reports, photos, and test results.
- The system ensures real-time tracking and maintains a full audit trail for transparency and accountability.

- It provides a unified digital platform connecting all major stakeholders like road authorities, Indian Railways, contractors, fabricators, and inspection bodies.

India's Target: Producing 5,000 Tons of REPM by 2030

- **Context:** India has set a target to achieve the capability of domestically producing 5,000 tons of Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM) by the year 2030.

About Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM)

- Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPM) are advanced magnets manufactured using rare earth elements such as Samarium, Neodymium, Praseodymium, Dysprosium, and Cerium.
- Compared to Ferrite or Alnico magnets, REPMs possess higher energy density, superior resistance to demagnetization, greater magnetic strength within a compact size, and deliver excellent performance in high-precision applications.
- India holds the world's third-largest reserves of rare earth elements, accounting for 6% of the total global reserves.
- With the aim of establishing an integrated, self-reliant ecosystem, the Union Budget for 2026-27 announced the creation of dedicated Rare Earth Element corridors across the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.
- A scheme worth ₹7,280 crore has been approved to incentivize the production of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets, with the objective of achieving an integrated annual production capacity of 6,000 tons within India.

Khelo India Tribal Games

▪ **Context:** The first edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games is taking place in Chhattisgarh, with events hosted in three cities—Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Sarguja. The competition is being over a period of ten days.

About Khelo India Tribal Games

- This marks the first nationwide multi-sport event under the Khelo India Programme that is exclusively focused on tribal athletes.
- The Games include seven medal disciplines athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming, and wrestling along with demonstration events like mallakhamb and kabaddi.
- More than 60,000 participants from 30 states and Union Territories are competing for a total of 338 medals.
- The event also acts as a talent scouting platform, with a dedicated Talent Identification and Development Committee (TIDC) tasked with identifying promising athletes for advanced training and support under the Khelo India initiative.

Mascot

- The official mascot is Morveer, a name formed from the Chhattisgarhi words “Mor” (meaning ‘our’) and “Veer” (meaning ‘brave’), symbolising a sense of belonging and courage.

National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna

- **Context:** The Center for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE), Kochi, Kerala, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has achieved a landmark milestone in marine conservation.

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has officially designated CMLRE’s “**Bhavasagara**” Referral Centre as a National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna.

- This prestigious recognition, conferred under the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, establishes the Centre as a critical national facility for the preservation, study, and documentation of India's vast deep-sea biological heritage.

- The “**Bhavasagara**” Referral Centre currently serves as a **vital scientific hub, housing an extensive collection of over 3,500 taxonomically identified and geo-referenced voucher specimens.**

- The collection spans a diverse range of marine life, from invertebrates including cnidarians, annelids, molluscs, arthropods, and echinoderms to vertebrates such as elasmobranchs and teleostean fishes.

About CMLRE

- The Centre for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE) is a premier institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, dedicated to the exploration, management, and conservation of marine living resources in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and adjacent deep seas.

OPU-IVF-ET technique

- **Context:** the ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Bareilly, has successfully produced five healthy Sahiwal calves for the first time using the advanced OPU-IVF-ET technique.

About ICAR

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), set up in **1929**, is an **autonomous organization** functioning under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- It oversees and coordinates agricultural research and education across the country.

About OPU-IVF-ET Technology

- This is an assisted reproductive method carried out in three stages: Ovum Pick-Up (OPU), In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), and Embryo Transfer (ET).
- **OPU:** Eggs (oocytes) are retrieved from high-quality cows using ultrasound technology without intensive hormonal treatment, allowing repeated collection even from pregnant or young animals.
- **IVF:** The collected oocytes are fertilised in a laboratory using selected high-quality semen to ensure genetic improvement.
- **ET:** The resulting embryos are implanted into the uterus of recipient cows, enabling faster multiplication of superior breeds.

About Sahiwal Cattle

- Sahiwal is among **India's finest indigenous cattle breeds**, valued for its ability to tolerate heat, resist diseases, and adapt well to tropical environments.
- It originated in the **Montgomery region (now in Pakistan)** and is mainly found in parts of **Punjab (Ferozepur, Amritsar), Haryana, and Rajasthan (Sri Ganganagar)**.

- The breed is also known by names such as **Lola, Lambi Bar, Multani, and Teli**.
- Sahiwal cattle are high milk producers, yielding about 2,000–3,000 litres per lactation. Their milk has high butterfat content and contains **A2 beta-casein protein**, which is associated with certain health benefits.

ASI Begins Excavation at Balirajgarh

- **Context:** The Archaeological Survey of India has started excavations at **Balirajgarh in Bihar to uncover details about the history of ancient Mithila**.
- Balirajgarh is situated in the **Madhubani district of Bihar**.
- The site is thought to be associated with King Bali and is believed to have served as an administrative **hub of the Videha Kingdom**.
- Findings indicate that the area was continuously inhabited during the **Mauryan, Sunga, Kushan, Gupta, and Pala periods**.
- Previous studies have identified the presence of fortified structures, pointing to well-developed urban planning on a large scale.
- Items such as beads, copper artefacts, terracotta figures, and punch-marked coins reflect a prosperous and advanced civilisation.

About the Videha Kingdom

- The Videha Kingdom was an ancient realm located in the **Mithila region, covering parts of present-day Bihar and Nepal**.
- It is closely linked with King Janaka and was an important centre for Vedic knowledge and philosophical thought.

NATIONAL SCHEMES

Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) Scheme

- **Context:** The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has rolled out a deferred payment option for Customs duties for qualifying manufacturer importers under the EMI Scheme.

About the EMI Scheme

- Launched by the CBIC as part of the Union Budget 2026–27 announcements.
- The scheme will remain operational from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028.
- Under this framework, eligible manufacturer importers (EMIs) are permitted to release imported consignments without making immediate Customs duty payments.
- Instead, the duty can be paid on a monthly basis in accordance with the Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules, 2016.
- The initiative is aimed at easing working capital pressures for manufacturers, strengthening tax compliance, supporting domestic production, and improving the overall business environment in India.

Pink National Common Mobility Card

- The 'Pink National Common Mobility Card' initiative has been launched with the aim of providing free bus travel to women in the national capital and seamless access to multiple public transport systems through a single smart card.

India's first 'Ring Metro'

- **Context:** Prime Minister inaugurated two new corridors of the Delhi Metro, including India's first fully operational "Ring Metro", marking a significant development in the urban transport system of Delhi.
- The newly opened sections include the **Majlis Park–Maujpur-Babarpur corridor of the Delhi Metro Pink Line** and the **Deepali Chowk–Majlis Park extension of the Delhi Metro Magenta Line**.

India's First Ring Metro

- India's first Ring Metro became operational in **Delhi**.
- The **Majlis Park–Maujpur-Babarpur stretch** of the Delhi Metro Pink Line was inaugurated.
- The new corridor is 12.3 km long with eight elevated stations, increasing the Pink Line length to 71.56 km.
- This makes Delhi the first city in India with a fully operational Ring Metro system.

Divyang Sahara Yojana and Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana

- **Context :** In a post-Budget webinar, **PM** highlighted the Divyang Sahara Yojana and Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana. Both schemes were introduced in the **Union Budget 2026–27** under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

About Divyang Sahara Yojana

- The scheme aims to provide **affordable access to modern assistive devices** to empower persons with disabilities (Divyangjan).

- It will support the **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)** in increasing production while integrating **AI and advanced technologies**.
- Retail-style centres will be set up where beneficiaries can **see, test, and choose assistive devices** according to their needs.
- Existing **Pradhan Mantri Divyasha-Vayoshri Kendras (PMDVKs)** will be expanded to provide **assessment, customization, and maintenance services**.

About Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana

- The scheme provides **industry-relevant skill training** to create dignified livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities (Divyangjans).
- It focuses on sectors such as **Information Technology (IT), Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics (AVGC), hospitality, and food & beverages**.
- Skill-training registration under the scheme is integrated with the **PM-DAKSH Portal of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

- **Context:** The Ministry of Culture has launched the 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' to survey, document, preserve, digitize, and make India's manuscripts accessible to all.
- This mission aims to establish **Cluster Centers (CC) and Independent Centers (IC)** across the country.
- To date, more than 40 CC and IC centers have been integrated into this project.
- 28 States and Union Territories have joined as Nodal Coordinating Authorities to implement this project.
- Technical partners provide support for metadata creation, equipment installation, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform, and long-term data storage.
- The objective is to survey and digitize approximately 10 million (1 crore) manuscripts housed in educational institutions, museums, libraries, and private collections across the country.
- The digitized manuscripts will be stored with centralized access through the **National Digital Repository (NDR)**.
- **The National Archives of India (NAI) is undertaking the task of digitizing historical records.**
- A Checksum verification method is employed to ensure the integrity and immutability of the data.

Lower Kopili Hydropower Project

- **Context:** The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the **120 MW Lower Kopili Hydropower Project** via video conferencing.

Lower Kopili Hydropower Project

- A **120 MW 'Run-of-River'** (utilizing the natural flow of the river) hydropower project has been planned within the Kopili River basin in Assam.
- It is situated within the autonomous district council areas of **West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao (North Cachar Hills)**.
- The project has been developed by, and operates under the aegis of, the **Assam Power Generation Corporation Limited**.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing funding** for this project under the Assam Power Sector Investment Program.

Kopili River

- The Kopili is a river that flows through the **states of Meghalaya and Assam.**
- In Assam, it is the **largest of the southern-bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra River.**
- It originates in the **Meghalaya Plateau**, flows through the districts of Karbi Anglong and Nagaon, and eventually joins the Brahmaputra River.
- Its total length is 256 km (of which 78 km forms the Meghalaya-Assam border, while the remaining 178 km lies within the state of Assam).

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

- **Context:** The Central Government has announced that over ₹81,500 crore has been released to the states so far during the current financial year for the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)

- The MGNREGA scheme was launched in the year 2005.
- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (funded by the Central Government).**
- This scheme is implemented by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
- It aims to guarantee a minimum of 100 days of wage employment to rural households within a financial year.
- The scheme focuses on enhancing livelihood security in rural areas.
- Adult members (aged 18 and above) of registered rural households are eligible to benefit from this scheme.
- **Under Section 27** of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, if states fail

to comply with the Central Government's directives, funds allocated to those states will be withheld.

Viksit Bharat- Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)

- Under the new scheme, the guaranteed number of workdays has been increased to 125.
- A new financial sharing ratio of **60:40 between the Central and State** governments regarding the scheme's expenditure has also been introduced.
- The Central Government has stated that the previous Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme will remain operational until the new scheme is fully implemented and all pending works are completed.

Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore for the development of 100 'plug-and-play' industrial parks across the country.
- The aim was to create **100 "future ready" industrial parks integrated with the PM GatiShakti** to make use of the latter's multi-modal connectivity and last-mile access.
- The objective is to create plug-and-play industrial zones that help **minimise delays and make it easier to start and run businesses.**
- The scheme also offers assistance for external infrastructure, covering up to **25% of the total project cost**, thereby improving overall connectivity.
- These parks will set new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability,

reducing inefficiencies and enhancing productivity across sectors.

- As per **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** the scheme's duration would be for six years starting 2026-27. The first phase would see 50 parks being set up.
- The minimum land need for the parks would be **100 acre in most cases, and 25 acre for industrial parks in hilly or North Eastern States**. The maximum size is 1,000 acre.

PM GatiShakti

- The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan was launched by Prime Minister on **October 13, 2021**.
- It is a digital platform designed to bring together **16 ministries—including railways and road transport—for coordinated planning and execution of infrastructure projects**.
- The initiative aims to **improve last-mile connectivity and lower logistics costs** across the country.
- It integrates major infrastructure programmes such as **Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry ports, and UDAN**.
- The plan also includes connectivity support for key economic zones like textile hubs, pharmaceutical clusters, defence corridors, electronics manufacturing zones, industrial corridors, fishing clusters, and agricultural zones.
- Overall, it seeks to enhance connectivity, streamline infrastructure development, and boost the global competitiveness of Indian industries.

PM POSHAN

- **Context:** A **Parliamentary Standing Committee** has proposed **adding breakfast to**

the PM POSHAN Scheme and extending its benefits to students **up to Class 12**.

About PM POSHAN

- Previously called the **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)**, it was renamed **PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman)** in **2021**.
- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Education** and is approved for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- It is a **centrally sponsored programme**, meaning both the central and state governments share its funding.
- Currently, it provides one hot cooked meal to students in government and government-aided schools from **primary level up to Class .**
- The scheme is designed to tackle **hunger by ensuring children receive** sufficient nutrition, while also improving educational indicators such as school attendance, retention, and overall learning outcomes.

Krishi Sakhi Initiative

- **Context:** The **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited** has introduced the **Krishi Sakhi Initiative** with the objective of **empowering women engaged in farming**.

About the Initiative

- Krishi Sakhi is a nationwide programme designed to strengthen the role of women farmers by increasing their awareness, encouraging their participation, and building their skills in agriculture and crop insurance.
- It is implemented by the **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited**.

Aim

- To increase the **involvement of women in agriculture and insurance-related activities**
- To support inclusive and gender-responsive growth in the agricultural sector

- To acknowledge and promote the contribution of women in enhancing India's farming system
- To avail of financial assistance, projects must exclusively use domestically manufactured equipment and machinery, in line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Key Features

- Planned campaigns such as videos, walkathons, and workshops conducted across 2026
- On-ground sessions to educate women farmers **about crop insurance schemes and their advantages**
- Initiatives focusing on sanitation, hygiene, and rural awareness, especially targeting women in farming communities
- The scheme helps reduce dependence on long-distance power transmission, lowers energy losses, and contributes to **India's goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based capacity by 2030.**

Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the **Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme** for the period from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.

About the Scheme

- The programme seeks to add around **1,500 MW of small hydropower capacity within five years**, especially in identified priority regions.
- It mainly promotes run-of-the-river projects, particularly suited for remote, hilly, and North Eastern areas.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The scheme is administered by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- Financial support is provided through Central Financial Assistance (CFA) based on a graded subsidy structure.
- North Eastern states and districts along international borders are eligible for up to ₹3.6 crore per MW or 30% of the total project cost, whichever is lower.
- Other states can receive up to ₹2.4 crore per MW or 20% of the project cost, whichever is lower.

Coconut Promotion Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Budget 2026-27 introduced a Coconut Promotion Scheme aimed at boosting **production and improving productivity in the coconut sector.**

About the Scheme

- It is a **Central Sector scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW)**.
- **Nodal Agency:** The programme will be implemented by the **Coconut Development Board (CDB), a statutory organization headquartered in Kochi, Kerala.**
- The scheme emphasizes the removal of old, unproductive, and diseased coconut trees and their replacement with improved varieties that are high-yielding, early-maturing, and resilient to climate variations.
- **Technology Integration:** Farmers will be linked to **Bharat-VISTAAR, a multilingual AI-based platform that offers real-time guidance on pest control and nutrient management.**

India's Coconut Production

- India is the world's largest coconut producer, contributing around 30.37% of global output, and ranks second in terms of productivity.
- The country cultivates coconuts on approximately 2.16 million hectares out of the global 12.39 million hectares.

- The sector supports the livelihoods of nearly 30 million people, including about 10 million farmers.
- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh together account for more than 90% of India's total coconut production.

Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) Scheme

- **Context:** To assist exporters affected by maritime disruptions in West Asia, the Government has approved the 'RELIEF' (Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) scheme under the Export Promotion Mission.

About RELIEF

- RELIEF is a time-bound financial and risk mitigation intervention implemented under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM), aimed at supporting Indian exporters facing logistics disruptions, cost escalations, and geopolitical risks in West Asia.
- Approved in **March 2026 under the framework of the Export Promotion Mission.**
- Nodal Ministry: **Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- Implemented by the **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC Ltd.).**

Project Insight (PI)

- **Context:** India's adoption of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in tax administration**—especially through the **Project Insight (PI) programme**—has drawn attention for its role in boosting compliance and increasing revenue collection.

About Project Insight (PI) Initiative

- Project Insight is an **AI-enabled system for tax administration** that leverages big data

analytics to monitor financial activities and identify instances of tax evasion.

- It is implemented by the **Income Tax Department under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.**

- Motivate taxpayers to accurately disclose income using data-driven prompts.
- Use AI and analytical tools to detect and target potential cases of tax evasion.

Key Features

- Utilises AI to build a comprehensive 360-degree financial profile of taxpayers by integrating data from various sources.
- Issues subtle reminders via SMS or email to help taxpayers rectify inconsistencies in their filings.
- Ranks and prioritises cases based on the level of risk and extent of possible evasion, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency.

Domestic Manufacturing of Rare Earth Magnets

- **Context:** The Central Government has initiated a bidding process to establish manufacturing plants capable of producing 6,000 metric tons (MTPA) of rare earth magnets annually.

- This scheme is being implemented with an outlay of ₹7,280 crore.

- The plants are being established under a scheme designed to **promote the domestic manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets.**

- These magnets are essential components for **electric vehicles (EVs), wind turbines, electronic devices, as well as the aerospace and defense sectors.**

- Currently, the majority of these magnets are **imported from China.**

- The government aims to reduce imports and transform India into a global manufacturing hub for these products.

About the Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM) Manufacturing Scheme

- The objective of this scheme is to establish integrated Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM) manufacturing facilities with an annual production capacity of 6,000 tons (MTPA).
- The scheme is being implemented by the **Ministry of Heavy Industries**.
- The total duration of the **scheme is 7 years**, commencing from the date of its approval.
- This timeframe includes a 2-year period for setting up the integrated REPM manufacturing facility, followed by a 5-year period for providing incentives linked to the sale of REPMs.
- Through this initiative, India's self-reliance will be enhanced, enabling the nation to position itself as a key player in the global REPM market.
- In the Union Budget for 2026–27, the government announced the establishment of **"Rare Earth Corridors" across the states of Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu** to facilitate the mining, processing, research, and manufacturing of Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (REPMs).

Agri-Photovoltaics (AgriPV) in India

- **Context:** The 2026–27 Budget increased funding for the **PM-KUSUM scheme to Rs.5,000 crore**, highlighting a stronger focus on solar energy for farmers, **aiming to improve energy access, water security, farmer incomes, and reduce carbon emissions**.

- Expanding solar projects on farmland raises concerns about reducing agricultural output, making it important to balance energy generation with food production.

About AgriPV

- Agri-photovoltaics (AgriPV) combines solar power generation with farming on the same land.
- Solar panels are installed in ways that allow crops to **grow underneath** or between them.

Importance of Crop Selection

- Shade-tolerant crops grow well under panels
- Sunlight-demanding crops are suited between panel rows
- Suitable crops vary by region (e.g., vegetables, spices, millets, fruits)

Business Models for Farmers

- Farmers can own systems and sell surplus electricity
- Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) can develop collective projects
- Private developers may lease land and share revenue

- Government agencies can also set up projects

AgriPV is Important for India

- **Supports India's solar target (300 GW by 2030) and net-zero goal (2070)**
- Reduces land-use conflict between **farming and solar projects**
- Helps farmers earn additional income while continuing agriculture

Environmental and Economic Benefits

- Reduces water loss (evapotranspiration)
- Improves soil moisture retention
- Protects crops from extreme weather
- Cuts diesel use and supports rural enterprises
- Enables services like cold storage and food processing

PRARAMBH 2026

- **Context:** The Union Finance Minister recently inaugurated the **PRARAMBH 2026 initiative**.

About PRARAMBH 2026

- PRARAMBH stands for **Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat**.
- It is a **nationwide awareness campaign focused on the Income Tax Act, 2025**, aimed at educating citizens about its provisions, effective from **April 1, 2026**.
- A multi-channel outreach program spanning print, TV, radio, outdoor media, digital platforms, and social media.

Key Features of PRARAMBH 2026 Extensive Outreach

- Provides taxpayer-oriented resources including guidance notes, brochures, tutorial videos, FAQs, educational content, and engagement activities like the MyGov Quiz.
- Brochures and materials are available in 10 regional languages in addition to Hindi and English for broader reach.
- Introduction of **'Kar Saathi', an AI-enabled chatbot** to help taxpayers with queries on the new Act, rules, and procedures.
- Upgraded platform with enhanced usability, simpler navigation, and faster service delivery for taxpayers.

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

- **Context:** To support exporters facing challenges related to freight costs and transport disruptions caused by the geopolitical crisis in West Asia, the Government of India has reinstated the full rates and value caps under the RoDTEP scheme, thereby lifting the previous 50% restriction.

About the RoDTEP Scheme

- RoDTEP is a flagship export promotion scheme launched on **January 1, 2021**.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- This scheme provides for the reimbursement of unrefunded Central, State, and local duties and taxes levied on exported products.
- It was introduced to replace the erstwhile **Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)**.
- It ensures that taxes are not exported—meaning taxes are not embedded in the cost of exported goods—thereby enhancing the global competitiveness of Indian products.
- It compensates for duties and taxes that are not covered under the GST or duty drawback schemes.
- The scheme **aims to increase both the volume and value of India's exports**.

UDAN Scheme

- **Context:** The Centre has extended the subsidy period for airlines on select Tier-2 and Tier-3 routes from three to five years, after a large share of those routes fell into disuse.
- The shift comes under the modified UDAN scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet.

About UDAN Scheme

- UDAN Scheme was launched on 21st October 2016; the first UDAN flight operated between Shimla and Delhi on 27th April 2017.
- UDAN strengthened regional tourism, healthcare access, and trade, catalyzing economic growth in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.
- UDAN aims to democratize aviation by making flying accessible and affordable for all.

- Implemented by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, this flagship scheme has since transformed India's regional connectivity landscape.
- Evolution of the UDAN Scheme (2016–2025)
- The UDAN Scheme has progressed through multiple phases, each widening its reach and improving implementation. Over time, it has strengthened regional air connectivity, especially in remote areas such as the Northeast, Ladakh, and island regions
- UDAN 5.0 (April 2023): Removed the 600 km distance limit and focused on quicker flight operations.
- UDAN 5.1 (May 2023): Enhanced helicopter connectivity in remote locations.
- UDAN 5.2 (July 2023): Promoted small aircraft (under 20 seats) for last-mile connectivity.
- UDAN 5.3 & 5.4 (2024): Revived inactive routes and expanded seaplane services.
- UDAN 5.5 (2025): Opened bids for 50+ water aerodromes, boosting seaplane-based transport.

UDAN 1.0 (2017)

- Marked the launch of the scheme, with the first flight operating between Shimla and Delhi on April 27, 2017.
- Around 128 routes were allocated to 5 airlines, covering 70 airports, including 36 newly developed ones.

UDAN 2.0 (2018)

- Expanded connectivity to 73 underserved airports.
- Introduced helipad operations for the first time, improving access to remote areas.

UDAN 3.0 (2019)

- Added tourism-focused routes to boost travel.
- Introduced seaplane services.
- Increased focus on enhancing connectivity in the North-Eastern region.
- UDAN 4.0 (2020)
- Prioritized connectivity in hilly, island, and border regions.
- Strengthened the use of helicopters and seaplanes for difficult terrains.

UDAN 5.0 Series (2023–2025)

- Represented a major reform phase aimed at improving efficiency and speed of operations.

Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) scheme until March 2031.

About the IVFRT Scheme

- This scheme was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on May 13, 2010.
- The scheme is implemented by the **Bureau of Immigration, under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, with the support of the National Informatics Centre (NIC).**
- Its primary objective is to facilitate travel while simultaneously ensuring national security and to integrate the processes of visa issuance, immigration clearance, and the tracking of foreigners.
- IVFRT 3.0 (2026–2031): The next phase of this scheme focuses on leveraging emerging modern technologies, infrastructure upgrades, and enhancing services through mobile platforms and 'Self-Service Kiosks.'

- To strengthen digital controls over illegal immigration, the scheme has been integrated with the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025.

Nasha Mukht Vidyalyaya

- **Context:** The Ministry of Education has released a detailed three-year action plan for the Nasha Mukht Vidyalyaya programme, aimed at eradicating substance abuse in schools.

About Nasha Mukht Vidyalyaya Initiative

- **Nasha Mukht Vidyalyaya (Drug-Free Schools)** is a focused programme under the larger Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), intended to make schools a frontline defense against drug addiction.
- The initiative seeks to reduce the growing problem of substance abuse among young people by using schools as a platform for awareness, early detection, and long-term behavioural change.
- Areas within a **500-metre radius around every school must be officially declared drug-free.**
- Principals and designated teachers are obligated to report any drug-related incidents within this zone to local authorities and police.
- Students are encouraged to take part in peer-led activities that promote awareness and mutual support.
- Teachers and school leaders receive structured training to identify early warning signs of substance abuse and conduct awareness programmes.
- A well-defined reporting and tracking mechanism operates at school, district, and state levels to monitor progress and ensure accountability.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana

- **Context:** The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Yojana to celebrate its anniversary and highlight its success in providing social security to unorganized workers.

About Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM), is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme launched by the **Government of India to provide social security to unorganised workers.**
- This scheme ensures a **minimum monthly pension of ₹3,000 after the age of 60 for workers** who belong to the unorganised sector and have a monthly income of up to ₹15,000.
- The scheme is a tribute to the workers in the Unorganized sectors who contribute around 50 per cent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- **PM-SYM was introduced in the Interim Budget 2019.**
- The scheme is administered by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** in collaboration with Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Common Service Centres e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC SPV) for seamless implementation.
- The scheme is a part of the government's broader social security initiatives and aligns with the vision of universal pension coverage for workers in the unorganised sector.

Eligibility Criteria

- To enroll in PM-SYM, individuals must meet the following eligibility conditions:
 - **Age Requirement: 18 to 40 years.**
 - **Income Limit:** Monthly income should be Rs. 15,000 or less.
 - **Unorganised Sector Employment:** Workers engaged in professions such as: Street vendors, rag pickers, rickshaw pullers, Construction workers, daily wage labourers etc

Exclusion Criteria

- Should not be covered under the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), or National Pension Scheme (NPS).
- Should not be an income taxpayer.
- Should not be receiving benefits from any other government pension scheme.

National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026

- **Context:** The country's first household income survey participation is everyone's responsibility
- Survey Period: April 2026-March 2027

About National Household Income Survey (NHIS) 2026

- This survey is being conducted to determine the income of different regions and groups across the country.
- To understand income distribution
- To develop effective strategies

The Shakti Sadan Scheme

- **Context:** The Shakti Sadan Scheme is designed to provide a secure and supportive

environment for women facing difficult circumstances.

- **Introduced in 2022 under Mission Shakti**, it was formed by combining the Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala schemes.

Objective

- Its main aim is to offer safe accommodation along with rehabilitation assistance to women in distress.
- It is a centrally sponsored, demand-based programme that is implemented by States and Union Territories.

- The scheme provides essential support such as shelter, food, medical care, legal assistance, counselling, and rehabilitation services.

- Its implementation is tracked through field inspections, review meetings, and the Mission Shakti Dashboard.

About Mission Shakti

- Mission Shakti, launched in 2022 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, is an umbrella initiative focused on women's welfare.

- This programme is also a centrally sponsored scheme, implemented through coordination between the Centre and the States to ensure broader outreach and effectiveness.

- It includes two main components
 - **Sambal** - focuses on women's safety and protection
 - **Samarthya** - focuses on empowerment and overall development

PM e-Drive Scheme

- **Context:** Under the Prime Minister's e-Drive Scheme, the Central Government has extended the timeframe for availing incentives for

registered electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers.

About the Prime Minister's e-Drive Scheme

- The Prime Minister's e-Drive Scheme was launched on September 29, 2024.
- The initial implementation period for this scheme was set for two years, spanning from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2026.
- This scheme is implemented through the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- Subsequently, the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries announced that it had extended the scheme's duration until March 31, 2028.
- The primary objective of the Prime Minister's e-Drive Scheme is to promote sustainable transportation by increasing the adoption of electric vehicles, expanding charging infrastructure, strengthening the electric vehicle manufacturing ecosystem, and reducing carbon emissions.

Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0

- **Context:** Meghalaya has emerged as the twelfth state to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Government regarding reforms under the Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 scheme.

About Jal Jeevan Mission

- This scheme was launched on August 15, 2019.
- It aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water to all rural households through 'Functional Household Tap Connections' (FHTC) by the year 2024.
- The Ministry of Jal Shakti is the nodal ministry responsible for implementing this scheme.
- To ensure 100% drinking water connectivity (saturation) for all 19.36 crore rural households,

the duration of this scheme has currently been extended until December 2028.

About Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0

- The Jal Jeevan Mission has been extended by the Union Cabinet until December 2028.
- This new phase, termed Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, aims to shift the focus from infrastructure creation to providing sustainable and citizen-centric services.

Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0: New Administrative and Digital Reforms

- Sujalam Bharat Digital Framework
 - This assigns a Unique ID to every village and maps the entire water supply chain.
- Jal Arpan Initiative
 - This engages Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) in the task of dedicating water supply schemes.
- Har Ghar Jal Certification
 - This certification is granted only after ensuring the existence of proper Operation and Maintenance systems at the local level.
- Jal Utsav
 - This is an annual, community-centric event conducted to inspect water systems and promote sustainability.

PM-KUSUM 2.0 to Include Battery Storage

- **Context:** The government is exploring the inclusion of a battery energy storage component in the upgraded PM-KUSUM 2.0 scheme.

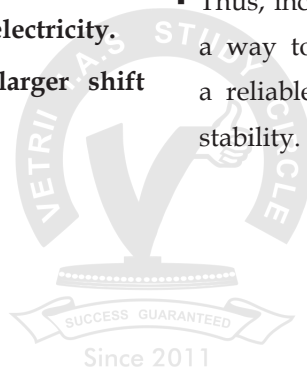
About PM-KUSUM

- PM-KUSUM refers to the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan**.
- The existing scheme, **introduced in 2019**, is scheduled to conclude in March 2026, and its revised version is expected to be named PM-KUSUM 2.0.
- This proposal has gained attention because the current scheme mainly focuses on **solarising agricultural pumps and does not cover battery storage**.
- The **initiative aims to lessen farmers' reliance on diesel and conventional grid electricity**.
- It also contributes to **India's larger shift toward renewable energy**.

- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** is responsible for implementing the scheme.
- It operates on a cost-sharing model, with 30% subsidy each from the central and state governments, and the remaining 40% borne by farmers.

Role of Battery Storage

- Battery storage systems can capture excess solar energy produced during peak sunlight hours.
- This stored energy can be used later when demand is high but solar generation is low.
- Thus, incorporating battery storage is seen as a way to enhance energy efficiency, ensure a reliable power supply, and maintain grid stability.



IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wildlife Day

- The global community will observe World Wildlife Day 2026 on 3 March. This United Nations-designated day highlights the importance of conserving wild animals, plants, and overall biodiversity across the planet.
- The theme for 2026 is “Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods”.

World Hearing Day

- World Hearing Day is observed on 3 March 2026
- The theme for 2026 is “From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children”.

National Security Day

- National Security Day is celebrated every year on 4th March.
- This day has been celebrated every year since 1972 to commemorate the Indian Defence Forces.

World Obesity Day

- World Obesity Day 2026 will be observed on March 4.
- 2026 theme is “8 Billion Reasons to Act on Obesity.”

International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness

- The International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness is observed annually on March 5.
- The purpose of this day is to increase awareness worldwide about disarmament and the prevention of the spread of weapons, especially among young people.

International Women’s Day

- International Women’s Day is celebrated on March 8, 2026,
- The primary global theme is “Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls,” as declared by the UN Women.

CISF Raising Day 2026

- Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day is celebrated across India on March 10 every year.
- The day marks the formation of the CISF and recognises the commitment, courage, and service of its personnel who safeguard the nation’s vital infrastructure.
- The CISF was established in 1969 under the CISF Act, 1968. The force operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

No Smoking Day

- No Smoking Day is observed on March 11, 2026, with the aim of motivating people around the world to quit tobacco use and adopt healthier lifestyles.

Dandi March Day

- Dandi March Day, celebrated on March 12th, commemorates the 1930 launch of Mahatma Gandhi’s 24-day, march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi against the British salt monopoly.

World Kidney Day

- World Kidney Day 2026 observed on March 12.
- The World Kidney Day theme 2026 “Kidney Health for All: Caring for People, Protecting the Planet”.

Pi Day 2026

- Pi Day is observed annually on 14 March to celebrate the mathematical constant Pi (π).

World Consumer Rights Day

- World Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on March 15.
- Celebrated internationally since 1983, this day is observed to emphasize consumers' fundamental rights, protection, and awareness.

National Vaccination Day

- National Vaccination Day is observed annually in India on March 16th to promote awareness regarding vaccination and public health.
- This day is observed to commemorate the launch of the Pulse Polio program in 1995.

World Social Work Day

- World Social Work Day 2026 will be observed on 17 March.
- The theme "Co-Building Hope and Harmony: A Harambee Call to Unite a Divided Society".

Ordnance Factory Day

- Ordnance Factory Day 2026 is celebrated throughout India on 18 March.
- The occasion highlights the country's strong heritage in defence manufacturing and its progress towards self-reliance.

International Day of Happiness

- Aimed at promoting well-being, equality, and sustainable development, the International Day of Happiness 2026 is observed on March 20.
- In the 2026 World Happiness Report, India ranked 116th out of 147 countries.

World Down Syndrome Day

- World Down Syndrome Day is observed annually on **March 21st**.
- The theme for the year 2026 is "**Unite against Isolation.**"

About Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21)

- The condition in which the 21st chromosome is present in a trisomic state is known as Down Syndrome.
- The characteristics of this condition include severe impairment in brain development, compromised development of the central nervous system, a wide spacing between the eyes, a flattened nose, hearing impairment, a constantly open mouth, and a protruding tongue.

International Day of Forests

- In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21st as the International Day of Forests (IDF).
- The theme for the year 2026 is
- This day celebrates the importance of all types of forests and raises awareness regarding them.

World Poetry Day

- World Poetry Day 2026 celebrated on March 21, it emphasizes the importance of poetry in fostering culture, creativity, and the preservation of languages, while encouraging self-expression, celebrating diversity, and promoting global harmony.

World Puppetry Day

- World Puppetry Day observed on March 21, it celebrates puppetry arts across the globe.
- Initiated by UNIMA, the day highlights the importance of puppetry in preserving tradition, supporting education, and fostering cultural exchange.

World Day for Glaciers

- World Day for Glaciers 2026 observed on March 21, it emphasizes the importance of glaciers as vital freshwater reserves and key indicators of climate change, calling for

worldwide measures to address environmental challenges.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination observed annually on March 21, this day aims to advance equality and combat racism across the world.

World Water Day

- World Water Day observed worldwide on March 22, it focuses on increasing awareness about the importance of water conservation and ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water for all.
- The 2026 theme is 'Water and Gender'

Shaheed Diwas

- India observes Shaheed Diwas on March 23, 2026, to honor and remember the sacrifices of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev.

World Meteorological Day

- World Meteorological Day 2026 observed annually on March 23, it emphasizes the significance of weather and climate science.
- The 2026 theme is "Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow."

World TB Day

- World TB Day 2026 is celebrated globally on 24th March.
- The theme for this year carries a strong and inspiring message: "Yes! We Can Eliminate TB."

International Day for the Right to Truth

- The International Day to Uphold the Right to Know the Truth about Severe Human Rights Abuses and to Honor the Dignity of Victims is commemorated on 24 March.

Earth Hour 2026

- Earth Hour 2026 will take place on March 28 between 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm. It is a global event that is observed every year on the last Saturday of March.

Mahavir Jayanti

- Mahavir Jayanti 2026 will be observed on 31st March, 2026, commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavir.

About Lord Mahavir

- Lord Mahavir Swami was born in 599 BCE in Kundagrama, in present-day Bihar. He belonged to the royal Vardhaman family but chose a very different path, renouncing worldly comforts at the age of 30.
- After 12 years of rigorous meditation and austerities, he attained Kevala Jnana (omniscience).
- From that point, he devoted his life to spreading the principles of peace, non-violence, and self-realization.
- His teachings later became the foundation of Jainism, one of the world's oldest religions.
- Even today, his life continues to inspire millions to embrace a path of discipline, simplicity, and spiritual awareness.

Teachings of Mahavir

- Ahimsa (Non-violence):** Refrain from causing harm to any living being.
- Satya (Truth):** Always be truthful in words and actions.
- Asteya (Non-stealing):** Do not take anything that does not belong to you.
- Brahmacharya (Celibacy):** Maintain self-discipline and control over desires.
- Aparigraha (Non-attachment):** Avoid excessive attachment to material possessions.

REPORTS & INDICES

Innovators Business Environment Index 2026

- **Context:** StartupLink has released the Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) 2026.
- The US topped the list with a score of 100, followed by Singapore at 2nd and the UK at 3rd.
- India ranked 54th globally with a score of 55.035, ahead of China at 85th.

National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025-26

- **Context :** National Highways Authority of India released the **National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025-26 annual report.**

About National Highways Green Cover Index

- **It is an initiative of National Highways Authority of India.**
- The report was prepared with **National Remote Sensing Centre of Indian Space Research Organisation.**
- The assessment uses high-resolution satellite sensors to **detect chlorophyll content.**
- **NH-GCI shows the percentage of green cover within the Right of Way (RoW) of highways for every 1 km stretch.**
- The first assessment covered about 30,000 km of highways across 24 states during July-December 2024.

Fiscal Health Index (FHI)

- **NITI Aayog** has released the second edition of its '**Fiscal Health Index (FHI)**' in 2026 to assess the fiscal performance of Indian states.s

- The index is a framework designed to assess the fiscal sustainability of states, **improve transparency and support data-based fiscal policymaking.**

- State governments account for nearly one-third of India's total public debt.
- Only 18 major states were assessed in the first edition.
- The new edition also includes 10 states from the North-East and the Himalayan region.
- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are in the 'Front Runner category' of the Fiscal Health Index 2026.

About Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026

- **Context:** NITI Aayog has released the 2nd edition of the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 to evaluate the fiscal performance and fiscal sustainability of Indian states.
- It analyzes state fiscal trends over a 10-year period, spanning from 2014-15 to 2023-24.
- In addition to the 18 major states, 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states have now been included and ranked separately.
- This index assesses states based on five key pillars
 - Quality of Expenditure
 - Revenue Mobilisation
 - Fiscal Prudence
 - Debt Index
 - Debt Sustainability

State Rankings (FHI 2026)

- **Achievers:** Odisha, Goa, Jharkhand
- **Frontrunners:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka

- Performers: Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan
- Aspirants: West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab

North-Eastern and Himalayan States

- **Achievers:** Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand
- **Performers:** Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura
- **Aspirants:** Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland

UN Report on Child Mortality (2024)

- **Context:** Around 4.9 million children died before age five in 2024, including 2.3 million newborns.
- The majority could be avoided with low-cost interventions and better access to quality healthcare.
- The report titled “**Levels and Trends in Child Mortality**” added that under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000.
- However, since 2015, this pace has slowed by more than 60%.
- The Union Health Ministry added that India, over the past two decades, has played a pivotal role in reducing **child mortality in the South Asia region**.
- The Ministry, in its release, said that the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) recorded a decline since 1990. **In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live births, which fell to 17 in 2024.**
- Also, the Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) witnessed a sharp fall – **in 1990, the U5MR stood at 127 per 1,000 live births, while in 2024, it declined to 27.**

- This sharp reduction is due to targeted public health interventions, improved institutional delivery systems, and expanded immunisation coverage.

World Happiness Report

- **Context:** **Finland** has once again secured the top position in the World Happiness Report 2026, marking its ninth consecutive year as the world’s happiest country. **Finland, Iceland, Denmark** secured top three positions.
- **India secured 116th rank in World Happiness Report.**

India’s Sports Equipment Sector

- **Context:** NITI Aayog has released a report titled “**Realising the Export Potential of India’s Sports Equipment Manufacturing Sector**”.
- The report presents a strategic roadmap aimed at positioning India as a leading global center for sports equipment production.

Highlights of the Report

- **India currently contributes about 0.5% to the \$52 billion international sports equipment export market.**
- Nearly 90% of the country’s sports goods manufacturing is driven by MSMEs.
- Production is largely concentrated in key clusters such as **Jalandhar and Meerut**.
- India’s exports are mainly focused on a narrow set of products, including cricket gear, inflatable balls, boxing equipment, and athletic or weightlifting items.

Global Terrorism Index 2026

- **Context:** The 2026 **Global Terrorism Index (GTI)** was released by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), an independent non-profit think tank based in Sydney.

- **Pakistan recorded the highest impact from terrorism, ranking first on the index.**
- Nearly 70% of global terrorism-related fatalities occurred in just five countries: Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- **India ranked 13th** on the Global Terrorism Index.
- **76% and for male students to 71%**, marking a significant improvement compared to previous years.
- While female student enrollment stood at 49.8% in the 2020–2021 academic year, it rose to 76% in 2024–2025.
- Similarly, male student enrollment, which was 46.6% in 2020–2021, increased to 71% in 2024–2025.

Consumer Justice Report

- **Context:** The India Justice Report has published the Consumer Justice Report 2026: Assessing Capacity of Redressal Commissions in India.
- It is the **first nationwide evaluation** of the consumer dispute redressal system under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- Furthermore, the report highlights that Tamil Nadu leads states such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh in terms of higher secondary school enrollment.

World Air Quality Report 2025

- **Context:** The World Air Quality Report 2025 released by IQAir points to a worsening trend in global air pollution.
- WHO Standards: Only 14% of cities complied with the **World Health Organization guideline for PM2.5 ($5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in 2025**, compared to 17% in 2024, indicating a decline.

Best Performing States

- **Andhra Pradesh ranked first followed by Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, West Bengal.**
- These rankings indicate better efficiency, infrastructure, and case disposal performance.

Gender Representation Concerns

- Representation of women remains very limited in leadership roles.
- Only Delhi and Sikkim had women serving as Presidents.
- Moreover, in the past five years, just three State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (SCDRCs) were headed by a woman.

Unified District Education Survey Report

- **Context:** The Central Government's Unified District Education Survey Report was recently released. This report notes that student **enrollment in higher secondary schools in Tamil Nadu has risen significantly.**
- Specifically, in the 2024–25 academic year, the **enrollment rate for female students rose to**
- **Most Polluted Country:** Pakistan recorded the highest pollution levels, with PM2.5 concentrations exceeding 13 times the WHO limit.
- **Most Polluted City:** Loni in Uttar Pradesh emerged as the world's most polluted city, with PM2.5 levels roughly 22 times higher than recommended levels.
- **Regional Trend:** A majority of the most polluted cities are located in India, Pakistan, and China, making Central and South Asia the worst-affected region.
- **India's Ranking:** India ranked as the **6th most polluted country in 2025**, showing a slight improvement from 5th place in 2024.

- **Polluted Capital: New Delhi** continued to be the most polluted capital city globally for the 8th year in a row.

IIED Food Security Index

- **Context:** The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has released the **Food Security Index**.
- The index assesses the impact of climate change on the four key dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization, and long-term stability.
- India is identified as one of the most at-risk major economies when it comes to food insecurity under rising global temperatures.
- The country is considered among the most vulnerable in the index rankings.
- Under warming scenarios of 1.5°C and 2°C, **India's food security score may decline significantly (around 15%),** potentially moving it toward a critically insecure category. Increasing temperatures are likely to intensify disparities between developed and developing nations in their capacity to ensure food security.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- **Context:** The report, first introduced in 2017, is released by the National Statistics Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- From 2025, the survey timeline has been changed from the **agricultural year (July–June) to the calendar year (January–December),** along with revisions in methodology.

About PLFS Report

- The Periodic Labour Force Survey is intended to measure key labour market indicators such as the Labour Force Participation Rate

(LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR), and Unemployment Rate (UR).

These are calculated using both

- Usual Status (principal + subsidiary activity over a year)
- Current Weekly Status (CWS) (based on the last 7 days)

Key Indicators

- **LFPR:** Proportion of people who are either employed or actively seeking/available for work within the population.
- **WPR:** Share of the population that is currently employed.
- **UR:** Percentage of unemployed individuals among those in the labour force.
- **Activity Status Definitions**
- **Usual Status:** Determined based on a reference period of the previous 365 days.
- **CWS:** Determined based on the previous 7 days before the survey.

Major Findings of the Report

- **LFPR**
 - For individuals aged 15 years and above, LFPR stood at 59.3%, with male participation at 79.1% and female participation at 40%.
 - Among males, the main reason for not joining the labour force was continuing education (69.8%), while for females, household responsibilities such as childcare were the primary reason (44.4%).
- **WPR**
 - The overall Worker Population Ratio for those aged 15+ was 57.4%, with 76.6% for males and 38.8% for females.
- **UR**
 - The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 and above was 3.1%, with rural areas at 2.4% and urban areas at 4.8%.

▪ Self-Employment Trend

- The proportion of self-employed individuals has slightly decreased from 58.2% in 2023 to 56.2% in 2025.

▪ Sector-wise Employment

- Agriculture continues to employ the largest share of the workforce, although its proportion declined from 44.8% in 2024 to 43% in 2025.

Maternal Mortality Rate in India

- **Context:** A report published in The Lancet: Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Women's Health journal states that the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in India has declined by 80 percent over the past 33 years.

About Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)

- Maternal death refers to the death of a mother during pregnancy, during childbirth, or within **42 days following delivery**.
- The Maternal Mortality Rate represents the number of maternal deaths occurring per **100,000 live births during a specific period**.

MMR in India According to The Lancet Report

- **India's Maternal Mortality Rate has decreased from 508 in 1990 to 116 in 2023.**
- Approximately 24,700 mothers died in the year 2023.
- According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) data for the 2021–2023 period, **the Maternal Mortality Rate stands at 88.**
- A recent report released by the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Group indicates that the Maternal Mortality Rate in India has declined by 86 percent since 1990, whereas the global decline stands at 48 percent.

Global MMR According to The Lancet Report

- In 2023, approximately 240,000 mothers died globally.
- Nigeria recorded the highest number of maternal deaths, with 32,900 fatalities.
- Ethiopia and Pakistan recorded 11,900 and 10,300 maternal deaths, respectively.
- Globally, the maternal mortality rate (MMR) declined from 321 in 1990 to 190.5 in 2023.
- **Under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a target has been set to reduce the maternal mortality rate to 70 by 2030.**
- **It is estimated that India has a high probability of achieving this 2030 target.**

About Tamil Nadu MMR

- **Tamil Nadu ranks first** in the country in terms of the number of safe deliveries conducted in government hospitals.
- As a result of these efforts, **the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) has declined to 35 per 100,000 live births.**
- **The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has also declined to 12 per 1,000 live births.**
- Both these figures are **significantly lower than the national average.**

Energy Statistics India 2026

- **Context:** The National Statistics Office (NSO) has published the 33rd edition of its annual report, Energy Statistics India 2026, which offers a detailed and integrated dataset on the country's energy reserves, production, and consumption patterns.

About Energy Statistics India 2026

- This report is an annual publication by the **National Statistics Office (NSO) under**

the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

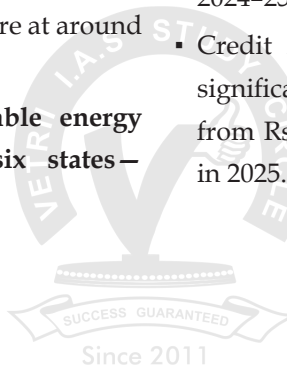
- It acts as a comprehensive source of information on energy resources, covering reserves, installed capacity, production, usage, and trade of various energy sources, including both fossil fuels and renewable energy.

Key Highlights of the Report

- The Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) reached 9,32,816 KTOE in FY 2024–25, showing a growth of 2.95% compared to the previous year.
- India's total renewable energy potential rose to 47,04,043 MW as of March 2025, with solar power contributing the largest share at around 71%.
- **More than 70% of the renewable energy potential is concentrated in six states—**

Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh.

- Installed renewable energy capacity recorded a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.93% between 2016 and 2025, while total electricity generation from renewables reached 4,16,823 GWh in FY 2024–25.
- Per capita energy consumption increased from 15,296 MJ in 2015–16 to 18,096 MJ in 2024–25.
- Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses declined from 22% in FY 2015–16 to 17% in FY 2024–25, indicating better efficiency.
- Coal continues to be the main energy source, with its supply rising to 5,52,315 KTOE in FY 2024–25.
- Credit flow to the energy sector expanded significantly, increasing more than six times— from Rs.1,688 crore in 2021 to Rs.10,325 crore in 2025.



EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Ayya Vaikunda Swamigal

- Vaikunda Swamigal (1809-1851) was born in the village of Shasthakovilvilai, now known as **Samithope, near Kanyakumari**.
- His original name was Mudi Soodum Perumal, later his parents changed his name to Muthukutti as the name was opposed by upper caste Hindus.
- Vaikunda Swamigal criticized the British rule and the rule of the Travancore king as the rule of "**white devils**" and "**black devils**" respectively.
- His religious system was known as '**Ayyavazhi**'.
- His views have been collected in the book Akhilathirattu.
- He founded the **Samathuva Samaj in 1836**.
- His 194th birth anniversary was observed on **March 4, 2026**.
- '**Dharma is to protect the downtrodden**' is his motto.

Meenambal Sivaraj

- Meenambal Sivaraj was a pioneering figure in the fight for the **rights of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and women's empowerment**.
- Born on **December 12, 1904** in Rangoon, Burma, to V.G. Vasudeva Pillai and Minakshi, she was part of a family that placed great importance on education, service, and leadership.
- In the book **Trailblazers: The First Women of South India**, author Nivedita Louis wrote that as her husband became more involved in politics and social movements, "she too began to engage with the issues affecting the Dalit community".
- In 1928, when the Simon Commission arrived in India, Meenambal supported it, believing it would better serve the interests of the SCs. This marked the beginning of her own political activism.
- She grew disillusioned with Congress leaders who were hesitant to address the concerns of the SCs, especially when it came to caste-based discrimination.
- Over the time, Meenambal became closely connected to leaders such as **B.R. Ambedkar, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, and Jawaharlal Nehru**.
- She was a regular speaker at rallies and a key figure in the **Self-Respect Movement, a radical initiative led by Periyar to challenge the caste system**.
- One of Meenambal's most significant contributions was her work with the **All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF), founded by Dr. Ambedkar**.
- She became the **first Dalit woman to join the AISCF, and the first woman president of the South India Scheduled Castes Federation**, advocating for greater rights and opportunities for the SCs.
- Meenambal remained fiercely committed to **gender equality and the rights of Dalit women**, who were oppressed by both caste and patriarchy.
- She served as a **magistrate for Madras Province**, and a member of several important boards and committees, such as the **Film Censor Board and the Madras State Advisory Committee**.
- A report in The Hindu on April 20, 1939, said she no longer wished to be addressed by her given name, Meenambal Sivaraj, which she believed had "Aryan origins". Instead, she chose to be called **Angiarkanni Siva Arasu**, a

name she felt better represented her identity, free from the caste and colonial influences.

- Meenambal said in a speech, "Whether or not women belonging to other classes are allowed to go forward, we should insist on our women being provided with opportunities of serving in a wider field than that of mere household work."
- In 1946, she was appointed a member of the **Senate of the University of Madras**. Three years later, she was elected to the **Madras City Council by the members of the Senate**.
- After her husband passed away in 1964, she continued her work in social reform and public service.
- Despite personal losses and electoral defeats, Meenambal remained unbroken in spirit. She contested the elections in 1952 and 1967 but was defeated.
- Nevertheless, her legacy as a social worker, politician, and women's rights advocate is etched in the history of Tamil Nadu. Meenambal died on November 30, 1992, at the age of 88.

Krishnammal Jagannathan

- She was born on **June 16, 1926** in **Pattiveeranpatti, Dindigul district**, into a poor family.
- She studied in Madurai and graduated from **The American College, Madurai**, becoming **the first woman graduate from Madurai**.
- **Krishnammal** and her husband **S. Jagannathan** worked to secure land for landless farmers across villages.
- She was inspired by **Vallalar Ramalinga Adigal** and followed Gandhian ideals of compassion and social justice.
- Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, she joined the **Sarvodaya movement of Vinoba Bhawe and**

participated in the Bhoodan Movement, distributing land to poor people in several regions including Bihar.

- They became active in **Thanjavur district after the Keezhvenmani massacre of 1968**, where 44 Dalits were burnt alive.
- She founded **Land for Tillers' Freedom (LAFTI) to secure land ownership for landless farmers**.
- She **helped register about 13,500 acres of land** in the names of poor farmers.
- For her social service, she received many awards including **the Padma Shri, Jamnalal Bajaj Award, Bhagwan Mahaveer Award, Right Livelihood Award (Alternative Nobel Prize)**, and the **Opus Prize**.

Shyamji Krishna Varma

- He was born on October 4, 1857, in Mandvi.
- He was an Indian revolutionary, lawyer, and journalist.
- The Indian Home Rule Society was founded by Shyamji Krishna Varma in London in 1905 to promote revolutionary nationalism.
- In July 1905, he established the 'India House' organization in London and launched the journal 'The Indian Sociologist'.
- This served as a hub for Indian nationalist activities in Britain.
- He served as the first president of the Bombay Arya Samaj and was one of the mentors who inspired Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Veer Savarkar).
- During the First World War, he moved to Paris and subsequently to Geneva, where he remained until his passing on March 30, 1930.
- A memorial named 'Kranti Teerth' was inaugurated in his honor in 2010.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Jnanpith Award

- **Context:** The **60th Jnanpith Award for the year 2025** has been announced for the Tamil poet Vairamuthu.
- Vairamuthu is the first Tamil writer to receive this award specifically for poetry.

About Poet Vairamuthu

- He is a Tamil poet, writer, and film lyricist.
- He was born on July 13, 1953, in Mettur, near Theni district.
- He has authored more than 40 books.

Key Works

- Kallikattu Ithikasam
- Karuvachi Kaviyam
- Thanneer Desam
- Moondram Ulaga Por

Awards Received

- Padma Shri – 2003
- Padma Bhushan – 2014
- National Award – 7 times (for Best Lyricist)
- Tamil Nadu State Government Award – 6 times
- Sahitya Akademi Award – 2003 (*Kallikattu Ithikasam*)
- He has received the Kalaimamani Award, presented by the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- He holds the distinction of being the first Tamil writer to receive the Jnanpith Award after a gap of 23 years.

About the Jnanpith Award

- Established in **1961**, this award is presented annually to writers who have excelled in the literature of Indian languages.

- It is conferred upon writers whose works are written in any of the languages listed in the **8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution**, as well as in English.

- The award comprises a cash prize of RS.1 lakh, a citation, and a bronze statue of Goddess Saraswati (Vagdevi).
- This award is presented by the cultural organization Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- The award was first received by G. Sankara Kurup in 1965 for his poetry collection Odakkuzhal.

Previous Tamil Writers Who Received the Jnanpith Award

- **Writer Akilan** received the Jnanpith Award for the year 1975 for his novel Chithirappavai.
- **Jeyakanthan** received the **Jnanpith Award** for the year 2002.

BCCI Naman Awards 2026

- **Roger Binny and Rahul Dravid** will be bestowed with the Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award, the BCCI's highest honour recognising outstanding service to Indian cricket.
- **Mithali Raj** will receive the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award for women, recognising her extraordinary contribution to the growth and stature of women's cricket in India.
- **Polly Umrigar Award – Best International Cricketer (Men): Shubman Gill**
- **Best International Cricketer (Women): Smriti Mandhana**

Sangita Kalanidhi award

- The 100th Conference and Concerts of the **The Music Academy, Chennai**, beginning in December this year, will be marked by the conferment of the **Sangita Kalanidhi award on renowned veena player Jayanthi Kumaresh**.
- **Bharatanatyam dancer Narendra G.** will receive the **Nritya Kalanidhi award**.
- Former diplomat **Navtej Sarna**, awarded in the **English language category for his novel Crimson Spring**.
- Hindi writer **Mamta Kalia** for her memoir **Jeete Jee Allahabad**
- The awardees will receive an engraved **copper plaque, a shawl, and Rs.1 lakh**.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

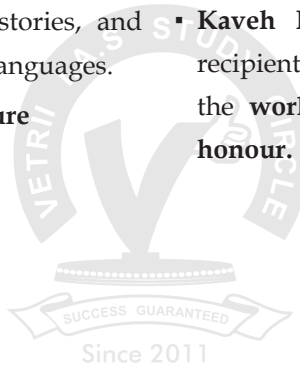
- Established in **1954**, it is an organization that works to promote and develop literature in various Indian languages.
- It is presented annually for literary works – including poetry, novels, short stories, and literary studies – published in 24 languages.
- Nodal ministry- **Ministry of Culture**

Academy Awards

- Paul Thomas Anderson's **One Battle After Another** was crowned best picture
- **Michael B. Jordan** win best actor and **Jessie Buckley** won best actress

Stockholm Water Prize

- **Kaveh Madani** has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 Stockholm Water Prize, the **world's most prestigious water-related honour**.



DEFENCE

Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)

- The Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) is a man-portable air defence missile system (MANPADS), designed to be carried and operated by ground troops.
- The system has been indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) through its Research Centre Imarat.
- It is capable of detecting, engaging, and neutralising fast-moving aerial targets across different distances and altitudes, enhancing short-range air defence effectiveness.
- The missile system is planned for deployment with the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force, contributing to India's multi-layered air defence network.

Mudh-Nyoma Air Force Station Upgrade

- **Context:** India's modernised Mudh-Nyoma Air Force Station has become the highest operational airfield in the world capable of supporting fighter aircraft.
- **Location:** Situated in the Changthang area of Eastern Ladakh at an altitude of about 13,700 feet, the airstrip lies roughly 23-35 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Executing Agency

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) carried out the upgradation under Project Himank.

- Project Himank is a key BRO programme focused on building and maintaining vital border infrastructure across Ladakh's harsh, high-altitude terrain.

Strategic Connectivity

- The upgraded base ensures faster deployment of forces to strategically important areas such as Pangong Tso, Demchok, and the Depsang Plains along the eastern Ladakh sector.

Operational Capabilities

- The facility now features an all-weather runway designed to accommodate advanced fighter aircraft, heavy-lift transport planes, Apache attack helicopters, and unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs).

Strategic Importance

- The airbase enhances India's capacity for swift military response along the China frontier, while also aiding disaster management efforts and improving connectivity in the remote Ladakh region.

Shtil Missile System

- **Context:** The Ministry of Defence signed defence agreements worth ₹5,083 crore to enhance maritime security. The deal includes procurement of Shtil surface-to-air missile system for frontline ships of the Indian Navy.

Shtil Missile System

- Shtil is a naval surface-to-air missile (SAM) system installed on warships.
- It is designed to destroy aerial threats such as: Fighter aircraft, Helicopters, Anti-ship missiles and other airborne targets attacking naval vessels.
- The system provides medium-range air defence for ships operating at sea.

Objective

- To improve the multi-layered air defence network of naval forces.
- To ensure quick-response protection for warships against several types of aerial threats, particularly in sensitive maritime regions.

Major Features

- **Medium-range missile system** capable of targeting aircraft, UAVs, and anti-ship missiles.
- Equipped with a Vertical Launch System (VLS) that enables missiles to be launched rapidly in any direction without rotating launchers.
- All-weather capability, allowing operations both day and night in complex sea conditions.
- Fast reaction time for intercepting incoming threats.
- Integrated with naval radar and fire-control systems for accurate detection and targeting.

Operation Sankalp

- **Context:** Due to rising tensions in West Asia, warships of the Indian Navy deployed under Operation Sankalp have been kept ready to conduct **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** missions if required.
- Operation Sankalp (meaning commitment in Sanskrit) is a maritime security operation launched by India.
- It aims to protect Indian-flagged merchant ships and support stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

Objectives of Operation Sankalp

- To ensure the safe movement of Indian commercial ships through strategic sea routes

such as: **Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman**

- To counter piracy and maritime threats in the Indian Ocean Region.
- To protect India's maritime trade and energy supplies, particularly oil imports, from potential risks and unconventional attacks.

Exercise LAMITIYE 2026

▪ **Context:** Exercise LAMITIYE is a **joint military exercise between India and Seychelles**. The **11th edition (2026)** is being held at the **Seychelles Defence Academy** from **9-20 March 2026**.

▪ The exercise is conducted between the **Indian Armed Forces** and the **Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)**.

▪ **Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force** are participating together, marking a **tri-service participation**.

▪ The exercise aims to **enhance defence cooperation, interoperability, and joint operational capabilities**.

▪ It also focuses on **peacekeeping operations, maritime security, and counter-piracy cooperation** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

▪ The exercise is **biennial (held every two years)** and has been hosted in Seychelles since **2001**.

▪ The word "**LAMITIYE**" means "**Friendship**" in the **Creole language**, symbolising strong bilateral ties.

▪ **Seychelles' strategic location in the western Indian Ocean** makes it an **important partner for India in ensuring regional stability and maritime security**.

Air Droppable Container

Context: Defence Research and Development

Organisation and the Indian Navy

- successfully conducted trials of the indigenous Air Droppable Container ADC-150 using a Boeing P-8I Poseidon aircraft.
- During the trials, four mid-air release tests were performed under different challenging conditions. The results demonstrated that the container can safely deliver essential supplies from an aircraft to naval ships operating far out at sea.

Indigenous Air Droppable Container ADC-150 System

- The ADC-150, developed by DRDO, is designed to transport payloads weighing up to 150 kg.
- This system enables aircraft to airdrop important materials directly to naval vessels deployed in distant ocean regions.
- It can carry a wide range of supplies such as medical items, technical equipment, food, and other emergency materials.
- This capability will significantly assist naval operations by ensuring that ships stationed in blue-water areas far from the coast can receive timely logistical support.

Operation Sankalp

- Context:** The Indian Navy has deployed warships to escort **Indian-flagged merchant vessels** transiting through the Persian Gulf region.
- Three Indian Navy ships have escorted the Indian-flagged merchant ships **Shivalik**,

Nanda Devi, and **Jag Laadki** from the Gulf of Oman after they crossed the Strait of Hormuz.

- The warships ensured the safe transit of vessels through vulnerable waters.
- The warships were operating in the region under **Operation Sankalp**, a mission aimed at **safeguarding merchant shipping and protecting India's maritime interests in the region.**
- Launched in **June 2019**, Operation Sankalp ensures the **safe passage of Indian-flagged vessels through critical sea lanes, and saw action, including during the Houthi attacks**

Sea Dragon

- Context:** India is taking part in the U.S.-led multinational naval exercise Sea Dragon 2026, which is presently being conducted near **Guam.**
- The **Indian Navy is participating along with naval forces** from countries such as **Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.**
- The exercise aims to **strengthen coordination among participating nations** and improve operational preparedness in anti-submarine warfare.

National Defence Industries Conclave (NDIC) 2026

- Context:** NDIC 2026, conducted in New Delhi, highlighted key priorities such as **defence innovation, integration of MSMEs, and the development of a domestic drone ecosystem.**
- It is a national-level conference organised by the **Department of Defence Production under the Ministry of Defence**, with the objective of advancing **manufacturing capabilities and promoting self-reliance in the defence sector.**

- Theme: **“Advanced Manufacturing Technologies”**
- **Focus Areas:** The conclave centred on emerging technologies including drone production, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, additive manufacturing, digital twins, and smart materials.
- **Initiatives Introduced:** Defence India Start-up Challenge-14, ADITI Challenges 4.0
- Naval personnel from 16 countries are taking part under the framework of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).
- India has deployed **INS Sunayna**, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, for conducting the initiative.
- The initiative enhances maritime cooperation, coordination, and interoperability among participating nations, **aligning with India’s SAGAR and MAHASAGAR visions.**

Significance

- The event enhances the role of MSMEs, supports defence indigenisation, contributes to the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, and boosts technological strength and global competitiveness.

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- **Introduced in 2018** by the **Ministry of Defence** and executed by the Defence Innovation Organisation.
- **To encourage innovation and the development** of indigenous technologies in the defence and aerospace sectors.
- Involves start-ups, MSMEs, individual innovators, and academic institutions.
- Offers financial support, mentorship, and access to testing and validation facilities.
- Functions through initiatives such as **DISC, iDEX4Fauji (i4F), SPARK, and ADITI.**

Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR

- **Context:** The second edition of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR has been launched recently as part of India’s maritime outreach efforts.
- It is led by the Indian Navy to tackle shared maritime challenges in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**, including piracy and illegal fishing.

INS Taragiri

- **Context:** The **indigenously built stealth warship, INS Taragiri**, is scheduled to be commissioned into the Indian Navy on April 3rd.
- INS Taragiri the fourth vessel in the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) series of warships was delivered to the Navy on November 28th of last year.
- It was constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. The ship weighs approximately 6,670 tons.
- It incorporates modern technologies such as a stealth (low-observability) design, high speed, automated systems, and multi-role naval operational capabilities.
- Furthermore, the ship is equipped with:
 - Supersonic missiles capable of striking surface targets
 - Medium-range missiles designed to engage aerial targets
 - Specialized systems for countering submarines.

Shaurya

- **Context:** The Indian Army is working on raising dedicated Shaurya squadrons within

the **Armoured Corps to embed UAV led surveillance** and precision strike capabilities into mechanised operations.

- The concept was successfully demonstrated during **Exercise Amogh Jwala in Babina Field Firing Ranges**.

- The Shaurya Squadrons will be equipped with swarm drones and first person view drones for real time surveillance and precision strikes against armour and logistics targets.

- The aim is to compress the **sensor to shooter cycle and push drone capability** down to the unit level for faster targeting and engagement.

Vayu Baan

- **Context:** The Indian Air Force has launched Vayu Baan, a trailblazing initiative to develop India's first drone system deployable from helicopters.

About Vayu Baan

- It is a compact, autonomous drone that can be released from a helicopter in flight.
- The name Vayu Baan means "Air Arrow" and forms part of an indigenous Air-Launched Effects (ALE) program, integrating unmanned aerial systems with manned helicopters.

Objective

- To provide stand-off attack capabilities, enabling helicopters to detect and neutralize enemy targets from distances exceeding 50 km.
- Keeps helicopters out of the threat range of MANPADS (Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems), enhancing crew safety while maintaining operational effectiveness.

- Vayu Baan represents a significant step in integrating unmanned and manned aerial platforms, boosting India's long-range precision strike and reconnaissance capabilities.

Operation Urja Suraksha

- **Context:** India has initiated **Operation Urja Suraksha, a naval mission aimed at protecting energy supply lines amid rising tensions in West Asia**.

- It is a strategic maritime operation by the Indian Navy to **secure the movement of energy-carrying ships heading towards India from the Persian Gulf**.

- The operation concentrates on safeguarding routes around the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil transit point.

Objectives

- To maintain a **steady and uninterrupted flow** of oil and gas imports to India.
- To ensure **safe passage and navigation for vessels** in high-risk and conflict-prone maritime zones.

Key Features

- **Escort System by Navy:** Indian naval ships accompany cargo vessels after they pass the Strait of Hormuz, guiding them safely through the Gulf of Oman into the Arabian Sea.
- **Multi-layered Security Setup:** Deployment of advanced warships like destroyers and frigates, supported by coordinated surveillance and communication networks.
- **Secure Route Planning:** Identification of safer sea lanes to minimize risks from threats such as mines and electronic interference.

- **Secures Energy Needs:** Helps protect India's crucial imports like crude oil, LNG, and LPG, reducing the risk of disruptions.
- **Boosts Strategic Role:** Strengthens India's position as a key maritime security provider in the Indian Ocean region.
- This aircraft replaced the older fleet of Tupolev Tu-142 previously operated by the Indian Navy. The P-8I is a modified version of the P-8A Poseidon used by the United States Navy.

Features of P-8I Aircraft

IMEX TTX 2026

- **Context:** The Indian Navy hosted IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command, Kochi.
- The exercise witnessed participation from Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Timor-Leste.
- This diverse multinational representation underscores a shared commitment to fostering mutual trust and enhancing collaborative maritime security across the region.
- As India assumes the IONS Chairmanship for the 2026–2028 cycle after a gap of sixteen years, IMEX TTX 2026 marks a significant milestone in strengthening regional maritime leadership.
- It is equipped with advanced sensors, weapon systems, and long-range operational capability, allowing it to identify and respond to various threats, including submarines, surface ships, and environmental challenges.
- The aircraft is capable of performing multiple roles such as anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), intelligence gathering, maritime patrol, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.
- It has a maximum take-off weight of 85,139 kg.
- It can reach speeds of up to 789 km/h and operate at a maximum altitude of 12,496 metres.
- The aircraft has an operational range exceeding 2,222 km and can remain on station for about four hours.

Dweep Shakti

P-8I Aircraft

- **Context:** The Ministry of Defence has recently entered into agreements for acquiring the Tunguska Air Defence Missile System and for carrying out depot-level inspection of the P-8I Poseidon long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft.
- The drill highlighted effective coordination and cooperation among the Army, Navy, and Air Force in safeguarding India's important island regions and maritime boundaries.

About P-8I Aircraft

- The P-8I Poseidon is a long-range, multi-role maritime patrol aircraft used by the Indian Navy. It is produced by Boeing.

About Exercise Dweep Shakti

- Dweep Shakti is a major tri-service military exercise aimed at evaluating and strengthening India's combined combat readiness in coastal and island settings.

- It emphasizes the swift mobilisation of forces to defend distant island territories against sea-based threats.
- The exercise was carried out under the supervision of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), India's only integrated theatre command, making use of the strategic location of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force all took part in the exercise.
- Its main goal is to enhance joint operational strategies and standard procedures, ensuring that all three services can function together seamlessly as a unified force during amphibious operations and in maintaining control over maritime areas.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- **We, the People of India: Decoding a Nation's Symbols-** T.M. Krishna (Carnatic vocalist)

INTERNATIONAL

G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting: India's Participation

- **Context:** Union External Affairs Minister traveled to France to participate in the meeting of the G7 Foreign Ministers.
 - Although India is not a member of the G7, it has been invited by the current chair, France, in the capacity of a "partner country."
 - India will engage in consultations with the G7 nations and other partner countries regarding global issues.
- About the G7 (Group of 7)**
- It is an informal forum comprising the world's seven advanced economies. Its members include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, and Japan, along with the European Union.
 - The group began as the **G6 in 1975** and became **the G7 in 1976** following the inclusion of Canada. It expanded to become the G8 in 1998 with the addition of Russia; however, **Russia was expelled in 2014**, and the group reverted to being the G7.
 - All decisions made within this forum are based on the consensus of the member nations.

SPORTS & GAMES

ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

- India secured the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 after defeating New Zealand by a massive 96-run margin at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- India is the First team to win three (2007, 2024, 2026) T20 World Cup titles.

Ranji Trophy 2025–26

- Jammu and Kashmir created history by clinching the Ranji Trophy 2025–26 title in their very first final, overcoming Karnataka in a remarkable performance.

India's Grandmaster

- Mayank Chakraborty has become India's 94th Grandmaster and the first from Assam.

Men's National kabaddi

- Indian Railways, led by Sunil Kumar, won the 72nd senior Men's National kabaddi championship with a 49-31 victory over Maharashtra in the final at Vadodara.

World Athletics Indoor Championship

- The Kalinga Indoor Stadium in Bhubaneswar will host the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships. The venue is also the front-runner to host the Asian Indoor Championships in 2028.



CURRENT FACTS

- The United States military has officially designated its recent combat actions against Iran as Operation Epic Fury.
- Part XII, Article 270- Taxes levied and distributed between the Union and the States.
- Part XII, Article 275- Grants from the Union to certain States
- Part XII, Article 280- Finance Commission
- Chief Minister launched a monthly incentive schemes of Rs1500 for village temple priests at a conference held in Mylapore.
- Sports Achievements of Tamil Nadu
 - Tamil Nadu Champions Foundation has been awarded the “India Sports Award 2025” by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry).
 - CII 'Best State for Promotion of Sports' for the year 2025.
 - Olympic Academy in Chennai, Madurai, Trichy and Nilgiris districts.
 - Some of the famous international tournaments held in Tamil Nadu- Squash World Cup Tournament, Men's Hockey Junior World Cup Tournament, Chennai Open International Women's Tennis Championship 2025, World Surfing League Tournaments, Chennai Chess Grand Master Tournaments.
- Part VI, Article 226- Power of High Courts to issue certain writs
- Minimum Wages Act, 1948
- Oleum($H_2S_2O_7$) – a concentrated form of diasulfuric acid – useful form for transporting sulphuric acid compounds, typically in rail tank cars, between oil refineries and industrial consumers.
- Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) for identification of diseases. NAT is a highly sensitive molecular technique that detects the genetic material for viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C in the blood.
- Tamil Nadu launched HPV Vaccination campaign on a pilot basis in four districts Ariyalur, Perambalur, Dharmapuri and Tiruvannamalai.
- In Tamil Nadu, where 58.27% of land is under agriculture and only 10.44% is classified as wasteland or dry land.
- Tamil Nadu pioneered the HPV vaccination campaign in four districts: Ariyalur, Perambalur, Dharmapuri, and Tiruvannamalai.
- The State’s current installed solar capacity is 10.15 GW.
- Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Project report released at the end of the 2023 showed that the Crude Incidence Rate of cervical cancer among women in Chennai was 13.0 per one lakh women, while the same in Dharmapuri was 36.2, followed by Perambalur 36.0, and Ariyalur 29.9.
- Part VI, Article 170- Composition of the Legislative Assemblies

- The South Pennayar originates in the Nandidurg hills of Karnataka and flows through Hosur, Krishnagiri, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Cuddalore districts for a distance of 391 km before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.
- India ranks second globally in childhood obesity. India stood second only to China in the number of children with high BMI (41 million high BMI; 14 million obesity).
- The State government launched a WhatsApp service for booking 108 ambulance for emergencies.
- Sungudi saris are traditional cotton saris which are perfected by the Saurashtrian community, who migrated from Gujarat to Madurai (Tamil Nadu) in the 17th century. Madurai Sungudi sari received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in December 2005.
- Union Home Minister unveiled two mascots, Pragati and Vikas, for the upcoming Population Census 2027. This will be the first Census that will be digital, and the first to allow self-enumeration and enumeration of caste.
- The Karavetti Bird Sanctuary, spread over nearly 4.5 square kilometres in Ariyalur district, is an important wetland that attracts thousands of migratory and resident birds each year. The freshwater lake is fed by the Pullambadi and Kattalai Canals. It was declared a bird sanctuary in 1999, and made a Ramsar site in 2024.
- Bhavani 'jamakkalam' refers to the colourful blankets and carpets woven in and around Bhavani in Erode district. They are made with thick cotton threads. The craft received the Geographical Indication tag in 2005. The 'jamakkalam' is exported to European countries, the U.S., and Singapore.
- The Rayakottai Fort in Krishnagiri district is one of the region's historic hill forts. It was constructed by the Vijayanagara rulers in the 14th Century. Later, it came under the control of the Mysore Wadiyars. Following the Third Anglo-Mysore War in 1791, the fort was passed into the hands of the British from Tipu Sultan.
- In the First World War, hundreds of soldiers from the erstwhile Trichinopoly district joined the British Indian Army. Some of them died in the war. To commemorate their sacrifice, a memorial was installed by the government opposite Gandhi Market in the heart of Tiruchi. A clock tower was also erected on the premises.
- In February 1895, the first tram services in Madras ran between the Power Station at Egmore and Pachaiyappa's College, with two short halts, completing the journey in 12 minutes. By 1921, 97 tram cars ran on 24 km of track. The Madras Tramway Company was officially closed in April 1953.
- India is the second largest fish-producing country in the world
- Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989
- Part V, Article 94- Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
- Prasar Bharati-Shared Audio-Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination (PB-SHABD) was launched in March, 2024.
- Amrit Bharat Station Scheme was launched in 2022 which aims at development and upgradation of stations over the Indian Railways (IR) network.
- cVIGIL App
 - Introduced by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the cVIGIL app empowers citizens to instantly report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and expenditure-related issues during election periods.

- Through this app, users can upload photos, audio clips, or videos.
- Promising action on complaints within 100 minutes, the app also features an automated facility for geotagging to pinpoint the exact location.
- India, with the fifth-largest coal reserves and being the second-largest consumer, heavily depends on coal.
- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer.
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a statutory body established in 1986 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023
- Joha rice from Assam was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2017.
- In India, Geographical Indications are regulated under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- Tamil Nadu Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) 2021-26 is 35 per 1 lakh live births.
- Vijayaraman was appointed as the State Information Commissioner of Tamil Nadu.
- The Right to Information Act, 2005, was amended through the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. This amendment restricts the disclosure of personal information, even in the interest of the public good.
- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019
- Through the 106th Amendment to the Constitution (2023), a law was enacted providing for a 33% reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. This legislation is known as the "Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam."
- Part XV, Article 324(5)
- Subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the Election Commissioners and the Regional Commissioners shall be such as the President may by rule determine:
- Provided that the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court and the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment:
- Provided further that any other Election Commissioner or a Regional Commissioner shall not be removed from office except on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- In the 2026 case of Harish Rana v. Union of India, the Supreme Court of India granted permission for euthanasia to Harish Rana, thereby upholding the right to die with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- Mazagon is India's only shipyard to have built destroyers and conventional submarines for the Indian Navy. It was given Navratna status in 2024.
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- Both the Houses of Parliament seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar. This is the first time that such a notice has been formally submitted in Parliament.

Nivation

- Nivation refers to erosion around and beneath a snowbank caused by **repeated freezing and thawing**.
- This process forms nivation hollows, which deepen over time as snow repeatedly accumulates in the same place.
- Instability in such areas can suddenly release ice, meltwater, and debris, leading to hazards like flash floods.
- **Part XV, Article 326**- Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage.
- **Warli painting**—the traditional folk art of the **Warli tribe from Maharashtra**—dates back to the **10th century AD** and received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2014.
- **Diethylene glycol** is commonly used as a solvent in the manufacture of resins, oils, and paints.
- **Propylene glycol** is the compound used as a solvent in liquid medications.
- Researchers have discovered a new species of earthworm, **Drawida vazhania**, in the Vazhani Dam area of the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary in the Thrissur district of Kerala.
- Union Finance Minister has stated that everyone in the country will be brought under the ambit of health insurance coverage by the year 2033.
- **Procedure for suspending Members of the Lok Sabha Rule 373**: This rule empowers the Speaker of the Lok Sabha to order a member behaving in a disorderly manner to immediately withdraw from the House.
- **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha Rule 255**: This rule empowers the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha to order a member behaving in a disorderly manner to immediately withdraw from the House.
- **Part III, Article 32**- Remedies for enforcement of rights conferred by this Part
- **Part VI, Article 226**- Power of High Courts to issue certain writs
- **Ethyl chloroformate** is an organic chemical intermediate widely used in pharmaceutical and agrochemical manufacturing.
- **India is the world's largest producer** of coconuts contributing to 30.37% of the Global coconut production.
- **The Indus River is known as the "Tigris of India."**

Oru Paisa Tamizhan

- Oru Paisa Tamizhan was a **Tamil weekly journal founded by Pandit C. Iyothee Thass**.
- It began publication in June 1907, from Royapettah in Madras, and was priced at one paisa.
- Issued every Wednesday as a four-page journal, it was renamed Tamizhan in 1908.
- Through it, Iyothee Thass voiced ideas of social reforms

- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**
- **Vainava Uraivalam**, an authority on the **Vaishnavite tradition** written by **T. Gnanasundaram**.
- **Armamalai Cave Paintings in Tirupattur** are found in natural caves and were adapted into a Jain shrine in the Eighth Century. The vivid wall and ceiling paintings depict themes from Jainism, including the Astadikpalakas.
- In Tolkappiyam, Pothu was used to refer to the male of several species, including bull, buffalo, deer, crocodile, and peacock.
- Avian influenza A (H5N1), commonly known as bird flu, is a severe viral infection that mainly spreads among birds but can also affect mammals.
- **SUVIDHA app**, a one-stop solution for seeking, tracking and downloading all campaign related permissions as well as ECI updates like Press Notes and latest instructions/ orders at the tip of their fingers. The platform which works on First in First Out principle ensures transparent permissions, thereby removing any discretion.
- India's ambitious energy transition goals – to have 300 GW of installed solar capacity by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070
- India imports 60% of its overall LPG requirements, of which 90% is routed through the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.
- India is the fourth largest buyer of natural gas in the world, with an imported supply of 261 lakh metric tonnes in 2025.
- In India, natural gas is primarily used to produce ammonia, which in turn is used to produce fertilizers. In FY26, about 30% of India's LNG supply was used for the production of fertilizers
- The right to vote in India is a statutory right under Article 326 and the Representation of the People Act, and compulsory voting is neither a fundamental duty nor a legal duty.
- *State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu (2025)*, the Court observed that prolonged inaction by a Governor in assenting to Bills is constitutionally impermissible. These rulings together signal a firm judicial commitment to protecting the legislative sovereignty of elected State assemblies.
- **Part XII, Article 280- Finance Commission**
- **Part XI, Article 263- Provisions with respect to an inter-State Council**
- **The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013** – came into force on January 1, 2014.
- The **Dinesh Goswami Committee** on electoral reforms, set up in 1990, did not favour compulsory voting, citing practical difficulties in implementation. Instead, it recommended improving voter participation through awareness campaigns.
- India was placed **102nd in the 2025 Global Hunger Index (GHI)**. Although the Public Distribution System (PDS) reaches more than 80 crore people, the rate of child wasting remains high at 18.7%, making it the second-highest in the world.
- **Chapchar Kut** is Mizoram's biggest spring festival and is widely known as the Mizo 'festival of joy'.
- **Heat stroke** is a life-threatening condition in which the body overheats due to high temperatures, humidity, or prolonged physical exertion resulting in a body **temperature exceeding 40°C (104°F)**, accompanied by seizures or a coma.

Reason for EV battery fires

- A common cause of EV battery fires is thermal runaway.
- A lithium-ion battery packs thousands of cells tightly together, each generating heat as it charges and discharges.
- Normally, an onboard computer called the battery management system keeps the temperature within a safe range.
- But if something goes wrong, one cell can overheat, causing neighbouring cells to overheat in a chain reaction that can outpace the cooling system.
- This process releases a toxic cocktail of gases, including hydrogen fluoride, in a flammable vapour that eases the 'path' to a fire.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

- LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas), consisting mainly of propane and butane, is separated from crude oil primarily through a process called Fractional Distillation.
- It is stored in liquid form inside pressurized cylinders and is commonly used for cooking in households.
- Although India produces a portion of its LPG needs domestically, it still relies on imports to satisfy overall demand.
- The government has increased LPG availability through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which offers subsidized connections to economically weaker households.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)

- Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is a cleaner automotive fuel mainly consisting of methane, typically making up about 80–90% of its composition.
- It is stored at high pressure, around 200–250 kg/cm², which allows a significant volume of gas to be contained in relatively small tanks in vehicles.
- Unlike LPG, which is kept in liquid form, CNG is stored as a gas.
- It is commonly used to help lower greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and reduce air pollution in cities.

Piped Natural Gas (PNG)

- Piped Natural Gas (PNG) mainly consists of methane (CH₄), along with small quantities of other hydrocarbons.
- It is delivered directly to homes, businesses, and industries through a network of pipelines.
- Since methane has the lowest carbon-to-hydrogen ratio among fossil fuels, PNG burns more cleanly and produces fewer emissions.
- It removes the need for gas cylinders and provides a continuous and reliable fuel supply.

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

- Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is natural gas, mainly composed of methane, that is cooled to about -160°C to turn it into a liquid state.
- It is shipped using specially designed cryogenic tankers and kept in insulated storage tanks at port terminals.
- Around half of India's LNG imports come from Qatar through long-term agreements, while other major suppliers include the United States, Australia, and Russia.

- Before use, the imported LNG is converted back into gas and then transported via pipelines for applications such as power generation, fertilizer manufacturing, city gas networks, and various industrial activities.
- Compared to regions like Europe, India has relatively limited LNG storage capacity, making it more susceptible to supply interruptions.

Strait of Hormuz

- The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow and strategically vital waterway situated between Iran to the north and the Arabian Peninsula (primarily the United Arab Emirates and the Musandam region of Oman) to the south.
- It is the sole maritime route connecting the oil-rich Persian Gulf (to the west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (to the southeast).
- Approximately 30 percent of the world's liquefied gas and 25 percent of its oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz.
- The United Arab Emirates and Oman also ship Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) through this route, and both nations contribute to India's imported LNG supply.
- Overall, the closure of this strait could impact more than 60% of India's imported LNG.

Anti-Defection Law

- Objective: It aims to prevent politicians from switching parties for personal gain.
 - Applicability: This law applies to both the Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies.
 - 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003: Through this Act, the Anti-Defection Law was further strengthened.
 - Consequently, the provision regarding a party "Split" (i.e., one-third of the members breaking away) was removed.
 - Currently, only the provision regarding a "Merger" remains in force.
- Part V, Article 82- Readjustment after each census
 - The Women's Reservation Act, 2023, known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023, mandates a 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
 - Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008
 - Companies Act, 2013
 - The Supreme Court has said that the right to life granted under Article 21 of the constitution applies to foreigner as well.
 - As per the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, the Election Commission of India is the sole authority empowered to resolve disputes regarding party symbols.
 - The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) operates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, to identify and recover proceeds derived from criminal activities.

Sarhul Festival

- Sarhul is a three-day traditional festival observed by tribal communities such as the **Oraon tribe, Munda tribe, and Ho tribe**.
- It is mainly celebrated in Jharkhand and also in parts of Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal.

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

- An Electronic Voting Machine is a device used to record votes in an electronic format. It was first introduced in 1982 in the Paravur Assembly constituency in Kerala.

- Since 2003, all state elections and by-elections have been conducted entirely using Electronic Voting Machines.
- In 2004, the Lok Sabha elections were conducted using Electronic Voting Machines.

Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme

- Based on the recommendations of the R.V. Gupta Committee, the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme—launched in 1998 by the Reserve Bank of India and NABARD—provides farmers with timely and affordable credit.
- This scheme offers loans of up to ₹3 lakh at low interest rates, as well as collateral-free loans of up to Rs.1.6 lakh for fisheries and animal husbandry activities.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme—launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on February 24, 2019—eligible small and marginal farmers receive an annual income support of ₹6,000, disbursed directly into their bank accounts in three equal installments of ₹2,000 each.

Barrel is a unit of volume

- 1 barrel = 159 liters
 - 1 barrel = 42 gallons
 - 1 cubic meter = 6.29 barrels
- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989
 - Part IV A, Article 51 A- Fundamental duties
 - Part IV A, Article 51 A (g) - to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures
 - Bonn Challenge is a global, voluntary effort to restore 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030.
 - Assam has become the first Indian State to float a tender for a group of earth-observation satellites that it says will strengthen disaster response along the flood-prone Brahmaputra valley and help survey the State's borders.
 - Where India stores its crude oil Existing Sites: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh; Mangalore, Karnataka; Padur, Karnataka. Upcoming Sites: Chandikhol, Odisha; Padur (Extension), Karnataka

Dengue

- Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the Dengue virus (genus: Flavivirus). It is primarily transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes.
- There are four serotypes of the virus: DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3, and DEN-4.

Evolution of the Collegium System

The Collegium system emerged through a series of judgments delivered by the Supreme Court.

- First Judges Case (1981): It was held that 'consultation' does not imply 'concurrence.' In other words, the government was not bound to strictly accept the Supreme Court's opinion regarding the appointment of judges.
- Second Judges Case (1993): The term 'consultation' was redefined to mean 'concurrence.' A recommendation made by the Chief Justice of India (CJI)—after consulting with two other senior-most judges—was deemed binding on the government.

- Third Judges Case (1998): The Chief Justice of India was required to consult a panel (Collegium) comprising four senior-most judges. The opinion of the majority of these judges was deemed essential.
- NJAC Act (2014): The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was introduced as a replacement for the Collegium system. However, in order to safeguard the independence of the judiciary, the Act was declared unconstitutional and subsequently struck down.
- The Supreme Court of India ruled that, under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950, Scheduled Caste status is restricted only to individuals belonging to Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist communities.
- According to the Central Government's 2024-25 Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) report, Tamil Nadu has secured the first place in India, with smart classrooms established in 82.5% of its government schools.
- Jacaranda mimosifolia is a deciduous tree species. It belongs to the Bignoniaceae family.
- Following Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh and Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu, the State Government plans to establish the country's third rocket launch site near the Gir Somnath district in Gujarat.
- The Constitution of India has been amended 106 times.
- One TMC (Thousand Million Cubic feet) is the volume of water obtained by discharging water continuously for 24 hours at a rate of 11,574 cubic feet per second.

Consumer Protection Authority

- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, undertakes the tasks of protecting consumer rights, regulating misleading advertisements, and ensuring product quality.

E-Jaagriti

- E-Jaagriti is an integrated, AI-based digital grievance redressal platform of the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- It is designed to integrate all consumer grievance redressal forums onto a single, seamless portal.

Theruvukkalam

- Theruvukkalam is an integrated mobile application that provides information regarding Tamil Nadu government competitive examinations including those conducted by the TNPSC, TRB, TNUSRB, and MRB – all in one place.
- It provides real-time updates on exam notifications, syllabi, and preparation guidelines.

Centre-State Relations comprise three categories

- Legislative Relations – Part XI, Articles 245–255
- Administrative Relations – Part XI, Articles 256–263
- Financial Relations – Part XII, Articles 268–293
- The 2026 G7 Summit is scheduled to take place from June 15 to 17, under the presidency of France.
- Fluoroquinolones are a class of antimicrobial drugs used to treat a wide range of bacterial infections. They are commonly used to treat various conditions, including typhoid fever, respiratory tract infections, and urinary tract infections.

Orange Economy

- The Orange Economy refers to a segment of the economy driven by creativity, culture, and intellectual property rights.
- In this sector, value is derived primarily not from physical goods, but rather from ideas, knowledge, artistic expression, and cultural content.

India's coastline

- In accordance with the guidelines of the National Security Council Secretariat, the National Hydrographic Office, in collaboration with the Survey of India, has re-evaluated India's coastline, revising its length from 7,516.6 km to 11,098.81 km.
- Furthermore, Tamil Nadu's coastline has been revised from 906.9 km to 1,068.69 km, making it the state with the second-longest coastline.

Sonowal Kacharis

- The Sonowal Kacharis are a plains tribe of the state of Assam. During the Ahom rule, they were engaged in the occupation of gold extraction.
- They belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family and are renowned for their knowledge of traditional herbal medicine.

Transgender Welfare Board

- Transgender people in Tamil Nadu are called thirunar in Tamil (திருனர்), specifically thirunangai (திருநங்கை) for transgender women and thirunambi (திருநம்பி) for transgender men.
- The state of Tamil Nadu was the first state to introduce a transgender welfare policy.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu has constituted a Third Gender Welfare on 15.04.2008 to redress their grievances.
- The Government provides monthly pension to help Third Gender who are above the age of 40 years.
- An "Award for the third gender" of Rs.1.00 lakh and a citation has been instituted from the year 2020 to encourage the third gender who has done eminent work for the welfare of third gender.
- The award will be felicitated on "Third Gender Day" which falls on 15th April of every year.
- Exclusive Mobile App, "Thirunangaial" has been developed to enable transgender to register their details and easily avail Identity Card. It also helps to enumerate the transgenders by their age, educational qualification, residence, etc. to formulate welfare schemes for them.

Initiatives by the Government of India

- The Government of India, through the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), has launched several measures to protect and empower transgender persons.
- The National Portal for Transgender Persons, launched on 25 November 2020, enables online applications for identity certificates and access to benefits.
- The SMILE Scheme, introduced in February 2022, provides livelihood, skill training, and shelter support through Garima Greh centres and Ayushman Bharat TG Plus health coverage.
- The Central Government constituted National Council for Transgender Persons on 21st August 2020.
- It serves as a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to safeguard and promote the rights of transgender persons in India.

- SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E).
- It is a flagship initiative aimed at the comprehensive rehabilitation and empowerment of transgender persons and other marginalised communities in India.
- Introduced as a Central Sector Scheme, SMILE was launched on February 12, 2022 and operationalised to align with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- SMILE aims to uphold the constitutional rights under Articles 14, 15, and 21, ensuring equality, non-discrimination, and the right to dignity for transgender persons.

Money Bill

- Article 110 of the Constitution of India defines bills containing only specific financial matters as 'Money Bills'.
- These include taxes, borrowing by the Central Government, the custody/ withdrawal of funds, appropriation, charged expenditure, receipts, audit, and other matters incidental thereto.
- The final authority to decide whether a bill is a Money Bill or not rests solely with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- It can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha. The prior recommendation of the President is mandatory for this purpose.
- The Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject this Bill; it can only offer recommendations.
- The President may give assent to the Bill or withhold it; however, he cannot return it for reconsideration.
- In the case of a Money Bill, there is no provision for a joint sitting of both Houses (Article 108) in the event of a disagreement.

Purchasing Managers' Index

- It is a measure of economic activity in both the manufacturing and services industries.
 - It is based on surveys that ask participants to report how key business factors have changed compared to the previous month.
 - Separate indices are prepared for the manufacturing and services sectors, which are then combined to form an overall composite index.
 - This index indicates whether business conditions, according to purchasing managers, are improving, worsening, or remaining unchanged.
- **Zojila Pass** is an important high-altitude pass in the western Himalayas. Commonly called the "pass of blizzards". It provides the only land connection between the Kashmir Valley and the cold desert region of Ladakh.
 - **MY Bharat Budget Quest:** It aims to connect the youth across the country with the Budget process and policymaking.
 - **Part V, Article 81-** Composition of the House of the People
 - **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan)**
 - The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) initiative is designed to **turn waste into valuable resources, supporting the development of a circular economy.**

- It seeks to build a robust framework for setting up **Biogas, Compressed Biogas (CBG), and Bio-CNG plants to encourage sustainable development.**
- The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** under the Ministry of Jal Shakti acts as the nodal agency for implementing this initiative.
- **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme 2025**
- This scheme was launched in **April 2025** by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**
- Its objective is to attract global and domestic investments, integrate **India's electronics industry into Global Value Chains (GVCs), and foster a robust ecosystem for component manufacturing.**
- The scheme offers sales-linked incentives for a **total duration of six years** preceded by a one-year preparatory period and capital incentives for a period of five years.
- **India ranks 7th in global coffee production.** Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu account for **96% of India's coffee production,** with **Karnataka leading** at an estimated 2,80,275 MT (2025-26).
- As per the findings of the **third NFHS (2005-6),** which is the closest survey to the 2002 constitutional amendment, in 2005, nine States (Himachal, Punjab, Delhi, Goa, Andhra (incl Telengana), Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu) had achieved a **TFR of 2.1 or less.** By 2021, most major States had achieved a TFR of 2.1 except **five States (Bihar, U.P., Jharkand, Meghalaya and Manipur).**
- **Rupee depreciation** refers to a fall in the value of the Indian Rupee (INR) relative to major foreign currencies, especially the USD.
- **Devaluation-** An intentional reduction in the value of a country's currency carried out by the government or the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **Depreciation-** A decline in a currency's value that occurs naturally in the market, driven by the forces of demand and supply.
- The Supreme Court reaffirmed the right to die with dignity under **Article 21,** allowing withdrawal of life support and emphasising patient autonomy.

Suvidha portal

- The Suvidha portal is a technological solution developed by the Election Commission of India to streamline requests from political parties and candidates for permissions and election-related facilities.

Election commission of India

- The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
- The Election Commission was established in accordance with the Constitution on 25th January 1950. The Commission celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2001.
- Originally the commission had only a Chief Election Commissioner. It currently consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.

- For the first time two additional Commissioners were appointed on 16th October 1989 but they had a very short tenure till 1st January 1990. Later, on 1st October 1993 two additional Election Commissioners were appointed.
- The concept of multi-member Commission has been in operation since then, with decision making power by majority vote.
- The President appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners. They have tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office in like manner and on like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- At the state level, the election work is supervised, subject to overall superintendence, direction and control of the Commission, by the Chief Electoral Officer of the State.
- At the district and constituency levels, the District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, who are assisted by a large number of functionaries, perform election work.
- If elections are being held only for the Parliament, the expenditure is borne entirely by the Union Government while for the elections being held only for the State Legislature, the expenditure is borne entirely by the concerned State.
- In case of simultaneous elections to the Parliament and State Legislature, the expenditure is shared equally between the Union and the State Governments.
- Political parties are registered with the Election Commission under the law.
- The Commission, as a part of its quasi-judicial jurisdiction, also settles disputes between the splinter groups of such recognised parties.
- The Commission also has advisory jurisdiction in the matter of post election disqualification of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.
- The Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate who has failed to lodge an account of his election expenses within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
- Article 329 of the Constitution once the actual process of elections is started, the judiciary cannot intervene by entertaining petitions on the conduct of the polls.
- Once the polls are completed and result declared, the Commission cannot review any result on its own.
- Absentee voters have an option entitled to vote by postal ballot.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

- The Chief Election Commissioner is the head of the Election Commission of India and is responsible for maintaining the independence and fairness of the electoral system.
- The CEC is appointed by the President of India as per Article 324(2) of the Constitution.

- The position plays a key role in implementing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), overseeing the preparation of electoral rolls, and ensuring that elections are conducted in a free and impartial manner.
- In the T.N. Seshan vs Union of India (1995) case, the Supreme Court ruled that all Election Commissioners have equal authority and status, promoting a system of collective decision-making.
- The CEC is regarded as the protector of India's electoral democracy and is accountable only to the Constitution and Parliament.
- Chief Election Commissioner: Gyanesh Kumar
- Election Commissioners: Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, Dr. Vivek Joshi

Election Commissioner

- The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners are appointed by the President of India under Article 324(2) of the Constitution.
- Appointment orders are issued by the President, and the terms, conditions, and service benefits are governed by the Election Commission (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1992.
- As per the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991, each Election Commissioner, including the CEC, serves for six years or until reaching the age of 65, whichever comes first.
- Their salaries and allowances are aligned with those of Supreme Court Judges.
- Election Commissioners may resign by submitting a written notice to the President.
- The Chief Election Commissioner enjoys higher constitutional protection: under Article 324(5), the CEC can be removed only in the same manner as a Supreme Court Judge through a special majority in both Houses of Parliament on proven misbehavior or incapacity.
- Other Election Commissioners can only be removed based on the recommendation of the CEC.
- This framework preserves the independence of the Election Commission, ensuring it remains impartial, credible, and free from arbitrary influence by the executive.

