

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

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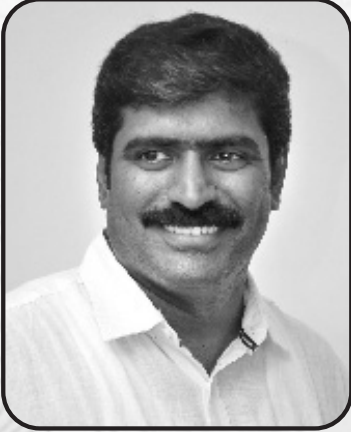
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Preface



M. SHUNMUGAM

Director

Vetrii IAS Study Circle.

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My Dear Aspirants,

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

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

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

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

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

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SCIENCE

GENERAL SCIENCE

GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

- **Context:** The Central Government has intensified its measures against the **misuse and illicit sale of GLP-1 receptor agonists.**

About GLP-1 Receptor Agonists

- GLP-1 receptor agonists are synthetic medications used to **treat Type 2 diabetes and obesity in adults.**
- They aid in **reducing obesity by suppressing appetite.**
- Furthermore, they stimulate insulin secretion to regulate blood sugar levels.

Microbial Methane Emissions

- **Context:** Non-producing oil and gas wells are releasing microbial methane at levels nearly 1,000 times higher than earlier estimates.
- These wells can remain a long-term source of methane leakage.

Microbial (Biogenic) Methane

- Methane produced by **microorganisms called methanogens (a type of archaea).**
- Formed through the **breakdown of organic matter in oxygen-free (anaerobic) conditions.**

Role in the Carbon Cycle

- An important part of the global carbon cycle.
- Naturally generated in environments such as: Wetlands, Rice fields, Landfills, Digestive systems of ruminant animals

Environmental Concern

- **Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas.**
- Its impact on climate change is significant regardless of whether it is natural or human-induced.

Implications of the Study

- Even after oil and gas reserves are exhausted, inactive wells may continue to emit methane.

National Institute for Pre-Clinical Research (NIPCR)

- **Context :** Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has upgraded the **'National Animal Resource Facility for Biomedical Research' (NARFBR)** and renamed it as the **'National Institute for Pre-Clinical Research' (NIPCR).**
- It serves as a critical bridge between laboratory discoveries and human clinical trials, validating biomedical innovations.
- The Cabinet Committee approved this institute on November 18, 2015, and it was formally established as a permanent ICMR institute on January 1, 2016.
- It is located in **'Genome Valley', Hyderabad.** India's premier biotechnology hub, spanning across 100 acres.

Objectives and Functions

- The primary objective is to **strengthen India's self-reliance in drug discovery and medical technology through advanced pre-clinical research.**
- It operates not just as an animal resource facility, but as a comprehensive center for pre-clinical and translational sciences.
- It provides the necessary infrastructure to systematically test drugs, vaccines, biological products, medical devices, and cell & gene therapy methods before they are applied to humans.
- It provides scientific expertise and infrastructure support for biomedical innovation and validation to academic institutions, industries, and start-ups.

LATEST INVENTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

refining of crude oil. It is widely used as a binding material in road construction.

CSIR's Bio-Bitumen

- **Context:** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) held a Technology Transfer Event to promote its innovative solution titled "Bio-Bitumen from Lignocellulosic Biomass From Farm Residue to Roads."

About Bio-Bitumen

- The technology has been jointly developed by CSIR-Central Road Research Institute and CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum.
- It is intended for use by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** in road construction projects.
- Bio-bitumen is produced using agricultural biomass and crop residues as raw material.
- Through a thermochemical conversion process, these inputs are transformed into a renewable and eco-friendly substitute for conventional petroleum-based bitumen.
- The product matches the performance of traditional bitumen while providing significant environmental and economic advantages.

Bio-Bitumen Production Process

- The process includes collecting post-harvest residues like **rice straw**, **converting them into pellets**, **subjecting them to pyrolysis to produce bio-oil**, and finally blending this with conventional bitumen to create bio-bitumen.

Significance

- This innovation can help curb pollution caused by **crop residue burning**.
- Since India imports nearly half of its bitumen needs, adopting bio-bitumen can also reduce reliance on foreign sources and boost domestic production capacity.

About Bitumen

- Bitumen is a thick, black, and sticky hydrocarbon substance obtained during the

WHO Approves First Malaria Treatment for Newborns

- **Context:** The World Health Organization has cleared for the first time a malaria treatment made specifically **for newborns and young infants**.

- World Malaria Day is **observed annually on April 25th**.

Drug Details

- Child-friendly version of **Artemether-lumefantrine**
- Dual action: One drug rapidly reduces parasites and Other eliminates remaining parasites and prevents relapse
- Suitable for **infants weighing 2–5 kg**

Global Malaria Situation

- 282 million cases and 610,000 deaths in 2024
- **India has seen a significant decline**, but malaria still persists in some regions

SPACE

Pulsars and Measuring Cosmic Distances

- **Context:** Indian astronomers have introduced a new technique to estimate distances in space by observing how pulsars interact with the interstellar medium they move through.

About Pulsars

- **Nature:** Pulsars are extremely magnetised, fast-spinning neutron stars that release beams of electromagnetic radiation from their magnetic poles.
- **Formation:** They are the dense remnants left behind after massive stars (around 1.4–2.3 times the Sun's mass) undergo supernova explosions.

- **Structure & Density:** A pulsar packs more mass than the Sun into a compact sphere of about 20 km, consisting mainly of neutrons.

- **Rotation Speed:** These objects rotate incredibly fast, from a few times per second to several hundred times per second in the case of millisecond pulsars.
- **Magnetic Strength:** Their magnetic fields are extraordinarily powerful—trillions of times stronger than Earth's enabling them to accelerate charged particles and produce focused, beam-like radiation.

ISRO Successfully Conducts Second Air Drop Test for Gaganyaan (IADT-02)

- **Context:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) completed the **second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02)**.
- **Location:** Test carried out at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**.
- The system is essential to **ensure safe recovery of the crew module – the capsule in which astronauts sit during a human flight**.
- After the module's release, a parachute system, comprising 10 parachutes, was deployed, helping the capsule decelerate to a safe splashdown speed.
- This test marks another significant step towards the readiness for the Gaganyaan G1 Mission, with active support and participation from **the Indian Air Force, Indian Navy, and Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- Successfully recovered with support from the Indian Navy.
- **First Test (IADT-01): Successfully conducted on August 24, 2025 at Sriharikota.**

Execution Method

- A simulated Crew Module was lifted to ~3 km altitude.
- Deployment was done using an **Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter**.

About Gaganyaan

- Gaganyaan Mission is **India's maiden human spaceflight initiative**, designed to send three astronauts into **Low Earth Orbit (about 400**

km altitude) for a duration of three days, and ensure their safe return to Earth.

- The program will proceed in stages, beginning with uncrewed test flights to validate systems, followed by the **first crewed mission, which is currently targeted for early 2027**.
- Successful completion of Gaganyaan will make India one of the few nations alongside the United States, Russia, and China to achieve independent human spaceflight capability.
- The astronauts selected for the mission include: **Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap, Shubhanshu Shukla**.

Critical Technologies Developed

- Human-rated launch vehicle (HLVM3)
- Life Support System (Earth-like environment in space)
- Crew Escape System (CES) for emergencies
- Crew training, recovery & rehabilitation systems

Human rated LVM3 - HLVM3

- LVM3 rocket - The well proven and reliable **heavy lift launcher of ISRO, is identified as the launch vehicle for Gaganyaan mission**.
- It consists of **solid stage, liquid stage and cryogenic stage**.
- All systems in LVM3 launch vehicle are re-configured to meet human rating requirements and christened Human Rated LVM3.
- HLVM3 will be capable of launching **the Orbital Module to an intended Low Earth Orbit of 400 km**.
- HLVM3 consists of Crew Escape System (CES) powered by a set of quick acting, high burn rate solid motors which ensures that Crew Module along with crew is taken to a safe distance in case of any emergency either at launch pad or during ascent phase.

AAKA Space Studio – 3D Printed Mars Radiation Shield

- Context: Ahmedabad-based AAKA Space

Studio has developed and successfully tested Asia's first 3D-printed radiation shield designed for Mars habitats.

- The technology was demonstrated during a large-scale analog space mission, highlighting future possibilities of sustainable construction on Mars.

Purpose of the Innovation

- The shield is designed to protect astronauts from harmful cosmic and solar radiation during long-duration stays on Mars.
- It aims to support safe human habitation on the Red Planet.

Radiation Protection is Important on Mars

- Mars has: No strong magnetic field, very thin atmosphere
- Because of this, the surface is exposed to high levels of cosmic and solar radiation.

Without protection, astronauts may face

- Serious radiation sickness
- Long-term damage to cells and tissues

Features of the 3D-Printed Shield

- Provides effective protection from space radiation
- Enhances thermal stability in extreme Martian conditions
- Offers structural strength suitable for long-term habitats

Significance

- Represents a key step toward:
- Sustainable habitat construction on Mars
- Future lunar and interplanetary bases

G20 Satellite – 2027

- **Context:** The Chairman of ISRO has announced that a 'G20 Satellite' designed to monitor climate change, air pollution, and weather conditions will be launched into space in 2027.
- This G20 satellite project is being developed for the benefit of the G20 member nations;

this consortium comprises 21 members, including the European Union, the African Union, India, the United States, Russia, and China.

- India holds the unique distinction of being the first nation to successfully place 104 satellites into orbit using a single launch vehicle, without any collisions.
- To date, ISRO has commercially launched 433 satellites for 34 different countries, thereby securing a prominent position for India in the global space market.
- ISRO is actively working on a mission to send Indian astronauts to the Moon by the year 2040.
- Under the 'Saamudrayan' mission, ISRO is currently engaged in the development of a 'titanium sphere' capable of withstanding high pressure, intended for deep-sea research.
- This titanium sphere is being designed with a thickness of approximately 100 mm and a circumference of 2.2 meters; it is intended for use in manned deep-sea research expeditions.

Aryabhata

- **Context:** As Aryabhata marks the completion of 51 years since its launch, it stands as India's first indigenously developed satellite, having laid the foundation for the nation's advancements in space technology.

About the Aryabhata Satellite

- Aryabhata was India's first indigenously built satellite.
- It was named in honour of Aryabhata, the renowned 5th century Indian mathematician and astronomer.
- The satellite was launched into space on April 19, 1975, from Kapustin Yar with the assistance of the Soviet Union.
- With this successful launch, India became the 11th nation in the world to place a satellite into orbit.

- The satellite was developed by a small team of **ISRO scientists led by Vikram Sarabhai and U. R. Rao.**
- It featured a semi-spherical structure with 26 flat facets, measuring approximately 1.59 meters in diameter and 1.19 meters in height.
- Its solar panels covered an area of approximately 36,800 square centimeters and generated about 46 watts of power.
- Aryabhata was designed to conduct scientific experiments in **the fields of solar physics and X-ray astronomy.**
- Although a power failure occurred after just five days, the satellite successfully carried out initial X-ray observations and transmitted data for a brief period.
- It remained in orbit for approximately 17 years before re-entering Earth's atmosphere and burning up on February 10, 1992.
- **This later became a symbol of national pride and paved the way for missions such as Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan, and Aditya-L1.**
- Low Earth Orbit is located at an altitude of **160 to 2,000 km** from the **Earth's surface.** The deployment of satellites into this orbit has significantly increased in recent years.

ISRO Village Mapping Project

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has **successfully completed a major project to map every village in India with high precision from space.**

- Announcement made on **National Panchayati Raj Day**

Mapping Details

- Land use and land cover mapped at 1:10,000 scale
- **1 cm on map = 100 meters on ground**
- High resolution allows distinction between features **like paddy fields and ponds**

Coverage

- **Based on 2011 Census:** 6.49 lakh villages mapped
- Data shared with multiple government agencies

Integration with Governance

- Integrated with **Gram Manchitra portal of Ministry of Panchayati Raj**
- Supports Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP)

Benefits

- Enables data-driven decision making at village level
- Helps identify land resources and usage patterns
- Improves planning and implementation of schemes

Significance

- Enhances transparency and accountability in rural governance
- Strengthens grassroots democracy
- Marks a major step towards digital and evidence-based governance.

Vikram-1 Rocket

- **Context :** The hardware for '**Vikram-1**', India's first private rocket developed by Skyroot Aerospace, has been dispatched from Telangana for its upcoming space launch.

About the Vikram-1 Rocket

- Vikram-I is **India's first private orbital launch vehicle developed by the Hyderabad-based company, Skyroot Aerospace.**
- Its maiden orbital launch is targeted for early 2026.
- It is named in honor of **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai**, the pioneer of the Indian space program.
- It is designed for the small satellite launch market, aiming to provide rapid and affordable access to space.
- It is designed to launch satellites weighing up to **350 kg into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).**

GEOGRAPHY

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

The Konyak Tribe

- **Context:** Researchers at Nagaland University have discovered that a **traditional herbal medicine used by the Konyak tribe** possesses the potential to act against cancer.
- This highlights to the world the significance of the indigenous medical knowledge possessed by this tribe.

About the Konyak Tribe

- The **Konyak tribe is found in the Mon district of Nagaland**, as well as in the Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Konyak community follows a patriarchal system. Typically, the father's assets are inherited by the eldest son.
- **Aolingmonyu, Animo, and Laun-Ongmo** are their most important festivals.
- Their most significant harvest festival is '**Aoleang Monyu.**' It is celebrated during the first week of April.

B'nei Menashe Community

- **Context:** Around 250 members of the **B'nei Menashe community from Manipur and Mizoram arrived in Tel Aviv**
- They claim ancestry from **one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel**

About B'nei Menashe

- Belong to the **Mizo and Kuki tribal groups in Northeast India**
- Identify themselves as descendants of the Tribe of Manasseh from Jewish tradition

- According to tradition, the **Tribe of Manasseh was exiled after the Assyrian conquest of Israel**
- Their migration narrative suggests movement through Persia and Afghanistan before reaching Northeast India.
- The B'nei Menashe represent a **unique blend of cultural, religious, and historical identity**
- Their story highlights the intersection of tradition, migration, and belief systems

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Tar Balls

- **Context:** The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change has recently issued draft rules to regulate and manage tar balls, aiming to safeguard coastal regions and marine ecosystems from the effects of oil pollution.

About Tar Balls

- Tar balls are small, dark, sticky lumps of degraded oil that are found in oceans, usually formed due to oil spills or natural leakage of crude oil.
- They are created when **crude oil undergoes weathering processes in the sea, including physical, chemical, and biological changes.**
- Ocean currents and waves carry these particles from offshore areas to coastlines.
- Over time, they become semi-solid or solid masses that wash up on beaches, leading to environmental harm and possible health risks.
- Their size can vary widely from tiny particles to large lumps as big as a basketball.
- Tar balls contain harmful substances such as heavy metals, trace elements, and long-lasting organic pollutants.

- They collect along beaches and can harm marine life. Birds, fish, and animals like sea turtles may accidentally eat them, mistaking them for food.
- The western coastline, especially from Gujarat to Goa, is highly prone to tar ball accumulation, particularly between April and September.

Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- **Context:** Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary was declared a Ramsar site in 2026. With this, **the total number of Ramsar sites in India has risen to 99.**

About Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- It is a freshwater wetland ecosystem in **Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, created by the Upper Ganga Canal.**
- This inclusion increases the number of Ramsar sites in **Uttar Pradesh to 12.**
- The sanctuary is located on the **Central Asian Flyway**, a major migratory route for birds.
- It serves as a vital habitat for migratory birds such as the Bar-headed Goose, Painted Stork, and various duck species.

India's Recent Ramsar Sites

- **Siliserh Lake (Rajasthan):** 95th Ramsar site.
- **Kopra Jalashay (Chhattisgarh):** 96th Ramsar site.
- **Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh):** 97th Ramsar site.
- **Chhari-Dhand Conservation Reserve (Gujarat):** 98th Ramsar site.

About Ramsar Sites

- A Ramsar site is a wetland recognized as being of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- The Ramsar Convention is one of the oldest intergovernmental treaties signed by member nations to conserve the ecological character of wetlands of international importance.
- It was signed on **February 2, 1971, in Ramsar, Iran**, and came into force in **1975.**
- **India** became a signatory to the **Ramsar Convention in 1982.**
- **Tamil Nadu** has **20 Ramsar** sites and holds the top position in India for having the highest number of these sites.

INDIAN POLITY

Cabinet Committee on Security

- **Context:** The Prime Minister recently chaired the second special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to assess India's preparedness and response strategies in light of the escalating tensions in West Asia.

About the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** is the highest decision-making body in India for matters related to national security, defence spending, and foreign policy.
- It is a key committee under the Union Cabinet that deals with critical and strategic issues requiring top-level attention.
- **Chairperson:** The CCS is headed by the Prime Minister of India.
- **Members:** It includes the senior-most ministers of the Union Government Prime Minister (Chair), Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of External Affairs, Minister of Finance.

Objective

- The main goal of the CCS is to safeguard national security by taking decisions on major defence deals, framing strategies to tackle internal and external threats, and coordinating India's diplomatic and economic responses during global crises.

Key Functions

- Oversees and guides actions during global conflicts, such as the ongoing West Asia situation, to protect India's interests.
- Ensures uninterrupted availability of essential resources like LPG, LNG, and fertilisers during international disruptions.

- Evaluates and approves significant capital purchases for the armed forces.
- Considers measures across sectors like agriculture, shipping, aviation, and MSMEs to reduce the impact of global uncertainties.
- Develops policies to address issues like terrorism, insurgency, and maintenance of law and order.
- Emphasizes timely dissemination of accurate information to curb misinformation and rumours during crises.

Significance

- The CCS serves as a centralized platform for swift and coordinated decision-making on sensitive national security matters.
- It also plays an important role in maintaining price stability and ensuring the steady supply of essential goods through measures like fuel duty adjustments and diversification of supply sources.

Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC)

- **Context:** The Central Government has invited applications from eligible senior officials to fill the post of Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC).
- The post is becoming vacant as the incumbent CVC, Praveen Kumar Srivastava (1988 IAS batch), is set to retire shortly.
- Consequently, the process for selecting a new Commissioner has been initiated.

About Central Vigilance Commissioner

- The CVC is **India's apex anti-corruption body**.
- It was established based on the recommendations of the **K. Santhanam Committee (1964) on the prevention of corruption**.
- It was **accorded statutory status under the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003**.

- The Commission comprises a **Central Vigilance Commissioner (Chairperson) and a maximum of two Vigilance Commissioners.**
- The members are appointed by the **President of India based on the recommendations of a committee comprising the Prime Minister (Chairperson), the Union Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.**
- The tenure of office is **four years or until the age of 65**, whichever occurs earlier.

Sindhi Constitution Edition Released

- **Context:** The Vice President of India released the **Sindhi edition of the Constitution of India in New Delhi, coinciding with Sindhi Language Day.**
- This new edition has been produced in both Devanagari and Perso-Arabic scripts.
- Notably, this release marks the first time since independence that the Sindhi edition of the Constitution has been **published in the Devanagari script.**
- The literary tradition of the Sindhi language reflects a unique confluence where **Vedanta philosophy and Sufi thought converge**, while also upholding universal values such as unity, love, and brotherhood.
- India stands unique in ensuring that its Constitution is available in multiple languages.
- The Constitution has also been translated into Tamil, Gujarati, Bodo, Dogri, Santhali, and Nepali.
- Through the **21st Constitutional Amendment Act of 1967**, Sindhi was included as the **15th official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.**

Women's Reservation (Article 334A)

- Operationalises one-third reservation for women in Assemblies.
- Reservation will take effect only after delimitation based on latest Census.

Current Census Context

- As of now, the latest published Census is 2011.
- Future delimitation will depend on a newer Census notified by Parliament.

Safeguards for Tribal Representation

- Includes protections to prevent dilution of tribal representation.
- Especially relevant for Northeastern States.

Delimitation Commission Composition

- To be set up under the proposed Delimitation Bill, 2026.

Members include:

- A **current/former Supreme Court judge (Chairperson)**
- **Chief Election Commissioner (or nominee)**
- **State Election Commissioner of the concerned State**

131st Constitutional Amendment Bill and Delimitation Bill

- **Context:** Three bills including the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill and the Delimitation Bill have been introduced in the **Lok Sabha with the aim of implementing a 33% reservation for women in the House, effective from the 2029 general elections onwards.**
- Through this initiative, **the total number of Lok Sabha constituencies is set to be increased from the current 543 to 815.**
- According to this proposal, it is envisaged that **815 seats would be allocated to the States, while 35 seats would be allotted to the Union Territories.**
- Out of the expanded total of 815 seats, **272 constituencies will be reserved for women, based on the 33% reservation quota.**

- Within this reservation framework, a sub-quota will be provided for women belonging to the **Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories**.
- Under the legislation enacted in 2023, implementation was contingent upon the completion of the 2027 Census; **consequently, the reservation could not have been effected prior to 2034**. These amendments have been introduced specifically to circumvent this delay.
- The number of **Lok Sabha constituencies in the Southern States will be increased from 129 to 195**.
- The representation of the Southern States will witness a **marginal increase, rising from 23.76% to 23.87%**.

Proposed figures

- The table shows the estimated number of seats for southern States as announced by Union Home Minister.

State	Current seats	As a share of current 543 seats	50% increase (approx.)	New status (as a share of 816 seats)
Karnataka	28	5.15%	42	5.14
Andhra Pradesh	25	4.60%	38	4.65%
Telangana	17	3.13%	26	3.18%
Tamil Nadu	39	7.18%	59	7.23%
Kerala	20	3.68%	30	3.67%
Total	129	23.76%	195	23.87%

Delimitation of Constituencies

- Delimitation is the **process of redrawing the boundaries of electoral constituencies to ensure proportional representation in accordance with changes in population**.
- This process ensures that the **value of every voter's vote is equal and rectifies regional imbalances in representation**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 82:** Empowers Parliament to enact a 'Delimitation Act' after every census.
- **Article 170:** Explains the process of dividing constituencies for State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Article 330:** Provides for the readjustment of the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha (House of the People).
- **Article 332:** Provides for the readjustment of the number of seats reserved for Scheduled

Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

- **Article 327:** Empowers Parliament to regulate, by law, all matters relating to elections to Parliament and State Legislatures.
- **Article 329(a):** Stipulates that orders issued regarding delimitation cannot be challenged in any court of law.

Composition and Appointment

- The Delimitation Commission is **appointed by the President of India in consultation with the Election Commission of India**.
- **Members:** It comprises a retired **Supreme Court Judge (as Chairperson), the Chief Election Commissioner, and the respective State Election Commissioners**.
- It functions independently, **free from executive interference**.

- Its orders possess the force of law; neither Parliament nor the State Legislatures can modify them.

The Necessity of Constituency Delimitation

- To resolve the anomaly where MPs from larger states represent a significantly higher number of voters compared to those from smaller states.
- To rectify the issue of certain constituencies becoming overcrowded due to rapid urbanization and migration.
- Delays in the delimitation process can lead to regional imbalances and distortions in political representation.

Constituency Delimitation Acts in India

- **Delimitation Act, 1952:** Based on the **1951 Census**, the **first Delimitation Commission (1952) was constituted**. It defined the initial constituencies for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, and also provided for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- **Delimitation Act, 1962:** Based on the **1961 Census**, the **Commission constituted in 1963** redrew constituency boundaries to reflect demographic changes and updated the reserved seats for SC/ST categories.
- **Delimitation Act, 1972:** Based on the **1971 Census**, the **Commission constituted in 1973** readjusted constituency boundaries. Subsequently, through the **42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976)**, the total number of seats was frozen and kept unchanged.
- **Delimitation Act, 2002:** Based on the **2001 Census**, the **Commission constituted in 2002** revised constituency boundaries and the reservation of seats for SC/ST categories.

However, due to a moratorium imposed until 2026, the total number of seats remained unchanged.

Judicial Stance

- **Kishorchandra Saghanlal Rathod v. Union of India (2024):** The Supreme Court ruled that orders issued by the Delimitation Commission can be subjected to judicial review by Constitutional Courts (High Courts and the Supreme Court) if such orders are patently arbitrary or violative of constitutional values.
- **Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission (1966):** Judicial intervention was restricted solely to avoid unnecessary delays in the electoral process; it did not impose an absolute bar on the power of Constitutional Courts to scrutinize the orders of the Delimitation Commission.

Constitutional Amendment Acts

- **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976:** Froze the allocation of seats to the States in the Lok Sabha, as well as the division of each State into territorial constituencies, based on the 1971 Census, until the year 2000.
- **84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001:** Extended this freeze until the year 2026. Furthermore, it empowered the authorities to undertake the readjustment of constituencies based on the 1991 Census.
- **87th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003:** Permitted the delimitation of constituencies based on the 2001 Census, without altering the number of seats allocated to each State in the Lok Sabha.

Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 Defeated in Lok Sabha

- **Context:** A united Opposition defeated the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, with **298 votes in favour and 230 against**,

falling short of the required two-thirds majority (352 votes) needed for constitutional amendments.

- The Bill aimed to redistribute Lok Sabha seats based on the 2011 Census, linking it to the implementation of women's reservation ahead of the 2029 general elections.
- Following the defeat, the government withdrew two related Bills: **Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, Delimitation Bill, 2026**

Types of Majorities in Indian Parliament

- The process of making a law in Parliament starts when a Bill is introduced and concludes once it receives the approval of the President.
- The Indian Parliament uses four different kinds of majorities to decide on various matters. They are **Simple majority, Absolute majority, Effective majority and Special majority**

Simple majority

- This refers to a situation where more than half of the members who are present and actually voting support a proposal.

It is reflected in provisions such as

- **Article 100** – Deals with voting in Houses, quorum, and functioning despite vacancies.
- **Article 108** – Provides for joint sittings of both Houses.
- **Article 169** – Relates to the creation or abolition of State Legislative Councils.
- **Article 356** – Concerns the imposition of President's Rule.

A simple majority is required for

- Passing ordinary bills in both **Parliament and State Legislatures**.
- Approving motions like **No-Confidence, Confidence, Adjournment, and Censure motions**.
- Passing resolutions related to **Financial Emergency and President's Rule**.

- Deciding on the **creation or abolition of a State Legislative Council**.
- Conducting elections for positions such as the **Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha**.

Absolute Majority

- This means securing more than half of the total strength of the House, irrespective of how many members are present or voting.
 - It is generally not used for routine legislative work in **Parliament or State Legislatures**.
 - It is mainly required when forming the government at the Centre or in the States after general elections, where a party or coalition must prove it has the support of over half of the total members.

Effective Majority

- This refers to a majority of **more than 50% of the actual working strength** of the House, meaning the total membership minus any vacant seats.
 - If the Lok Sabha has 545 seats but 15 are vacant, the effective strength becomes 530. In such a case, the effective majority required would be more than half of 530, i.e., 265.

It is mentioned in provisions like

- **Article 67(b)** – Removal of the Vice President
- **Article 90(c)** – Removal of the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
- **Article 94(c)** – Removal of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha

This type of majority is used for

- Passing a resolution in the **Rajya Sabha to remove the Vice President, which must then be approved by the Lok Sabha with a simple majority**.
- Removing the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha as well as similar presiding officers in State Legislatures.

Special Majority – I (Parliament)

- This type of majority requires more than half of the total strength of the House along with at least two-thirds of the members present and voting.

It is needed in situations such as

- **Article 368** - Amending the Constitution
- **Article 124** - Removal of Supreme Court judges
- **Article 217** - Removal of High Court judges
- **Article 148** - Removal of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India
- **Article 324** - Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner
- **Article 243K** - Removal of the State Election Commissioner
- **Article 352** - Approval by Parliament of a Proclamation of National Emergency

Special Majority – II (Parliament)

- This majority means at least two-thirds of the total membership of the House must support the motion.

It is specifically required for

- **Article 61**- Impeachment of the President
- The President can be removed before completing the **five-year term for violation of the Constitution.**
- The motion must be approved by **both Houses of Parliament with a two-thirds majority of their total strength.**

Special Majority – III (Parliament)

- This type applies only in the Rajya Sabha and requires **two-thirds of the members present and voting.**

It is used in cases such as

- **Article 312**- Recommending the creation of new All-India Services
- **Article 249**- Allowing Parliament to make laws on subjects in the State List

Pennaiyar River

- **Context:** The Central Government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking an additional six months' time to constitute a tribunal regarding the Pennaiyar river water dispute between the states of **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.**

- In 2018, the Tamil Nadu government filed a lawsuit alleging that the Karnataka government's construction of a dam across the **Markandeya River (a major tributary of the Pennaiyar)** was illegal.

- On February 2, 2026, the Supreme Court of India directed the Central Government to constitute the Pennaiyar River Water Dispute Tribunal within one month.

About the Pennaiyar River

- The Pennaiyar is a major river in South India. It flows through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It is also known as the **Then Pennai, Dakshina Pinakini, Thenpennai, or Ponnaiyar.**

- Originating in the Nandi Hills, it flows **southward through Karnataka and southeastward through Tamil Nadu, eventually emptying into the Bay of Bengal near Cuddalore.**

- With a length of approximately 497 km, this river is the second-longest river in Tamil Nadu.

- The river basin is bounded by ranges of the Eastern Ghats, such as the Velikonda, Nagari, Javadhu, Shevaroy, Chitteri, and Kalvarayan Hills. The Bay of Bengal forms its eastern boundary.

- The Chinnar, Markandeya, Vaniyar, and Pambar are the river's major tributaries.

- Important reservoirs, such as the **Krishnagiri Dam and the Sathanur Dam,** play a crucial role in water management within the basin.

▪ **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:**

This Act enables states to request the Central Government to constitute tribunals for the purpose of resolving disputes related to inter-state waters.

- The verdicts of these tribunals are binding in nature.

ECI Rules on Mobile Phones & Photography inside Polling Stations

- **Context:** The Election Commission of India has issued strict guidelines prohibiting the use of digital devices inside polling stations.

Ban on devices inside booths

- Mobile phones, cameras, smartwatches, and other electronic devices are not allowed inside polling stations

Violation & Punishment

- Taking photos, selfies, or videos inside polling booths can lead to: Up to 3 months imprisonment, or Fine, or both
- Devices used in violation may be confiscated

Legal Provision

- Photographing voting on EVM is a serious offence under Section 128 of the Representation of the People Act 1951 (maintaining vote secrecy)

Additional Powers

- The Election Commission may also disqualify offenders, restricting future voting rights

Purpose of Restrictions

- To ensure secrecy and integrity of voting process
- To maintain the sanctity of elections

Permitted Activity

- Voters may take selfies with inked fingers only after exiting the polling station

Online Gaming Promotion and Regulation Rules, 2026

▪ **Background:** The Government of India has officially announced the new “**Online Gaming Promotion and Regulation Rules, 2026**” to create an integrated national framework for the online gaming sector.

▪ Finalized by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, these rules come into effect on May 1, 2026. These serve as guidelines operating under the Act enacted in 2025.

Key Features

▪ The objective is to eliminate fragmented state-level regulations and introduce standardized laws across the country. This is intended to address issues such as gaming addiction, financial fraud, and money laundering.

▪ A new body, the ‘**Online Gaming Authority of India**’ (OGAI), has been constituted under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

▪ Data localization has been made mandatory. To prevent prohibited real-money gaming, the framework facilitates the use of financial transaction systems as a tool to promote a legal and formal gaming environment.

Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal

▪ **Context:** The **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT)** has issued a final warning to the states of **Odisha and Chhattisgarh** to reach a consensus regarding the sharing of the Mahanadi river water.

About the Mahanadi River

▪ The Mahanadi is a major **east-flowing peninsular river** that flows through the states of **Chhattisgarh and Odisha**.

- It is the **second-largest peninsular river** in India in terms of water resources, **ranking just after the Godavari**.
- The river originates near **Pharsiya village, in the Nagri Sihawa area of Dhamtari district in Chhattisgarh**, at an elevation of approximately **442 meters above sea level**. It flows for **about 851-900 km**.
- It drains into the **Bay of Bengal near False Point**, close to the Paradip Port, after splitting into several distributaries.
- The **Seonath, Hasdeo, Mand, Ib, Jonk, Ong, and Tel** are its major tributaries. It is known as one of the rivers that deposits the most silt in India.
- **Key Feature**
 - **Hirakud Dam**: It is the **world's longest earthen dam**. It is used for irrigation, flood control, and hydroelectric power generation.
- **The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT)** was constituted in **2018** under the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.

Constitutional Provisions Regarding Inter-State River Water Disputes

- **Article 262 of the Constitution**: Deals with the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-state rivers or river valleys.
- **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**: This Act empowers the Central Government to establish tribunals to adjudicate disputes between states regarding inter-state river waters.
- **River Boards Act, 1956**: This Act provides for the establishment of River Boards to advise on the regulation and development of inter-state rivers.

NITI Aayog

- **Context** : NITI Aayog is a **public policy think tank** of the Central Government that promotes economic growth and cooperative federalism.
- The Central Government has restructured the NITI Aayog.
- **Ashok Kumar Lahiri** has been appointed as the new Vice Chairman.
- 5 full-time members have been appointed - **K.V. Raju, M. Srinivas, Abhay Surantikar, Govardhan Das, Rajiv Gauba**.
- NITI Aayog serves as a key platform for policy formulation, cooperative federalism, administrative reforms, innovation and long-term strategic thinking.
- The Prime Minister is the **Chairman of NITI Aayog**.
- Ashok Kumar Lahiri is a former **Chief Economic Advisor** and a member of the **15th Finance Commission**.

About NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog is the **premier public policy think tank** of the Government of India. It promotes economic growth through **cooperative federalism**.
- It was established on **January 1, 2015**, through a **Cabinet resolution** as a replacement for the Planning Commission.
- It shifted policy-making from a centralized **"top-down"** model to a decentralized **"bottom-up"** approach in which states participate.
- Its key objectives include involving states in **economic decision-making, supporting long-term strategic planning and innovation, and integrating national security with economic policy**.

- It functions as a policy-designing body, a knowledge hub, a monitoring and evaluation agency, and a reform driving force to improve administration.
- The **Prime Minister of India serves as its Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson is appointed by the Prime Minister with Cabinet rank.**
- The Governing Council includes Chief Ministers of States, Chief Ministers of Union Territories with legislatures, and Lieutenant Governors of other Union Territories.
- It includes **full-time professional members, up to four Union Ministers as ex-officio members,** and a **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** appointed for a tenure determined by the Prime Minister.
- **Aspirational Blocks Programme:** Extends development initiatives to remote blocks to improve administration and service delivery through the convergence of schemes.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** Aims to improve the **nutritional levels of children, women, and mothers** using monitoring and inter-departmental convergence.
- **e-AMRIT Portal:** Encourages the use of **electric vehicles** as part of the **India-UK** collaboration roadmap.
- **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment):** Encourages sustainable living and eco-friendly habits to build a global 'pro-planet' community.
- **Poshan Gyan:** A digital nutrition knowledge platform that supports awareness regarding maternal and child health.

NITI Aayog Initiatives

- **Atal Innovation Mission (2016):** Encourages entrepreneurship and innovation through Atal Tinkering Labs, Atal Incubation Centres, and Atal New India Challenges.
- **Aspirational Districts Programme:** Focuses on transforming 112 backward districts using real-time monitoring and central-state cooperation.
- **Key Indices**
- NITI Aayog has developed various indices to evaluate the performance of states across different sectors, including:
 - **SDG India Index** (in collaboration with the United Nations).
 - **Composite Water Management Index.**
 - **Health Index.**
 - **Agricultural Marketing Reform Index.**
 - **India Innovation Index.**

INDIAN ECONOMY

Agricultural Credit Framework

- **Context:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has indicated that the flow of agricultural credit in India remains fundamentally strong and is expected to cross RS.32.5 lakh crore in FY 2025–26.

About NABARD

- NABARD, set up in 1982, is the apex statutory institution responsible for promoting agriculture and rural development in India.
- It was created based on the recommendations of the CRAFTICARD Committee led by B. Sivaraman.
- Rather than lending directly to farmers, NABARD provides refinance support to institutions such as Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), and cooperative credit bodies.

India's Agricultural Credit Framework

- The Reserve Bank of India regulates agricultural credit and sets Priority Sector Lending (PSL) guidelines, while NABARD oversees implementation and development.

Institutional Sources

- Formal credit mainly comes from SCBs (contributing over 70%), along with RRBs and cooperative institutions.
- The cooperative network includes Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs), and State Cooperative Banks for short-term loans, while Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) cater to long-term financing.

Non-Institutional Sources

- Informal lenders such as moneylenders and traders still account for about 28% of agricultural credit.

Credit Mechanisms and Schemes

- RBI requires banks to allocate **18% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) to agriculture.**
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC):** Introduced in 1998, it ensures timely access to short-term credit for crop production and allied activities like animal husbandry and fisheries.
- Under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), farmers can access loans at **7% interest**, which may drop to 4% with timely repayment.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

- **Context:** The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has announced a one-time relief scheme that permits eligible manufacturing units in **Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to sell their products in the Domestic Tariff Area (within India) at reduced customs duty rates.**
- This measure will be in **force from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027**, and is aimed at supporting SEZ manufacturers in dealing with challenges arising from global trade disruptions.

About Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

- A policy was introduced on in April 2000 for the settling up of special Economic Zones in the country with a view to a hassle-free environment for exports.
- Units may be set up in SEZ units are on a self-certification basis.
- The policy provides for setting up of SEZs in the public, private, joint sector or by state governments.

- It is also envisaged the some of the existing Export Processing Zones, would be converted in to Special Economic Zones.
- As of February 2026, India has 368 officially notified SEZs.
- SEZs function under the provisions of the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and the SEZ Rules, 2006, which ensure a simplified and business-friendly regulatory environment.
- Accordingly, the government has converted Export Processing Zones located at following places.
 - Nanguneri SEZ - A multi product SEZ, Thirunelveli
 - Ennore SEZ - Thermal power project, Vayalur
 - Coimbatore SEZ - IT Parks
 - Hosur SEZ - Auto Engineering, Electronics, Defence and Aerospace
 - Perambalur SEZ - Multi product SEZ
 - Autocity SEZ - Automobile/Auto Components, Tiruvallur
 - India-Singapore SEZ - IT & ITES, Electronic Hardware, Logistics and Warehousing - Thiruvallur District
 - Bio-Pharmaceuticals SEZ - Clinical Research Organisation, Poison Control Centre, Centre for Regenera-tive Medicine, Medicine Research
- been under pressure due to rising oil prices and global uncertainties.
- After this step, the rupee strengthened from below **₹95 to around ₹93 per US dollar.**
- The decision also helps align India's forex system with global regulatory and accounting standards.

Speculative Trading

- It refers to buying or selling assets **just to make profit from short-term price changes, without any real underlying transaction.**

Non-Deliverable Derivatives (NDDs)

- An NDD is a financial agreement where two parties fix an exchange rate in advance, but no actual currency is exchanged.

Key Features

- The difference between the agreed rate and actual market rate is paid in cash (usually in US dollars).
- These contracts are mostly traded outside India in financial hubs like Singapore and London.
- Used by investors to protect against currency risk (hedging) or to bet on changes in the rupee's value (speculation).
- NDD trading can influence exchange rate expectations and sometimes create extra volatility, especially when offshore rates differ from domestic market rates.

RBI's Upcoming Guidelines

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to introduce final guidelines on "Responsible Business Conduct."
- **Aim: Prevent mis-selling by banks and protect customers.**
- **Likely implementation date: July 1.**
- **Focus area:** Transparent distribution of third-party financial products, especially insurance.

RBI Ban on Non-Deliverable Derivatives

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **stopped banks from participating in Non-Deliverable Derivative (NDD) contracts** to control fluctuations in the rupee.

Purpose of the Move

- The main aim is **to limit speculative trading and bring stability to the rupee**, which had

Role of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- Responsible for regulating insurance commissions a major driver of mis-selling.
- Has been reviewing the issue since 2023.
- Earlier approach: Cap total management expenses (including commissions).
- Issue persists: Commissions are rising faster than premiums.

Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Statement

- **Context:** The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Sanjay Malhotra, has announced that the central bank's policy interest rate will remain unchanged, continuing at the level of 5.25%.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected that the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for the financial year 2026-27 (FY27) will be 6.9 percent.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation for the financial year 2026-27 has been revised upwards to 4.6 percent, from the previously projected 4.5 percent.

About the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- It is a statutory body constituted under the RBI Act of 1934.
- To determine the policy interest rate in order to maintain inflation within the prescribed target (currently 4% +/- 2%).
- Meetings: Must meet at least four times a year.

Members (Total 6)

- RBI Governor (Chairperson)
- RBI Deputy Governor
- RBI Official (One)
- Experts appointed by the Central Government (Three)

Quorum for Decision-Making

- A minimum of four members is required to constitute a quorum for decision-making.

- The Governor or the Deputy Governor must mandatorily participate in the meeting.
- Decisions are taken based on a majority vote; in the event of a tie, the Governor holds the casting vote

Retail Inflation Trends in India

- **Context:** Country's retail inflation accelerated to **3.4% in the last month, up from 3.21% recorded in February this year.**
- According to data released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, inflation in rural areas edged higher to 3.63%, while in urban regions it rose to 3.11%.
- The food inflation rate, based on the All India Consumer Food Price Index, stood at 3.87% in March, up from 3.47% in the preceding month.
- The top items showing high inflation includes Gold and Silver jewellery, Coconut, Tomato and Cauliflower.
- In contrast, items with lowest inflation include Onion, Potato, Garlic, Arhar or Tur and Peas or Chickpeas.

About Retail Inflation

- **Retail inflation, or Consumer Price Index inflation**, measures changes in the prices of **goods and services that households regularly consume.**
- It reflects the day-to-day cost burden on consumers.

CPI Indicates

- Tracks how expensive it is for households to maintain their standard of living.
- Shows the ability of consumers to buy goods and services.
- Reflects the relative cost of different goods and services.
- Indicates the real value of the Indian rupee in terms of purchasing capacity.

Method of Calculation

- CPI is expressed as a percentage index.

- It compares current prices with prices in a reference (base) year.
- CPI base year is revised to 2024, updating the consumption basket and weights for both rural and urban households.
- Amidst such global challenges, **India's growth rate is projected to remain robust at 6.5 percent in both 2026 and 2027.**
- India's growth estimate for the year 2025 has been set at **7.6 percent**; this figure exceeds previous projections.

Compiling Authority

- The **National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) compiles CPI data.**
- It releases monthly CPI figures for: Rural, Urban, Combined sectors, State-wise data
- Driven by rising global energy and food prices, India's inflation rate is expected to rise to 4.7 percent in 2026, before subsequently **moderating to 4 percent in 2027.**

About the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Uses of CPI

- Acts as a key indicator of inflation in the economy.
- **Helps the central bank and government in:** Inflation targeting, Maintaining price stability
- Used as a deflator in national accounts to adjust nominal values.
- **Assists in evaluating:** Real wages, salaries, and pensions, Purchasing power of money
- **Established in 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference** (alongside the World Bank), the IMF officially commenced its operations in 1945.
- Its headquarters are located in Washington, D.C.
- Its core objectives include ensuring the stability of the international monetary system, fostering global monetary cooperation, and facilitating international trade.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- **Context:** Despite the impact of prevailing geopolitical tensions in West Asia on the global economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has stated that India will emerge as the **world's fastest-growing major economy in the years 2026 and 2027.**
- Due to disruptions caused to international markets and supply chains by conflicts in West Asia, the global economic growth forecast has been **downgraded from 3.3 percent to 3.1 percent.**
- Specifically, if tensions between the United States and Iran escalate further, global economic growth could decline to approximately 2 percent in 2026 a scenario that is particularly likely to materialize if energy infrastructure is compromised.
- It acts as the **"Lender of Last Resort" for countries facing financial crises.**
- Currently, it has **191 member countries. India is a founding member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The most recent country to join was Andorra (in 2020).**
- The **Union Finance Minister of the Government of India serves as the ex-officio Governor on the IMF's Board of Governors.** The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) serves as the Alternate Governor.
- The **SDR (Special Drawing Rights), created by the IMF in 1969,** is an international reserve asset. Its value is based on a basket of five major currencies: the US Dollar, the Euro, the Chinese Renminbi (Yuan), the Japanese Yen, and the British Pound Sterling.
- The IMF provides loans to member countries facing Balance of Payments (BoP) difficulties.

Its primary lending instruments include the Stand-By Agreement (SBA) for short-term needs and the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for medium-term structural issues.

Key Reports

- **World Economic Outlook (WEO)**
- **Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR)**

India's Position

- India currently ranks 8th in terms of **Quota allocation**. Although India borrowed heavily during the economic crisis of 1991, it repaid all its debts by the year 2000.
- Since 2002, through the Financial Transaction Plan (FTP), **India has served as a creditor nation to the IMF.**

Overall Core Sector Growth

- **Context:** The combined **Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) declined by 0.4 per cent (provisional) in March, 2026** as compared to the Index in March, 2025.
- The production of Fertilizers, Crude Oil, Coal and Electricity recorded negative growth in March, 2026. **March 2026 Performance**
- 4 out of 8 sectors contracted compared to March 2025.
- Weak performance driven by high base effect and external disruptions (e.g., West Asia crisis).

Fertiliser Sector Decline

- Output plunged 24.6% YoY in March 2026.
- Caused by input shortages due to geopolitical tensions.
- **Annual growth** : -0.1% in 2025-26, down from 2.9% in 2024-25.

Electricity Sector Weakness

- Contracted 0.5% in March 2026 (high base effect from 7.5% growth last year).
- Annual growth slowed to 0.9% (from 5.2%).

Construction-Linked Sectors Slow

- Steel growth fell to 2.2% (18-month low).

- Cement growth dropped to 4% (17-month low).
- Suggests slowdown in construction activity.

Natural Gas Shows Strength

- Grew 6.4% in March 2026.
- Boosted by government push to increase output amid supply constraints.

Crude Oil Continues Decline

- Contracted 5.7% in March 2026.
- Marks the 7th consecutive month of contraction.

Coal and Refinery Products

- **Coal sector:** Declined 4% in March 2026.
- **Refinery products:** Marginal growth of 0.1%.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

▪ The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is a key economic measure that tracks **short-term fluctuations in the output of industrial goods in India**. It provides an overview of how the **industrial sector is performing, covering areas such as manufacturing, mining, and electricity generation.**

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

▪ **Base Year: 2011-12**

▪ **Coverage:** Includes three main sectors—Mining, Manufacturing, and Electricity

▪ **Objective:** Used to assess industrial performance, support policy formulation, and serve as an early signal of economic trends

▪ **Frequency:** Released every month

▪ Assists in evaluating sector-wise growth, understanding inflation patterns, and tracking the overall progress of industrial development

Circular Economy

▪ **Context:** At the 2nd **Global Seminar on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy**

held in New Delhi, the Union Minister emphasized **India's shift toward a circular economy model.**

- The Minister highlighted the growing importance of recycling and biotechnology in achieving sustainable industrial growth and reaching the **net-zero emissions target by 2070.**

About Circular Economy

- A circular economy is an economic system that **eliminates waste and pollution by keeping products and materials in use through maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, and recycling.**
- Unlike the linear "take-make-dispose" model, it **emphasizes closing the loop, reducing resource extraction, and regenerating natural ecosystems.**
- By 2050, **India's circular economy is expected to achieve a market value of over \$2 trillion and generate approximately 10 million jobs.**
- According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), shifting to global circular economy models could yield **\$4.5 trillion in economic benefits by 2030**, while simultaneously **reducing carbon emissions and creating sustainable green jobs.**

India's key initiatives in Circular Economy

- **Swachh Bharat Mission 2014 (SBM-U):** Strengthening urban waste management through the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) principles.
- **GOBAR-Dhan Scheme 2018:** Creating wealth from waste through biogas and organic waste processing. As of February 2025, the scheme is implemented in 67.8% of India's districts, with 1,008 biogas plants in operation.
- **E-Waste Management Rules (2022):** Formalizing the recycling-based disposal of electronic waste.

- **Plastic EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility):** Encouraging manufacturers to take responsibility for plastic waste (single-use plastic was banned in 2022).

- **NITI Aayog's Circular Economy Division (2022)**

- It is a dedicated unit that coordinates between various ministries to finalize action plans for sectors such as e-waste, lithium-ion batteries, and end-of-life vehicles.

India's Expansion of Free Trade Agreements

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry has stated that Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are currently being finalized with **12 additional countries and blocs, including Brazil.**

- India has already signed Free Trade Agreements with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom (UK), the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which comprises four European nations Australia, Mauritius, Oman, and New Zealand.**

- Compared to the previous financial year, the country's exports have registered an increase during the first three weeks of the current month of April. This growth has been recorded despite the challenges posed by the conflict in West Asia.

- India is currently engaged in negotiations for **Free Trade Agreements with Chile, Peru, Israel, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Canada, South Africa** and its neighboring regions, Brazil and its neighboring countries, and Russia. Accordingly, 12 additional agreements are currently in the pipeline.

TAMIL NADU

INITIATIVES / SCHEMES

Tamil Nadu Climate Initiative Gains Global Recognition

- **Context:** The Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company (TNGCC) has been featured in a major global report by The Earthshot Prize in collaboration with Arup.
- The report titled “Champions of Change: How Cities and Regions are Designing a Low Carbon, Climate-Resilient Future” showcases 11 top public-sector climate innovations worldwide.
- **Flagship Initiative:** TNGCC’s CARES (Climate Action for Resilient Ecosystems and Societies) was recognized under the “Protect and Restore Nature” category.
- The Tamil Nadu model was chosen from 130+ global initiatives, highlighting its global competitiveness.
- Praised for its institutional design, the initiative coordinates climate action across 30+ government departments.
- CARES is described as India’s first government-backed climate company integrating: Wetlands, Forests, Coastal ecosystems and District-level climate missions
- **Aims to build climate resilience and restore biodiversity across ecosystems.**
- Tamil Nadu joins leading cities like: Oslo, Bogota, London.

Tamil Nadu Money Lending Portal

- **Context:** Launched by the Tamil Nadu government to prevent harassment and coercive practices by moneylenders.
- Enables victims to file complaints online.

- As part of the initiatives, the portal <https://tnmoneylending.tn.gov.in> – was made operational to act as a single window for registration, renewal, annual filings, public disclosure, and grievance redress mechanism.

Legal Framework

- Introduced under the Tamil Nadu Money Lending Entities (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Act, 2025.
- **Aims to regulate lending activities and stop unfair recovery methods.**

Objectives of the Act

- Ensure transparency in interest rates.
- Promote standardized loan agreements.
- Safeguard borrower rights.
- Establish a digital system for registration and monitoring of moneylenders.

Features of the Portal

- **Single platform for:** Registration and renewal of moneylenders, Annual filings, Public disclosures, Grievance redressal, Provides borrowers with information about their rights and legal options.

Focus on Vulnerable Groups

- Protects economically weaker sections such as farmers, women, and self-help groups.
- Targets elimination of illegal and unregistered lending practices.

Definition of Coercive Actions

- Use of violence or intimidation.
- Harassing or repeatedly following borrowers or their family members.
- Visiting homes/workplaces to pressure repayment.
- Using third-party agents to threaten or force repayment.

Penalties for Violations

- Imprisonment up to 5 years, or
- Fine up to Rs.5 lakh, or
- Both (as per Section 21 of the Act).

Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Villages

- **Context:** The Economic Survey of India for 2025–26 has recognized Tamil Nadu's 'Climate Resilient Villages' project as a model best practice.

About the 'Climate Resilient Villages' Project

- **Launched in 2023** under the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission, this project aims to enhance the adaptive capacity of rural areas to withstand climate change.
- The project is implemented in collaboration with the **World Resources Institute (WRI)**, combining scientific assessment with the participation of local communities.
- The primary goal is to create **sustainable and disaster-resilient villages** capable of facing the impacts of climate change.
- The project ensures region-specific defense strategies tailored to various ecosystems, **including coastal areas, forests, mountains, river basins, and tourism-dependent zones.**
- The selected villages function as a 'Climate Smart Village' model. These include:
 - **Kodiakkarai, Muthupet, Pichavaram, Rameswaram, Yercaud, Ooty, Hogenakkal, Pulicat, and Tiruchendur.**

Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission

- The Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission was launched following an announcement in the **2021–22 State Budget.**
- It is established under the **Department of Environment and Climate Change.**
- Its primary role is to **coordinate climate adaptation and mitigation** efforts across various government departments and districts.
- The mission aims to enhance Tamil Nadu's resilience to climate change, protect natural resources, minimize vulnerabilities, and promote sustainable development in alignment with climate change goals.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Bhonsala Inscriptions & the Shivaji-Afzal Khan Episode

Thanjavur Big Temple Inscriptions

- The **Brihadeeswarar Temple** contains extensive inscriptions, including the largest from the Maratha period.
- Found on the **south-western walls near the Vinayagar shrine.**
- Written in Marathi during the reign of Serfoji II.
- Provides a detailed account of the history and genealogy of the Maratha kings of Thanjavur.
- Includes praise for the **Danish missionary Christian Frederick Schwarz.**
- Records that Serfoji II sent military support and financial aid to the British.
- Mentions his assistance during the conflict against the **Marudu Brothers Rebellion.**
- Highlights the political alliances and historical context of the **Maratha rule in Thanjavur.**

Bhonsala Vamsa Charitra

- Published by Sarasvati Mahal Library.
- Chronicles Maratha history in Marathi and Tamil, with an English summary.
- Vividly narrates the famous encounter between Chhatrapati Shivaji and Afzal Khan.

Shivaji vs Afzal Khan – Strategy & Encounter

- Shivaji, guided by his deity **Tulja Bhavani**, planned the meeting at Jawali Fort.
- Secret instructions were sent to surround Afzal Khan's army if needed.
- During the meeting, Afzal Khan attempted to stab Shivaji.
- Shivaji, protected by armor, retaliated using tiger-claws (*wagh nakh*) and killed him.

Aftermath of the Duel

- Afzal Khan's minister **Krishnaji Pant** continued the fight.

- Shivaji offered him mercy, respecting his Brahmin status, but he persisted and was killed by a bodyguard.
- Maratha forces attacked after the nagara (war drum) signal and defeated Afzal Khan's troops.
- Captured soldiers were treated with honour and released.

Religious & Cultural Beliefs

- Shivaji's victory was attributed to divine blessings of **Tulja Bhavani**.
- The narrative blends history, faith, and royal legitimacy.

Historical Significance

- The episode is one of the most dramatic in Indian history.
- Highlights Shivaji's strategic brilliance, courage, and ethics in warfare.
- The inscriptions preserve a unique Maratha perspective within a Chola monument.

Flowers as War Symbols in Tamil Culture

- In no other ancient culture in the world have flowers been used as symbols of the land.
- Flowers have also been used to symbolize events related to the exterior life and warfare, **known as the exterior life, only in Tamil culture.**
- This not only speaks of the close natural bond that existed among the Tamils. It also speaks of their botanical knowledge.
- In Sangam literature, flowers of war were used to **symbolize different stages of war and to express the mood of the soldiers.**
- A flower was used as a symbol for each war action to express the purpose of the war.
- These flowers were used to identify one's comrades on the battlefield and to show the determination of the soldiers.
- The book that describes the above-mentioned grammar of external objects is 'Purap Porul

Venbamalai written by Aiyanarithanar dated 9th century B.E. (AD). This is considered to be the only book written on **grammar of external objects after Tolkappiyam.**

Vetchi

- The Vetsi flower is used to attract the **herds of cows in the enemy country.** It is commonly known as Idlipoo in Tamil. In English, Flame flower, scientific name *Ixora coccinea*.
- It is recorded in Sangam literature that women wore these flowers on their heads. It is native to Southwestern Peninsular India and Sri Lanka. This tree is used in Ayurvedic medicine.

Vanji

- When a war is **waged against an enemy country and the land** is captured, the Vanji flower is used. The Vanji flag is called Sindhi. In English, Heartleaf vine, scientific name *Tinosporacordifolia*.
- The tree *Salix tetrasperma* / Indian willow is called the river Vanji, and some botanists believe that this is the flower of the willow tree that the literature refers to.

Karanthai

- They carry the Karanthai flower to rescue **herds of cows that have been attracted by it.** It is also called Sivakaranthai, and its scientific name is *Sphaeranthus indicus*.
- Its flowers, seeds, and leaves are used for medicinal purposes. It is used against inflammation, as an antimicrobial, and as a blood purifier.

Kanchi

- The flower Kanchi is used to protect its **country against the blazing fire of the Indian Elm.** It is called Aavu. Aaya.
- The English name is Indian Elm, the scientific name is *Holoptelia integrifolia*.

Uzhignai

- A flower that is used to **beautify a fort during a siege.**

- In Kumari district, the name Uzhignai is still given, but it is used to treat paralysis. It is widely known as Balloon vine.
- In English, Balloon vine, also known as *Cardiospermum halicacabum*.

Nochchi

- The flower that the soldiers who break the siege rise up to.
- It is mentioned as **Sindhu varam in line 89 of Kurinjipatu**. Scientific name: *Vitex negundo*.

Thumbai

- The flower that is used when the leaders of two countries fight face to face. Scientific name: *Leucas aspera*.
- The **Purananuru and Ainkurunuru** mention that men and women used to wear the **Thumbai flower**.

Vaagai

- Vaagai, a flower that is burned as a **symbol of victory in war**, in detail. Of the above plants.

The Big Temple Chariot Symbol on Nayak Period Coins

- **Context** : Numismatic researchers have stated that the symbol of the Thanjavur Big Temple (Brihadisvara Temple) chariot is engraved on the coins issued during the Thanjavur Nayak rule.
- **Tamil temple chariots are built in the Dravidian architectural style** and have been depicted not only in inscriptions, sculptures, paintings, and literature but also on coinage.
- It is believed that these coins were likely issued during temple festival seasons to commemorate the chariot festival.
- Under the Vijayanagara Empire, Nayak kings issued various types of coins featuring chariot motifs.
- **Two types of coins found in the Chola region** have been identified as belonging to the Thanjavur Nayak period, as they feature the chariot symbol.

- This is a **copper coin weighing 2.3 grams**. It features an image of a **bull (Nandi), with the sun and moon above it**, and a chariot depicted in the background.

- This is also a **copper coin, weighing 0.64 grams**. It features an image of **Lord Ganesha** on the obverse and a chariot symbol on the reverse.

Prehistoric Rock Art Site Rediscovered in Nilgiris

- **Context**: The Yaakai Heritage Trust has reported the **re-discovery of a prehistoric rock painting site in the Nilgiris district**.
- The site, situated near the famous rock art site of **Vellarikombai village in Kotagiri, is sacred to Irula and Kurumba indigenous communities**
- The newly identified site, known locally among tribal communities as '**Oor Pare**', lies **northwest of Vellarikkombai**.
- The region is already known for important rock art locations such as **Eluthuparai and Tholikkiparai**, which have previously drawn scholarly attention.
- Used by tribal communities as a **resting spot during honey collection**.

Depictions & Themes

- Anthropomorphic (human-like) figures with conical headgear
- Elongated human forms and ladder-like structures
- Ritual symbols like dot-filled rectangular patterns
- Indicate ritualistic and supernatural beliefs

Chronology

- Paintings created over multiple phases
- Evidence of repainting and overlapping layers
- Similar nearby sites show up to four chronological layers

Holocene Fossil Bed Discovery in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** The Union Environment Minister announced the discovery of a notable fossil site in Panaiyur are of Thoothukudi.
- The fossils date to the **middle-to-late Holocene period**
- A newly found site containing fossil remains that add significantly to India's Quaternary record
- Offers insights into the region's ancient life forms and ecosystems
- Came to light after heavy rains in 2023

About the Holocene Epoch

- The Holocene is the most recent phase of the Quaternary Period, following the Pleistocene
- Covers roughly the last 11,700 years
- The Thoothukudi fossils are estimated to be 8,000–12,000 years old

Key Features of the Holocene

- Warming climate after the last Ice Age
- Rise in sea levels due to melting glaciers
- Changes in animal life, including disappearance of large species and adaptation of modern fauna
- Growth of human settlements and agriculture

ECONOMY

Tamil Nadu Economic Performance

- **Context:** Tamil Nadu, which is the second-largest State economy, has sustained a high-growth trajectory, recording a **real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of 10.83% in 2025-26**, following 11.19% in 2024-25.
- This places the **State well above the national average of 7.4%** and marks two consecutive years of double-digit growth.

Sector-wise Growth

- **Secondary Sector:** Main driver, grew 15.02% (vs 6.6% national)
- **Manufacturing:** 14.22% growth
- **Construction:** 15.02% growth
- **Services Sector:** 8.54% growth; contributes 53.54% of GVA
- **Primary Sector:** Primary sector recorded 5.92% growth in 2025–26, **higher than the national average (2.7%)**

Industrial Strength

- Contributes 13.35% to India's manufacturing GDP
- Over 40,000 factories employing ~25 lakh workers
- **Ranks 1st in factory employment**

Per Capita Income

- Increased from ₹2.096 lakh (2020–21) to ₹4.08 lakh (2025–26)
- Second highest in India (after Karnataka)
- **Above national average (₹2.196 lakh)**

Investment & FDI

- FDI inflows rose from **\$2,169 million (2022–23) to \$3,681 million (2024–25)**
- Strong private investments in manufacturing, automobiles, electronics, renewable energy

Infrastructure & Human Capital

- Strong power supply, roads, ports, industrial corridors
- High skilled workforce and technical education base

Export Performance

- **Ranked 2nd in Export Preparedness Index (Score: 64.41)**
- Major contributor to India's exports

Inflation Control

- Retail inflation declined **from 5.2% to 2.62%** (Dec 2025)
- Balanced supply and demand conditions

ENVIRONMENT

Pykara Lake

- Context: The Madras High Court has declined to remove the temporary ban on tourist boating at Pykara Lake.

Location & Formation

- The lake lies around 20 km from **Ooty in the Nilgiris district**.
- It was created due to the construction of **the Pykara Dam across the Pykara River**.

River Significance

- The Pykara River **originates from the Mukurthi Peak**.
- It is the largest river in the district.
- It is regarded as sacred by the **Toda tribal community**.

Hydropower

- The dam includes a power station, among the oldest in South India.
- It **produces approximately 60 MW of electricity**.

Pykara Falls

- Located a short distance from the lake.
- The **Pykara Falls features two cascades**.
- Heights: about 55 meters and 61 meters.

Surroundings & Ecology

- The lake is encircled by **dense forests of Mukurthi National Park**.
- This park forms **part of the Western Ghats**.
- Recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1 July 2012**.

Nilgiri Tahr Census

- **Context:** To ensure the long-term protection of the Nilgiri Tahr, the state animal of Tamil Nadu, various special schemes are being implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu. As part of this, an integrated Nilgiri Tahr census is being conducted in collaboration with the Kerala Forest Department.

- This census is conducted annually after the **winter calving season**, when young animals are seen with mature herds.

- In the **first integrated census held in 2024**, the number of Tahrs was estimated at 1,031.

- In the **second integrated census held in 2025**, the number of Nilgiri Tahrs was estimated at 1,303.

- During this study, the continuous use of newly re-colonized habitats like Pasumalai was confirmed, as well as the return of this species to areas that had not been seen for over a decade (10 years). In this, many of the surveyed landscapes align with the places described in Sangam literature.

- Following this, the 3rd integrated census operations began last Friday (April 24). This work, which continues until April 27, is being conducted over an area of more than 3,100 km across Tamil Nadu, covering 14 forest divisions, 43 forest ranges, 124 forest sections, and 177 survey blocks.

- The survey is being conducted from **Ashambu Mottai in Kanyakumari to Thavalamalai in Gudalur**.

About the Nilgiri Tahr

- The Nilgiri Tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu. Its cultural and environmental

importance was recorded 2,000 years ago in ancient Sangam literature such as Silappathikaram and Seevaga Chinthamani.

- "Ongu Maalvarai Varaiyaadu Uzhakalin Udaithungu Peruthen." The meaning of this is: "The Tahr that wanders on the high mountains," as mentioned in Seevaga Chinthamani.
- The Nilgiri Tahr is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and is provided the highest level of legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Project Nilgiri Tahr

- The Government of Tamil Nadu launched the "Project Nilgiri Tahr" on December 28, 2022, to protect the Nilgiri Tahr species, expand its habitat, and create awareness among the public.
- The main objectives of this project are to calculate the population through research and radio telemetry, reintroduce them to historical habitats, eliminate threats, and increase awareness.
- The total estimated cost of this project is Rs.25.14 crore.
- This project is being implemented from **2022 to 2027**.
- **October 7** is observed as 'Nilgiri Tahr Day' in honor of **E.R.C.Davidar**, who conducted one of the early studies on this species in 1975.

▪ The Nilgiri Tahr is the **only mountain-dwelling ungulate (hoofed animal)** found in South India.

▪ According to the 2015 report of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), their population was estimated to be around **3,122**.

AWARDS

Sahitya Akademi Award for 2025

- **Context:** Writer **S. Tamilselvan** received the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2025 at a function in Delhi.
- His work **Tamil Sirukathaiyin Thadangal** won the award in the category of **literary criticism**.
- The book traces the history of the Tamil short story, offering critical insights beginning with **V.V.S.Iyer's Kulathankarai Arasamaram**, widely regarded as the **first short story in Tamil**.

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**
- The awardees will receive an engraved **copper plaque, a shawl, and Rs.1 lakh**.

NATIONAL - NEWS

Census 2027

- **Context:** India will carry out its next population Census in a digital format, beginning in 2026 and finishing by **March 1, 2027**.
- A Census is a nationwide survey that gathers information about people, such as age, gender, and occupation. **It is usually conducted every ten years**, though the 2021 round was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The government requires all usual residents to be included in the **National Population Register (NPR)**, which is maintained under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and related rules of 2003.
- Historically, **India's first regular decennial Census was held in 1881 under W.C. Plowden, while independent India's first Census took place in 1951.**
- Since then, it has been conducted at the start of each decade. Although the Constitution mandates population enumeration, the Census Act of 1948 does not fix a specific schedule.
- The process is overseen by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Key features of the 2027 Census

- It will be **India's first fully digital Census**, using devices like smartphones and laptops.
- A self-enumeration portal will be available in **16 languages**.
- It will include detailed caste data collection for the **first time since 1931**, going beyond just SC and ST categories.

Morung System

- **Context:** Recently, Prime Minister appreciated the Morung system of education for its role in safeguarding cultural traditions while also supporting modern learning.

- Morung is a **traditional, community-based institution among several Naga tribes**, forming an important part of their social structure. It functioned as a residential learning space for village youth mainly boys, and is often described as a kind of bachelor's dormitory.
- Its key roles included teaching practical skills like crafts, farming, and warfare, as well as passing down cultural knowledge through oral traditions. It also helped build discipline and acted as a community centre, council space, and security post for the village.
- Today, the Morung system is being adapted to modern needs by linking it with formal schooling **under the Samagra Shiksha Nagaland program**, blending traditional knowledge with contemporary education.

Modernizing Internal Security through Artificial Intelligence

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Home Affairs is adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to enhance internal security by enabling predictive policing, cyber surveillance, and detection of financial fraud.
- The aim is to **support quicker decision-making, real-time monitoring, and analysis of crime trends across police and security agencies.**

Major initiatives under this AI-driven approach include

- The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre is building an AI-powered system for the **1930 helpline to allow faster and multilingual complaint registration.**
- In partnership with the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub, AI tools are being developed to **identify and stop fraudulent financial transactions in real time.**
- **Collaboration with IIT Bombay is helping create AI models that assign risk scores to**

suspicious bank accounts used for illegal activities.

- An AI/ML-based application is being upgraded to detect and reduce risks from such accounts in the banking system.
- AI technologies are being used to track phishing networks, scam websites, and illegal activities on the dark web.
- The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing has developed an AI tool to identify and verify child sexual abuse material from cyber tip-offs.
- A proposed system will create a database (hash bank) of illegal content for proactive detection across digital platforms.
- AI is being explored for digital investigations, though its role in detecting forged documents is still evolving.
- The Immigration, Visa Foreigners Registration and Tracking system will use AI/ML for smarter traveller profiling and may incorporate blockchain for secure data management.

India's Multi-Pronged Strategy and Progress in Eliminating Naxalism (LWE)

- **Context:** In the Lok Sabha, the Union Home Minister stated that almost the entire top leadership of Maoists has been eliminated in the last two years, with only one leader remaining.
- The government has set a target to make all affected areas **free from Left Wing Extremism by March 2026** through a coordinated strategy based on dialogue, security measures, and inter-agency coordination.

Success of Coordinated Measures in Addressing Naxalism

- **SAMADHAN Strategy:** This serves as a comprehensive framework guiding both immediate and long-term security operations at various levels.

- **Development Measures:** Schemes like **Special Central Assistance (SCA)** address gaps in infrastructure and public services in affected districts. Initiatives such as Aspirational District Programme and Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan aim to improve socio-economic conditions.
- **Surrender & Rehabilitation:** Former militants are encouraged to surrender through financial aid and monthly stipends, along with skill development support.
- **Enhanced Security & Technology:** Advanced tools like drones, satellite imagery, AI-based analytics, and mobile data tracking are being used to strengthen operations.
- **Financial Disruption:** Funding channels are targeted using laws like the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to seize and block illicit funds.

About Naxalism (LWE)

- It began with the **Naxalbari Movement**.
- The movement seeks to challenge the Indian state through armed struggle and establish parallel systems of governance, often targeting security forces and institutions.
- It expanded across the **"Red Corridor,"** covering states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and others.
- Factors include social and economic marginalisation, lack of access to education and development, and governance gaps such as poor implementation of laws like the **Forest Rights Act and PESA**.

Energy Statistics India 2026

- **Context:** The National Statistics Office, under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has published **Energy Statistics India 2026**.

Key Highlights

- **Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES):** Increased by 2.95% in FY 2024-25, reaching

approximately 9.3 lakh kilo tonnes of oil equivalent (KToE).

- Renewable Energy Capacity: As of 31 March 2025, total renewable generation stands at around 47 lakh Megawatts.
- Leading States: **Rajasthan (23.7%)**, followed by Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- Major Sources: Solar energy accounts for the largest share (~71%), followed by wind power and large hydro projects.
- Despite growth in renewables, **coal continues to be the dominant energy source.**

Gujarat – Semiconductor Plant

- **Context:** The Prime Minister inaugurated the Micron Technology semiconductor manufacturing plant, valued at ₹3,300 crore, located within the Sanand GIDC complex near **Ahmedabad.**
- This is the second major commercial manufacturing facility established **under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) scheme.**
- It enhances the **country's chip manufacturing capabilities and accelerates efforts to position India as a global hub in this sector.**
- In its initial phase, this facility is set to manufacture advanced 'Intelligent Power Modules' (IPMs).
- These are critical components required for automotive and industrial applications.
- Each module contains 17 chips; these are slated to be supplied to the California-based company, Alpha and Omega Semiconductor.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

- The India Semiconductor Mission was **launched in 2021 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**
- It forms part of a comprehensive program aimed at **establishing a sustainable**

semiconductor and display ecosystem within India.

Objectives

- To provide financial assistance and incentives to companies investing in semiconductor manufacturing, display fabrication, and chip design.
- To strengthen domestic capabilities and reduce reliance on imports.

India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 (ISM 2.0)

- ISM 2.0 is designed to position India as a reliable and globally competitive player within the semiconductor value chain.
- It supports the objectives of **'Self-reliant India' (Aatmanirbhar Bharat) and 'Make in India - Make for the World.'**
- To achieve this, the government has allocated a budget of ₹1,000 crore for the financial year 2026–27 to enhance domestic manufacturing, innovation, and supply chain resilience in the semiconductor sector.

Strengthening Rural Governance through Digital Innovation

- **Context:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has made notable progress in strengthening digital governance in rural India through initiatives like eGramSwaraj Portal and **SabhaSaar.**

About eGramSwaraj Portal

- eGramSwaraj is an integrated web-based platform and mobile app created by the ministry **to improve e-governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country.**
- It facilitates the preparation and tracking of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP), ensuring that local development activities are transparent and accessible to the public.
- By linking with the Public Financial Management System, it enables direct online payments to vendors, minimizing delays and reducing chances of corruption.

- The platform supports geo-tagging of village assets using GPS, allowing proper verification and supervision.
- Its integration with the Government e-Marketplace allows Panchayats to procure goods online at competitive prices.

About SabhaSaar

- **SabhaSaar is an AI-powered tool introduced in 2025** to automatically convert speech into text and generate summaries of meetings.
- It is integrated with the **BHASHINI platform, enabling transcription and translation across major Indian languages.**
- It runs securely on the **IndiaAI Compute Portal under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.**
- The tool supports 23 Indian languages and is being used by over 1.15 lakh Gram Panchayats for automated recording and summarisation of meetings.

Nyaya Setu AI Chatbot

- **Context:** Vice-President of India and the **Minister of Law and Justice** recently launched the Nyaya Setu AI Chatbot along with its **official mascot, Dishika, as part of the DISHA programme.**

About Nyaya Setu AI Chatbot

- Nyaya Setu is an AI-driven legal assistant that is voice-enabled, multimodal, and supports multiple languages.
- It acts as a digital bridge to simplify legal information, making it more accessible and understandable for citizens.
- The chatbot has been developed and fully implemented by the **Digital India BHASHINI Division.**
- The main objective of Nyaya Setu is **to make justice more accessible by removing language and procedural barriers,** helping

citizens easily comprehend their legal rights and procedures.

ISRO's Role in Advancing Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation has created a wide range of space-based applications that serve different sections of society, thereby advancing the **idea of Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR).**
- **SSR is similar to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).** It emphasizes the ethical duty of scientists not only to generate knowledge but also to share it with and educate society.

ISRO's contributions to SSR

For tribal communities

- ISRO has set up around **75 "Space Labs" in Eklavya Model Residential Schools** across 19 states, encour-aging interest in **STEM subjects such as space science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.**

For farmers and fishermen

- Provides **Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ)** advisories that help fishermen locate areas with higher fish availa-bility.
- Supports crop insurance by using satellite data to monitor crops and assist in assessing insurance claims.

For students

- Runs initiatives like **YUVIKA (Young Scientist Programme), a two-week residential course for Class 9 stu-dents.**
- Offers tele-education services under programs like PM e-VIDYA.

For the general public

- Supplies geospatial data that helps in planning and monitoring major government schemes.
- Enables services such as telemedicine and early warning systems for disasters.

For women empowerment in space

- The Gaganyaan mission includes a female humanoid robot named “Vyommitra” as part of its test flight.

India’s Defence Exports Reach Record High

- **Context:** India’s defence exports climbed to a record ₹38,424 crore in FY 2025–26, registering a 62.66% increase compared to the previous year.
- **Sector Contribution:** Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs): 54.84% and Private Sector: 45.16%
- The strong growth reflects increasing international trust in Indian defence products and deeper integration into global supply chains.
- India exported defence equipment to over 80 countries, with the US, France and Armenia as top destinations.
- Partnerships are expanding with the Philippines, Indonesia, Egypt, and African nations.
- The defence budget has steadily increased from ₹2.53 lakh crore (2013–14) to ₹6.81 lakh crore (2025–26).
- India aims to achieve ₹3 lakh crore in defence production by 2029, strengthening its ambition to become a major global defence manufacturing hub.

‘Kar Saathi’

- **Context:** New Platform Introduced: The Income Tax Department has launched a new website called ‘Kar Saathi’, designed to make tax processes simpler, faster, and more user-friendly.
- **All-in-One Access:** The platform provides a single point of access for all direct tax-related information and services.

AI-Powered Assistance

- **Kar Saathi acts as an AI chatbot companion.**
- **Offers 24×7 support** for taxpayer queries and guidance.
- **Improved User Experience:** The website focuses on easy navigation and quicker access to services.
- **Digital Transformation Push:** Part of the government’s effort to modernize tax administration using advanced technology.
- **Linked Initiative:** Highlighted during the launch of PRARAMBH, an outreach programme for smooth implementation of the new tax system.
- **Meaning of PRARAMBH: Stands for Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat.**

Impact on Compliance

- Simplified procedures will ease taxpayer compliance
- May eliminate requirements for over 6 crore transactions
- **Broader Goal:** Transition to the Income Tax Act, 2025 aims to make the system simpler, clearer, and more reliable for taxpayers.

Mission Mitra: Strengthening India’s Astronaut Readiness

- **Context:** India’s Gaganyaan Mission has launched a special experiment called Mission Mitra in the extreme environment of Ladakh.
- Led by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), this initiative is aimed at evaluating human endurance, teamwork, and mental strength.
- As India prepares for long-duration space missions, the programme ensures astronauts are psychologically as well as physically ready for space challenges.

Mission Mitra in Ladakh

- The experiment is being conducted in high-altitude Ladakh, known for: **Severe weather conditions, Low oxygen levels, Isolation.**
- These conditions closely mirror the harsh environment of space.
- The programme is carried out by ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) along with research experts.
- Four selected astronauts are participating after completing acclimatization in Leh.

About Mission Mitra

- Full Form: **Mapping of Interoperable Traits & Reliability Assessment**
- Designed to simulate space-like conditions on Earth.
- Unlike conventional training, it emphasizes: Mental resilience under stress and Team coordination in isolated settings

Significance of the Mission

- Prepares astronauts for real space challenges such as: Isolation, Communication delays, Limited resources
- Enhances their ability to perform effectively in demanding conditions, making it a key step toward successful future human space missions.

Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill, 2026

- **Context:** Parliament has approved the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 to reform enforcement of laws across sectors.
- **Aims to promote trust-based governance, reduce excessive penalties, and simplify compliance for businesses and citizens.**
- Focuses on making regulations less complex and more practical, easing everyday legal requirements.

Reforms in Health Sector

- Several laws related to: Drugs, Food safety, Pharmacies, Hospitals, Healthcare

professionals have been updated to improve ease of compliance.

Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940

- Minor violations (e.g., record-keeping errors) will now attract monetary fines instead of criminal cases.

New Adjudication System

- Designated officials can: Review cases, Issue notices, Hear explanations, Impose penalties, Ensures faster resolution and reduced court burden.

Other Health Laws Updated

- Similar penalty-based approach adopted for: Pharmacies, Food safety regulations, Clinical establishments
- Hospitals & Clinics: Minor lapses (not affecting patient safety) will lead to financial penalties instead of criminal charges.

Significance

- **Decriminalization of Minor Offences:** Shifts focus from punishment to correction and compliance.
- **Faster Justice Delivery:** Reduces legal delays and court workload.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Encourages a business-friendly regulatory environment.
- **Efficient Governance:** Cuts down paperwork and procedural complexity.

SAMPANN Platform

- **Context:** As a key initiative to modernize pension disbursement, the Government of Goa and the Cochin Port Authority have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to **implement the SAMPANN digital platform.**

About the SAMPANN Platform

- It is a pivotal digital platform for **pension and financial management under the Department of Telecommunications.**
- It is administered by the **Controller General of Communication Accounts (CGCA).**

- This platform was created to integrate pension sanction, authorization, accounting, and payment processes into a unified digital system.
- It was launched on **December 29, 2018**.
- It facilitates the direct transfer of pension amounts to the beneficiaries' bank accounts.
- To facilitate informed decision-making, Mission Mausam serves various sectors, including agriculture, disaster management, and rural development.

Yuva Sangam

Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System

- **Context:** The Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System marks a significant advancement in India's weather forecasting and disaster risk management capabilities.
- It is a state-of-the-art digital forecasting platform developed by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**. It has been built using open-source technologies and indigenous expertise.
- This system is part of the digital transformation initiatives under the '**Mission Mausam**' project and was officially launched in **January 2024**.
- It operates in real-time and utilizes tools such as Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. This enables meteorologists to efficiently collect, analyze, and disseminate weather information in a clear and easily accessible format.
- The primary ministry overseeing this platform is the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- **Context:** Yuva Sangam is a Government of India program that helps **young people from different States and Union Territories connect with each other**.
- It is organized by the **Ministry of Education** along with other ministries.
- The program is part of the **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative**, which aims to promote national unity and cultural exchange.
- Under this, youth travel to other states to learn about local culture, traditions, and lifestyle, improving mutual understanding.
- It follows a similar idea to the **Kashi Tamil Sangamam**, which connects people from different regions.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

Mission Mausam

- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** (meaning "One India, Great India") is a **national program started by the Government of India**.
- It was proposed by Prime Minister on **31 October 2015**, which is celebrated as **Rashtriya Ekta Divas in honour of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- Under this scheme, all States and Union Territories are paired with each other for one year.
- During this time, the paired regions interact and collaborate in areas like culture, language, food, festivals, tourism, and sports.
- The program is managed **mainly by the Ministry of Education** along with other central ministries such as Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs, Sports, Home Affairs, and Railways.
- Mission Mausam was launched by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences in 2024**.
- This project is implemented by the **India Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**.
- Its objective is to **enhance weather and climate services** by providing timely and accurate monitoring, modeling, and forecasting data.

Objectives

- Build a strong feeling of oneness among people by connecting different regions of the country.
- Help people learn and appreciate each other's traditions, art, language, and food.
- Encourage people to visit and explore the cultural and historical places of other states.
- Promote exchange programs in schools and colleges, including learning different languages and sharing knowledge.
- Create lasting relationships between states through continuous cooperation involving both government and citizens.

Bharat Tribe Fest

- **Context:** Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 concluded today with a grand closing ceremony in New Delhi.
- The event marked the culmination of a 19-day celebration of tribal culture, craftsmanship, and enterprise.
- The closing ceremony witnessed the felicitation of top-performing tribal artisans and sellers across ten categories - Pottery, Cane and Bamboo, Jewellery, Cuisines, Gifts and Assortments, Metal, Naturals, Paintings, Textiles, and Van Dhan Vikas Kendras.
- Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, a **flagship initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs organised in association with TRIFED.**
- The festival served as a comprehensive platform for tribal artisans, self-help groups, Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, and entrepreneurs from across the country, facilitating direct market access and promoting sustainable livelihoods.
- A key highlight of the festival was the launch of the **RISA brand** on March 18, 2026, marking a significant **step towards positioning tribal craftsmanship in contemporary and global markets.**

- The initiative, launched by **Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Shri Jual Oram and Minister of State for Women & Child Development**

RISA brand

- Timeless Tribal is a high-end national brand that highlights tribal textiles, embroidery, and handicrafts.
- It aims to promote India's indigenous artistry in both domestic and international premium markets while safeguarding traditional cultural heritage.

Sadhana Saptah 2026

- **Context:** Sadhana Saptah 2026 is a week-long initiative launched by the Prime Minister of India to enhance the capabilities of government employees.
- It is organized by the **Department of Personnel and Training under the Mission Karmayogi program.**
- **Sadhana (Strengthening Adaptive Development and Humane Aptitude for National Advancement) aims to cultivate the skills necessary for citizen-centric governance.**

About Sadhana Saptah 2026

- Sadhana Saptah 2026 is a **nationwide, week-long skill development program for government employees.**
- It encompasses officials from Central Ministries, Departments, Organizations, and State Governments.
- Its objective is **to enhance the capability, efficiency, and performance of government employees.**
- Furthermore, it aims to align governance skills with the **vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India).**
- This program utilizes the **iGOT-Karmayogi platform for digital learning.**

- The training covers behavioral, functional, and domain-specific areas.
- Additionally, it focuses on emerging fields such as technology, artificial intelligence, governance reforms, and traditional knowledge.
- It promotes transparent, responsive, and citizen-centric governance.

Project Chetak Marks 47th Raising Day

- **Context:** Project Chetak, an initiative of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), recently marked its 47th Raising Day.

About Project Chetak

- Project Chetak is among the **largest BRO projects** in terms of the area it covers.
- **Established in 1980**, it has been instrumental in building and maintaining road infrastructure in **Rajasthan, Punjab, and the northern regions of Gujarat**.
- The project plays an important role in assisting the Defence Forces by ensuring the upkeep of vital feeder routes leading to the International Border.

Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- The BRO is responsible for **developing and maintaining crucial infrastructure such as roads, bridges, tunnels, and airstrips in remote and border areas**, serving both **military and civilian purposes**.
- **It operates under the Ministry of Defence. It was founded in 1960**
- Through its international projects in Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, the organisation enhances regional connectivity and strengthens strategic ties.

Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026

- **Context:** The government has announced amendments to the **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016**.

Objective

- The changes are **intended to encourage a circular economy** by requiring the use of recycled plastics, enhancing compliance, increasing transparency, and cutting down plastic pollution.

Key Features of the Plastic Waste

Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026

- The rules set gradually rising targets for recycled plastic use in packaging, particularly for rigid plastics, **increasing from 30% to 60% by 2028-29**.
 - Producers are required to include recycled plastic in packaging, making circular practices mandatory by law.
 - Companies are allowed to carry forward unmet recycling obligations for up to three years instead of meeting strict yearly targets.
 - A formal system of tradable certificates has been introduced, enabling companies to buy credits from those that exceed their targets.
 - The rules permit disposal methods such as **incineration, waste-to-energy, co-processing, and conversion of waste into oil**.
 - Plastics are grouped into rigid (easily recyclable), flexible, and multi-layered (most difficult to recycle), with separate compliance requirements for each category.
- #### Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016
- Issued under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, these rules provide a legal basis for regulating plastic waste in India.
 - To reduce plastic waste generation, encourage recycling and reuse, and ensure safe and eco-friendly disposal.
 - **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Makes producers, importers, and brand owners accountable for collecting and managing plastic waste.
 - Requires segregation of waste at the source and the creation of proper collection systems.

- The 2022 amendment banned specific single-use plastic items.
- Urban and rural local bodies are tasked with handling segregation, collection, processing, and disposal of plastic waste.
- Needs only power supply and a clear view of the sky, avoiding expensive infrastructure work.
- Helps quickly restore communication and serves as a backup when ground-based networks fail.

Meghalaya Partners with Starlink

- **Context:** Meghalaya has become the **third state in India, after Maharashtra and Gujarat**, to officially collaborate with Starlink.

Starlink Overview

- Starlink, a satellite internet project launched in **2019 by SpaceX**, aims to deploy around 42,000 satellites in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) to provide **global internet coverage**.

About Satellite Internet

- Satellite internet is a type of internet service delivered through satellites positioned in either **Geostationary Orbit (GSO) or Non-Geostationary Orbit (NGSO)**.
- **LEO and Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) are part of NGSO.**
- Unlike traditional internet systems such as fiber optics or cable networks, satellite internet does not depend on physical wires for data transmission, making it more accessible, quicker to deploy, and effective over long distances.

Infrastructure Components

- Consists of a network of communication satellites in orbit.
- Includes control systems, tracking stations, and gateway facilities.
- Comprises user-end equipment like satellite terminals.

Advantages over Traditional Internet

- Provides connectivity to remote and underserved areas without fibre or cellular networks.

ECINet Initiative

- **Context:** Ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections and by-elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has encouraged voters to make informed decisions by using the **“Know Your Candidates” (KYC) feature available on the ECINet platform.**

Election Schedule

- Elections are being held in **Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry**, along with by-elections in various constituencies. Voting for some regions is scheduled for April 9.

KYC Module on ECINet

- Provides details on candidates' criminal records, assets, liabilities, education, and social media accounts.
- Allows downloading of Form 26 (candidate affidavit) for transparency.

About ECINet Platform

- A unified digital platform integrating **40+ ECI applications and services.**
- Offers voter services like registration, electoral roll search, **application tracking, and grievance redressal.**
- Enables download of **e-EPIC (digital voter ID), interaction with officials, and booking appointments with BLOs.**

Additional Tools

- **cVIGIL:** For reporting violations of the Model Code of Conduct.
- **Saksham:** Ensures accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Objective

- To promote informed voting by giving citizens easy access to verified candidate information and enhancing participation in the democratic process.

India Achieves Criticality of Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)

- **Context:** India has reached a significant milestone in its nuclear energy programme as the indigenously developed **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, has achieved criticality.**

Major Achievement

- The PFBR attaining criticality marks a crucial step in India's civil nuclear programme, indicating a successful self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.

Second Stage of Nuclear Programme

- This development advances the second phase of India's three-stage nuclear power strategy.

Technological Significance

- The reactor is designed to generate more fuel than it consumes, showcasing advanced nuclear technology and engineering strength.

Thorium Utilisation

- It is an important step towards utilising India's vast thorium reserves in the third stage of the nuclear programme.

Reactor Details

- Capacity: **500 Megawatt electric**
- Location: **Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu**
- Operated by: **Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI)**

Global Position

- Once fully operational, **India will become only the second country after Russia** to run a commercial fast breeder reactor.

Meaning of Criticality

- It is the stage where the reactor achieves a stable, self-sustaining chain reaction—an essential step before full power generation.

Indigenous Development

- The project has been built domestically with support from over 200 Indian industries, including MSMEs, supporting the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Significance

- Strengthens India's capabilities in advanced nuclear technology and boosts clean energy generation.
- As part of its long-term energy strategy, India aims to achieve **100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047.**
- The proposed **'SHANTI' (Strategic Harmonization of Atomic Nuclear Technology and Innovation) Act 2025**, which aims to allow private sector participation in the nuclear energy sector, represents a major policy shift.
- The development of the PFBR strengthens India's closed nuclear fuel cycle, reduces dependence on uranium, enhances technological self-reliance, and contributes to achieving **India's Net Zero 2070 goal.**

India-Wind Power Generation Capacity

- **Context:** In the financial year 2025–26, India added an unprecedented annual **wind power generation capacity of 6.05 GW**. This surpasses the previous peak of 5.5 GW, which was achieved in the financial year 2016–17.
- This represents an increase of approximately 46% compared to the financial year 2024–25. It reflects the rapid growth witnessed in the deployment of onshore wind energy.
- Consequently, the country's total installed wind power generation capacity has crossed the 56 GW mark, demonstrating the continued expansion of this sector.

- Simultaneously, greater emphasis is being placed on hybrid wind-solar projects which enhance efficiency and grid integration as well as on Green Energy Open Access mechanisms.
- This progress strengthens India's journey toward achieving its **target of reaching 500 GW of electricity generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year 2030.**

Tamil Nadu Wind Power Generation Capacity

- Tamil Nadu stands as a **pioneer in India's wind energy sector.** Its installed capacity stands at **11,361.855 MW.** This **contributes approximately 10% to the country's total electricity consumption, and the state ranks as the second-largest in India in terms of installed capacity.**
- The state possesses an **onshore wind potential of 95 GW.**
- The **Muppandal Wind Farm is one of the largest operational onshore wind farms in the world.**
- Tamil Nadu was the **first state in India to implement a scheme for the modernization or repowering of older wind turbines.**
- Wind power generation is expected to increase by **25% through the 'Repowering, Refurbishment, and Lifetime Extension Policy 2024'.**
- The **National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE)** has estimated that there is an offshore wind energy potential of approximately 35 GW along the coastal **areas stretching from Kanyakumari to Nagapattinam.**

India's Push Towards Deep Technology

- **Context:** The Union Government has taken several steps, including policy support, to encourage the growth of deep technology in India.

Deep Technology

- Deep technology refers to innovations that are based on advanced scientific discoveries and cutting-edge technological research.

Importance of India's Deep-Tech Goals

- It helps India emerge as a reliable global hub for research and development by using its large pool of STEM talent to lead in advanced technologies.
- It reduces dependence on foreign countries for critical sectors like defense, space, and national security, protecting India from global supply disruptions.
- Deep tech enables solutions tailored to India's needs, such as using AI for rural healthcare, advanced farming methods for food security, and green hydrogen for clean energy.
- A strong deep-tech sector helps India move from low-cost services and basic manufacturing to high-value activities like innovation, design, and intellectual property creation.

Government Initiatives

- The Draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) has been designed to boost innovation, economic development, and social progress through research-driven technologies, while improving India's global competitiveness.
- The government is supporting the development of India's own AI systems, including **Large Language Models (LLMs)** and other AI solutions suited to Indian conditions.
- The Indian Space Policy, 2023 clearly defines the roles of **ISRO, IN-SPaCE, and private players,** encouraging private sector participation in the space industry.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules in the space sector have been relaxed, allowing up to **100% FDI in satellite manufacturing** and

- higher limits in other areas to attract global investment and technology.
- The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), set up under the ANRF Act, 2023, aims to **provide funding, strategic guidance, and collaboration** between industry, academia, and government.
 - The National Quantum Mission (2023–2031) focuses on **advancing quantum computing, communication, and sensing technologies**.
 - The Bio-E3 Policy promotes biotechnology startups, biomanufacturing, and innovation in bio-based technologies.
 - AI Centers of Excellence are being set up across India to support AI research and startups.
 - The **Semicon India Program launched in 2021** aims to develop the domestic semiconductor industry through incentives and partnerships.
 - At the Global Investors Summit 2025, it was announced that **India's first domestically developed semiconductor chip** is expected to be ready for production by 2025.
 - These relics were unearthed in **1898 by William Claxton Peppé** at Piprahwa in Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh, which is believed to be the **ancient city of Kapilavastu**.
 - A portion of the relics was gifted by **Lord Elgin to King Rama V**, while another portion remained with the Peppé family.
 - In 2025, the Ministry of Culture ensured their return by preventing an auction in Hong Kong and acquiring the collection held by the Peppé family.
 - This exhibition enhances India's Buddhist diplomacy by reinforcing its role as the **birthplace of Dhamma and a major spiritual hub**.
- Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**
- **Context:** The National Statistics Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has introduced the **Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**.
- About ASISSE**

Piprahwa Relics: Preserving India's Buddhist Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy

- **Context:** The Piprahwa relics are set to be brought to Leh as part of the exhibition "**The Light & the Lotus**", marking an important milestone in showcasing India's Buddhist heritage.

About Piprahwa Relics

- The relics consist of bone remains of Gautama Buddha, along with crystal and steatite containers, gold ornaments, and precious stones. **A Brahmi inscription confirmed that these relics belong to Buddha of the Shakya lineage.**
- It is the **first yearly survey** that focuses on **incorporated service sector companies across all States and Union Territories**, using 2024–25 as the reference year.
- The survey includes service enterprises registered under the **Companies Act 1956, Companies Act 2013, and Limited Liability Partnership Act 2008**.
- It spans multiple sectors such as trade, transportation, information technology, healthcare, education, and hospitality.
- The main goal is **to create a dependable database to support policymaking and economic research**.
- The survey relies on data from the Goods and Services Tax Network and covers around 1.21 lakh enterprises.

- It works alongside the Annual Survey of Industries and the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises to provide a complete picture of the non-agricultural economy.

Government e-Marketplace

- **Context:** The Government e-Marketplace has reached a **major milestone by achieving a cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)** of ₹18.4 lakh crore, including crossing ₹5 lakh crore in FY 2025–26.
- This reflects the platform’s rapid growth and its increasing importance as a transparent, technology-driven public procurement system in India.

About Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- The Government e-Marketplace is India’s official online platform for public procurement, **introduced in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- It aims to **improve transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness in government purchasing.**
- The portal is used by Central and State Government ministries, departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), and other government bodies to procure goods and services.
- GeM is a completely digital and cashless platform that provides an end-to-end procurement solution for both buyers and sellers.
- It incorporates **AI-based tools and a multilingual Learning Management System (LMS)** to make the platform more accessible and user-friendly.
- Additional features include voice-assisted navigation and region-specific training modules, which help sellers—especially those from remote and underserved regions—participate easily in government procurement.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- **Context:** The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** aims to **install rooftop solar systems in 1 crore households under the PM Surya Ghar initiative by March 2027.**
- This is part of India’s broader push toward clean energy adoption and reduced electricity costs for households.

ULA Model

- The government is promoting a “Utility-Led Aggregation (ULA)” model.

Under this model

- State electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) take the lead.
- They **fund and install rooftop solar systems for households.**

About PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana was **introduced in 2024** with the objective of enabling households across India to access **free electricity through solar power.**
- The scheme supports households by **offering financial assistance (subsidy) for installing rooftop solar panels.**

Subsidy Structure

- A subsidy of **60% of the cost** is provided for solar systems with capacity up to 2 kW.
- For systems with capacity between 2 kW and 3 kW, an additional 40% subsidy is given on the extra cost.
- The total subsidy benefit is limited to systems of **up to 3 kW capacity.**

Additional Components

- The scheme also includes the creation of a **Model Solar Village in every district to promote solar energy adoption at the grassroots level.**
- Under the Incentives to Local Bodies component

- Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) are awarded ₹1,000 per rooftop solar installation within their jurisdiction.
- This aims to **encourage local governance institutions** to actively promote rooftop solar systems.

Implementation Mechanism

- At the national level, the scheme is overseen by a **National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA)**.
- At the state level, execution is handled by State Implementation Agencies (SIAs).

Women's Reservation Act Amendment

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister, has approved a draft amendment Bill.
- The aim is to **implement women's reservation by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections**.

Law Being Amended

- The amendment relates to the Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam, which was **originally passed in 2023** to provide reservation for women in legislatures.

Increase in Lok Sabha Strength

- The proposal includes expanding the Lok Sabha's strength from 543 seats to 816 seats
- This increase **will follow a fresh delimitation exercise**.

Reservation for Women

- Out of 816 seats: **273 seats (≈ one-third) will be reserved for women**.
- Reservation will be applied vertically, means Women will also get quotas within Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories.

106th Constitutional Amendment Act

- **Article 239AA** (Delhi Assembly) - Provides

one-third reservation for women in the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

- **Article 330A** (Lok Sabha) - Reserves one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha. Includes quota within SC/ST reserved seats.

- **Article 332A** (State Assemblies) - Ensures one-third reservation for women in State Legislative Assemblies. Also applies within SC/ST categories.

- **Article 334A** (Implementation Framework) Reservation will be implemented after delimitation. Includes a 15-year sunset clause (can be extended). Provides for rotation of reserved constituencies.

Concerns Regarding the 106th Amendment

- Critics argue that reservation may conflict with merit-based competition and the constitutional principle of equality.
- Reserving constituencies may restrict voters' freedom to choose candidates from a wider pool.

Lack of Homogeneity among Women

- Women are a diverse group, unlike caste categories.
- A uniform quota may not address varied socio-economic challenges.

Proxy Representation Risk

- There is concern that some women representatives may act as symbolic figures, with actual power exercised by male relatives
- Similar patterns observed in the "Sarpanch Pati" phenomenon at the local level.

Uneven Impact Across States

- Rotation of seats and differing state dynamics may lead to inconsistent political outcomes.

Exclusion of Upper Houses

- No reservation is provided in Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Councils
- This limits women's representation to only **directly elected lower houses**.

Mohra Power Project

- **Context:** The **Jammu & Kashmir** government has decided to revive the historic Mohra Power Project.
- The move comes amid efforts to **boost power generation after the Indus Waters Treaty was kept in abeyance** following the Pahalgam terror attack.
- The Mohra hydroelectric plant was constructed **after the major floods of 1903 to support dredging operations in the Jhelum.**

Location & Historical Background

- Located on the **Jhelum River in Boniyar (Uri sector), Baramulla district.**
- Commissioned in 1905, making it one of the oldest hydroelectric plants in India.
- Originally built as a **run-of-the-river project.**

Unique Engineering Feature

- Known for its **10 km-long wooden water channel (flume) that carried water through mountainous terrain.**
- Considered an innovative, low-impact engineering design for its time.

Capacity & Decline

- Initial capacity: ~5 MW
- Later expanded to 10.5 MW (planned revival capacity)
- Damaged by 1992 floods, reducing output to ~3 MW before becoming non-operational.

Biological Resource Repositories

- **Context:** The National Biodiversity Authority, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,** has facilitated the official recognition of two institutions as repositories under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002.**
- These repositories support the conservation and documentation of biological materials,

particularly voucher specimens.

- Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, empowers the Central Government to **designate repositories for various biological resources.**
- To date, **18 institutions have been designated** as national repositories under Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- Proposals were received from the **Pavasagara Centre of the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE) in Kochi, and from the Agharkar Research Institute in Pune,** for their respective microbial collections and the National Fungal Culture Collection.

National Biodiversity Authority

- It is a **statutory body** established under **India's Biological Diversity Act (2002).**
- Headquartered in **Chennai, it became operational in 2003.**
- It performs regulatory and advisory functions for the Government of India regarding matters related to the conservation of biological resources, their sustainable utilization, and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from them.

India 3rd in Renewable Energy

- **Context:** Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy said **India ranks third globally in Renewable Energy Installed Capacity,** according to the Renewable Energy Statistics 2026.
- India has **moved ahead of Brazil** in the ranking. The International Renewable Energy Agency released the statistics as of December 2025.

Renewable Energy Breakdown

- Out of 283.46 GW
 - Solar Power: 150.26 GW
 - Wind Power: 56.09 GW

- Large Hydro Power: 51.41 GW
- Bio Energy: 11.75 GW
- Small Hydro Power: 5.17 GW
- Nuclear Power: 8.78 GW

Major Milestones

- Achieved **50% of installed power capacity from non-fossil sources** in June 2025
- Achieved **5 years ahead of 2030 target under Paris Agreement** (NDC goals)

India as a Leading Renewable Energy Player

- India has emerged as a **major global leader in the renewable energy sector**, supported by several targeted initiatives across different segments.
- Key programs **National Solar Mission, PM-KUSUM scheme, National Green Hydrogen Mission, National Bioenergy Programme**, and various **small hydropower development schemes**.
- These efforts collectively aim to expand clean energy capacity, promote sustainable development, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Skills Outcomes Fund

- **Context:** Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship initiated the campaign to build a Skills Outcomes Fund, a **first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at unlocking aspirational livelihoods for youth from low-income backgrounds**.
- The fund envisages to mobilise public and private capital to scale outcomes-based financing (OBF) in India's skilling ecosystem, linking investments directly to verified employment outcomes.
- The Skills Outcomes Fund aims to unlock aspirational and sustainable livelihoods for youths from low-income backgrounds across India.

- This initiative is expected to become the largest outcomes-based financing (OBF) initiative for skilling globally and marks a significant step in strengthening the adoption of OBF within India's skilling ecosystem.

- The initiative builds on India's growing global leadership in outcomes-based financing, a theme highlighted at the Outcomes Finance Alliance Summit 2026 in Cape Town.

Implementation Structure

- Anchored by **National Skill Development Corporation**
- Under **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**

Key Features

- Largest proposed global OBF skilling initiative
- Focus on verified employment outcomes
- Employer-led, demand-driven skilling

Significance

- Strengthens India's demographic dividend
- Promotes outcome-based governance in skilling

- **Supports vision of Viksit Bharat 2047**

- Positions India as a global leader in skills financing innovation

National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)

- **Context:** The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) a Public Sector Undertaking under the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India** is celebrating its **25th Foundation Day** on April 10, 2026.

About the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation

- The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) was established in 2001 under the Ministry of

Tribal Affairs, Government of India, with its headquarters located in New Delhi.

- It is governed by a Board of Directors comprising representatives from the Central Government, State agencies, NABARD, IDBI Bank, TRIFED, and tribal communities.
- It generates self-employment opportunities by providing loans at concessional interest rates to facilitate the socio-economic and educational advancement of tribal communities.
- It enhances employability and entrepreneurship skills by offering financial assistance for higher education as well as skill development training programs for the youth.

BHASHINI Workshop on Pali Language & AI Development

- **Context:** The BHASHINI Sanchalan/Seva Workshop on Pali Language Preservation and Digital AI Model Development was organised at the University of Delhi.

Organising Bodies

- Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**
- In collaboration with the **Centre for Advanced Studies in Buddhist Studies**, Delhi University

Focus Language

- Emphasis on Pali, an ancient Middle Indo-Aryan language
- Primary language of early **Buddhist scriptures, including the Tripitaka**

Cultural & Policy Significance

- Supports preservation of heritage and minority languages
- Aligns with initiatives of the Ministry of Minority Affairs

AI Development Goals

- **Building AI models for the Pali language**
- Focus on: Data collection, Validation frameworks, Community participation

Indian Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0

- **Context:** India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 aims to **broaden its scope beyond manufacturing to include R&D, materials, equipment production, and skill development**, creating a comprehensive ecosystem.
- India has nearly **20% of the world's semiconductor design engineers**, but lacks sufficient domestic design companies, indicating a structural imbalance.
- The government is actively promoting **deep-tech sectors such as AI, semiconductors, and advanced materials** as key drivers of future economic growth.

About ISM 2.0

- Introduced in the Union Budget 2026–27, ISM 2.0 represents a significant step toward strengthening India's semiconductor capabilities.
- Around ₹1,000 crore has been earmarked for FY 2026–27 to support its rollout.
- Strong emphasis on training through initiatives like **Chips to Startup Programme (C2S)** and **collaboration with industry players**.

Domestic Manufacturing Push

- Focus on building indigenous capacity in: Semiconductor equipment, Materials and chemicals, Specialty gases
- Aim: Reduce dependence on imports

End-to-End Ecosystem

- Seeks to develop a complete semiconductor value chain, including: Chip design, Fabrication, Packaging
- Development of full-stack semiconductor intellectual property

Innovation & Collaboration

- Industry-academia partnerships
- Growth of startup-driven innovation
- Solutions targeting real-world technological challenges

Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project Agreement Signed

- **Context:** India and Bhutan have signed a Tariff Protocol for the Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project.

About the Project

- It is a 1020 MW run-of-the-river hydropower project built on the Punatsangchhu River.
- The Punatsangchhu River is formed by the meeting of the Phochhu and Mochhu rivers in Bhutan.
- It then flows southward into the Indian state of West Bengal.
- The river is a tributary of the Brahmaputra River.

Publications Division Goes Digital on WAVES OTT

- **Context:** The Publications Division has made its major journals available free of cost on WAVES OTT platform by Prasar Bharati.
- **Aim:** Enhance digital access to authentic and informative content across India.

Journals Available for Free

- Popular publications include: **Yojana, Kurukshetra, Aajkal, Bal Bharati, Employment News**

These publications cover

- Socio-economic issues
- Rural development
- Literature & education
- Job opportunities & career guidance
- Free E-Books Collection
- Includes Bharat Year Book, known for detailed information on: Governance, Economy, Development programs

E-Books & Book Access Expansion

- About 300 more e-books will be added by end of April.
- These will be offered at affordable prices to ensure accessibility.

- Physical books can also be purchased via the WAVES platform.

- Enabled through: **CSC Grameen eStore**
- Open Network for Digital Commerce

Objective

- Promote knowledge accessibility and inclusivity
- Combine: Free digital content, Affordable paid resources, Physical book distribution

Significance

- Strengthens digital knowledge dissemination
- Expands reach to rural and remote areas
- Builds a comprehensive and inclusive reading ecosystem across India

108th anniversary of Champaran Satyagraha

- **Context:** April 10 marks the 108th anniversary of the Champaran Satyagraha, a defining moment in India's freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi.

- **Indigo farmers** were forced to grow indigo under the Tinkathia system by **British planters**.

- This system was **exploitative and caused severe distress to peasants**.

- It also marked **Mahatma Gandhi's first experiment with Satyagraha** in the country.

- In response to the persistent efforts of local farmer **Raj Kumar Shukla**, Mahatma Gandhi visited the region and undertook a detailed inquiry into the plight of the peasants.

- Defying British orders to leave, he mobilised farmers through non-violent resistance and brought national attention to their suffering.

- The movement eventually led to the formation of an **inquiry committee, with Gandhiji as a member**, and by 1918, the movement successfully forced the abolition of the forced indigo system.

- The Champaran Satyagraha not only secured justice for farmers but also marked **the rise of Gandhi as a mass leader**, laying the foundation for India's larger freedom movement.

Boost to Compressed Biogas (CBG) in India

- **Context:** The Centre plans to increase production and adoption of compressed biogas (CBG).
- **Aim:** Reduce dependence on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) amid global supply constraints.

Existing Biogas Initiatives

- SATAT Scheme (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation)

About SATAT Scheme

- The SATAT Scheme was launched by the Government of India in October 2018.
- It promotes the use of Compressed Biogas (CBG) as a clean and alternative fuel, especially for transportation.
- The scheme is supported under **Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)**.
- SLWM is a key component of the **Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G)**.
- It also contributes to effective municipal waste management.

Objective

- To convert agricultural **residue, cattle dung, and municipal solid waste into CBG**.
- Encourages waste-to-energy conversion and promotes renewable energy use.
- Environmental Benefits
- Helps reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Supports clean energy transition and sustainable development.

Reducing Import Dependence

- India relies heavily on imports of natural gas and crude oil.
- CBG can significantly lower this dependence by providing a domestic fuel alternative.

Significance

- Promotes a circular economy by converting waste into energy.
- Strengthens sustainability, energy independence, and environmental protection.

National Biogas Programme (2021)

- Focuses on setting up biogas plants **for clean cooking, lighting, and small-scale energy needs**.

Objectives

- Setting up of biogas plants **for clean cooking fuel, lighting, meeting thermal and small power needs of users** which results in GHG reduction, improved sanitation, women empowerment and creation of rural employment.

- **For production of Organic enriched Bio-manure:** The digested slurry from biogas plants, a rich source of manure, shall benefit farmers in supplementing / reducing of use of chemical fertilizers

- To promote biogas based Decentralized Renewable Energy Sources of power generation (Off-Grid), in the capacity range of 3 kW to 250 kW or thermal energy for heating/ cooling applications from the biogas generation produced **from Biogas plants above 25 M3 to 2500 M3 size**

Energy Security Concerns

- Nearly 40–45% of India's LNG imports come from Qatar and other West Asian nations like United Arab Emirates and Oman.

- India meets about 55% of its natural gas demand domestically.
- It is utilized to remove water impurities from motor vehicle and aviation fuels.

Most domestic gas is used for

- PNG (cooking)
- CNG (transport)
- Sectors like fertilizers, steel, and power rely heavily on imported gas.
- It serves as a solvent in the production of paints and plastics.

About Deendayal Port

- Deendayal Port (formerly Kandla Port) is India's second-largest major seaport.
- It is situated on India's west coast, within the Kutch district of the state of Gujarat.
- The port is located in the Kandla Creek, approximately 90 kilometers from the Gulf of Kutch.

Role of CBG in Future Energy Mix

- CBG is a sustainable and renewable alternative to natural gas.
- Can reduce import bills and improve energy self-reliance.
- Supports waste management and environmental goals.

Kalai-II Hydro Electric Project

- Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister, has approved an investment of ₹14,105.83 crore for the construction of the Kalai-II Hydro Electric Project on the Lohit River in Anjaw District in Arunachal Pradesh.

Deendayal Port's Green Transition and Methanol Bunkering

- Context:** The Deendayal Port Authority (Kandla Port) is spearheading a green transition in the maritime sector by enhancing its methanol bunkering capabilities.
- This initiative aims to reduce carbon emissions within the maritime industry and achieve a Net-Zero target by 2050.
- Low-carbon alternative fuels**, such as e-methanol and e-ammonia, are being utilized to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in shipping operations.

About Kalai-II Hydro Electric Project

- The hydroelectric plant will have an installed capacity of 1,200 MW, comprising six units of 190 MW each and one unit of 60 MW.
- It is projected to generate 4,852.95 million units (MU) of electricity annually.
- As the first hydro project in the Lohit Basin, it will strengthen the state's power supply, assist in peak demand management, and support the national grid.
- The project will be implemented through a joint venture between THDC India Limited and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Arunachal Pradesh will receive 12% free power and an additional 1% allocation for the Local Area Development Fund (LADF).
- The project is expected to improve local infrastructure, including 29 kilometres of roads and bridges, and provide employment, compensation, and CSR benefits to the local population.

About Methanol

- Methanol (CH₃OH) is also known as 'wood alcohol.'
- It is produced by subjecting natural gas to a 'steam reforming' process to generate synthesis gas, which is then converted into methanol using a catalyst.
- Methanol is a colourless and highly volatile liquid.
- Much like ethyl alcohol, it possesses a mildly sweet taste, yet features a pungent odour.
- It is extensively used in the manufacturing of various chemical products.

Jallianwala Bagh

- **Context:** The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust is observing the 107th martyrdom day in their memory.
- The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place in **Amritsar on April 13, 1919**. It marked a pivotal turning point in the Indian freedom struggle.
- It was triggered by protests **against the Rowlatt Act**, which permitted imprisonment without trial.
- This led to nationwide protests **under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and the unrest intensified following the arrests of Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew**.
- On the **festival of Baisakhi**, a large, peaceful crowd gathered at Jallianwala Bagh. There, **Reginald Dyer** blocked the sole exit route and ordered his troops to open fire without warning.
- This paved the way for protest movements such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, as well as acts of dissent such as **Rabindranath Tagore renouncing his title of 'Knighthood.'**
- The British government appointed the **Hunter Commission**; although it condemned Dyer, it failed to take any punitive action against him.
- Subsequently, in **1940, Udham Singh assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in an act of retribution for the massacre**.
- In 1951, the Government of India established a memorial at **Jallianwala Bagh to honor the victims and to preserve this historical heritage. On the Occasion of Vaisakhi**
- Vaisakhi is celebrated as **the Sikh New Year**. On this day in 1699, **Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa**.
- Concurrently, in **Punjab and Haryana, it is also celebrated as a harvest festival marking the reaping of the Rabi crops**.

- This festival is celebrated through performances of Punjab's traditional dances: **Bhangra and Giddha**.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

- **Context:** Unified Payments Interface has **completed 10 years since its launch** in 2016.
- The network has expanded rapidly, with participating banks rising from 216 (2021) to 691 (2026).
- Has significantly **improved access to digital payments**.
- Provides affordable and user-friendly payment options **across both urban and rural regions**.
- UPI services are now operational in more than **eight countries**, including: United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, Qatar

About UPI

- A real-time payment platform that allows instant transfer of **money between bank accounts using a mobile device**.
- Eliminates the need for traditional banking details during transactions.
- Managed by **the National Payments Corporation of India**.
- Enables users to send and receive money across different banks and apps through a single UPI ID/interface.
- Ensures seamless integration across platforms.

Key Functional Features

- Instant fund transfer facility
- **24×7 availability**
- **QR code-based payments**
- Supports: **Person-to-Person (P2P), Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions**

Security Mechanism

- Uses two-factor authentication for verification.
- Built on secure digital protocols to ensure safe and reliable transactions.

Southern Railway – 75th Foundation Day

- **Context:** Southern Railway, one of the oldest zones of Indian Railways, celebrates its 75th Foundation Day today, April 14.
- On April 14, 1951, Southern Railway was formed through the amalgamation of the Madras & Southern Mahratta Railway, the South Indian Railway, and the Mysore State Railway.
- The history of railways in South India began in 1856 with the operation of the first train from Royapuram to Arcot (Walajah Road).
- The railway network expanded nationally through connections established with the West Coast in the 1860s, Mumbai in the 1870s, and Howrah in the 1900s.
- Key achievements of Southern Railway include the Nilgiri Mountain Railway (1899) and the Pamban Bridge (1925).
- While preserving its rich heritage, Southern Railway remains committed to providing modern technology, safety, and world-class amenities.

About Southern Railway

- Southern Railway's current network spans a vast region of the southern Indian peninsula.
- It covers the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry, as well as a small portion of Andhra Pradesh.
- Its coverage extends from Mangalore (West Coast) to Kanyakumari (South), and from Renigunta (Northwest) to Gudur (Northeast).
- The headquarters of Southern Railway is located in the city of Chennai.
- Southern Railway comprises a total of 6 divisions: Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Palakkad, Thiruvananthapuram, Salem

About Indian Railways

- In India, railway transportation was first introduced in 1853 during the tenure of Lord

Dalhousie as Governor-General between Bombay and Thane.

- In terms of railway infrastructure, India ranks 4th globally, following the United States, Russia, and China.
- Indian Railways is divided into 18 zones.
- Four sites associated with Indian Railways are included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list:
 - Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (1999)
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (2004)
 - Nilgiri Mountain Railway (2005)
 - Kalka-Shimla Railway (2008)

National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)

- **Context:** Launched in April 2016, the National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) is a nationwide electronic trading platform designed to establish a single unified market for agricultural commodities by digitally linking existing mandis across the country.

Digital Integration of Mandis

- Integrates existing APMC mandis (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) into a single online platform.
- Enables seamless nationwide trading of agricultural produce.

Key Benefits

- Transparent price discovery through online bidding.
- Better market access for farmers, traders, and buyers.
- Reduces dependence on local intermediaries.

"One Nation, One Market" Vision

- Promotes a unified agricultural market across India.
- Allows farmers to sell produce beyond local mandis.

Digital Ecosystem Components

- Web portal and mobile application

- Dedicated helpline support
- Human assistance infrastructure
- AI-based quality assessment systems

Farmer-Centric Advantages

- Access to a larger pool of buyers
- Improved chances of better price realization
- Encourages competitive bidding

Financial Inclusion

- Promotes digital payments in agriculture
- Enhances transparency and efficiency in transactions

e-NAM Web Portal

- e-NAM Portal enables end-to-end digital trading.
- Connects mandis into a single national electronic platform.

e-NAM Portal-Key Digital Features

- **Single-window service:** Commodity arrivals, quality assaying, bidding, payment, all on one platform
- **Unique Lot ID tracking:** Each lot tracked from gate entry to final sale via mobile
- **Live price dashboard:** Real-time commodity prices, mandi arrivals, trade volumes, publicly accessible
- **12-language interface:** Hindi, English, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Bengali, Tamil, Odia and others
- **Secondary sale module:** Enables resale of already-purchased lots within the platform
- **Inter-state trade facility:** State Unified License enables traders to bid across State boundaries

SARAL AI

- **Union Science & Technology Minister** announced that the Anusandhan National Research Foundation is developing an AI-based platform named SARAL AI.
- The platform aims to **transform complex research publications into simple, easy-to-**

understand content in 18 Indian languages, thereby helping bridge the gap between scientific innovation and the general public.

About SARAL AI

- SARAL AI is designed to simplify scientific research and present it in formats that are **easily accessible and engaging for everyday users, making technical knowledge more understandable.**

Key Features of SARAL AI

- Converts research papers and patents into short videos, podcasts, and visual posters
- Generates social media-friendly content to reach a wider audience
- Supports 18 Indian languages, promoting inclusivity
- Produces business briefs and presentations for practical and professional use

Objective

- To make complex scientific and technological developments easy to understand for non-experts
- To enhance the reach and impact of research by making it more relatable and accessible to the public

India's First Quantum Computing Testbeds

- **Context:** India's first indigenous quantum computing test and reference facilities have been inaugurated in **Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.**
- These facilities are part of the **Amaravati Quantum Valley (AQV)** initiative, which is designed to provide the sovereign infrastructure necessary to test, certify, and manufacture quantum hardware.
- The project comprises two testbeds dedicated to evaluating quantum devices such as

cables, amplifiers, and control systems under extremely rigorous environmental conditions.

- To enable the operation of quantum qubits and ensure reliable performance, these facilities **operate at temperatures approaching absolute zero (-273°C).**
- Researchers will be provided with complete transparency regarding the hardware to prevent foreign intrusions or “backdoors” within the components, thereby ensuring national security.
- The project aims **to foster an indigenous ecosystem for quantum-grade components, such as cryo-electronics and chips.**

Quantum Computing

- Quantum computing is a field of computer science based on the principles of quantum theory, which govern the **states of atoms and subatomic particles.**
- It utilizes subatomic particles such as **electrons or photons to process information.**
- **Quantum computing employs qubits, which can exist in a state of 0, 1, or a superposition (a combination) of both states simultaneously.**
- It operates through cryogenic quantum processors, which require extremely **low temperatures to function.**
- Its programming is based on controlling quantum interference to **obtain high-probability solutions.**
- It possesses the potential to demonstrate exponential speedup in solving specific types of problems.
- It is analog in nature; furthermore, quantum error correction is essential to ensure accuracy.

Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor

- **Context:** Marking a significant milestone in Uttarakhand’s developmental journey,

the Prime Minister inaugurated the **Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor in Dehradun.**

About the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor

- The Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor is a 213-km long, six-lane expressway constructed at a cost of over ₹12,000 crore, featuring advanced infrastructure facilities.
- This corridor significantly **reduces the travel time between Delhi and Dehradun.**
- Special provisions have been made to protect the **region’s rich biodiversity and wildlife.**
- A 12-km long elevated wildlife corridor has been constructed to ensure the safe and unhindered movement of animals.
- This elevated section ranks among the **longest wildlife corridors in Asia.**
- The project incorporates 10 dedicated wildlife crossing passages, including two specialized underpasses designed for elephants.
- Within a 20-km eco-sensitive zone, underpasses totaling 97 meters in length have been constructed to facilitate the safe crossing of wildlife.

New Digital Platform for Trade Services

- **Context:** The Commerce and Industry Ministry launched a new **integrated digital platform for the Department of Commerce.**
- Aimed at improving access to trade-related services and information
- Part of the government’s push for stronger e-governance

Purpose

- Enhance ease of doing business in international trade
- Improve service delivery for exporters, importers, and stakeholders

Features of the New Website

Modern and user-friendly interface

- **Complies with:**

- Digital Brand Identity Manual 3.0

- Guidelines for Indian Government Websites
- Provides:
 - Seamless access to trade services
 - Transparent and efficient information delivery

Mobile Application

- Bilingual app available on: Android, iOS

Key features

- Offline access
- GPS integration
- Enables users to access services anytime, anywhere

Benefits

- Greater transparency in trade processes
- Improved efficiency and accessibility
- Supports stakeholders in foreign trade operations

Broader Significance

- Aligns with India's e-Governance vision
- Promotes digital transformation in trade facilitation
- Strengthens the overall trade ecosystem in India

Urban Challenge Fund

- **Context:** The Centre launched the operational guidelines for the **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)**, which is aimed at **transforming urban infrastructure through market-linked competitive financing**.
- The government had made allocation for it in the Union Budget.
- The Centre will provide financial support to transformative and bankable urban projects through competitive challenge mode through this fund.

About Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)

- A Centrally Sponsored Scheme by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

- Central Assistance: **₹1,00,000 crore** (FY 2025-26 to 2030-31, extendable by 3 years).
- Aims to **mobilize ₹4 lakh crore** total investment in the urban sector.

Core Objective

- **Shift from grant-based funding to:**
 - Market-linked financing
 - Reform-driven development
 - Outcome-oriented infrastructure creation

Eligibility

- Cities with a projected **25 population of 10L+**
- Industrial Cities (manufacturing and cities) with a **projected 2025 population of 1L**.
- ULBs in **hill states/UTs, Northeastern States and ULBs with population blow 1L**.

Projects Admissible Under UCF

- Digital governance
- Projects for decongestion
- Revitalisation of old city areas; 5-20 square kilometer (sqkm)
- Non-Motorised transport
- Walkways
- Transit Hub upgradation
- Transit oriented infrastructure development
- Integrated waste processing
- Flyover Riverfront development

Key Approach

- Promote bankable urban projects through a competitive "challenge-mode".
- Encourage cities to access market funding, not rely solely on public finance.

Focus Areas (Three Verticals)

- **Creative Development of Cities** – Revamping city cores and legacy infrastructure.
- **Cities as Growth Hubs** – Development of greenfield/semi-greenfield cities with strong economic drivers.

- **Water and Sanitation** – Clean cities, waste management, and sanitation improvement.

Reform Requirements

- Cities must implement reforms in: Urban governance, Urban finance, Urban planning

Infrastructure Priorities

- Rejuvenation of old city areas
- Garbage-free cities and sanitation
- Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)
- Dump site and legacy waste remediation

Funding Pattern

- 25% funding from UCF
- 50% to be raised from the market
- 25% from State/UT/ULB or additional market sources
- Encourages private sector participation (financial + managerial)

Support for Small Cities

- ₹5000 crore credit repayment guarantee corpus created
- Targets: Cities with population < 1 lakh and Cities in hilly and northeastern states/UTs

Credit Guarantee Benefit

- 70% loan repayment guarantee
- Up to ₹7 crore coverage
- Enables small Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to access market finance

Significance

- First initiative enabling small cities to tap market funding
- Promotes inclusive urban growth and financial empowerment of ULBs
- Marks a paradigm shift in India's urban development strategy

Coverage & Project Eligibility

- **The Urban Challenge Fund will include**
 - All cities with a population of 10 lakh and above (as per 2025 estimates)

- All State and Union Territory capitals not falling in this category
- Key industrial cities with a population of at least 1 lakh

Projects supported under the fund must

- Be financially viable (bankable)
- Bring significant transformation
- Align with the three focus areas (verticals)
- Have well-defined outcomes and a reliable market-based financing plan
- Projects that are already receiving funding under schemes such as Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 and Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, or any other Centrally Sponsored Schemes, will not qualify, ensuring the fund is used for fresh and innovative projects.

National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation

- **Context:** The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation achieved a record disbursement of Rs 613.75 crore in FY 2025-26, benefiting over 61,000 people.
- **Achieved a 16%** increase over the previous year.
- Ensured wide geographical coverage and near full fund utilization.

Special Initiatives

- Implements schemes like **VISVAS Interest Subvention Scheme**.
- Promotes concessional finance for OBCs and other eligible groups.

Beneficiary Groups

- Primarily supports Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- **Also assists**
 - Economically Backward Classes (EBCs)
 - De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- Senior citizens, beggars, and transgender persons
- **Impact**
- Strengthens financial inclusion and self-employment.
- Promotes inclusive growth and social empowerment in India.

About NBCFDC

- National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation is a Government of India undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Established in 1992 as a not-for-profit company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.
- Created to support Backward Classes and economically weaker sections.

Main Objectives

- Promote economic and development activities for Backward Classes.
- Provide financial assistance and loans for viable income-generating projects.
- Support education, training, and skill development.
- Enhance entrepreneurial and technical skills for self-employment.

Financial Support & Schemes

- Provides loans and assistance through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs).
- Supports Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and micro-financing systems.
- Covers sectors like:
 - Agriculture and allied activities
 - Small business and traditional occupations
 - Technical and professional trades
 - Transport and service sectors

India's First Semiconductor SEZ at Dholera

- **Context:** The government has approved a new Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to be developed

by **Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Private Limited at Dholera, Gujarat.**

- This SEZ will cover 66.166 hectares and is expected to generate around 21,000 jobs.
- It will focus on **electronic hardware, software, and IT/ITES services**, supported by strong infrastructure and a single-window approval system for smoother operations.
- The project is significant as it represents **India's first chip fabrication (fab) facility.**

Policy Reforms to Boost Semiconductor

Ecosystem

- The government has introduced major reforms in SEZ regulations to promote semiconductor and electronics manufacturing.

Amendments to the SEZ Rules, 2006 (notified on June 3, 2025) include

- Reduction in minimum land requirement from 50 hectares to 10 hectares
- Relaxation in land encumbrance conditions
- Inclusion of free supplies in Net Foreign Exchange (NFE) calculations
- Permission for domestic sales in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) after paying applicable duties

These changes aim to

- Attract high-value and capital-intensive investments
- Encourage innovation and advanced manufacturing
- Improve ease of doing business
- Build a globally competitive semiconductor ecosystem

Other Major Approved Semiconductor & Electronics SEZs

- Micron Semiconductor Technology India Pvt Ltd
 - Setting up an SEZ in Sanand

- Focus: Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging (ATMP)
- Investment: ₹13,000 crore

Aequs Group

- Developing an electronics component SEZ in Dharwad

Expected Impact

- Development of domestic semiconductor value chains
- Creation of high-skilled employment opportunities
- Reduction in import dependence
- Strengthening India's position in the global electronics and chip manufacturing industry

About Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

- A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a clearly defined area that operates as a duty-free region, considered outside the domestic customs territory for trade, tariffs, and taxation purposes.
- The **SEZ Act, 2005** lays down the legal structure governing exports, investment, employment generation, and infrastructure development within SEZs.
- Amendments to the SEZ Rules, 2006 in June 2025 reduced the minimum land requirement for semiconductor units from 50 hectares to 10 hectares, aiming to convert SEZs into dynamic industrial and development centres.
- **India set up Asia's first Export Processing Zone (EPZ) at Kandla, Gujarat, in 1965.** Today, the country has **368 notified SEZs**, providing employment to over 31 lakh people.

AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG)

- **Context;** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has set up the AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG) as a top-level inter-ministerial body

for shaping and coordinating AI governance in India.

- The formation of AIGEG implements recommendations from
 - India's AI Governance Guidelines
 - The Economic Survey of India

Purpose and Role

AIGEG will act as the central institutional mechanism for

- Developing AI governance policies
- Ensuring coordination across **ministries, regulators, and departments**
- Promoting a whole-of-government approach to AI

It aims to

- Align AI development with national strategy and priorities
- Balance technological growth with labour market realities
- Maintain social and economic stability

Leadership and Composition

- **Chairperson:** Minister for Electronics & IT, Railways, and I&B)
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Minister of State for Electronics & IT and Commerce & Industry
- Members include senior officials from multiple sectors, such as: Policy-making, Science and technology, Security, Economic affairs

Institutional Framework

- AIGEG will function as the apex inter-ministerial authority for AI governance in India.
- It will be supported by a Technology and Policy Expert Committee (TPEC), which will
 - Provide technical and policy advice
 - Track global AI trends and innovations
 - Assess risks, regulations, and emerging challenges

Overall Significance

- Strengthens India's AI governance architecture
- Encourages coordinated policymaking across government
- Supports responsible and inclusive AI development
- Positions India to better respond to global AI advancements and challenges

India's First National Bat Assessment

- **Context:** India's first comprehensive bat assessment has been prepared by organisations such as the **Nature Conservation Foundation and Bat Conservation International**, among others.

Biodiversity Findings

- The study records around **135 bat species in India**.
- Out of these, **16 species are endemic**, meaning they are found only in India.
- Seven species are listed as threatened under the IUCN classification.

Major Threats Identified

- Rapid urbanisation leading to habitat loss
- Increasing deforestation
- Impacts of climate change
- Continued public stigma and fear, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic

About Bats

- **Bats are mammals**, meaning they give birth to live young, are warm-blooded, and have bodies covered with fur.
- They are the only mammals capable of sustained powered flight.
- Most bats rely on echolocation, where they emit high-frequency sound waves to move, locate prey, and navigate in complete darkness.

Ecological Importance

- Bats play a crucial role in maintaining ecosystems by providing services such as:

- **Pollination of plants**
- **Natural pest control by consuming insects**
- Seed dispersal, helping forest regeneration

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

- **Launched in 2011 under the Ministry of Rural Development**

- Aims to **reduce multidimensional rural poverty**

- Focuses on: Self-employment generation, Financial inclusion, Skill development and livelihood enhancement

Scale and Achievements in India

- Over 100 million households reached
- More than 9 million Self-Help Groups (SHGs) formed
- Around 20 million women earn over ₹1 lakh annually through SHGs
- Over 50 million women have accessed bank credit
- Credit linkage worth approximately ₹12 lakh crore facilitated

- Presence of women banking correspondents in 60%+ local governments

- Active implementation across 742 districts

- Total capital support of ₹51,368 crore provided

Women-Centric Empowerment

- Strong emphasis on women-led SHGs

Built systems of:

- Village, cluster, and block-level federations
- Community-based service delivery cadres
- Strong financial inclusion networks
- Helped increase female labour force participation since 2018

Global Influence and South-South Cooperation

- NRLM model increasingly studied and adopted by countries in Africa

- Delegations from: **Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda**
- To help citizens verify the authenticity of official notices issued by the CBI.

Focus of learning:

- SHG scaling strategies
- Credit linkage mechanisms
- Community mobilisation systems
- Financial discipline and accountability structures

African Countries Are Adopting the Model

- **Promotes women's economic empowerment**
- Uses a low-cost, community-driven approach
- Suitable for large informal economies
- Strengthens local institutions and governance systems
- Encourages sustainable livelihood diversification
- Aimed at **protecting people from online frauds, especially rising "digital arrest" scams.**
- Fraudsters often impersonate officials to extort money, creating fear and confusion among victims.
- The chatbot provides instant verification of notices **to identify whether they are genuine or fake.**
- Helps users avoid panic and prevent financial losses due to fraudulent communications.
- Represents the use of artificial intelligence in strengthening cyber safety and public awareness.

India's Development Diplomacy

- NRLM reflects India's shift from aid-based support to knowledge export
- Promotes institutional and social innovation sharing
- Strengthens South-South cooperation through: Training programmes, Study visits, Capacity-building initiatives
- Proposed idea: creation of a Rural Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Platform for global collaboration
- **The initiative will be inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Surya Kant.**
- Strengthens efforts to combat cybercrime and misuse of law enforcement identity.

Kankaria Depot: India's First Water-Neutral Railway Facility

- **Context: Kankaria Coaching Depot in Ahmedabad has become India's first water-neutral railway depot.**
- The initiative focuses on sustainable railway operations through **wastewater treatment and reuse.**
- The depot saves around **1.60 lakh litres of water daily**, equivalent to over 300 household tanks.
- Water used in coach washing and maintenance is treated and recycled instead of being discharged.
- The core technology used is **Phytoremediation, which uses plants to naturally purify water.**
- The treatment process includes wetland-based purification, **followed by carbon and sand filtration, and UV disinfection.**

Significance

- NRLM has become a flagship rural transformation programme in India
- It is now a global model for women-led, community-based development
- Demonstrates India's growing role in shaping international development practices beyond financial aid

Abhay' AI Chatbot

- **Central Bureau of Investigation** has launched an AI-powered chatbot named "**Abhay**".

- The treated water is safely reused for operational purposes within the depot.
- Annual water savings are estimated at **about 5.84 crore litres**.
- The project reduces dependence on **freshwater resources and promotes eco-friendly infrastructure**.
- It serves as a model for water conservation and sustainable practices across Indian Railways.
- Represents a major technological advancement in security infrastructure.
- Improves efficiency, accuracy, and speed of decision-making using AI.

Prajna

- **Context:** Prajna is an AI-enabled satellite imaging system developed to improve real-time decision-making for security agencies.
- It has been provided to the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.

Developed By

- Created by **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- Built by its specialised lab, **Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR)**.

Key Features

- Uses Artificial Intelligence to analyse satellite imagery.
- Can process large volumes of data quickly.
- Detects patterns and anomalies that may be missed by traditional systems.

Purpose and Functions

- Enhances surveillance and intelligence gathering.
- Supports real-time operational response.
- Helps in better situational awareness.

Strategic Importance

- Useful for monitoring sensitive and border areas.
- Assists in tracking suspicious activities.
- Strengthens counter-terrorism and border management efforts.

Significance

Supreme Court's Road Safety Guidelines

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India issued nationwide (pan-India) guidelines to improve safety on expressways and national highways.
- Emphasised that highways must not become "corridors of peril" due to poor administration or infrastructure gaps.

Concern over Road Fatalities

- National highways make up only 2% of total road length but account for ~30% of road deaths.
- Indicates serious safety deficiencies.

Constitutional Perspective

- Court linked road safety to **Article 21 of the Constitution of India**.
- Declared that ensuring safe roads is a constitutional duty of the State.
- Used powers under **Article 142 of the Constitution of India to issue directions**.

Ban on Highway Parking

- Strict prohibition on parking/stopping heavy or commercial vehicles on highways.
- Allowed only at designated bays or lay-byes.

Use of Technology for Enforcement

- **Implementation through Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS):**
 - Real-time alerts to police
 - GPS-based photographic evidence
 - Integrated e-Challan system

Institutional Responsibilities

- **Directions issued to:**
 - Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
 - National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- State governments & UTs
- District Magistrates to create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

District Highway Safety Task Force

- To be set up in every district within 15 days.
- Includes officials from administration, police, NHAI, PWD, and local bodies.

Key Safety Measures Ordered

- Regular patrolling and surveillance
- Identification and fixing of accident blackspots
- Development of truck lay-bys and lighting systems
- Improved emergency response infrastructure

Muthuvan Tribe

- **Context:** A recent report by the Kerala Food Commission has exposed serious lapses in the distribution of ration supplies in Edamalakkudy, the state's only tribal panchayat.
- The inquiry found instances of shortages and irregular practices in the system.
- It has recommended swift legal action against those responsible and called for immediate corrective steps to safeguard food security for the Muthuvan Tribe living in the region.

About Muthuvan Tribe

- The Muthuvan Tribe, also known as Mudugars, are an indigenous community residing in the forested regions of the Western Ghats, mainly across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- They speak the Muthuvan language, which is part of the Dravidian language family.
- The tribe is divided into two sub-groups with slight linguistic differences, commonly referred to as Malayalam Muthuvan and Pandi Muthuvan.
- The Muthuvans are well known for their harmonious relationship with nature,

especially their deep understanding of forest ecosystems and wildlife.

- They possess rich knowledge of traditional healing practices, using herbal medicines that have been carefully preserved and passed down through generations.
- This medicinal knowledge, along with the role of traditional healers, is often kept within the community and treated as confidential.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel & ATF Blending

- **Context:** The government has permitted the mixing of ethanol and synthetic hydrocarbons with Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF).

- ATF (jet fuel) is mainly derived from the refining of crude oil.

About Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)

- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is an alternative liquid fuel made from various feedstocks such as used oils and fats, municipal waste, and non-food crops.

- **Can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 80% compared to conventional jet fuel**

Blending Limits

- SAF can be mixed with ATF in proportions typically ranging from 10% to 50%, depending on the source and production process

India's Targets

- **India plans to**
 - Achieve 1% SAF blending in international flights by 2027
 - Increase to 2% by 2028
 - Reach 5% by 2030
- These targets align with the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, led by the International Civil Aviation Organization

Disabled-Friendly Prisons in India

- **Context:** The Supreme Court of India has instructed the **formation of a high-level committee to design a roadmap for making prisons accessible to persons with disabilities.**
- **Committee Details:** Led by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, the panel will broaden its scope to address accessibility, assistive facilities, and security needs of disabled inmates.
- **Constitutional Rights:** Prisoners with disabilities continue to enjoy protections under **Article 14 and Article 21**, ensuring equality and a life with dignity even while in custody.
- **Legal Protection:** Any denial of rights is punishable under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Key Issues Faced by Disabled Prisoners

- **Lack of Reliable Data:** India does not maintain official statistics on prisoners with disabilities, unlike global estimates (WHO: ~16% population; U.S. prisons: up to 38%).
- **Human Rights Concerns:** Incidents involving G. N. Saibaba and Stan Swamy highlight denial of essential aids, medical care, and basic dignity.
- **Institutional Shortcomings:** Key reform efforts such as the Model Prison Manual, Mulla Committee, and the Prison Act 2023 have largely overlooked disability inclusion, despite addressing other vulnerable groups.
- **Gap between Law and Practice:** Although legal safeguards exist, their implementation within prisons remains weak and inadequate.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure & Care:** Most prisons lack ramps, assistive devices, specialised healthcare, and mental health services, worsening the living conditions of disabled inmates.

India's First Private Gold Mine

- **Context:** India's first large-scale private gold mine **will be launched in Andhra Pradesh.**
- The project is developed by Geomysore Services India Pvt Ltd, with backing from Thriveni Earthmovers and Deccan Gold.
- The mine is located **in Kurnool district**, covering about 598 hectares across Jonnagiri, Erragudi, and Pagidirayi villages.
- It is expected to **produce around 1 tonne (1,000 kg) of gold annually** for nearly 15 years.
- The project **will help reduce India's dependence on gold imports**, which exceed 800 tonnes per year.
- It represents a shift from state-controlled **mining to private sector participation.**

- Advanced technologies such as **open-pit mining and carbon-in-leach extraction will be used.**

Open-pit mining

- Open-pit mining involves removing surface layers of **rock to extract minerals found near the ground**, making it cost-effective for large-scale operations.

Carbon-in-leach extraction

- Carbon-in-leach extraction is a method where **crushed ore is treated with cyanide, and activated carbon is used to absorb and recover the gold** efficiently.

India's Bioeconomy Growth and Key Achievements

- **Context:** Addressing an international conference, the Union Minister highlighted **bioeconomy-driven growth, projecting the sector to reach \$1 trillion by 2047.**
- The bioeconomy refers to the utilisation, management, and conservation of biological resources, along with associated science,

technology, and innovation, to deliver products and services across sectors while promoting sustainability.

India's Bioeconomy

- The sector expanded from \$10 billion in 2014 to about \$195.3 billion in 2025, contributing nearly 4.8% to GDP.
- The number of bioeconomy start-ups surged from around 50 in 2014 to over 11,800 in 2025.
- Reduction in petrol imports has resulted in foreign exchange savings of \$12–14 billion, helping lower the current account deficit.

Major Growth Factors

- Implementation of 20% ethanol blending in petrol.
- Rising use of GLP-1 category drugs.
- Establishment of several Global Capability Centers (GCCs).
- Increased application of enzymes and microorganisms in industries such as textiles, detergents, food processing, and biofuels.

Research & Innovation Milestones

- Creation of the world's first DNA-based COVID-19 vaccine (ZyCoV-D).
- Development of indigenous CAR-T cell therapy.
- Progress in mRNA vaccine technologies.
- Introduction of India's first homegrown antibiotic (Nafithromycin).
- Setting up of a National Biobank facility.

India's Achievement in Global Cheese Competition

- **Context:** Prime Minister congratulated Indian cheesemakers for their success.
- India participated in **Mundial do Queijo do Brasil 2026**, a global dairy competition.

- India secured a total of **4 medals in the event.**
- **Medal tally:** 1 Super Gold, 2 Gold, 1 Silver.
- Super Gold was awarded to **Eleftheria Gulmarg (Brie Style).**
- Gold medals were won by **Yak Churpi-Soft (Nordic Farm, Leh, Ladakh)** and **Eleftheria Brunost (Whey Cheese).**
- Silver medal was awarded to **Eleftheria Kaali Miri (Belper Knolle Style).**
- Awardees included **Mausam Narang** and **Thenlay Nurboo.**
- The achievement highlights the **growing global recognition of India's artisanal dairy sector.**
- It reflects India's strong entry into the international cheese industry.

India's Currency Swap Support to Maldives

- **Context:** India has approved the first disbursement of **₹30 billion to the Maldives under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework.**
- The framework includes an INR swap facility of ₹25,000 crore, in addition to an existing USD/Euro swap window.
- It aims to encourage wider use of the Indian Rupee in international transactions.

About SAARC

- The **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation** is a regional body that promotes cooperation, connectivity, and development in South Asia.
- It was established in **1985 during its first summit held in Dhaka.**
- It has 8 member countries: **India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Afghanistan**
- The **SAARC Secretariat** is located in **Kathmandu.**

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)

- **Context:** Recently, the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) conducted a Global Symposium on Credit Guarantees.

About CGTMSE

- Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises was set up in 2000.
- **Aim:** To promote and ease the flow of formal credit to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs).

Jointly created by: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Small Industries Development Bank of India

Funding Pattern

- Corpus funded by:
 - Government of India and SIDBI
 - Contribution ratio: 4 : 1

Eligible Lending Institutions

- Scheduled commercial banks (public, private, and foreign banks)
- Selected Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)
- National Small Industries Corporation
- North Eastern Development Finance Corporation
- SIDBI
- Selected Small Finance Banks and NBFCs

Credit Guarantee Support

- Provides guarantee cover of 75% to 85% on loans
- Helps strengthen credit access for MSEs

Asia's First UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion

- **Context:** India has established Asia's first UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development

About the Initiative

- The UNESCO Chair is a global academic initiative focused on reducing gender

disparities in technical and vocational education

- Launched on April 24, 2026 in Pune

Organizations Involved

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- UNESCO
- Symbiosis Skills and Professional University

Objective

- Aims to promote gender equality in skill development.
- Seeks to ensure greater participation of women in emerging economic sectors
- Focuses on inclusive growth and social transformation

Key Features

- **Training women in advanced fields such as semiconductors, AI, robotics, defence, and advanced manufacturing.**
- Linked with international bodies like International Labour Organization, UNESCO-UNEVOC, and UNESCO Global Skills Academy.
- Targets women from underprivileged backgrounds with industry-relevant skills.
- Involves 40+ industry experts and policymakers to align training with job market needs.
- Backed by both the **Skill Development and Education ministries.**

Significance

- Positions India as a leader in gender-inclusive skill development in Asia
- Promotes women's empowerment and financial independence
- Prepares women for future-ready, high-value employment opportunities

Virli Khandar Megalithic Site

- **Context:** An ongoing excavation at a megalithic site in Virli Khandar has revealed distinctive burial architecture, rare artefacts and unusual

pottery arrangements, offering fresh insights into ancient funerary practices in Vidarbha.

- The site, located in Pauni tehsil of Bhandara district, in Maharashtra was first reported in 2008.

Unique Burial Pattern

- Features stone circles with menhirs inside (composite megalithic structure)
- Distinct from nearby sites like Pimpalgaon Nipani and Tirota Kheri, which mainly have dolmen burials

Artifacts Discovered

- Copper items (e.g., necklace)
- Iron tools: axes, chisels, ladles, arrowheads
- Semi-precious beads, including etched carnelian
- Gold earring recovered

Pottery Findings

- Unique pottery cluster not previously reported in the Vidarbha region
- Around 50 pots arranged systematically in one burial
- Larger pots covered with inverted bowls

Burial Structure Details

- Pots placed over black cotton soil layer
- Soil laid above natural lateritic (murum) base

Abhilekh Patal Portal

- **Context:** Prime Minister encouraged citizens to explore the Abhilekh Patal portal to better understand India's historical heritage

About the Abhilekh Patal Portal

- Abhilekh Patal Portal is a comprehensive online platform providing access to archival materials
- Developed and maintained by the National Archives of India
- Functions as a digital repository of historical records

Objective

- Aims to make historical documents easily accessible to users worldwide
- Designed to bridge geographical barriers and reach a global audience

Content Available

- Over 7 million digitised records

Includes:

- Government records from various ministries and departments
- Private papers of notable individuals
- Photographs, maps, microfilms, and rare documents
- Digitised archival files preserved by NAI

About National Archives of India

- Established in 1891 in Kolkata as the Imperial Record Department
- Largest archival institution in South Asia
- Custodian of non-current government records
- Holds diverse collections such as public records, private papers, oriental and cartographic materials
- Headquarters in New Delhi, Operates under the Ministry of Culture

Significance

- Enhances public access to India's historical documents
- Supports research, education, and administrative reference
- Promotes awareness of India's rich historical legacy

India's Digital Content Regulation

- **Context:** India has joined a select group of nations where platforms like Meta (Facebook, Instagram) automatically curb flagged online content at scale

Sahyog Portal

- The Sahyog Portal is a centralised online system launched in 2024
- Developed by the **Ministry of Home Affairs and managed by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**
- Functions as a **single-window platform** for law enforcement agencies to issue quick and coordinated requests to remove or block illegal online content

Evolution of the Portal

- Initially created as an emergency response tool during the pandemic
- Later transformed in late 2024 into a key mechanism for regulating online content

Legal Framework

- Based on Information Technology Act, 2000 under Section 79(3)(b)
- This provision states that intermediaries lose “safe harbour” protection if they fail to promptly remove unlawful content after government notice
- Section 69A: Provides a formal blocking process with safeguards like written justification
- Section 79(3)(b): Used via Sahyog Portal as a quicker, parallel route for content takedown without the same procedural steps

Significance

- Enables faster enforcement of digital laws
- Strengthens government oversight of online platforms
- Raises discussions around balance between regulation and safeguards

Google AI Data Centre Hub

- **Context:** Andhra Pradesh is set for a technological leap the foundation stone for **Google’s massive \$15 billion (₹1.35 lakh crore) AI data centre hub at Tarluvada, near Visakhapatnam, on April 28.**

- It is one of the largest FDI projects in India

Project Execution

- Managed by Raiden Infotech in Partnership with Adani Infra
- Developed under ‘Speed of Doing Business’ policy

Technical Features

- Planned capacity: **1 Gigawatt (GW)**
- **Google’s first major AI-driven data centre campus in India**
- Includes
 - Submarine cable landing stations
 - Dedicated fiber networks
 - Ensures low-latency global connectivity

Economic & Employment Impact

- Creation of thousands of high-value jobs
- Opportunities in: **Data science, Cybersecurity, AI operations**
- Boost to allied sectors like: **Renewable energy, Advanced manufacturing**

Strategic Importance

- **Positions Visakhapatnam as a global AI and cloud hub**
- **Supports development of 6.5 GW digital ecosystem**
- Seen as a major driver of long-term economic transformation

Mission SAKSHAM by RBI

- **Context:** The Reserve Bank of India introduced **Mission SAKSHAM the initiative is intended to strengthen the Urban Co-operative Banking (UCB) sector by improving its overall functioning**

Launch & Objective

- Reserve Bank of India **launched Mission SAKSHAM on April 28, 2026**
- Aims to strengthen the **Urban Co-operative Banking (UCB) sector**

- Focus on improving **skills, governance, and operational efficiency**

About Mission SAKSHAM

- “SAKSHAM” stands for **Sahkari Bank Kshamta Nirman**
- Designed as a mission-mode capacity-building programme
- Targets personnel working in Urban Co-operative Banks across India

Core Focus Areas

- Enhancing professional skills and institutional capacity
- Strengthening governance practices
- Improving day-to-day banking operations

Approach

- Not limited to training alone
- Aims for long-term transformation in functioning of UCBs

Development Process

- Formulated after consultations with: Umbrella Organization of UCBs and Various cooperative federations
- Designed to address practical challenges faced by the sector

Significance

- Promotes stronger and more efficient cooperative banks
- Supports financial stability and better service delivery
- Enhances capacity of UCB workforce across India

WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative

Global Goal

- Led by World Health Organization
- **Aim:** Make cervical cancer a rare disease

- **Target incidence:** 4 cases per 1,00,000 women

2030 Targets

- 90% of girls vaccinated against HPV before age 15
- 70% of women screened using HPV test at ages 35 & 45
- 90% of detected cases receive proper treatment

India's Progress

- Has crossed halfway mark since global declaration
- Still significant gap in achieving 2030 targets

National HPV Vaccination Campaign

- Launched on **February 28, 2026**
- Initiated by Prime Minister
- Reflects strong political commitment to women's health

Public Health Importance

- Focus on awareness among parents
- Free vaccination available at **government health centres for 14-year-old girls**

Significance

- Aims to ensure a **cervical cancer-free future**
- Contributes to the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047

Tamil Nadu HPV Vaccination Programme

Expansion

- The Government of Tamil Nadu started the HPV vaccination initiative on **27 January 2026**
- Main objective is to protect **14-year-old girls from cervical cancer, a major cause of cancer deaths among women**

Objective

- Emphasis on early vaccination to lower future disease burden
- Supports broader efforts to strengthen preventive healthcare

Initial Implementation

- First introduced in four districts: **Ariyalur, Tiruvannamalai, Perambalur, Dharmapuri**
- These areas were chosen based on population characteristics and healthcare access

Expansion Phase

- After a successful pilot, the programme is being extended across the State
- Backed by the Government of India under the national HPV vaccination drive

Future Goal

- Target is universal coverage among eligible adolescent girls
- Expected to significantly reduce cervical cancer cases over time

E-PRAAPTI Portal (EPFO)

- **Context:** The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is set to launch **E-PRAAPTI**, a dedicated digital platform to facilitate identification, tracking, unique account number (UAN) linking, and activation of old EPF accounts.
- **E-PRAAPTI: EPF Aadhaar-Based Access Portal for Tracking Inoperative Accounts**

Key Features

- Aadhaar-based authentication for secure access
- Enables retrieval of old EPF accounts without UAN
- Facilitates profile updation, UAN linking, and activation
- Reduces manual processes and paperwork

Benefits

- Minimises documentation and manual intervention
- Enhances transparency, efficiency, and accessibility

- Simplifies EPF account management for members

Ganga Expressway

- **Context:** Prime Minister inaugurated the newly built (greenfield) **Ganga Expressway in Hardoi**

- It is the **longest expressway in Uttar Pradesh**, stretching about 594 km with 6 lanes, expandable to 8 lanes

- The route passes through 12 districts, **linking Meerut (west) to Prayagraj (east)**

- Travel time between the two cities is expected to reduce by nearly 6 hours

- Features a 3.5 km emergency airstrip at Shahjahanpur for use by the Indian Air Force

- **To boost economic activity**, the state plans to develop 12 industrial clusters and logistics hubs along the corridor, supporting manufacturing and e-commerce growth

Sikkim & Organic Farming

- **Context:** During the celebration of **50 years of statehood of Sikkim**, Prime Minister highlighted that the State is setting an example for India's organic food mission.

About Organic Farming

- A sustainable farming approach that avoids synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and GMOs
- Depends on natural practices like crop rotation, use of crop residues, animal manure, and organic waste

Benefits

- Reduces input costs for farmers
- Enhances soil fertility and biodiversity
- **Produces safe, chemical-free food**
- **Minimises water and environmental pollution**

Sikkim's Organic Farming Model

- Launched the **Sikkim Organic Mission in 2010**
- Became the **world's first fully organic state in 2016**
- Received the **Future Policy Gold Award (2018) from the Food and Agriculture Organization for leadership in organic agriculture**

- Promotes transparent and investor-friendly auction system
- Encourages adoption of advanced technologies like UCG

Significance

- Marks a transformational shift in coal utilisation
- Strengthens energy security, industrial growth, and import substitution
- Positions India as a leader in innovative energy solutions

Coal Sector Reform & UCG Integration

- **Context:** The Ministry of Coal executed **Coal Mine/Block Production and Development Agreements (CMDPAs)** with successful bidders for four coal mines marking the **first-ever tranche of commercial coal mines in India to carry embedded provisions for Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)**

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- **Context:** NITI Aayog launched **DPI@2047 for Viksit Bharat on 27th April 2026**, a strategic roadmap that charts the next phase of **India's Digital Public Infrastructure journey as a driver of inclusive, non-linear, and productivity-led growth.**

About UCG

- **Underground Coal Gasification converts coal into synthetic gas (syngas) within the seam**
- Eliminates need for conventional mining
- Enables use of deep, thin, and unmineable coal reserves

About Digital Public Infrastructure

- According to the United Nations, Digital Public Infrastructure refers to the core digital systems that support the functioning of modern societies.
- These systems enable smooth and secure interactions among individuals, businesses, and governments.
- They make it possible to verify identities, open bank accounts, carry out instant digital payments, and exchange data safely.

Strategic Significance

- Expands India's usable coal resource base
- Supports cleaner and more efficient energy production
- Aligns with energy transition and self-reliance goals

UCG-produced syngas can be used for

- Fertiliser production (urea, ammonia) → reduces imports
- Chemicals & petrochemicals (methanol, DME, synthetic fuels)
- Substitutes imported natural gas and naphtha

Significance of Digital Public Infrastructure

- It helps people to:
 - Easily establish their identity from anywhere
 - Use banking, insurance, and other financial services

Policy Direction

- Focus on increasing domestic coal production

- Receive government benefits directly into their accounts
- Access opportunities in education, healthcare, and markets

India's digital ecosystem is built on the JAM trinity, which includes

- Aadhaar
 - A biometric ID system that provides every resident with a unique identity.
 - It enables secure authentication for government schemes and financial services.
 - With over 144 crore IDs issued, it ensures portability and reliability.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
 - **Launched in 2014**, this major financial inclusion initiative brought millions into the formal banking system.
 - It offers access to **credit, insurance, pensions, and RuPay cards**.
 - Bank accounts increased from 14.7 crore in 2015 to 57.7 crore by 2026.

▪ **Mobile Connectivity**

- Widespread smartphone **usage and expanding 5G networks have improved digital access across both rural and urban areas.**
- With over 85% of households owning smartphones, people can now access banking, education, healthcare, and welfare services anytime and anywhere.

DPI 2.0 Roadmap

Sectoral Focus

- Targets 8 key sectoral transformations
- Covers **MSMEs, agriculture, education, and health**
- Strengthens enablers like credit, decentralised energy, and welfare delivery

Core Approach

- Expands digital infrastructure beyond identity, payments, and welfare.
- Focus on livelihoods, productivity, and market access
- Builds connective digital infrastructure for faster innovation diffusion

Role of Technology

- Promotes AI adoption at scale
- Encourages open digital ecosystems and trusted data flows
- Supports innovation across citizens and small enterprises

Strategic Shift

- Moves from digital inclusion to productivity and capability-led growth
- Focus on scalable and inclusive economic transformation

Implementation Focus

- Emphasis on district-level execution and local needs
- Anchored in trust, interoperability, and safeguards.

NATIONAL SCHEMES

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

- **Context:** Government Approves 29 Investment Proposals Worth Rs.7,104 Crore under ECMS

About ECMS

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** started the **Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)** in 2025, with a total budget of Rs.40,000 crore over six years (FY26–FY32).
- To build a strong domestic electronics component manufacturing ecosystem by attracting both global and local investments, and linking India's electronic industry with Global Value Chains (GVCs).
- **Incentive Structure:** Offers turnover-based, capital expenditure-based, and hybrid incentives for manufacturing sub-assemblies, bare components, and developing the supply chain ecosystem.
- Focused on high-value electronic components such as PCBs, camera/display modules, and Li-ion cells.

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin

- **Context:** Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) completed 10 years.
- **Launched in 2016**, PMAY-G is a revamped version of the earlier Indira Awas Yojana, which began in 1996.

Key Features of PMAY-G

- The scheme aims to achieve "Housing for All" in rural regions by providing financial support to eligible households.
- This includes families without homes and those living in kutcha houses with zero, one, or two rooms, enabling them to build durable houses with essential amenities.

- Initially, the government planned to construct 2.95 crore houses between 2016–17 and 2023–24.
- The scheme has been extended for another five years (2024–25 to 2028–29) with an added goal of building 2 crore more houses.
- Beneficiaries receive assistance for constructing houses of at least 25 square meters. The support provided is Rs.1.20 lakh in plain areas and Rs.1.30 lakh in hilly regions.
- The cost is shared between the Centre and States in a 60:40 ratio for plain areas, while for Northeastern and Himalayan states, the ratio is 90:10.
- Beneficiaries are selected based on housing deprivation data from the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011, with final verification carried out by Gram Sabhas.
- The scheme is implemented and tracked through an end-to-end e-governance system using platforms like AwaasSoft and Awaas App.

Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) Scheme

- **Context:** The **Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL)** scheme, implemented by the **Ministry of Textiles**, has been extended until **September 30, 2026**.

About the RoSCTL Scheme

- This scheme was launched on **March 7, 2019**. Its objective is to rebate State and Central taxes and levies that are not reimbursed through any other mechanism.
- It operates on the principle of '**Zero-rating**' of exports; that is, it ensures the reimbursement of unrebat-ed taxes embedded in exported goods.
- It primarily benefits MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) exporters.

Ammonium Nitrate Project

- **Context:** A lease agreement was signed between Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Ltd. (BCGCL) and Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) for a project to produce ammonium nitrate from coal, to be established in Lakhanpur, Odisha.

About Ammonium Nitrate

- It is a white, crystalline, water-soluble solid substance. It is produced on a large scale in the industrial sector.
- It is a synthetic salt of ammonia and nitric acid; it does not occur naturally.

Properties

- Its melting point is approximately 170°C.
- It possesses the property of absorbing moisture from the air.
- When dissolved in water and heated, it produces nitrous oxide (laughing gas); furthermore, at higher temperatures, it explodes and releases nitrogen dioxide.

Applications

- In agriculture, it is used as a fertilizer rich in nitrogen content.
- In explosives, it acts as an oxidizer.

Trade Capability and Marketing Initiative (TMI)

- **Context:** The Minister of State for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) provided information in the Lok Sabha regarding trade promotion and marketing initiatives.

About the Trade Capability and Marketing Initiative

- This is a Central Sector Scheme falling under the "Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance" (RAMP) program.
- It is designed to provide the necessary digital tools and support to enable Micro, Small, and

Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to participate effectively on e-commerce platforms.

- The scheme will be implemented for a period of three years, from 2024 to 2027.
- Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) registered under the 'Udyam' portal, operating in both the manufacturing and service sectors, are eligible to avail the benefits of this scheme.
- The initiative aims to cover 500,000 Micro and Small Enterprises, with 50% of the beneficiaries being women-led enterprises.
- The scheme is being implemented by the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).
- It has been launched by the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.
- Its primary objective is to enhance market access for MSMEs through e-commerce platforms and to strengthen their digital presence.

Coal Gasification

- **Context:** The Union Minister has introduced India's plan to reduce dependence on imports by using domestic coal more effectively, with the Coal Gasification Incentive Scheme playing a key role.

About Coal Gasification

- Coal gasification is a method where coal is converted into a useful gas called syngas (synthesis gas).
- This happens when coal reacts with steam and oxygen at very high temperatures.
- Syngas mainly contains: Hydrogen (H₂), Carbon monoxide (CO)

Uses of Syngas

- This gas can be further used to produce important products such as
 - Ammonia mainly used to make fertilizers
 - Methanol used as a fuel and in chemical industries

- **Hydrogen** a cleaner source of energy
- **Synthetic Natural Gas (SNG)** can replace imported LNG

Small Savings Schemes (SSS)

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Finance** has announced that interest rates on all **Small Savings Schemes (SSS)** will stay the same for the first quarter of FY27.

About Small Savings Schemes

- SSS are government-supported savings options designed to **promote secure and consistent saving habits, especially among middle- and lower-income groups.**
- These schemes are mainly available through post offices and authorised banks (both public and private).

Types of Schemes

They can be broadly divided into

- Postal Deposit- savings accounts, recurring deposits, and fixed (time) deposits
- Savings Certificates - like **Kisan Vikas Patra**
- Social Security Schemes - such as **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana**

NSSF Mechanism

- The money collected under these schemes goes into the **National Small Savings Fund (NSSF).**
- This fund is part of the **Public Account of India.**

Interest Rates

- Interest rates are reviewed every quarter.
- They are linked to government bond (security) yields and are generally higher than bank fixed deposit rates.

Tax Benefits

- Some schemes offer **EEE (Exempt-Exempt-Exempt) status, meaning no tax on investment, interest, or maturity.**
- Others provide tax deductions under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act.

Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme

- **Context:** India's strong performance in the smartphone PLI scheme has shown how export-focused manufacturing can drive growth, leading to suggestions that this model be extended to other sectors.

About the PLI Scheme

- The Production-Linked Incentive Scheme is a **performance-based program designed to encourage companies to manufacture goods within India.**
- **Launch:** Introduced in 2020 under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.**
- **Goal:** To boost exports, attract investments, reduce dependence on imports, and create jobs.
- Companies receive financial incentives based on the increase in production or sales compared to a fixed base year.
- This rewards firms that expand their manufacturing output.

Coverage

- The scheme applies to 14 sectors, including: Electronics, Pharmaceuticals, Automobiles, Telecom, Textiles, Solar equipment.

Key Concern

- Even though about ₹1.97 lakh crore has been allocated, only around 10% has been distributed so far.
- This indicates that many sectors have not fully benefited or achieved expected results.

Namo Drone Didi Scheme

- **Context:** Under the **Namo Drone Didi Yojana,** Karnataka has secured the **top position** in terms of the number of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) trained as drone pilots.

About the Nammo Drone Didi Scheme

- This is a **Central Government scheme implemented under the Deendayal**

Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission, aimed at empowering women Self-Help Groups by providing drone technology for agricultural services.

- The scheme facilitates SHGs in renting out drones to farmers for tasks such as **spraying fertilizers and pesticides**.
- Financial assistance covering **80% of the drone's cost (up to ₹8 lakhs) is provided as a subsidy**. The remaining amount is provided as a loan with interest subvention under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.
- Selected members of the Self-Help Groups receive **15 days of training** on drone operation and agricultural applications.
- The scheme is implemented through the coordination of the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the Department of Rural Development, the Department of Fertilizers, and fertilizer companies**.

Key Details

- Type: Central Sector Scheme
- Budget: ₹1,261 crore
- Duration: 2023–24 to 2025–26

Objective

- The scheme aims **to support women in building a stable source of income by training them to use drones**.
- It helps them **earn over ₹1 lakh annually** through drone-based services.
- At the same time, it promotes the use of modern drone technology in agriculture, improving farming practices.

Three-Language Formula: CBSE Scheme

- **Context:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) plans to introduce a **three-language curriculum in schools, starting from Class 6, beginning with the 2026–27 academic year**.

- Based on the recommendations of the **New National Education Policy (NEP)** and the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)**, and as CBSE continues to implement a multilingual education system in a phased manner, the study of a third language is being made mandatory starting from Class 6.

- Under this three-language framework, students are required to learn **three languages, two of which must mandatorily be Indian languages**.

- In cases where students returning from schools abroad have studied a third language in Class 8 or 9 that is not taught in Indian schools, they will be granted an exemption in accordance with the regulations.

- Starting from the 2026–27 academic year, **Mathematics and Science subjects will be introduced at two distinct levels in Class 9**.

- All students are required to compulsorily study and pass the Basic level Mathematics and Science subjects; the examination for this will be conducted for 80 marks over a duration of 3 hours.

- A separate examination, carrying 25 marks, will be conducted for the Advanced level subjects.

- The marks obtained in these Advanced level subjects will not be included in the overall aggregate score; however, for students who secure more than 50 percent marks in these subjects, a separate grade indicator will be specified on their certificate.

- **This two-level curriculum for Mathematics and Science will also be introduced in Class 10, starting from the 2027–28 academic year.**

Evolution of the Three-Language Formula Policy

Constitution of India, Article 351:

- The Constitution of India emphasizes that it is the duty of the Central Government to

promote the growth of the Hindi language and to facilitate its propagation.

Kothari Commission (1964–66):

- This Commission was the **first to recommend the implementation of the Three-Language Formula.**
- This was subsequently incorporated into the National Policy on Education of 1968.

National Policy on Education 1968:

- This policy accorded importance to the use of regional languages at the school level.
- Furthermore, it encouraged the adoption of regional languages at the university level as well.

Right to Education Act 2009:

- This Act stipulates that, as far as practicable, a child's mother tongue should serve as the medium of instruction for that child.

National Policy on Education 2020:

- This policy advocates for the use of home language, mother tongue, local language, or regional language as the medium of instruction, at least until Grade 5 and preferably up to Grade 8 or beyond.

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)

- **Context:** India marks 11 years of the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana was launched on 8 April 2015.
- It is a flagship scheme aimed at supporting **unfunded micro and small enterprises.**

Objective of the Scheme

- To provide collateral-free loans to small businesses.
- To promote financial inclusion and grassroots entrepreneurship.
- To simplify access to credit for small and informal sector enterprises.

Significance

- Reduced dependency on traditional banking barriers.
- Created opportunities for self-employment, especially among youth.
- Encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship at the grassroots level.
- Offered a more inclusive alternative to earlier credit systems.

Achievements

- Around 58 crore loans sanctioned.
- Total loan amount exceeds ₹40 lakh crore.
- Two-thirds of loans given to women entrepreneurs.
- About 20% loans provided to first-time entrepreneurs.

Loan Features

- Provides collateral-free loans up to ₹20 lakh.
- Easy and streamlined loan process for small businesses.

Categories of MUDRA Loans

- **Shishu:** covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/-
- **Kishore:** covering loans above Rs. 50,000/- and up to Rs. 5 lakhs
- **Tarun:** covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh and up to Rs. 10 lakhs
- **Tarun Plus:** Rs. 10 lakh and up to Rs. 20 lakhs

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- **Context:** Special measures have been initiated to automate the processes for receiving insurance claim amounts under the **Prime Minister's Ayushman Bharat Health Insurance Scheme.**
- Accordingly, facilities are being introduced to automatically scrutinize insurance claims submitted by hospitals and to release the funds immediately.

- This initiative will prevent situations where patients are compelled to wait for several hours to receive their insurance claim settlements.

About Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- This scheme was launched on **September 23, 2018, in Ranchi, Jharkhand.**
- The “Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana” is implemented by the **National Health Authority (NHA), which operates under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.**
- This scheme **aims to provide cashless hospital treatment coverage of up to ₹5,00,000 per family per annum for secondary and tertiary medical care to over 12 crore poor and vulnerable families.**

National Quantum Mission

- **Context:** Under the National Quantum Mission, **India has successfully demonstrated a 1,000 km-long quantum communication network in less than two years.**
- This constitutes **one of the longest networks in the world.** Furthermore, it signifies rapid progress toward achieving **the Mission’s eight-year target of establishing a 2,000 km-long network.**
- This milestone achievement was realized using indigenous technology developed by **QNu Labs, an Indian quantum cybersecurity startup.**
- This network not only strengthens secure communication across the defense sector, financial systems, and critical infrastructure but also operates effectively in challenging terrains, including underwater and underground environments.

About the National Quantum Mission

- It is a flagship program of the **Department of Science and Technology.** A financial outlay of

₹6,003 crore has been allocated for this Mission for the period spanning 2023–24 to 2030–31.

- **It aims to position India as a global leader in quantum technology** by fostering scientific and industrial research and development.

- The Mission focuses on enhancing indigenous capabilities and accelerating technology-led economic growth.

It encompasses four key verticals

Quantum Computing

- Aims to develop medium-scale quantum computers with **50 to 1,000 ‘qubit’ capacity within eight years.**

Quantum Communication

- Targets satellite-based secure communication and **long-distance Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology over a range of 2,000 km.**

Quantum Sensing

- Focuses on the development of highly precise magnetometers and atomic clocks.

Quantum Materials

- Aims to **strengthen manufacturing capabilities** for the production of indigenous hardware.

Thematic Hubs

- The National Quantum Mission is implemented through **thematic hubs established across India.**
- Four T-Hub centers have been established at the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), IIT Madras (in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Telematics), IIT Bombay, and IIT Delhi.**
- Each hub focuses on a specific domain: **Quantum Computing, Communication, Sensing and Metrology, and Materials and Devices.**

Hub-Spoke-Spike Model

- The Mission adopts a Hub-Spoke-Spike model, wherein the hubs serve to coordinate research networks.
- “Spokes” represent collaborative research projects, while “Spikes” denote individual research groups.
- This model facilitates resource sharing among institutions and fosters greater coordination and research collaboration.

Nobel Prize – Quantum

- In 2023, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to Mounqi G. Bawendi, Louis E. Brus, and Alexei I. Ekimov for the discovery and synthesis of Quantum Dots.
- The 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to John Clarke, Michael H. Devoret, and John M. Martinis for their discovery of macroscopic quantum mechanical tunneling and the quantization of energy in electrical circuits.

Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI)

- **Context:** The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) has shown encouraging results, with cumulative investment exceeding nine thousand crore rupees against a committed investment of around seven thousand crore rupees.

About PLISFPI (Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry)

- Scheme Type: **Central Sector Scheme**
- Implementing Ministry: **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)**
- Duration: **6 years** (2021–22 to 2026–27)
- It is a significant program focused on boosting India’s food processing industry, enhancing the international presence of Indian food brands, and developing world-class leaders in food manufacturing.

Key Objectives

- Develop global leaders in food manufacturing
- Promote Indian food brands in international markets
- Create off-farm employment opportunities
- Ensure better prices for farmers and enhance their income levels

Poshan Pakhwada 2026

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** will celebrate the 8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada from April 9–23, 2026.
- It aims to improve nutritional outcomes and strengthen **India’s fight against malnutrition.**
- Theme 2026: **“Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life”**

Highlights

- First 1,000 days are critical
- 85% of brain development occurs before age 6
- Focus on nutrition, caregiving, and early learning

The key focus areas under this year’s theme include

- **Maternal and Child Nutrition** – Promoting optimal nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and age-appropriate complementary feeding.
- **Early Stimulation for Brain Development (0–3 years)** – Encouraging responsive caregiving and early learning interactions.
- **Play-Based Education in Early Years (3–6 years)** – Supporting holistic development and school readiness.
- **Role of Parents and Community in Minimising Screen Time** – Promoting healthy habits and active engagement.
- **Strengthening Anganwadi Centres through Community Participation** – Enhancing infrastructure and service delivery through Jan Bhagidari and CSR.

- **Implementation & Activities:** Activities conducted nationwide through Anganwadi Centres.
- Through Poshan Pakhwada 2026, the Ministry aims **to further strengthen the Jan Andolan** by reinforcing that nutrition, care, early learning, and community participation together

Types of Activities

- Poshan Panchayats to promote community dialogue on nutrition
- Awareness sessions on health and nutrition
- Early stimulation activities for child development
- Play-based learning initiatives for young children
- Campaigns encouraging: Healthy lifestyles, Reduced screen time among children

POSHAN Abhiyaan (Prime Minister's

Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition)

- POSHAN Abhiyaan is a flagship initiative designed to **enhance nutritional status among women, children, and adolescent girls.**
- Launch: Introduced in 2018
- Implemented by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**
- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, executed by States and Union Territories.
- Mission POSHAN 2.0: **Initiated in 2021** as a comprehensive and integrated nutrition programme.
- Brings together multiple initiatives, **including the Supplementary Nutrition Programme and POSHAN Abhiyaan, under a single unified framework to improve efficiency and impact.**

NHAI Arogya Van

- **Context:** NHAI has taken the initiative to develop 'Arogya Van', the thematic medicinal tree plantations on **vacant land parcels along the National Highways.**

- The initiative aims **to enrich biodiversity along the National Highways by introducing medicinal tree species that support pollinators, birds and microfauna**, thereby strengthening ecosystem resilience.

Objectives

- Enhance soil and ecosystem health
- Support pollinators, birds, and microfauna
- Promote awareness of medicinal plants
- Strengthen climate resilience

Tree Species

- Around 36 medicinal plants selected
- Examples: **Neem, Amla, Jamun, Imli, Lemon, Gular, Maulsari**
- Chosen based on local climate suitability

Significance

- Promotes traditional medicine like Ayurveda
- Conserves indigenous medicinal flora
- Creates green corridors along highways

Soil Sakhis Initiative

- **Context:** The "Soil Sakhis" programme in the drought-affected regions of western Maharashtra is uplifting women from marginalised communities while also enhancing soil quality and boosting farm productivity.

- Launched (2023): By **Mann Deshi Foundation under Agriculture & Climate Action Programme**

- Coverage Area: Drought-prone districts of Maharashtra (Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Kolhapur, Pune)

- Concept: Train rural women as Soil Sakhis to test soil and guide farmers

Role of Soil Sakhis

- Collect soil samples
- Get lab testing done
- Provide scientific soil health insights to farmers

Income

- ₹8,000–₹10,000/month + petrol allowance
- Soil test cost: ₹400–₹900

Objectives

- Improve soil health & crop yield
- Promote climate-resilient farming
- Provide scientific knowledge access to farmers

Significance

- Empowers women economically
- Supports sustainable agriculture
- Reduces impact of drought on farming

Womaniya

- **Context:** The 'Womaniya' initiative facilitates women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to sell their products directly to government buyers through the e-marketplace platform ('GeM').
- It covers the procurement of specific product categories such as handicrafts, handlooms, jute, coir products, home décor items, and office furniture.

About the Womaniya Initiative

- It was launched in 2019 on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) platform under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It aims to encourage the participation of women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in public procurement.
- It enables direct sales to government buyers without the involvement of intermediaries, thereby improving market access and transparency.
- In addition to covering handlooms, handicrafts, jute, coir products, textiles, and lifestyle-related goods, it also provides support to rural women producers.
- It is integrated with the 'SWAYATT' initiative, which further strengthens the contribution of women, youth, and startups.

In the Financial Year 2025–26 (FY 2025–26)

- More than 2.1 lakh women-led MSMEs have registered on GeM; 13.7 lakh orders have been placed.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- GeM is an online portal designed to facilitate the consolidated procurement of goods and services by Central and State government departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Panchayats, and Cooperatives.
- It was launched in 2016 with the objective of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance."

Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0

- **Context:** The government has notified the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 with a corpus of ten thousand crore rupees to boost capital flow into the country's startup ecosystem.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that investments under the scheme will focus on Alternative Investment Funds supporting priority segments, including deep tech startups and early growth stage.

Focus Areas

- Investments will be routed through Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).
- **Priority sectors include:** Deep tech startups, Early growth-stage startups

Implementation Structure

- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Implementation agency:** Small Industries Development Bank of India.
- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade will: Issue operational guidelines and Define Venture Capital Investment Committee structure

Key Features of the Scheme

- Adopts a structured and sector-specific funding approach rather than a broad-based one.

- Encourages funding in cutting-edge technologies requiring sustained and patient capital.
- Provides financial backing to emerging entrepreneurs, helping reduce risks in initial phases.
- Promotes startup growth beyond metropolitan hubs, ensuring wider regional participation.
- Targets sectors where private investment is limited due to higher risks, especially strategic industries.
- Boosts local venture capital funds, with special emphasis on smaller and emerging funds.

e-SafeHER

- **Context:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has introduced e-SafeHER, a large-scale cybersecurity training initiative aimed at empowering women in rural India.

About the e-SafeHER Programme

- e-SafeHER is a focused cybersecurity awareness programme designed specifically for rural women.
- It functions under MeitY's broader Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) framework and follows a community-driven, peer-learning approach to address the gap between digital usage and online safety.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

Aim

- To equip one million rural women with the skills to safely use digital platforms within the next three years (by 2029).
- To enhance cybersecurity awareness at the grassroots level, especially for women involved in digital payments and online livelihoods.
- To build a sustainable and gender-sensitive model for secure digital inclusion.

Key Features

▪ **Cyber Sakhi Model**

- Women are trained as Cyber Sakhis (peer educators).
- They spread awareness within their local communities, ensuring grassroots impact.

▪ **Delivery Mechanism**

- Uses Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for outreach in rural areas.
- Follows a peer-led, community-based model.
- Integrates with existing women's empowerment programmes (no new infrastructure needed).

▪ **Content and Training Approach**

- Multilingual, localized content developed by C-DAC.
- Use of audio-visual modules for better engagement.
- Blended learning: combines structured training with community interaction.

▪ **Phased Implementation**

- Initial rollout in: Madhya Pradesh, Odisha
- Will expand nationwide through partnerships.

▪ **Expected Outcomes**

- Improved cyber risk awareness
- Increased confidence in digital transactions
- Adoption of safe online practices
- Strengthened digital inclusion and security

▪ **Long-Term Vision**

- Build a scalable and sustainable model for cybersecurity awareness.
- Enable policy integration and replication across India.
- Contribute to the vision of a "Cyber Secure Bharat."

Model Solar Villages

- **Context:** The Green Energy Corporation has intensified its efforts to prepare a project report for establishing 37 model solar villages across Tamil Nadu.
- To encourage the use of solar power in households, the **Central Government** launched the 'PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' scheme in 2024.
- Under this scheme, a **subsidy of ₹30,000 per kilowatt** is provided for setting up rooftop solar power systems in households.
- As part of this initiative, a project to establish **model solar villages in every district is also currently being implemented.**
- Accordingly, a decision has been made to set up a solar power plant within each village and to distribute the electricity generated from it to local households and public utility buildings including Panchayat offices.
- The **Central Government provides financial assistance of ₹1 crore for the establishment of a single solar village.**
- In Tamil Nadu, the Green Energy Corporation a subsidiary of the Electricity Board is undertaking the work of creating solar villages across 37 districts, excluding Chennai.
- For this purpose, villages with a population exceeding 5,000 have been selected to be developed as model solar villages.

Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- The Government of India launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' in February 2024.
- The objective of this scheme is to **install Rooftop Solar (RTS) systems in one crore households within the residential sector by the financial year 2026-27.**

- This scheme operates under **the aegis of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).**
- The scheme also envisions the creation of one '**Model Solar Village**' in every district across the country.
- This scheme is implemented at the national level through the '**National Project Implementation Agency**' (NPIA) and at the state level through '**State Implementing Agencies**' (SIAs).

India's First State-of-the-Art 3D Glass Chip Packaging Plant

- **Context:** The foundation stone for India's first state-of-the-art 3D (three-dimensional) glass chip packaging plant was laid in Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha.
- The Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology and the Chief Minister of Odisha jointly inaugurated this project.
- The Central Government has approved the development of this project with an investment of approximately Rs.1,943 crore.
- Chip packaging is the final and crucial stage of semiconductor manufacturing, through which finished chips are made ready for use.
- The chips manufactured at this facility will be utilized in key sectors such as aerospace, defense, Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5G, and data centers.

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI Pool)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the **establishment of the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool** with a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore.
- It is a **government-backed domestic insurance mechanism to ensure uninterrupted coverage for shipping vessels.**
- Covers Indian-flagged ships, Indian-controlled vessels, and ships bound for Indian ports.

- Acts as a financial safeguard to maintain trade continuity even if global insurers withdraw due to sanctions or geopolitical conflicts.

Governance and Structure

- A newly constituted governing body will manage implementation and operations.
- **Domestic insurance companies** will function as pool members.
- Combined underwriting capacity of around ₹950 crore will support policy issuance.

Objectives

- Reduce dependence on the **international Protection and Indemnity (IGP&I) Club system**.
- Provide affordable insurance for vessels in high-risk or sensitive maritime routes.
- Prevent sudden increases in freight and trade costs.
- Strengthen India's control over maritime risk management.

Coverage Scope

- Hull and Machinery (ship structure and equipment damage).
- Cargo insurance for transported goods.
- Protection and Indemnity (third-party liabilities such as pollution, crew injury, wreck removal).
- War risk coverage for conflict-affected maritime zones.

Key Features

- Backed by a ₹12,980 crore sovereign guarantee ensuring financial stability and claim settlement capacity.
- Applicable to Indian vessels, India-bound foreign ships, and vessels operating from Indian ports.
- Insurance policies will be issued domestically for India-specific requirements.
- Expected to develop national expertise in marine insurance, claims management, and maritime law.

RELIEF

- **Context:** Rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia and its continuing impact on maritime logistics across the Gulf and adjoining regions, the Government has expanded the list of eligible destinations under RELIEF - Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation, a time-bound intervention under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).

About RELIEF

- **RELIEF (Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation)** was launched on **19 March 2026** under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).
- The scheme addresses challenges such as **high freight costs, increased insurance premiums, and war-related export risks**.
- It provides support across the export cycle, including both past shipments during disruption and upcoming exports.
- **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India is the nodal agency responsible for implementing the scheme.**
- Assistance includes insurance support for exporters, facilitation of coverage for new shipments, and reimbursement aid for eligible MSMEs facing extra costs.
- **Egypt and Jordan** have been newly added to the list of eligible destinations under the scheme.

River Basin Management (RBM) Scheme

- **Context:** The RBM Scheme is proposed to be continued during the 16th Finance Commission period from 2026-27 to 2030-31 with a fully funded estimated financial outlay of ₹2183 crore.
- In the previous phase, covering 2021-22 to 2025-26, the total budget allocation for the scheme was ₹1276 crore.

About River Basin Management (RBM)

Scheme

- RBM is a **Central Sector Scheme under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
- It focuses on integrated planning and development of water resources at the river basin level.
- The scheme covers both **surface water and groundwater systems.**
- It aims to promote comprehensive and sustainable management of water resources.
- Implementing agencies include the **Brahmaputra Board, Central Water Commission, and National Water Development Agency.**
- Supports preparation of river basin master plans for long-term water resource management.
- Facilitates survey and investigation of water resource projects.
- Promotes planning and development of multipurpose projects such as irrigation, hydropower, and flood control.

Objectives of the Scheme

- The River Basin Management Scheme is designed to **address the diverse challenges associated with water resource planning and development at the basin level.**
- The objective of the scheme is to **focus on promoting sustainable use of water while supporting irrigation, hydropower, and flood management.**
- These objectives guide the overall planning and implementation of the scheme.
- Geographical Scope and Priority Areas
- The RBM Scheme primarily focuses on strategically important and water-rich but underdeveloped regions, particularly:

- North Eastern Region river basins.
- Indus Basin in Jammu & Kashmir / Ladakh.
- Key basins such as Brahmaputra, Barak, Teesta, and Indus.

These basins are prioritised due to their importance in

- National water security.
- Cross-border water management.
- Flood control and erosion management.
- Ecological stability.
- The scheme also addresses capacity gaps in **states such as Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim, Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland,** which require central support for project planning and development.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval for the continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) beyond March 2025 upto March 2028.**

About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched on **25 December 2000** as a **flagship rural development programme.**
- Objective: **To provide all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations through a single reliable road.**

Eligibility Criteria

- Based on population size and connectivity status of habitations.
- In plain areas: **Habitations with a population of 500 or more are eligible.**
- In North-Eastern, Himalayan states and Union Territories: **Threshold reduced to 250 or more (as per 2001 Census).**

Implementation Mechanism

- Implemented by **State Governments and Union Territory Administrations** through designated Executing Agencies.
- At the district level, Programme Implementation Units (PIUs) handle planning, coordination, and execution.
- PIUs are staffed with qualified technical personnel.
- Coordination with District Rural Development Agencies ensures smooth implementation and fund flow.

Administration

- Funds are released through DRDAs.
- Nodal Ministry: **Ministry of Rural Development oversees the scheme**

Benefits

- Extension of PMGSY-III timeline **will ensure completion of targeted rural road upgradation.**
- Enhances socio-economic benefits by improving connectivity in rural areas.
- Boosts rural economy and trade by improving market access for agricultural and non-farm products.
- Reduces transportation time and costs, leading to higher rural incomes.
- Improves access to education and healthcare, especially in remote and underserved regions.
- Ensures timely delivery of essential services.
- Generates employment opportunities through construction and related activities.
- Promotes growth of rural enterprises and services.
- Helps bridge the rural-urban divide.
- Contributes to inclusive and sustainable development.
- **Supports the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.**

Pipeline Gas Project

- **Context:** The Central Government in New Delhi has formulated a pipeline gas project worth ₹12,500 crore, with the objective of reducing the road-based transportation of gas and enhancing energy security.
- Currently, there is a heavy reliance on road transport, as gas imported from abroad is transported to refineries via tanker trucks.
- To address this situation, **the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has planned the establishment of a pipeline network.**
- Under this project, direct pipeline linkages will be established connecting gas import terminals, refineries, and cylinder filling centers.
- Consequently, **the use of tanker trucks will decrease, making gas distribution safer and more efficient.**
- As the first phase of this project, nine locations across the country have been identified; specifically, plans are in place to lay pipelines spanning approximately 2,500 kilometers across four key regions.
- It is anticipated that once implemented, **this project will enable a significant reduction in road-based gas transportation by the year 2030.**
- Overall, this project marks a pivotal step toward modernizing India's energy distribution infrastructure while simultaneously enhancing its safety and efficiency.

Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana

- **Context:** The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has provided training to over 2,500 beneficiaries under the 'Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana' scheme on the usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

About Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana

- The 'Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana' was launched in 2023 as a fully funded Central Sector Scheme by the Government of India to support traditional artisans and craftspeople.
- This scheme is implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of MSME, in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance.
- The scheme will remain operational for a period of five years, spanning from the financial year 2023-24 to 2027-28, thereby ensuring long-term support for artisans across India.
- Its objective is to empower traditional workers engaged in family-based trades such as blacksmithing, goldsmithing, pottery, carpentry, and sculpting by integrating them into the modern economy.
- The scheme places special emphasis on inclusive growth by extending support to women, marginalized sections (SCs, STs, and OBCs), persons with disabilities, transgender individuals, and residents of the North-Eastern, island, and hilly regions.
- Only artisans aged 18 years and above who are working in the unorganized sector are eligible for this scheme. Only one beneficiary per family is permitted.
- Beneficiaries of schemes such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme and PM SVANidhi over the past five years, as well as government employees and their families, have been excluded from this scheme.
- Collateral-free business development loans of up to ₹3 lakh are provided at a concessional

interest rate of 5%. The Government of India provides an interest subvention of 8% for this purpose.

- This scheme covers 18 traditional trades across both rural and urban areas, thereby ensuring wide-ranging reach and impact.

Launch of 'Vishwa Sutra' Initiative

- **Context:** The Ministry of Textiles launched Vishwa Sutra - Weaves of India for the World.
- A designer collection under this initiative was showcased at the 61st Femina Miss India held in Bhubaneswar.

Implementing Agencies

- Developed by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms).
- In collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).

Objective of the Initiative

- To present Indian handlooms in a modern, global design context.
- Aims to blend traditional weaving with contemporary fashion trends.

Unique Concept

- Features 30 distinct handloom weaves from different Indian states.
- Each weave is reimagined using design inspirations from 30 different countries.
- Reflects a fusion of Indian tradition and global aesthetics.

Policy Vision

- Aligns with the government's "Vocal for Local to Global" approach.
- Promotes the 5F Framework.

Importance of Handloom Sector

- Helps preserve India's cultural heritage.
- Generates sustainable livelihoods for artisans.

- Strengthens India's global presence in textiles and fashion.
- The scheme is demand-driven; employment must be provided whenever it is requested.

Significance

- Positions Indian handlooms as globally competitive and fashion-forward.
- Encourages innovation while retaining traditional craftsmanship.
- **If employment is not provided within 15 days of the request being made, beneficiaries are entitled to receive an unemployment allowance.**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

- **Context:** To mitigate the impact of geopolitical tensions in West Asia on supply chains and the prices of essential commodities, the Central Government has allocated ₹17,744 crore to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (the '100-day work scheme').
- The 100-day work scheme will remain operational until the **Viksit Bharat–G RAM G Scheme, 2025' comes into effect.** Wages will be disbursed in a timely manner.
- The unemployment allowance is disbursed at a rate equal to one-fourth of the **minimum wage for the first 30 days**, and at half the minimum wage thereafter.
- The scheme is implemented across all parts of the country specifically in rural areas with the exception of districts that are entirely urbanized.

About the Viksit Bharat – G RAM G Scheme

- This scheme guarantees 125 days of wage employment to rural households within a financial year.
- The scheme introduces a funding-sharing mechanism between the Central and State governments, set at a ratio of 60:40 for most states and 90:10 for special category regions.

About the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was launched in 2005 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- This scheme guarantees wage employment for a **minimum of 100 days** in a financial year to those willing to work within rural households. Thereby, it ensures livelihood security.
- **Adults aged 18 years and above**, belonging to registered rural households and willing to undertake unskilled manual labour, are eligible to benefit under this scheme.
- In areas affected by drought or natural disasters, **an additional 50 days of employment is provided with the aim of strengthening rural resilience.**
- State governments are permitted to declare up to a maximum of 60 days within a financial year as "non-work days."
- In addition to upholding the employment guarantee, the scheme ensures budgetary predictability through planned financial allocations.
- The scheme promotes institutionalized convergence and integrated infrastructure planning to foster enhanced rural development.

Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS)

- **Context:** The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has expanded eligibility under the Prime Minister Internship Scheme.

New Eligibility Criteria

- Final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students can now apply
- Age limit: 18–25 years
- Must meet existing eligibility conditions

Objective of Expansion

- Provide early industry exposure before graduation
- Enhance employability and job readiness
- Bridge the gap between academics and industry needs

Alignment with Policy

- Supports goals of National Education Policy
- Promotes experiential learning, internships, and skill development

Scheme Features

- Provides structured, paid internships across sectors
- Minimum ₹9,000 monthly stipend
- Opportunities available in top companies

Revised TDIP Scheme (2026–31)

- **Context:** The Ministry of Communications has overhauled the **Technology Development and Investment Promotion (TDIP) Scheme** to enhance India's presence and influence in the global telecommunications sector.
- Time period: 2026–2031

Core Objectives

- Strengthen India's global telecom footprint
- Boost participation in global standard-setting bodies
- Promote indigenous telecom innovation
- Accelerate 5G Advanced and 6G ecosystem development

Global Standardization Focus:

- Enhance India's role in: **International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 3GPP, oneM2M**

Support for

- Participation in global meetings
- Technical contributions
- Leadership roles
- Hosting international events in India

Expanded Scope

- Inclusion of: Startups, MSMEs, Academia & research institutions, Telecom service providers & industry players and Encourages collaborative innovation across the ecosystem

Implementation Agencies

- Telecommunications Standards Development Society India
- Telecom Centres of Excellence India
- Telecommunications Consultants India Limited

Complementary Initiatives

- Works alongside: Telecom Technology Development Fund, Bharat 6G Mission

Expected Outcomes

- Position India as a global standard-setter in telecom
- Boost intellectual property creation & exports
- Strengthen competitiveness of domestic telecom technologies
- Advance India's leadership in 6G and future communication systems

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- **Context:** Atal Pension Yojana has **crossed 9 crore total enrolments as of April 21, 2026.**

Achieved highest-ever annual addition

- Over 1.35 crore new subscribers in FY 2025–26

Launch & Administration

- Launched in **May 2015**
- Administered by **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**

Objective

- Provide universal social security
- Focus on low-income groups and unorganised sector workers

Growth Drivers

- Support from banks, regional rural banks, cooperative banks, and Department of Posts
- Government-led awareness campaigns & outreach programs

Key Benefits

- Guaranteed **monthly pension of ₹1,000 to ₹5,000** after age 60
- Spouse continues pension after subscriber's death
- Nominee receives accumulated **corpus after both subscriber and spouse pass away**

Eligibility

- Open to Indian citizens aged **18–40 years**
- Not eligible for those who are or have been income tax payers

Project DANTAK

- **Context:** 'Project DANTAK', operating under the **Border Roads Organization (BRO)**, was established in **April 1961**. It celebrated its **66th Raising Day** on April 24, 2026, marking over six decades of service in Bhutan.

About the Project DANTAK

- It plays a **pivotal role in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Bhutan** by developing strategic infrastructure and enhancing transport connectivity.

- The project has constructed over **1,500 km of roads, including the strategically significant East-West Highway** connecting Trashigang to Thimphu.

- It has developed the **Phuentsholing–Thimphu Highway, Paro International Airport, and Yonphula Airport**, along with various bridges, hospitals, schools, and telecommunication networks.

- It has significantly contributed to **Bhutan's socio-economic development**, particularly in the areas of hydropower and connectivity.

- Recently, the project has continued to grow through modernization, road widening, disaster management capabilities, and new road-bridge initiatives.

Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) App 2.0

- **Context :** The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is set to launch the upgraded 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) App 2.0 to strengthen monitoring under the 'National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction' (NAPDDR).

About Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)

- The 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan' (Drug-Free India Campaign) was launched on **August 15, 2020**, by the **Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** in 272 districts identified as being highly vulnerable to drug abuse.

- It was **expanded to cover all districts** across the country effective from **August 15, 2023**.

- The core objective of the campaign is to reduce the demand for drugs and to create awareness among youth, women, and the general public about the harmful consequences of drug abuse.

Significance of the NMBA App 2.0

- This app has been developed as a centralized digital platform under the ‘**National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction.**’ It will ensure real-time monitoring, reporting, and coordination among stakeholders at all levels.
- The app aims to increase transparency and accountability. It features dashboards that provide necessary data and awareness materials to states, districts, organizations, and volunteers.
- This initiative strengthens institutional coordination and digital governance for drug demand reduction. It also facilitates easier public access to rehabilitation and mental health support services.
- **Target Landscapes:** The project includes key landscapes such as the Sathyamangalam-Mudumalai region in Tamil Nadu and the Garo Hills region in Meghalaya. This also covers protected areas like the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve and the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve.
- **Community-Based Conservation:** It promotes community-based conservation through multi-stakeholder platforms involving the Forest Department, local bodies, and civil society.
- **Financial Innovation:** It encourages innovative financing methods through Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), CSR funding, and green micro-enterprises for sustainable livelihoods.
- **Inclusivity:** It prioritizes the participation of women, Scheduled Castes (SC), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in governance and economic activities.

Biodiversity Conservation Project

- **Context :** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the National Biodiversity Authority have launched a five-year project (2025–2030) titled “Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Safeguarding Biodiversity Commitments.”
- **Funding:** This project is being implemented with a financial outlay of 4.88 million USD, supported jointly by the Government of India, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- **Focus:** It focuses on integrating biodiversity into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) and strengthening local governance institutions such as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs).
- **Alignment:** The project functions in alignment with national and global frameworks, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2024–2030), the 30x30 global biodiversity target, and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Programme

- **Context :** The Union Cabinet has recently approved the **Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Programme.**

About Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

- Approved by the Union Cabinet of India
- Focus on Small Hydro Projects (1–25 MW capacity)

- Implementation period: FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31
- Total outlay: ₹2,584.60 crore
- Target: Add ~1,500 MW capacity

Focus Areas

- Priority to hilly and North Eastern States
- Aims to improve energy access in remote regions
- Promotes decentralised and local power generation

Financial Assistance

- For NE & border districts: ₹3.6 crore/MW or 30% of project cost (max ₹30 crore/project)
- For other regions: ₹2.4 crore/MW or 20% of project cost (max ₹20 crore/project)

Investment & Economic Impact

- Expected to attract ₹15,000 crore investment
- Encourages indigenous machinery manufacturing
- Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative

Project Pipeline Development

- Support for Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)
- At least 200 projects planned
- ₹30 crore allocated for DPR preparation

Employment Generation

- Around 51 lakh person-days during construction
- Long-term jobs in operation & maintenance
- Benefits rural and remote populations

Advantages of SHP

- Decentralised power reduces transmission losses
- Clean energy with no fuel use or emissions
- Supports rural development and infrastructure
- Generates local employment and livelihoods
- Low ecological impact with minimal land use

Significance

- Enhances energy security and grid reliability
- Promotes sustainable and inclusive growth
- Key contributor to India's clean energy future

Role of Hydro Power

- Hydropower is a reliable and mature renewable energy source
- Provides round-the-clock (RTC) power, unlike solar and wind
- Ensures grid stability, energy security, and system resilience
- Crucial for India's clean energy transition

IMPORTANT DAYS

Utkal Divas 2026

- Utkal Divas is observed on **1st April 2026**, commemorating the creation of Odisha as a separate province in 1936.

RBI foundation day

- On **1st April**, India commemorated the foundation day of the Reserve Bank of India, which was set up in 1935.
- The RBI serves as the country's central bank and has a vital role in framing monetary policy, controlling inflation, managing currency fluctuations, and regulating the banking system.
- It was established under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, based on the recommendations of the Hilton Young Commission.
- Initially, the **RBI's headquarters was located in Kolkata**, but it was later shifted to Mumbai in 1937, where it continues to function today.
- The bank was nationalised in 1949, after which it came under the full ownership of the Government of India.
- First Governor:** Sir Osborne Smith
- First Indian Governor:** Sir C. D. Deshmukh
- The RBI was created to oversee and regulate India's currency and credit system.

The RBI performs several important functions that have a direct impact on the country's economy

- Formulating and implementing monetary policy to control inflation
- Issuing and managing the nation's currency
- Regulating and supervising banks and financial institutions
- Managing foreign exchange and maintaining stability in the external sector

World Autism Awareness Day

- World Autism Awareness Day is marked every year on **2nd April**.
- In addition, the whole month of April is recognised as Autism Awareness Month.
- This observance was first established by the **United Nations in 2007**.

Rajya Sabha Day

- Rajya Sabha Day is observed annually on **April 3rd**.
- This day marks the first constitution of the '**Council of States**' on **April 3, 1952**.
- It was subsequently renamed the 'Rajya Sabha'.
- Its first session was held on **May 13, 1952**.

About the Rajya Sabha

- The Rajya Sabha is also known as the '**Council of States**'. It is the Upper House of Parliament. It represents the interests of the States and Union Territories.
- Its maximum strength is **250 members**. This comprises 238 members elected from the States and Union Territories, and 12 members nominated by the President. Currently, its strength stands at 245 (233 + 12).
- Members are elected indirectly by the elected members of the State Legislative Assemblies, based on the principle of proportional representation through the single transferable vote system.
- It is a permanent House; it is not subject to dissolution. One-third of its members retire every two years. The tenure of a member is six years.**

Qualifications and Disqualifications

- The minimum age to become a member is **30 years**.
- A person may be disqualified on grounds such as holding an office of profit, being of unsound mind, being an undischarged insolvent, acquiring foreign citizenship, or engaging

in anti-defection activities under the **Tenth Schedule**.

International Day for Mine Awareness

- **The International Day for Mine Awareness 2026, observed on April 4**, emphasizes the worldwide effort to eliminate landmines, raise awareness about their dangers, support victims, and foster peace and safer, mine-free communities across the globe.

International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

- The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 2026, observed on April 6, recognizes the role of sports in fostering unity and inclusion.
- This year's theme, "**Sport: Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers**," highlights how sports can bring communities together and encourage the involvement of youth and marginalized groups.

National Maritime Day

- National Maritime Day is observed annually on **April 5th** to commemorate the historic voyage of the **S.S. Loyalty—the first Indian merchant vessel—which traveled from Mumbai to London in 1919**.
- The theme for India's 63rd National Maritime Day (April 5, 2026) is "**Maritime India Empowering Progress**."

World Health Day

- World Health Day 2026, celebrated on **April 7**, highlights the theme "**Together for Health: Stand with Science**," focusing on the importance of global collaboration and scientific research in safeguarding the health of humans, animals, and the environment.

Shaurya Diwas

- Shaurya Diwas is observed every year on **April 9** to commemorate the exceptional courage and bravery displayed by security forces during the 1965 India-Pakistan conflict.

World Homeopathy Day

- Observed annually on **April 10th**, World Homeopathy Day commemorates the birth anniversary of the founder of homeopathy, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann.
- The theme for World Homeopathy Day in 2026 is "**Homeopathy for Sustainable Health**."
- Samuel Hahnemann's most significant work is the '**Organon of Medicine**.'

Siachen Day

- Siachen Day was observed on **April 13**, the Indian Air Force and Indian Army today paid tribute to **bravehearts who have sacrificed their lives in defending the world's highest battlefield, Siachen in Ladakh**.
- The **operation Meghdoot was launched on this day in 1984**, when the Indian Army and Indian Air Force advanced to the Siachen glacier to secure the heights dominating the Northern Ladakh region.

Equality Day

- In India, Equality Day is celebrated every year on **April 14**.
- This day marks the **birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (April 14, 1891), the principal architect of the Indian Constitution**.
- A prominent politician, legal scholar, and social reformer, he dedicated his entire life to fighting against social discrimination and oppression.
- Furthermore, by continuously striving for the rights of women, labourers, and oppressed communities, he laid a strong foundation for

building a society based on inclusive equality and justice.

Himachal Pradesh Day

- On April 15, 2026, Himachal Pradesh celebrates its 79th Foundation Day.
- Himachal Pradesh Day is celebrated annually on April 15th to commemorate the formation of the state of Himachal Pradesh.
- On April 15, 1948, Himachal Pradesh was constituted as a 'Chief Commissioner's Province.'
- Following the enactment of the Constitution of India, it became a 'Part C' state on January 26, 1950.
- Subsequently, on November 1, 1956, it was converted into a Union Territory. In 1966, it was expanded through the merger of the hilly areas of the state of Punjab.
- Finally, under the Himachal Pradesh Statehood Act of 1970, it attained full statehood status as the 18th state of India on January 25, 1971.

World Hemophilia Day 2026

- World Hemophilia Day 2026 is observed on **April 17**.
- The theme for 2026 is: **“Diagnosis: First Step to Care”**.

World Heritage Day

- **Every year on April 18**, the world observes World Heritage Day, also called the International Day for Monuments and Sites.
- The theme for World Heritage Day 2026 is **“Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters.”**

National Civil Services Day

- National Civil Services Day is observed on **April 21st** to commemorate the address delivered by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to civil service officers in 1947.

- It marks the foundation of the administrative structure—often referred to as the **“Steel Frame”**—which is citizen-centric in independent India.

- This day fosters introspection among civil service officers, reinforces their dedication to public service, and promotes national unity.

- The theme for 2026 centers on **“Viksit Bharat” (Developed India) through digital governance and the development of Aspirational Blocks.**

- **Lord Cornwallis is regarded as the “Father of Civil Services”** in the pre-independence era, whereas Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is hailed as the architect of the modern civil services.

- The framework for civil services within the Indian Constitution is based on **Article 312 and the All India Services Act of 1951.**

Adi Shankara Jayanti (2026)

- Adi Shankara Jayanti, marking the **birth anniversary of Adi Shankara**, is celebrated on **April 21, 2026.**

- Adi Shankara was the **foremost philosopher of Advaita Vedanta**, emphasizing the oneness of the individual soul (Atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman).

- He was born in **Kalady, Kerala**, to parents Aryamba and Shivaguru.

- He revived and consolidated Sanatana Dharma through his teachings based on the Vedas and Upanishads.

- He preached concepts such as the Atman, Paramatman, Vairagya (renunciation), and Moksha (liberation).

- He established **four major Mathas (monasteries) across India**

- Sringeri (Sharada Peetham)
- Puri (Govardhana Matha)
- Dwarka (Kalika Matha)
- Jyotirmath (Badrinath region)

World Earth Day

- World Earth Day is observed annually on **April 22 to promote environmental protection and sustainability**.
- It was first observed in the **United States in 1970** as a response to the increasing environmental degradation.
- In **2009, the United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution officially designating **April 22 as 'International Mother Earth Day'**.
- The theme for 2026 is: **"Our Power, Our Planet"**.
- **Rajasthan became the first state to implement this system in 1959.**
- The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act** later provided constitutional status to PRIs and added **Part IX to the Constitution**.
- It established a **three-tier structure: Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti (or Block Panchayat) at the intermediate level, and Zilla Parishad at the district level.**
- The **first National Panchayati Raj Day** was celebrated in **2010, under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.**

World Book and Copyright Day

- World Book and Copyright Day 2026 is **observed globally on 23 April** each year.
- The day highlights and honours the importance of books, writers, and the culture of reading.

English Language Day

- English Language Day 2026 is **observed worldwide on 23 April** each year.
- The day recognises the significance of the English language in facilitating global communication and connection.
- **eGramSwaraj:** Used for planning, budgeting, accounting, and integration with the **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)**. More than 2.55 lakh Panchayats are connected to this portal, with transactions exceeding ₹53,000 crore.
- **SabhaSaar:** An **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** powered tool that automatically records the proceedings of Gram Sabha meetings. It supports 23 Indian languages and is currently used in over one lakh Panchayats.

National Panchayati Raj Day

- **Context:** National Panchayati Raj Day is observed annually on **April 24th**.
- This day commemorates the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992)**, which came into effect in 1993.
- The amendment granted **constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**, marking a significant milestone toward decentralization and participatory democracy in India.
- The Panchayati Raj system is based on traditional Indian village self-governance structures **like Sabhas and Samitis**.
- In modern India, it was **first recommended by the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957.**
- **Meri Panchayat App:** Enhances citizen participation and transparency in local governance.
- **Gram Urja Swaraj:** Helps track renewable energy assets at the Panchayat level and aids in data-driven rural energy planning.
- **SVAMITVA Scheme**
 - **Launched in 2021 to provide legal ownership of rural properties by mapping inhabited areas using drone and GIS technology.**
 - It aims to reduce land disputes and enable rural citizens to use their property as a financial asset.

- Over 3.10 crore property cards have been issued under this scheme, strengthening rural planning, improving land records, and increasing financial inclusion in villages.

Financial Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions

- **15th Finance Commission:** Approximately ₹2.36 lakh crore was allocated to rural local bodies from 2021 to 2026.
- **16th Finance Commission:** For the period 2026 to 2031, this allocation has been increased to approximately ₹4.35 lakh crore.
- These funds are **utilized for drinking water, sanitation, and rural infrastructure** development, ensuring greater financial autonomy and flexibility at the local level.

World Malaria Day 2026

- World Malaria Day is observed **every year on April 25**.
- The day aims to raise awareness about malaria and encourage coordinated global efforts to eliminate the disease.
- The theme for 2026 is: **“Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must.”**.

World Intellectual Property Day

- **World Intellectual Property Day** is observed every year on **April 26** to raise awareness about the importance of intellectual property rights in promoting creativity, innovation, and economic growth.
- It is spearheaded by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to protecting intellectual property rights globally.
- The theme for World Intellectual Property Day 2026 is: **"IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate."**
- The 2026 theme focuses on the **role of intellectual property in driving innovation,**

technology, and creativity in the sports industry.

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2026

- World Day for Safety and Health at Work is marked on **April 28** to encourage safe and healthy working environments worldwide.
- Initiated by the International Labour Organization.

Ayushman Bharat Diwas

- Ayushman Bharat Diwas is marked on April 30 to highlight the achievements of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, the country's flagship health insurance programme.
- It offers cashless treatment coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family and has benefited more than 10.74 crore families across India.

Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is the world's largest public healthcare scheme that aims at providing health insurance of up to Rs. 5 lakhs to each eligible household annually.
- AB-PMJAY was launched seven years ago on Sept. 23, 2018 to achieve universal health care. It is the world's largest public healthcare scheme with crores of vulnerable Indian families enrolled in it.
- AB-PMJAY makes quality healthcare more affordable for over 12 crore vulnerable families.
- More than 86 lakh senior citizens have been enrolled in the scheme.
- It is a part of the Ayushman Bharat scheme with multiple components; together they deliver affordable and quality healthcare to achieve universal health.

REPORTS & INDICES

FAO Food Price Index

- **Context:** The FAO Food Price Index **increased to 128.5 points** in March 2026, mainly due to rising energy prices linked to tensions in the Middle East.

About the FAO Food Price Index

- It is an index released by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.
- It tracks **monthly changes** in global food prices.
- The index is based on a basket of **widely traded food commodities**.

Key Features

- **Base Period:** 2014–2016
- **Covers Five Commodity Groups:** Cereals, Vegetable oils, Dairy products, Meat, Sugar

South Asia Economic Update April 2026

- **Context:** The **South Asia Economic Development Report**, published by the **World Bank**, indicates that India's economy remains in a strong position.
- Previously, in its South Asia Economic Development Report, the World Bank noted that India's economic growth stood at 7.1 percent in 2025, driven by robust domestic demand and the resilience of the export sector.
- India's growth is projected to rise to **7.6 percent in 2026, reaching a peak level**.
- The growth rate is forecast to moderate slightly to 6.6 percent in 2027.
- The current estimate represents an upward revision compared to the 6.5 percent projection made last January.

- Indian exports continue to demonstrate strong performance, despite facing heightened global tariff pressures.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Report

- **Context:** Conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is a key source of data regarding employment, unemployment, and labour force participation in India.

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR - March 2026):** The overall LFPR for individuals aged 15 years and above stands at 55.4%. Within this, the rural LFPR is 58.0%, while the urban LFPR remains unchanged at 50.3%.

- **Women's Participation:** The LFPR for women, which stood at 35.3% in February 2026, witnessed a slight decline to 34.4% in March 2026. Specifically, the rural female LFPR is 38.9%, and the urban female LFPR is 25.2%.

- **Worker-Population Ratio (WPR):** This remains stable at an overall level of 52.6%. It stands at 55.5% in rural areas and 46.8% in urban areas.

- **Unemployment Rate (UR):** In March 2026, the unemployment rate rose to 5.1% (up from 4.9% in February). This increase is primarily attributed to a rise in urban unemployment, which reached 6.8%.

- **Rural Scenario:** In rural areas, the unemployment rate for women remained stable, whereas the unemployment rate for men witnessed a slight increase.

About the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- Launched in 2017 by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, the Periodic Labour Force

Survey (PLFS) serves as **India's primary source for providing data on employment, unemployment, and wages.**

- It was introduced as a replacement for the previous 'National Sample Survey' (NSS) method, with the aim of providing data on the labour market more frequently and reliably.

Two Approaches to Measuring Employment

- **Usual Status (US):** Based on activities over the past one-year period (reflecting long-term trends).
- **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** Based on activities over the past 7 days (reflecting short-term changes). This dual approach accurately captures the dynamic and informal nature of India's labor market.
- **Effective from 2025,** the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) adopts the calendar year cycle (January–December), replacing the previously followed agricultural year cycle (July–June).

India's Position in Global Economy Rankings

- **Context:** In the ranking of major economies released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), **India has slipped from the 5th position to the 6th position.**
- It is reported that India has dropped **one spot due to the depreciation of the Indian Rupee against the US Dollar and the revision of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) base year from 2011-12 to 2022-23.**
- According to IMF data, **India's GDP stood at US\$ 3.76 trillion in 2024.**
- While India's GDP was valued at US\$ 3.92 trillion last year, the United Kingdom's GDP rose to US\$ 4 trillion.
- The value of the **Indian Rupee against the US Dollar depreciated from 84.57 in 2024 to 88.48 in 2025.**

▪ It is expected to depreciate further this year, reaching 92.59. Conversely, the value of the British Pound is strengthening against the US Dollar.

▪ Based on IMF data, it is indicated that India will retain the 6th position among major economies this year, based on current exchange rates.

▪ However, in the coming year, India is expected to advance to the 4th position, surpassing not only the United Kingdom but also Japan. If this trend continues, India is projected to overtake Germany by 2031, rising to the 3rd position.

▪ **Top 5 Countries:** United States, China, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom.

Global Military Spending (SIPRI Report 2025)

▪ **Context:** **India ranks fifth** on the list of countries with the highest military spending.

▪ According to a report released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a Sweden-based organization:

▪ **In 2025, India spent 92.1 billion US dollars on its military requirements. This represents an increase of 8.9% compared to the previous year.**

▪ India has significantly increased its defense expenditure to ensure military readiness, driven by factors such as 'Operation Sindoor' and prevailing tensions in border regions.

▪ India's share of **global military spending stands at 3.2 percent.**

▪ By spending 92.1 billion US dollars in 2025, India has secured the fifth position on this list.

▪ In this ranking, the **United States holds the first place, followed by China in second, Russia in third, and Germany in fourth.**

- The United States spent 1,480 billion US dollars, while China spent 336 billion US dollars on their respective militaries.
- Pakistan currently ranks 31st on the list of countries with the highest military spending.

National Statistical Office Health Survey

- **Context:** The National Statistical Office (NSO) recently released the results of its 80th round survey on 'Household Social Consumption: Health (2025).'
- According to the NSO survey, health-seeking behaviour in India has improved. The Proportion of People Reporting Ailments (PPRA) has nearly doubled between the periods of 2017-18 and 2025.
- **This figure rose from 6.8 percent to 12.2 percent in rural areas, and from 9.1 percent to 14.9 percent in urban areas.**
- Government health insurance coverage has expanded significantly, driven by schemes such as the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY)**.
- This coverage increased from 12.9 percent to 45.5 percent in rural areas, and from 8.9 percent to 31.8 percent in urban areas.
- **Hospital-based deliveries have reached record highs of 95.6 percent in rural areas and 97.8 percent in urban areas, indicating improved healthcare access for mothers.**
- There has been a shift in the disease profile, characterized by a **decline in the prevalence of infectious diseases and a concurrent rise in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes and cardiovascular ailments.**
- The utilization of government health facilities has increased, particularly in rural areas. Outpatient service utilization has risen from 28 percent in 2014 to 35 percent in 2025.

- This improvement in the utilization of government healthcare services is bolstered by the expansion of primary healthcare services which prioritize prevention, health promotion, and early diagnosis and treatment along with the provision of free medicines and diagnostic tests.

About the National Statistical Office (NSO)

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) is the principal statistical agency of the Government of India.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
- It was established in 2019 through the merger of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) to enhance coordination, data quality, and efficiency.

Authority and Role

- It is responsible for the **collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of official statistics at the national level.**
- It acts as the central authority for statistical standards, methodologies, and classifications utilized by Central Ministries and State governments.

- It supports evidence-based policy formulation, planning, and the monitoring of development programs.

Key Functions

- It conducts large-scale sample surveys on socio-economic indicators such as employment, consumption, health, education, and housing.
- It compiles National Accounts Statistics, including Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross Value Added (GVA), savings, investment, and capital formation.

- It releases key macro-economic indicators such as the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Operates through specialized divisions handling Surveys, National Accounts, Prices, Industrial Statistics, and Data Dissemination.

Key Data Products

- National Accounts Statistics (GDP and related aggregates).
- Works in coordination with the Directorates of Economics and Statistics of the States for field-level data collection.

- Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).

- Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES).

- Annual Survey of Industries (ASI).

- Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

- Consumer Price Index (CPI - Rural, Urban, and Combined).

Organizational Structure

- Headed by the **Chief Statistician of India (CSI)**.

Significance

- Provides reliable and comparable statistics for economic planning, fiscal policy, targeting welfare schemes, and monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Enhances the transparency and credibility of India's official statistical ecosystem.

- Plays a pivotal role in measuring economic performance and social progress.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- **Vice President released the book Tides of Time: Bharat's History through Murals in Parliament** authored by Sudha Murty.
- The book presents India's long civilizational history through the murals displayed in Parliament, combining elements of art, history, and cultural heritage into a distinctive and engaging narrative.

SPORTS & GAMES

Khelo India Tribal Games

- **Karnataka emerged as the champion of the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026**, securing the highest number of medals. Odisha and Jharkhand came in second and third, while the host state, Chhattisgarh, ranked ninth in the overall medal standings.

Women's Candidates chess tournament

- R. Vaishali won the Women's Candidates chess tournament in Cyprus and thus qualified for the World championship match to be played later this year.
- The Grandmaster from Chennai scored a crushing victory over Russia's Kateryna Lagno in the final round to emerge as the clear winner.

EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Jyotirao Phule

- Jyotirao Phule was born on **April 11, 1827**. He was a pioneering social reformer **who opposed caste hierarchies and championed the rights of Dalits and women**.
- In collaboration with **Savitribai Phule**, he opened India's first school for girls in 1848.
- Furthermore, in **1855**, he established **night schools in Pune for workers, farmers, and women**.
- In 1873, he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj to combat caste discrimination and promote equality.
- In his **book Gulamgiri**, he drew a parallel between the caste oppression prevalent in India and the institution of slavery in America.
- He advocated for the provision of **compulsory education and economic empowerment for oppressed communities**.
- In 1888, he was honored with the **title "Mahatma"** by Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

- Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (**14 April 1891 - 6 December 1956**) was a brilliant legal scholar, economist, politician, and social reformer.
- He spearheaded the **Mahad Satyagraha in 1927** against social discrimination.
- He participated in **all three Round Table Conferences**.
- In **1932**, he signed the **Poona Pact with Gandhi**, agreeing to drop the demand for separate electorates for the oppressed classes.

- He served as the **Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942)**.
- He was the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution**.
- He described **Article 32 of the Constitution as the "Soul and Heart of the Constitution."**
- In 1947, he became the **first Law Minister of independent India**.
- In 1956, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with his followers. **The day of his passing is observed as Mahaparinirvan Diwas.**

Key Works

- Annihilation of Caste
- Buddha or Karl Marx
- The Untouchables
- Who were Shudras?
- The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution

Journals

- Mooknayak (1920)
- Bahishkrit Bharat (1927)
- Samata (1929)
- Janata (1930)

Organizations

- Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (1923)
- Independent Labour Party (1936)
- Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)

Awards

- He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna in 1991**.

C. Vijayaraghavachariar

Early Life & Education

- Born in **Pon Vilaindha Kalathur near Chengalpattu**.
- Father Sadagopachariar was a Sanskrit scholar, but he chose a different path.

- Mastered the Vedas early, yet developed a **strong passion for English.**

- Left home and stayed with his uncle in Madurantakam to pursue studies.

- **Graduated from Presidency College, Madras.**

Early Career & Turning Point

- Worked as a lecturer in a **government college in Mangaluru.**

- Resigned in **protest against racial discrimination by a European principal.**

- Moved to Salem and qualified for the Bar privately.

Rise to National Prominence

- **Gained fame through success in the Salem riots case.**

- Earned titles like **"Hero of Salem"** and **"Lion of South India."**

- Became a member of the committee drafting the constitution of the Indian National Congress.

Role in Freedom Movement

- Supported **Bal Gangadhar Tilak during the Congress split (moderates vs extremists).**

- Returned to active politics after the 1916 Congress reunification.

- Influenced **Mahatma Gandhi to demand Swaraj (self-rule)** beyond specific issues.

- Presided over the **1920 Nagpur Session of Congress where Non-Cooperation was adopted.**

Contribution to Constitutional Development

- Played a key role in drafting the Swaraj Constitution.

- **Member of the committee led by Motilal Nehru.**

- Responded to the constitutional challenge posed by Lord Birkenhead.

Social Reform Efforts

- Advocated:

- Post-puberty marriage for women
- Property rights for daughters
- Reform in Hindu personal law

- Campaigned against untouchability.

- Promoted upliftment of minorities and encouraged Muslim participation in Congress.

Principles & Values

- Opposed racial discrimination.

- Supported labour rights.

- Rejected titles and positions of power, staying committed to ideals over office.

Andaman Sentence & Legal Victory

- **The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, known as "Kala Paani", served as a dreaded colonial penal settlement.**

- Many freedom fighters like **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Bhai Parmanand were imprisoned there.**

- **Vijayaraghavachariar was sentenced to 10 years of transportation after the 1882 Salem riots case.**

- He appealed to the Madras High Court and got his conviction quashed on January 9, 1883.

- Continued legal efforts helped secure the release of other accused persons as well.

Resistance Against British Authority

- Removed from the Salem Municipal Council for being labeled an **"undesirable person."**

- Challenged the decision legally and won the case, **receiving ₹100 as damages.**

- His actions demonstrated strong resistance to colonial injustice and abuse of power.

Role in Indian National Congress

- **Became the first Tamil President of the AICC at the Nagpur Session of Congress.**

- Played a major leadership role in shaping the Congress during a critical phase of the freedom movement.

Support from Press

- Received strong backing from newspapers like **The Hindu and Amrita Bazar Patrika**.
- Media support amplified his fight against colonial injustice.

Ideals & Influence

- C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) recalled his guiding principle:
 - Lawyers must engage in public life.
 - They should defend people against unjust authority.
- Known for his independence, courage, and commitment to justice.

Memorial Library & Public Hall

- **The C. Vijiaraghavachariar Memorial Library Public Hall was established in Salem.**
- Built on land gifted by the local municipal body.
- Functioning since July 1951.
- **Opened by P. S. Kumaraswami Raja.**
- **Foundation stone laid in August 1950 by T. Prakasam.**

Statues in Salem

- Library statue unveiled in 1982 by former Union Finance Minister R. Venkataraman.
- Second statue unveiled in 1984 by M. G. Ramachandran.

Recognition & Tribute

- R. Venkataraman praised him as a “pioneer of fundamental rights.”
- Widely remembered for his contributions to constitutional development and civil liberties.

Legacy

- Served as a symbol of legal brilliance and fearless nationalism.

- **His 82nd death anniversary is observed on April 19.**

Dheeran Chinnamalai's 271st Birth Anniversary

- Dheeran Chinnamalai was a Palayakkarar (feudal chieftain) of the Kongu region who fought against the British East India Company.
- He was born on April 17, 1756, near Kangayam in the present-day Tiruppur district, under the name Theerthagiri Sarkarai Mandradiar.
- He was one of the Palayakkarars who received training from both the French and Tipu Sultan.
- Inspired by his association with Tipu Sultan, he became highly proficient in guerrilla warfare, archery, horsemanship, and military tactics.
- Initially, he opposed the exploitative taxation policies of Mysore; subsequently, he became a staunch opponent of the British East India Company.
- To establish autonomy in the Kongu region, he defeated the Mysore forces in a battle fought on the banks of the Noyyal River.
- Following the demise of Tipu Sultan in 1799, he constructed the Odanilal Fort to serve as a strategic base for resistance against the British.
- He played a pivotal role as a key resistance leader during the Second Palayakkarar War (1800–1805).
- Employing guerrilla warfare techniques, he defeated British forces in battles fought at Kaveri (1801), Odanilal (1802), and Arachalur (1804).
- His final battle took place in 1805. During this conflict, Chinnamalai was betrayed by his cook and was subsequently hanged at Sankagiri Fort on July 31, 1805.

Bharathidasan

- The 136th birth anniversary of Poet Bharathidasan was celebrated.
- The “Revolutionary Poet” Bharathidasan was born in Puducherry on **April 29, 1891, and passed away on April 21, 1964.**
- His birth name was **Kanagasubburathinam; influenced by Subramania Bharathi, he changed his name to “Bharathidasan.”**
- His prominent titles include **Pavendar, Puratchikavi, and Pagutharivu Kavignar.**
- He was a social reformist poet who championed the **Tamil language, social justice, equality, and rationalism.**
- He was closely associated with the ideologies of the **Dravidian Movement and the Self-Respect Movement.**
- He advocated for progressive concepts such as **women’s education, widow remarriage, the abolition of caste, and communism.**
- His maxim, “Until the subjugation of women ends, the subjugation of the land will not end,” highlights the pivotal role of women in bringing about social change.
- His major literary works include **Kudumba Vilakku, Pandiyan Parisu, Tamizhiyakkam, Kannagi Puratchi Kappiyam, Tamizhachiyin Kathi, and Pisirandhaiyar.**
- His versatility as a writer is demonstrated through works such as the rights-based play **Amaithi** and the satirical play **Irunda Veedu.**
- He translated Shakespeare’s **The Merchant of Venice into Tamil, thereby introducing world literature to the Tamil literary landscape.**
- Through periodicals such as **Kuyil**, he fostered the growth of Tamil literature and disseminated social reformist ideas.
- His verses—such as “**Tamizhukkum Amuthendru Per**” and “**Puthiyathor Ulagu Seivom**” underscore the themes of social change and equality.
- Bharathidasan University, located in **Tiruchirappalli**, was established in his honour.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu honors his literary and social contributions by annually presenting the ‘**Pavendar Award**’.
- Bharathidasan was posthumously awarded **the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1969 for his play, Pisirandhaiyar.**

DEFENCE

INS Malvan

- **Context:** INS Malvan—the **second of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC)** built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL)—has been delivered to the Indian Navy.
- This vessel is capable of detecting **enemy submarines and destroying them using torpedoes and rockets.**
- The ship measures between 30 and 80 meters in length, weighs 1,100 tons, and is powered by waterjet propulsion systems.
- It is equipped with modern systems and sensors, including torpedoes, rockets, radar, and sonar.
- Over 80% of the components used in the ship's construction are indigenously manufactured.
- It is designed to operate in shallow coastal waters and is **integrated with the Indian Navy's modern de-fense systems**

Survey Vessel Sanshodhak

- **Context:** The Indian Navy has formally inducted Sanshodhak (Yard 3028), the fourth and last vessel un-der the Survey Vessel (Large) project.

About Survey Vessel Sanshodhak

- Sanshodhak, meaning “Researcher,” is the final ship in the Survey Vessel (Large) (SVL) series designed by the Indian Navy’s Warship Design Bureau.
- It serves mainly as a platform for hydrographic surveys and data collection.
- With its induction, the series alongside INS Sandhayak, INS Nirdeshak, and INS Ikshak completes the project approved in October 2018.

Development

- The vessel has been designed and constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers.
- It has over 80% indigenous content by cost, reflecting strong participation from domestic industries and MSMEs.

Objective

- The SVL programme aims to **replace the older Sandhayak-class ships with modern, technologically ad-vanced survey platforms.**
- It also contributes to the goal of self-reliance under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** initiative while strengthen-ing India’s maritime capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region.

Key Features

- Around 110 meters in length with a displacement of nearly 3,400 tonnes.
- Equipped with twin diesel engines, enabling speeds above 18 knots.
- Includes a Data Acquisition and Processing System, along with Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs).
- Fitted with DGPS-based long-range positioning systems and Digital Side Scan Sonar for detailed seabed mapping.

INS Aridhaman

- **Context:** INS Aridhaman **India’s new nuclear submarine** is a fully indigenously developed, nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) that has recently been inducted into the Indian Navy.
- India now stands alongside nations such as the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China as a country possessing nuclear-powered submarines.
- Under **India’s Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN)** program, these submarines are being constructed entirely domestically and inducted into the fleet.

- It is noteworthy that these vessels are not only nuclear-powered but also possess the capability to carry long-range missiles, including nuclear ballistic missiles.

About INS Aridhaman

- This is India's third domestically manufactured, nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine.
- It is the second vessel in the Arihant class of submarines.
- It was constructed at the Shipbuilding Centre in Visakhapatnam under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project.

India's Nuclear Submarines

- INS Arihant:** India's first indigenous nuclear submarine was commissioned into service in 2016.
- INS Arighat:** The second nuclear submarine was commissioned in 2024.

INS Trikand Visits Tanzania

- Context:** The Indian Navy's frontline warship, **INS Trikand**, arrived at Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania as part of its deployment in the South West Indian Ocean Region.
- The visit is aimed at **strengthening cooperation and friendly relations between India and Tanzania**.
- The training will enhance interoperability and maritime cooperation.
- In addition, a range of social and community engagements are planned, including friendly sports fixtures and yoga.
- During the visit, critical stores ferried from India will be handed over to the other side.
- The port call by INS Trikand is aligned with **India's vision of MAHASAGAR - Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions**.

MAHASAGAR Vision

- MAHASAGAR focuses on deepening partnerships with smaller maritime nations, improving maritime domain awareness, and tackling illegal activities at sea.
- Many medium and smaller countries are looking for trustworthy strategic partners, influenced by their interactions with China and the US.
- India is viewed as a friendly and reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific region, providing long-term opportunities for cooperation in maritime security and development.

Indian Army Releases Roadmap for Unmanned Aerial Systems and Loitering Munitions

- Context:** The Indian Army has introduced a technology roadmap in New Delhi for **Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and loitering munitions to guide future capability development**.

Strategic Initiative

- The roadmap provides long-term clarity on the Indian Army's requirements in the field of drones and loitering munitions.

Guidance for Stakeholders

- It offers clear and actionable direction to industry, academia, and R&D organisations to align investments and innovation with priority areas.

Bridging Gap

- The document acts as a link between operational needs and technological advancement, **ensuring a structured and demand-driven growth of India's drone ecosystem**.

Modern Warfare Focus

- Lieutenant General Rahul R. Singh highlighted the growing importance of drone technology in warfare, noting the need to balance large-scale deployment with precision strikes.

Collaborative Approach

- The event saw participation from the armed forces, defence industry, startups, and academic institutions.

National Objective

- Reinforces a “whole-of-nation” approach to build a strong, resilient, and self-reliant drone ecosystem in India.

Cyclone-IV

- An Indian Army contingent has departed for Egypt to participate in the fourth edition of the India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise, Cyclone-IV.
- The exercise aims to enhance joint mission planning capabilities and improve interoperability through the exchange of best practices in special operations.

Operation HimSetu

- The **Indian Army has initiated Operation HimSetu** to evacuate and rescue more than 1,400 stranded tourists and local residents in North Sikkim.
- The situation was caused by severe landslides along with the collapse of a newly constructed bridge near Lachen, which severely affected regional connectivity.

INS Sudarshini at Escale à Sète 2026

- **Context:** The Indian Navy’s sail training ship **INS Sudarshini successfully completed its first-ever participation in the Escale à Sète 2026 festival.**
- Escale à Sète is a **maritime heritage festival held every two years in Sète, France.**
- The event is conducted under UNESCO patronage and aims to **promote maritime traditions, raise environmental awareness,** and encourage the sharing of knowledge between generations.

- INS Sudarshini’s presence at the festival was part of the “**Lokayan 26**” initiative, which seeks to enhance global maritime cooperation and strengthen international relations.

DUSTLIK

- **DUSTLIK is a bilateral joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan.**
- Its 7th edition is being held at the Gurumsarai Field Training Area in **Uzbekistan** from April 12 to 25, 2026.
- Its objective is to **enhance joint operational capabilities in semi-mountainous terrain.**
- It focuses on joint planning, tactical drills, and special operations.
- Key activities include terrain **navigation, assault missions, and handling armed groups.**
- It strengthens operational capabilities, coordination, and defense ties between the two nations.

Samudra Sahas Expedition

- **Context:** The Indian Army today flagged off its **first blue-water sailing expedition, Samudra Sahas, from Marve in Mumbai** as part of the bicentenary celebrations of the Regiment of Artillery.
- The 520 nautical mile expedition along the Konkan coast will be conducted in four legs from Mumbai to Vijaydurg, Goa and back, using 21-foot Seabird class sailing boats.
- The team will sail about 7 nautical miles off the coast, navigating varying wind conditions.
- Led by **Captain Kshitij Nair and Subedar Prakash Funde**, with ground support from Major Vardhan Shidhye, the mission aims to promote endurance, teamwork and leadership.
- It is being conducted with support from the **Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.**

INS Dhruv

- **Context:** The Indian Navy deployed its advanced missile-tracking and ocean surveillance ship INS Dhruv in the Arabian Sea just ahead of Pakistan's scheduled live missile testing period.

About INS Dhruv

- It is India's first specialised vessel designed for tracking nuclear missiles and conducting ocean surveillance.
- It was constructed by Hindustan Shipyard Limited with support from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO).

Key Functions of INS Dhruv

- The vessel can map the seabed, which helps in studying and identifying enemy submarines.
- It serves as a highly confidential strategic platform capable of

Monitoring ballistic missile launches

- Collecting electronic intelligence (ELINT) to strengthen India's defence capabilities

It plays a crucial role in

- Providing early alerts of missile threats
- Assisting in improving India's ballistic missile defence systems*by analysing flight paths and impact behaviour

Operational Control

INS Dhruv is jointly operated by

- The Indian Navy
- National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

Mirage 2000–Astra Mk2 Integration: Boosting India's Air Power

- Indian Air Force and Defence Research and Development Organisation are studying integration of **the Astra Mk2 missile on Mirage 2000 jets.**
- The upgrade aims to enhance long-range interception capability and strengthen aerial dominance.
- The Mirage 2000 "Vajra" fleet is already **upgraded with improved avionics and extended service life.**
- Integration would transform it into a **long-range interceptor capable of striking without close combat engagement.**

Astra Mk2 Missile Features

- Astra Mk2 missile is an advanced indigenous **Beyond-Visual-Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM).**
- Range: Approximately 200–240 km (at high altitude).
- Propulsion: **Dual-pulse solid rocket motor for extended engagement capability.**
- Guidance: AESA seeker with ECCM features for resistance to jamming.
- Designed for long-range BVR interception missions.

Strategic Significance

- Offers significantly greater range compared to Astra Mk1 (~110 km).
- Comparable to advanced missiles like China's PL-15.
- **Enhances India's "first-shot" advantage in aerial combat.**
- Boosts indigenous defence capability and reduces reliance on foreign systems.

India–Sri Lanka DIVEX 2026

- **Context:** INS Nireekshak arrived in Colombo to participate in DIVEX 2026.
- The exercise is a bilateral naval drill involving the Indian Navy and the Sri Lanka Navy.
- Participation: **Diving teams from both navies collaborate during the exercise.**

Objectives

- Enhance interoperability between the two navies
- Improve operational cohesion
- Enable exchange of best practices in diving and rescue operations

India Receives Fourth S-400 Air Defence System

- **Context:** In 2018, the Central Government signed a contract with Russia to procure the state-of-the-art S-400 air defense systems. Under this agreement, Russia is obligated to supply five S-400 defense systems.
- Russia has dispatched the **fourth S-400 air defense system to India.**
- Against this backdrop and coinciding with the one-year anniversary of the military operation 'Operation Sindoor' Russia has handed over the fourth S-400 air defense system to India.
- 'Operation Sindoor' was launched against Pakistan following the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. During that operation, the S-400 system performed exceptionally well.
- The missiles integrated into this system are **capable of striking and destroying any aerial target located east of the Indus River in Pakistan, from a distance of 400 kilometers.**
- With the aim of further bolstering missile defense capabilities against Pakistan, this

system is expected to be deployed along the Rajasthan border.

Exercise 'Pragati'

- **Context:** The Indian Army is set to host military delegations from 11 friendly countries for the inaugural edition of the multilateral exercise 'Pragati' at the Foreign Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya.

Pragati stands for 'Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region'

Nature of Exercise

- A multilateral military exercise
- Focus on joint training and cooperation

Objectives

- Strengthen defence cooperation among nations
- Enhance interoperability between armed forces
- Build mutual trust and coordination

Strategic Significance

- Promotes collective security
- Supports regional peace and stability
- Reflects commitment to international military collaboration

India Successfully Conducts First NASM-SR Salvo Launch

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation, in collaboration with the Indian Navy, has successfully conducted the first salvo launch of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile–Short Range (NASM-SR).

The trial took place from a naval helicopter off the coast of Odisha, marking a major advancement in India's indigenous missile technology.

- This test is notable as it represents India's inaugural salvo launch of an air-launched anti-ship missile system.
 - All mission goals were successfully met, with sophisticated tracking tools including radar, telemetry, and electro-optical systems—monitoring the operation at the Integrated Test Range Chandipur.
 - It uses a solid-fuel booster along with a long-duration sustainer, enabling efficient flight and extended range.
- The missile is equipped with several high-end systems, including**
- A fibre-optic gyroscope-based navigation system
 - A highly accurate seeker for target acquisition
 - Advanced control and guidance algorithms
 - A high-bandwidth two-way data link
 - A radio altimeter for precise targeting
- Advanced features of NASM-SR**
- The NASM-SR incorporates advanced indigenous technologies, making it a strong addition to India's naval arsenal.



AWARDS & HONOURS

Yudh Seva Medal

- **Context:** Yudh Seva Medals were awarded to two naval officers for their exceptional service during '**Operation Sindoor,**' an operation conducted by the Indian Navy targeting terrorist camps in Pakistan.
- Yudh Seva Medals were also conferred upon senior officers for their distinguished service in combat situations; among those **honoured was Vice Admiral A.N. Pramod Rahu Gokhale.**

Operation Sindoor

- 'Operation Sindoor' was a precision strike conducted by the Indian Armed Forces on **May 7, 2025, in retaliation for the Pahalgam attack.**
- This operation was undertaken in response to the terrorist attack that took place in Pahalgam the previous year.
- During Operation Sindoor, terrorist camps were destroyed, and several terrorists were killed.

AI Innovation in Botany: Neophyte ID App

- N. Alim Yusuf received the WWF National Award.
- Award presented at the National ECHO Youth Innovation Summit 2026 in Telangana.
- Includes a seed grant of ₹1.5 lakh from World Wide Fund for Nature.

Neophyte ID App

- Developed at Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences, Kozhikode.

- App named **Neophyte ID identifies nearly 100 invasive plant species in Kerala.**
- Launched at the **Kerala Science Congress (February, Kochi).**

Technology Used

- Powered by YOLOv11, an advanced machine learning model.
- Users can identify plants by simply capturing an image.

Key Features

- Available in Malayalam and English.
- Integrates geospatial tracking to map spread of invasive species.
- Provides valuable data for researchers and the Forest Department.

Significance

- Helps in early detection and management of invasive species.
- Supports biodiversity conservation efforts in Kerala.
- Demonstrates the role of AI in environmental protection and research.

Samridh Gram Initiative

- **Context :** The Samridh Gram initiative has been nominated for the **WSIS Prizes 2026 under the "Enabling Environment (AL C6)" category.**
- The award recognizes India's efforts in leveraging digital infrastructure for inclusive rural development.

About the Samridh Gram Initiative

- This initiative is **implemented by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India.**

- It is built on **BharatNet**, the world's largest rural broadband connectivity project.
- It establishes centres that provide integrated "phygital" (physical + digital) services.
- It provides access to key sectors such as **healthcare, education, agriculture, governance, financial inclusion, and e-commerce.**
- It enables services like **telemedicine, smart classrooms, digital governance, and technology-driven agriculture.**
- **High-speed broadband, FTTH connectivity, and public Wi-Fi support the delivery of these services.**
- It improves digital literacy, reduces travel time and costs, and enhances livelihood opportunities in rural areas.
- The model is scalable, sustainable, and based on a community-driven entrepreneurial approach.
- **The first Samridhi Kendra was inaugurated in Umri village, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **WSIS Prizes**
- **Launched in 2012**, these awards recognize **ICT-driven projects that contribute to sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- The prizes act as a global mechanism to identify and promote impactful digital initiatives.
- They honor stakeholders as 'Winners' and 'Champions' for advancing **WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact.**

Guntur Municipal Corporation Wins GEM Award 2026

- Guntur Municipal Corporation received the **GEM Award 2026 in Vienna.**
- The award was given for deploying over **200 women as e-auto drivers for waste collection services.**
- The initiative promotes clean energy use, **improves solid waste management, and supports eco-friendly practices.**
- It also focuses on women empowerment by providing sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- The award was presented by **United Nations Industrial Development Organization.**
- It was conferred during the **International Day of Women in the Industry 2026** celebrations held in Vienna.

About the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

- It is a global multi-stakeholder platform established in **2004** to advance digital development and inclusive information societies.

INTERNATIONAL

United Nations Security Council

- **Context:** India has emphasized that, as part of the reforms to the UN Security Council (UNSC), "**Veto**" power must be granted to any new permanent members.

About the UN Security Council

- The United Nations Security Council was established in 1945. Its headquarters is located in New York.
- It consists of a total of 15 members. Five nations the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China serve as permanent members possessing "Veto" power.
- The remaining 10 non-permanent members are elected by the UN General Assembly for a two-year term, based on geographical representation.
- Countries such as India, Germany, Japan, and Brazil have long been advocating for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.
- It is noteworthy that since 1960, the Security Council has undergone reform only once; during this instance, the number of non-permanent members was increased from 6 to 10.

Powers and Functions

- Determining whether a threat to peace, a breach of peace, or an act of aggression exists.
- Issuing binding resolutions upon UN member states (while recommendations from other UN

bodies are often non-binding, the decisions of the Security Council are legally binding).

- Imposing economic sanctions and arms embargoes on specific nations.
- Authorizing peacekeeping missions and military interventions.
- Recommending the admission of new members to the United Nations.
- Recommending the appointment of the UN Secretary-General.
- Transferring or referring cases involving violations of international law to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

- **Context :** The fourth edition of the India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) is set to be held in India in late May 2026.

About the India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

- The IAFS is the official institutional platform for India-Africa relations. It serves as a high-level consultative mechanism between the Government of India and the member states of the African Union (AU) to promote South-South cooperation.
- It was first held in New Delhi in 2008, followed by summits in Addis Ababa in 2011 and New Delhi in 2015.
- India is set to host the 4th summit in 2026, after a gap of over a decade.
- The summit aims to deepen South-South cooperation and expand engagement beyond trade and Lines of Credit toward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and industrial partnerships.

- It focuses on sectors such as **health, education, human resource development, agriculture, ICT, and infrastructure.**
- It supports initiatives like the **IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar** for capacity building.
- India is strengthening diplomatic ties by expanding its presence to 45 missions across Africa.
- It promotes cooperation in **security, defense, and maritime stability.**
- It helps align the positions of India and African nations on global issues such as trade, governance, and development.
- It plays a key role in ensuring resource security and stable supply chains during global disruptions.
- It reflects a shift from a donor-recipient model to a partnership-based, investment-driven relationship.
- The 2026 summit gains significant importance amid global supply chain uncertainties, highlighting Africa's strategic significance.

About OPEC

- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is a **permanent intergovernmental organization of oil-exporting nations**
- It was established in 1960 by five founding members: **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela**
- The organization currently has around 12 member countries, including Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, UAE, and others
- Angola exited the group on **January 1, 2024**
- Headquarters is located in **Vienna**

UAE Announces Exit from OPEC+

- **Context:** The United Arab Emirates declared that it is exiting both OPEC and the wider OPEC+ grouping.

About OPEC+

- OPEC+ is a coalition of **leading oil-exporting countries.**
- It was created in 2016 as an expanded framework of OPEC.
- The group includes 22 oil-producing nations that meet periodically to determine crude oil output levels for the global market.
- Its membership consists of the **12 OPEC countries** along with Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mexico, Malaysia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Oman.
- These countries coordinate their production policies to regulate supply and maintain stability in global oil prices.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- The UAE announced that it will leave the **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) effective May 1**, stripping the oil cartel of one of its largest producers and further weakening its leverage over global oil supplies and prices.

CURRENT FACTS

- India's current global semiconductor market stands at ₹4.5 lakh crore, with a **target of reaching ₹9 lakh crore by 2030**.
- On **Mahavir Jayanti 2026**, Prime Minister inaugurated the **Samrat Samprati Museum in Gandhinagar**. The museum celebrates Jain heritage, displaying rare artefacts and ancient manuscripts, while promoting the principles of non-violence and preservation of cultural traditions.

Powers of the Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India holds extensive authority to maintain the fairness, neutrality, and transparency of elections across the country.
- **Key Powers**
 - **Administrative Powers:** Manages election schedules, polling arrangements, and the deployment of staff for elections.
 - **Advisory Powers:** Provides guidance to the President and Governors on issues like disqualification of elected members.
 - **Quasi-Judicial Powers:** Resolves disputes related to political party recognition and allocation of symbols under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
 - **Regulatory Powers:** Ensures compliance with the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and supervises election expenditure.
 - **Disciplinary Powers:** Can transfer, suspend, or take action against officials involved in election-related misconduct.
- **Operation Green Hunt (2009–2010):** A major military-style campaign carried out by Indian security forces targeting Maoist insurgents, mainly across the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra.
- **Sloth Bear**- IUCN: Vulnerable, CITES: Appendix I, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1.
- **NASA** has launched the **Artemis II mission**, sending four astronauts on a 10-day voyage around the Moon. This mission represents the first time humans are traveling toward the Moon since 1972.

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- NATO is a military alliance dedicated to ensuring peace and collective security. According to its Article 5, an attack against one member state is considered an attack against all member states.
- It was established on **April 4, 1949, by 12 nations from Europe and North America**.
- Founding Nations: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (USA).
- **Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium**
- It has expanded from its original 12 member nations to its current total of 32 nations.

Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA) Program

- The objective of the 'YUVIKA' program is to **impart basic knowledge regarding space science, space technology, and space applications to young students**.
- This program is conducted by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.

- Students studying in the 9th grade across India are eligible to apply for ISRO's 'Young Scientist Programme - 2024' (YUVIKA).
- Covering **CBSE, ICSE, and State Board curricula**, three students from each state and Union Territory will be selected to participate in this program.
- Special priority has been accorded to students hailing from rural areas within the selection criteria.
- **Part VI, Article 161**- Power of Governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases
- **Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act 1974**

Chola-era copper plate inscriptions found at Anbil in early 1900s

- A set of 16 copper plate inscriptions was found at **Anbil village on the banks of River Kollidam in Tiruchi** district in the early 1900s.
- The inscriptions were issued during the fourth regnal year of **Sundara Chola (835 CE)**.
- They were written in both **Tamil and Sanskrit**.
- This is one of the earliest Chola copper plate inscriptions discovered.

Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1988

The National Security Act, 1980

- The Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders and Slum-Grabbers Act, **1982** (Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982).
- **Part XV, Article 324**- Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission
- The Government of India has designated renowned sand artist **Sudarshan Pattnaik** as the brand ambassador for the Census 2027.

Muppandal boasts one of the largest onshore wind farms

- **Muppandal**, located close to the southernmost tip of India in Kanniyakumari district, is known for **one of the largest onshore wind farms**.
- Situated near the **Aralvaimozhi Pass**, the Muppandal Wind Farm is operated by the Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited.
- It has an installed capacity of **1,500 MW**.
- **Helium**, a colourless, odourless, non-toxic, and inert gas and primarily used to cool superconducting magnets, MRI scanners, spectrometers and semiconductor fabs, has no or a few substitutes.

The Chennai Port

- Tamil Nadu has the highest number of major ports in India.
- Of the total 13 major ports in the country, the State hosts three: **Chennai, Ennore, and Thoothukudi**.
- The Chennai Port started operations as early as the 1880s, making it one of the oldest ports in India.
- It is also the largest container port on the eastern coast.

Pulikulam breed of cattle is native to Madurai, Sivaganga

- The Pulikulam breed of cattle is native to villages **in Madurai and Sivaganga districts**.

- The ferocious bulls of this breed are widely used for testing the skills of **bull-fighters in jallikattu**.
- Earlier, they were commonly used for ploughing.
- Pulikulam is one of the approved **indigenous cattle breeds of Tamil Nadu**.

Kumarikalpalayam Menhir is one of the tallest in India

- Kumarikalpalayam, located in **Uthukuli taluk of Tiruppur district**, is known for one of the tallest menhirs in India.
- The 26-foot-tall menhir is believed to date back to the megalithic period.
- It lies near **Kodumanal in Erode district**, an ancient industrial and trade centre on **the banks of River Noyyal**.

Mission Karmayogi

- Launched by the Union Cabinet on **September 2, 2020**, Mission Karmayogi (**NPCSCB - National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building**) is a national reform program aimed at enhancing the capabilities of civil servants through the iGOT-Karmayogi digital platform, thereby transforming governance from a 'rule-based' system into a 'role-based' system.

Antariksh Venture Capital Fund

- This is a fund established in India **exclusively for the space sector**. Its primary objective is to foster and support space technology startups.
- It is managed by **SIDBI Venture Capital Limited (SVCL)**.
- The process of evaluating startups is currently underway; four projects have advanced to the next stage of assessment. Necessary guidance and support regarding documentation and due diligence are being provided to these projects.
- The first round of investments is expected to be undertaken at the beginning of the Financial Year 2027 (FY2027).
- Its key goals **are to encourage private sector participation, foster innovation, and position India as a global leader in the space sector**.

E20 Fuel

- E20 fuel is a blend consisting of **20 percent ethanol and 80 percent petrol**.
 - It is a biofuel derived from agricultural sources such as sugarcane, maize, and other grains.
 - **Chemical formula for ethanol: C₂H₅OH**.
 - It possesses a high 'octane' rating and offers relatively cleaner combustion efficiency, making it an excellent alternative fuel.
 - In India, the octane rating of regular petrol typically ranges between 91–92 RON, whereas E20 fuel has a minimum rating of 95 RON.
 - This higher octane rating facilitates superior engine performance, allowing the fuel to burn more smoothly and generate greater energy.
 - **India has successfully achieved the target of blending 20% ethanol into petrol by 2025 – five years ahead of its original deadline set for 2030.**
- Women in **Kerala** have attained high levels of educational attainment, and the highest life expectancy in the country.

Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary

- Located in the **Mahasamund district of Chhattisgarh**, the **Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary** spans an area of approximately 245 square kilometers.
- It features tropical dry deciduous forests rich in **Teak and Sal trees**.
- Furthermore, efforts have been undertaken to **reintroduce Blackbucks** to the sanctuary in order to restore and enhance its grassland ecosystem.
- Plastic Waste Management Rules, **first introduced in 2016**.
- India's first nuclear power reactor went operational in **1969 in Tarapur**.

The Juang Tribe

- They are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of Odisha**. They primarily inhabit the districts of **Keonjhar and Dhenkanal**.
- They speak a language belonging to **the Austro-Asiatic (Munda) language family**. Furthermore, they have traditionally engaged in occupations such as **hunting, food gathering, and basket weaving**.

Rongali Bihu

- Also known as **Bohag Bihu**, this festival marks the **Assamese New Year and celebrates the arrival of spring in the month of April**.
- During this festival, people exchange traditional towels known as '**Gamocha**' or '**Bihuwaan**' with one another as a token of respect.
- The Gamocha (or Gamusa) a **handloom-woven textile of Assam** received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Central Government in December 2022**.

About the Indian Census

- Early references to the census can be found in the **Rigveda (800–600 BC)**, the **Arthashastra (300 BC)**, and the **Ain-i-Akbari (16th century)**.
- India's **first non-synchronous census** was conducted in selected regions in **1872**, under the tenure of **Governor-General Lord Mayo**.
- Subsequently, the **first synchronous census covering all of British India** was conducted in **1881** by **W.C. Plowden**, during the era of **Lord Ripon**.
- Until 1951, organizations were established on an ad-hoc basis for each census. However, since then, the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner functioning **under the Ministry of Home Affairs** has assumed responsibility for this task.
- The Census falls under the **Union List** of the Constitution, as stipulated by **Article 246**.
- It is conducted in accordance with the **Census Act of 1948**.
- **Article 142** empowers the Supreme Court to pass any order or decree necessary for complete justice in any pending case before it.
- **Calcium carbide** is a grey-black industrial compound commonly used in welding, but it is often misused as an inexpensive and fast method for artificially ripening fruits.

Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI)

- The Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI) was registered in Delhi on July 29, 1972.
- Although registered in Delhi, the RSSDI Secretariat is currently located in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

NALSA v. Union of India (2014)

- The Supreme Court of India delivered the landmark ruling of the **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India (2014)**, which established transgender people as the **'third gender' while protecting their constitutional rights**.
- Through this judgment, the Supreme Court established legal transgender recognition and created pathways for complete protection of fundamental rights, which placed transgender individuals under equality principles.

Rabies

- This is a viral disease transmissible from **animals to humans**. It is caused by the **Rabies Virus (RABV)**, a member of the Lyssavirus genus within the **Rhabdoviridae family**.
- It primarily attacks the **central nervous system, causing progressive neurological damage**.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified this disease as a **Neglected Tropical Disease**.
- Once symptoms of the disease begin to manifest, **it is almost 100% fatal**.
- Timely vaccination for prevention is the single most effective method to avoid fatalities.

One Nation, One Election (ONOE)

- This initiative proposes **holding elections for the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) and State Legislative Assemblies simultaneously**.
- It aims to conduct both **national and state elections concurrently** within a single, unified electoral cycle.
- This framework does not encompass elections for **Panchayats, Municipalities, or by-elections**.
- Voters cast their ballots for both **Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly representatives on the same day**.
- Depending on logistical requirements, the elections may be conducted in a single phase or across multiple phases.
- During its first four general elections from 1951-52 to 1967 India conducted simultaneous elections for **both the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies**.
- **Part III, Article 25**- Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion
- **Part III, Article 26**- Freedom to manage religious affairs
- **Part V, Article 124**- Establishment and constitution of Supreme Court
- **Divya Singh (28)**, a teacher from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, has set a record as the first Indian woman and the second woman globally to reach the **Everest Base Camp by bicycle**.
- Nammazhvar wrote four works: **Thiruvirutham, Thiruvasiriyam, Peria Thiruvandadi and Thiruvaimozhi**. His four works give us the essence of the four Vedas.

Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam

- In September 2023, Parliament passed the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, or the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**, which commits to reserving **one-third of**

seats in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas for women, including in constituencies already earmarked for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

- **According to Article 124(4)** of the Constitution of India, a Supreme Court Judge can be removed from office on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity only through an order of the President, following the passing of a resolution by a special majority in both Houses of Parliament.
- **Article 324(5)** of the Constitution of India safeguards the independence of the Election Commission of India by stipulating that the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through a procedure equivalent to that of a Supreme Court Judge.
- **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners** (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

Unnatha Tamizhagam

- The UEF Trade Summit 2025 took place at the Chennai Trade Centre.
- The event centered around the theme “**Unnatha Tamizhagam - 4Tn for TN by 2047,**” which expresses a forward-looking goal of transforming Tamil Nadu into a highly developed and thriving state by the **100th year of India’s independence.**
- The “4Tn” concept represents an ambitious economic milestone aimed at driving sustained growth and long-term prosperity.

Sundarbans

- The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest ecosystem in the world.
 - Situated in the delta formed by the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers along the Bay of Bengal.
 - Spread across India (about 40%) and Bangladesh (around 60%).
 - Recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site
 - Declared a Biosphere Reserve under the Man and Biosphere Programme
 - Also designated as a Ramsar wetland of international importance
 - Includes rivers such as Muriganga, Raimangal, Harinbhanga, Saptamukhi, Thakuran, and Matla
 - Home to the largest population of tigers in the world, specially adapted to a semi-aquatic (amphibious) lifestyle
 - Dominated by salt-resistant vegetation, particularly the Sundari trees
- The **Urban Flood Management Cell (UFMC)** is **India’s first artificial intelligence-based system** designed for early warning and decision-making in urban flood situations, set up in **Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.**
 - **Tamil Nadu ranks first in India in the production of footwear and leather goods.** The state accounts for a **47% share of India’s total leather exports** and contributes **38% to the production of footwear and leather goods.**

India Records Highest-Ever Solar Capacity Addition (FY 2025-26)

- **India has recorded its highest-ever annual solar capacity addition of around 45 gigawatts** in the financial year 2025-26.
- Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy said that **Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra** have led this extraordinary growth, powering India’s transition towards a cleaner, greener and more self-reliant future.

- The Minister further informed that the country has recorded **6.65 Giga Watt solar capacity in March 2026**, the highest-ever solar installation in a single month.

'THIRAN' Scheme

- The **'THIRAN' (Targeted Help for Improving Remediation and Academic Nurturing)** educational enhancement scheme was implemented in July 2025 with the objective of identifying **slow learners among students studying in Grades 6 through 9 in Tamil Nadu government schools**, providing them with special remedial training in English, Tamil, and Mathematics, and thereby **bridging their learning gaps**.
- National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (National Authority CAMPA)

Sagarmala 2.0

- The Sagarmala Programme was **launched in March 2015**.
- Sagarmala 2.0 is built upon the foundation of previous achievements.
- For a comprehensive maritime development strategy, it has been integrated with the **'Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030' and the 'Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047'**.
- Its objective is **to position India as a global maritime hub through modernized ports and enhanced maritime infrastructure**.
- The program focuses on **port-led industrialization, connectivity to coastal and hinterland regions, inland waterways, and coastal shipping services**.

The Sagarmala Programme is based on five key pillars

- Port Modernization (Capacity Enhancement)
 - Port Connectivity (Road, Rail, and Waterway Linkages)
 - Port-led Industrialization (Coastal Economic Zones)
 - Coastal Community Development (Livelihood Enhancement)
 - Coastal Shipping and Inland Waterways (Logistics Development)
- Hawksbill Turtle ***Eretmochelys imbricata*** has most recently been assessed for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2008. *Eretmochelys imbricata* is listed as **Critically Endangered**.
 - The **Lanjia Saora community**, a particularly vulnerable tribal group living in the forested regions of **Rayagada and Gajapati districts in Odisha**.
 - **Part XVI, Article 334-** Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after certain period.
 - India is the **second largest fish producer in the world**. Now, it is also the second largest globally in aquaculture production.
 - A life-size bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda was unveiled for the **first time in the United States at Westlake Square in Seattle** on April 12, 2026, honoring the legacy of the Indian spiritual leader.

Mission Amrit Sarovar

- With a view to conserve water for the future, the Prime Minister has launched a new initiative named **Mission Amrit Sarovar on 24th April 2022**.
- The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating **75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.

Coffee Production in India

- **India ranks 7th globally in coffee production**, following countries such as
- Brazil and Vietnam.

- It is a **tropical plant** that is typically cultivated under the shade of trees.
- Coffee Varieties: **Robusta and Arabica**.
- **Major Coffee-Producing States:** It is primarily cultivated in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha.
- Among these, **Karnataka holds the leading position, contributing over 70% to the total production.**

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), launched in **September 2020** to drive a “Blue Revolution” in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- Its main goal is **to upgrade fisheries infrastructure, boost fish production, raise the income of fishers, and promote the sustainable use of aquatic resources.**
- The scheme is executed by the **Department of Fisheries India under the Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry and Dairying**. PMMSY is a **centrally sponsored scheme**.
- It includes both marine and inland fisheries, covering brackish water as well as freshwater aquaculture.
- A key feature of PMMSY is the promotion of modern technologies such as biofloc systems, cage culture, recirculatory aquaculture systems, mariculture, and seaweed farming to improve productivity and efficiency.
- Financial assistance is provided for developing fish ponds, hatcheries, fishing boats, cold storage facilities, ice plants, and processing units.
- The funding pattern is shared between the **Centre and States in a ratio of 60:40 for general states**, 90:10 for northeastern and Himalayan states, and full central funding (100%) for Union Territories.
- With a contribution of approximately 8% to global fish production, this scheme plays a pivotal role in strengthening India's position as the world's second-largest fish producer

Project Cheetah

- Initiated in **2022 as part of Project Tiger, Project Cheetah** focuses on reintroducing cheetahs to India, where they had gone extinct in 1952.
- It is recognized as the **first project in the world to relocate a wild carnivore across continents.**
- The project is implemented by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- At present, **Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh** function as the main habitats for the relocated cheetahs.
- Additionally, Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh has been identified as a potential site for expanding the cheetah habitat in the future.

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- This scheme was launched by the Government of India on **September 23, 2018**, to ensure that healthcare coverage is accessible to all.
- Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is the **world’s largest public health scheme**.
- It aims **to provide medical insurance coverage of up to ₹5 lakh annually to every eligible family.**

- It aims to provide **financial protection to poor and vulnerable families** for secondary and tertiary medical care.

The other key pillars under this scheme are as follows

- **Ayushman Arogya Mandir:** This focuses on providing easily accessible primary healthcare services and community-level services in close proximity to people's homes.
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM):** This aims to create an integrated digital health ecosystem by connecting hospitals, clinics, and patients through digital infrastructure.
- **PM – Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM):** This strengthens the infrastructure capacity of the healthcare sector, ranging from rural health centers to district hospitals.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM JUGA)

- This scheme was **launched on October 2, 2024**, from **Hazaribagh in the state of Jharkhand**.
- Also known as the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, PM JUGA aims to benefit more than 5 crore tribal people about half of India's tribal population through comprehensive development initiatives.
- **Seventeen-line ministries** are collaborating on PM JUGA.
- These ministries are implementing flagship schemes to bridge critical gaps in **social infrastructure, healthcare, education and livelihoods in tribal-majority villages and Aspirational Districts**.
- It is the **largest tribal development program in India's history**.
- **Part V, Article 81-** Composition of the House of the People
- **Part V, Article 82-** Readjustment after each census

Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023

- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act), provides for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognizes both the rights of individuals to protect their personal data and the necessity to process such personal data for lawful purposes.

Subhas Chandra Bose's Philosophy and Political Doctrine

- Subhas Chandra Bose **died in a plane crash in 1945**, ending a major intellectual-political project.
- He aimed to create a "higher synthesis" **between Eastern spirituality and Western material progress**.
- Initially influenced by **Adi Shankaracharya and Vedanta**.
- Rejected the **Doctrine of Maya** as impractical for revolutionary action.
- Transitioned from **absolutism** → **pragmatism**.
- Core principle: Reality is fundamentally **LOVE** and moral in nature.
- **Adopted ideas from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**.
- **Doctrine of Samyavada (Harmonious Equality)**
 - Indigenous Indian ideology not borrowed from the West.
 - Aimed to synthesize opposing systems, especially: **Fascism, Communism**
 - Rejected blind imitation of foreign ideologies.
 - Envisioned as **India's contribution to global political thought**.
 - Strong Central Authority

- Favoured a powerful central government during reconstruction.
- Suggested temporary authoritarianism for nation-building.
- Influenced by global trends (e.g., Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Imperial Japan).
- Believed decentralised democracy might slow urgent reforms.
- **Critical Perspective**
 - His ideas must be viewed in historical context (rise of authoritarian regimes).
 - Modern democratic societies question: Risks of authoritarianism, Balance between efficiency and rights
- **Socialist framework**
 - Social ownership of production and distribution.
 - Scientific and industrial development.
 - Equality and social justice as core principles.
 - Dynamic, evolving doctrine not rigid or dogmatic.
- **Vision of Freedom**
 - Freedom = holistic liberation, not just political:
 - Social equality, Gender equality, Economic justice
 - **End of caste discrimination and communalism**
- **Economic and Political Blueprint**
 - Strong advocate of industrialisation and scientific planning.
 - Opposed purely agrarian models (contrast with Mahatma Gandhi).
 - **Proposed:** State control of key industries, Elimination of poverty through planned economy
- **Equality in Action: Policies and Praxis**
 - Samyavada as Social Experiment
 - Subhas Chandra Bose treated India as a laboratory for Samyavada (synthesis of equality and socialism).
 - Emphasised secular, scientific training to eliminate caste, communalism, and gender inequality.

Early Socialist Programme (1931)

- At the All-India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, proposed Abolition of caste system, Removal of superstition and Organisation of peasants, workers, and women on socialist lines
- Military Reforms in INA
- Abolished caste/ethnic-based “class companies” used by British.
- Promoted unity across religions and communities in the Indian National Army.

National Unity in Practice

- Advocated Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity as brothers-in-arms.
- Promoted inclusive slogans like “Jai Hind” over divisive symbols.
- Used a Hindustani version of Jana Gana Mana as INA anthem.

Equality in Governance

- Provisional Government of Azad Hind guaranteed: Religious liberty, Equal rights and opportunities and National unity beyond colonial divisions

Women's Empowerment

- Recognised active role of women in freedom struggle.
- Established Rani of Jhansi Regiment.
- Called for mass participation of women in nation-building.

Workers' Rights and Socialism

- Advocated: Right to work, Right to a living wage
- Positioned himself between: Soviet-style communism, Moderate reformism
- Supported indigenous socialism tailored to India.

Equality in Daily Life

- INA soldiers practiced social equality (shared food, no caste barriers).
- Reflected real-world implementation of egalitarian ideals.

Pragmatism: Dealing with the Axis Powers

- Strategic, Not Ideological Alliance
 - Bose's alignment with Axis powers was purely pragmatic ("enemy of my enemy").
 - Goal: India's independence, not ideological support for Fascism.
 - Balanced View on Japan
 - Admired Japan's challenge to Western dominance.
 - Criticised its imperialism in China.
 - Criticism of Nazi Ideology
 - Rejected Adolf Hitler's racial theories as unscientific and historically false.
 - Opposed racial supremacy and domination.
 - Independent Political Position
 - Refused subservience to Axis powers.
 - Prioritised India's dignity and interests above all.
- Part XVI. Article 330 - Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People
 - Part XVI. Article 332 - Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.

India's Diverse New Year Celebrations

- Poila Boishakh or Nobo Borsho: This is celebrated as the Bengali New Year in West Bengal.
- Vishu: In Kerala, this is celebrated to mark the Spring Equinox.
- Bohag Bihu: In the state of Assam, this is celebrated as both a harvest festival and the New Year.
- Puthandu: This is celebrated as the Tamil New Year in Tamil Nadu.
- Vaisakha: In the state of Bihar, this is celebrated to honor the Sun God, Surya.

El Nino and La Nina

- El Nino is a climate phenomenon marked by an abnormal warming of surface waters in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.
- During this phase, sea surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific increase, while the trade winds blowing east to west near the Equator become weaker.
- In contrast, La Nina, the cooler phase of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle, is characterised by below-average sea surface temperatures in the same region.
- During La Nina, trade winds strengthen, pushing warm ocean waters toward Asia.

- For India, El Nino is generally associated with reduced rainfall and higher temperatures, whereas La Nina tends to enhance monsoon rainfall, especially over north western India and regions like Bangladesh.
- Part III, Article 25- Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion
- Part III, Article 25 (2) (a) - Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law – regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice
- **Constituency Delimitation Amendments**
 - 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976: Froze the allocation of seats to the States in the Lok Sabha and the division of each State into territorial constituencies based on the 1971 Census until the year 2000.
 - 84th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2001: Extended this freeze until the year 2026. Furthermore, it empowered the readjustment of constituencies based on the 1991 Census.
 - 87th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003: Permitted the delimitation of constituencies based on the 2001 Census, without altering the number of seats allocated to each State in the Lok Sabha.
- Oru Ilakkivavathiyin Arasiyal Anubhavangal by writer Jayakanthan he argued that Annadurai's positions on literature, art, language, economics, and sociology were simplistic and catered to "idiots and ruffians."
- India's first passenger train ran on April 16, 1853, from Bori Bunder (Mumbai) to Thane. Comprising 14 coaches and carrying approximately 400 passengers, the train covered a distance of 34 kilometers. The 173rd anniversary of this historic event which laid the foundation for Indian Railways will be celebrated in 2026.
- **South India's oldest hydroelectric project was launched in 1932**
 - The Pykara Hydroelectric Project in the Nilgiris is one of South India's oldest hydropower projects.
 - Its aim was to tap into the power generation potential of River Pykara, which originates in the Western Ghats.
 - Commissioned in 1932, it was conceived with three units of a total capacity of 6.65 MW.
- **Soviet Cultural Centre started Tal Chess Club in Chennai in 1972**
 - Chennai's association with chess started in the 1970s.
 - The Soviet Cultural Centre established the Tal Chess Club in 1972.
 - India's first International Master Manuel Aaron played an instrumental role in the club.
 - It became the ultimate incubator for local talent, famously producing India's first Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand.
- **Valparai Plateau in the Western Ghats is a crucial wildlife habitat**
 - Valparai Plateau, part of the Western Ghats, is an ecologically significant zone.
 - It is known for tea and coffee plantations and is a crucial habitat for wildlife, especially for elephant migration.

- During the annual migration season, elephants migrate from Kerala to the Valparai Plateau, which is also part of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve.
- **A titan of number theory, who proved Waring's Problem**
 - While Ramanujan is globally celebrated, another mathematician from Tamil Nadu, S.S. Pillai of Tirunelveli, was a titan of number theory.
 - In the 1930s, he proved the conundrum known as Waring's Problem.
 - He died in a plane crash while travelling to the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton.
- **Social Reform & Education at Cheranmahadevi**
- **Gurukulam Controversy & Political Impact**
 - In 1924, a Gurukulam founded by V. V. S. Iyer at Cheranmahadevi practiced caste-based segregation in dining.
 - Brahmin and non-Brahmin students were made to eat separately.
 - This incident triggered widespread debate on caste discrimination.
 - It became a turning point for Periyar E. V. Ramasamy, who left the Congress and later founded the Dravidar Kazhagam.
- **Soosaiappan Primary School – A Progressive Model**
 - Soosaiappan Primary School in Cheranmahadevi stood out during a time of intense social unrest over caste discrimination.
 - Located on Arasadi Street, the school had already completed 50 years of service at the time of Cheranmahadevi incident.
 - Founded by a Catholic community elder without missionary assistance.
 - Functioned as a pioneering institution for Scheduled Castes (SCs) education.
- **Inclusive Education Approach**
 - Promoted social equality by educating students from all castes.
 - Stood in contrast to caste-based discrimination seen elsewhere at the time.
 - Became a symbol of empowerment through education.
- **Operation Numkhor**
 - Operation Numkhor is a nationwide crackdown on smuggling of premium second-hand vehicles.
 - Focuses on illegal routes through Bhutan and forged registrations involving Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) officials.
 - Highlights growing cooperation between India and Bhutan to curb cross-border crime.
 - Initiated by the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi.
- **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)**
 - Launched in 2011 by the Ministry of Rural Development.
 - A flagship programme of the India government.
 - Aims to reduce multidimensional poverty in rural areas.
 - Focuses on enabling households to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

- Promotes self-employment opportunities.
- Encourages access to gainful employment for rural poor.
- Meghalaya has declared the indigenous Khasi and Garo languages as official languages of the state, alongside English.
- Nominated member Harivansh has been elected as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for the third consecutive time.
- **Launch of the Tourism Anthology**
 - The Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, Suman Bery, released a new anthology titled “Divya Bharat: A Window to the Soul of India” in New Delhi.
 - The book is designed as a year-round tourism guide covering all States and Union Territories of India.
- **Government schemes supporting tourism growth include:**
 - Dekho Apna Desh initiative
 - Swadesh Darshan scheme
 - Plan to develop 50 global-standard destinations
- **Women's Reservation Bill**

The 106th Amendment Act, 2023

- This Act is known as the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam' or the 'Women's Reservation Act'.
- This Act provides for a one-third (33%) reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.
- Reservation for women is also provided within the constituencies already reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- It was introduced with the objective of strengthening women's political representation in elected bodies.
- This Act will not come into force immediately; it will become operational only after the next delimitation exercise and the subsequent census data become available.
- The reserved constituencies will be rotated periodically.
- This reservation applies only to the directly elected Lower Houses (Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies); it does not apply to the Rajya Sabha or the State Legislative Councils (Upper Houses).
- This Bill had been introduced multiple times since 1996 and was finally passed in 2023 with strong support from the Parliament.
- **Key Features of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act**
 - Article 239AA: Reservation of one-third (33%) of seats for women in the Legislative Assembly of Delhi.
 - Article 330A: Reservation of one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha. This includes seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST).
 - Article 332A: Reservation of one-third of seats for women in State Legislative Assemblies. This includes seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST).

- Article 334A: Implementation following delimitation of constituencies, a 15-year time limit, and provisions for the extension of the reservation and for rotation of seats.
- The Tharu tribe is an indigenous community inhabiting the Terai plains along the Indo–Nepal border. They are considered the largest and one of the earliest settled ethnic groups in the Terai region.
- The Chenchu community mainly lives in the Nallamalai forest region of Andhra Pradesh. They are recognized as one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the state.
- **Adjournment sine die**
 - Adjournment sine die refers to ending a session of Parliament for an unspecified period, without fixing any date for it to meet again.
 - The authority to declare such an adjournment rests with the presiding officer of the House.
 - The presiding officer also has the power to reconvene the House earlier than the scheduled adjournment or even after it has been adjourned sine die, whenever considered necessary.
- **Delimitation in India: Evolution, Freeze, and Emerging Challenges**
 - Articles 82 and 170(3) mandate periodic readjustment of Lok Sabha and State Assembly seats and constituency boundaries after every Census.
 - The first delimitation (1950–51) was based on estimated population figures due to urgency, followed by a proper exercise after the 1951 Census.
 - Subsequent delimitations occurred after the 1961 and 1971 Censuses, with the 1976 exercise based on 1971 data.
 - The 42nd Constitutional Amendment froze delimitation until the 2001 Census to avoid penalising States that successfully controlled population growth.
 - After 2001, the freeze on increasing the number of seats continued, though constituency boundaries were redrawn using 2001 Census data to maintain population balance.
 - The 84th Amendment (2001) extended the freeze on fresh delimitation until after the first Census post-2026, aiming to encourage population stabilisation.
 - The assumption was that population growth would stabilise uniformly across States within 25 years, which has not fully materialised.
 - Migration and uneven population growth have led to disparities in constituency population sizes.
 - The Delimitation Bill, 2026 proposes using 2011 Census data, raising concerns about outdated population figures.
 - Continued migration and demographic changes may lead to inequalities in representation even after delimitation is completed.
 - Article 81(2) emphasises equal population-to-seat ratio across States, but broader considerations may be needed.
 - There is scope to include additional factors beyond population while allocating seats, especially with a likely increase in total seats.
 - Ensuring fair representation while maintaining balance among States is crucial for strengthening the federal structure.

- **Nammalu, a short story by Sahitya Akademi Award-winning writer Imayam.**
- **SMILE Scheme**
 - SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme was launched in 2022.
 - It is implemented by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
 - It is India's first integrated national framework that provides support ranging from identifying marginalized people to providing rehabilitation and building livelihoods.
 - It includes services such as healthcare, counseling, education, skill development, and long-term economic independence.
 - It includes a sub-scheme to identify individuals involved in begging, collect their details, and provide rehabilitation with their consent.
 - The scheme also focuses on the empowerment, welfare, and social inclusion of transgender individuals.
- **TTRO - Tertiary Treatment Reverse Osmosis**
- Tamil Nadu is home to six particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) — Toda, Kota, Kurumbas, Irular, Paniyan, and Kattunayakan.
- Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT), launched in 2006 by then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, was aimed at developing infrastructure in rural panchayats.
- Tamil Nadu Village Habitations Improvement (THAI) scheme, which was specifically targeted at marginalised clusters to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources.
- In a first, Tamil Nadu has a dedicated helpline for deaf persons on voting day. They can contact sign language interpreters through videoconference and calls.
- **cVIGIL**
 - cVIGIL is a mobile application developed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to enable citizens to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections.
 - To report a violation, users simply need to open the app, select the type of violation, and provide details of the incident, including location, time, and photographs or videos.
 - The app also allows users to track the progress of their complaints.
 - The cVIGIL app has been praised for its simplicity, ease of use, authenticity, and user secrecy.
 - It has also been credited with helping to increase the number of MCC violations reported during elections.
 - If you see a violation of the MCC, you can use the cVIGIL app to report it. The app is a valuable tool for ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and transparently.
- **Here are some of the features of the cVIGIL app**
 - Allows users to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)
 - Provides a platform for citizens to participate in the electoral process
 - Uses GPS to track the location of the violation
 - Allows users to capture the live incidents only

- Tracks the progress of the complaint
- Feature to report the case of MCC violation anonymously
- **ECINET**
- ECINET mobile app is a one-stop digital platform for voters.
- It allows users to:
 - View candidate information
 - File Model Code of Conduct (MCC) complaints
 - Search their name in the voter list
 - Raise voter ID (card) related complaints
 - Download e-voter card
 - Check polling trends
 - Connect with election officials
- **Saksham App**
 - The Election Commission of India is working towards easing the voter identification and registration process for people with disabilities (PwDs) by offering them customized services.
 - Under a new program, PwDs need to share their essential details with Election Commission.
 - The Saksham App provides a number of features to help PwDs register to vote, find their polling station, and cast their vote.
 - The Saksham App is a valuable tool for PwDs to participate in the electoral process. The app is easy to use and provides a number of features that make it easier for PwDs to register to vote, find their polling station, and cast their vote.
- **These features include**
 - Voice assistance: The app provides voice assistance for PwDs who are visually impaired.
 - Text-to-speech: The app provides text-to-speech for PwDs who are hearing impaired.
 - Accessibility features: The app has a number of accessibility features, such as large fonts and high-contrast colors, to make it easier for PwDs to use.
 - Information on polling stations: The app provides information on polling stations, including the location of the polling station, the accessibility features available at the polling station, and the contact details of the polling officials.
 - Complaints: The app allows PwDs to file complaints about any problems they face while participating in the electoral process.
- India has introduced a nationwide toll-free helpline (1855) to make the Census 2027 process easier and help citizens take part more smoothly and effectively.
- **Measles**
 - Highly contagious and serious airborne viral disease.
 - Caused by a virus belonging to the paramyxovirus family.
 - Infections spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing.
 - Initially infects the respiratory tract then spreads throughout the body

- Can lead to: Severe illness, Complications, Death in serious cases
 - The State's immunisation coverage stands at 99%.
 - The Measles-Rubella vaccine, administered at nine and 18 months - has about 85% efficacy and provides adequate protection.
- **Anti-Defection Law**
 - **Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (Anti-Defection Law):** Explains the disqualification of Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) due to changing political parties.
 - **A member may be disqualified in the following circumstances**
 - When they voluntarily give up their membership in their political party.
 - When they vote or abstain from voting contrary to the party's direction (whip) without prior permission.
 - When an independent member joins any political party after the election.
 - When a nominated member joins any political party after six months from the date of taking office.
 - **Exemptions**
 - If at least two-thirds of the members agree to merge with another party, they will not be disqualified.
 - To maintain neutrality, the Speaker or Chairperson may resign from their party membership, and they will not be disqualified if they rejoin after their term ends.
 - **Key Features**
 - The authority to decide on disqualification lies with the Speaker or Chairman of the House.
 - According to the *Kihoto Hollohan vs. Zachillhu* (1992) case, the Speaker's decision is subject to judicial review.
 - **91st Constitutional Amendment Act (2003)**
 - Removed the provision regarding political split (which previously allowed one-third of members to split).
 - Limited the number of ministers to 15% of the total strength of the House.
 - Disqualified members cannot hold any ministerial position or any remunerative political office until they are re-elected.
 - **Wind Power Generation**
 - The country's wind power generation capacity has increased to 56 Gigawatts (GW). In the last year alone, a generation capacity of 6 GW has been added.
 - India ranks 4th in the world in terms of wind power generation capacity.
 - States like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan are pioneers in this sector. Massive renewable energy parks are currently being developed in areas like Kutch, Patan, and Banaskantha in Gujarat.
 - The Government has reconstituted the NITI Aayog. Economist Ashok Kumar Lahiri has been appointed as the Vice Chairperson of the Aayog. He will replace the current Vice Chairman, Suman K. Bery.

- Part XV, Article 324- Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission
- 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
- MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).
- SHANTI Act are expected to facilitate greater participation of the private sector in scaling up the country's nuclear energy capacity and achieve the 100-gigawatt nuclear energy target by 2047.
- Rithika Sri from Tamil Nadu has made history by becoming India's first transgender cricket umpire. This achievement comes after the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association introduced an 'Other' category in its umpire examination system, paving the way for greater inclusivity.
- Part VI, Article 162- Extent of executive power of State
- Part III, Article 21- Protection of life and personal liberty
- **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**
 - The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, established in 2001 in Shanghai, is one of the largest regional organisations promoting political, economic and security cooperation.
 - Its member states include India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, and Belarus.
 - India became a full member of the grouping in 2017, and assumed its rotating presidency in 2022-23, underlining its growing role in regional security and multilateral cooperation.
- **Cauvery Water Management Authority**
 - The Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee were constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, through the Cauvery Water Management Scheme (CWMS) notified on June 1, 2018.
 - This scheme was formulated to implement the final order of the Cauvery River Water Tribunal, as modified by the judgment of the Supreme Court of India dated February 16, 2018.
 - The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) has been empowered to ensure adherence to and implementation of the Tribunal's final order, including the storage, apportionment, regulation, and control of Cauvery waters.
 - With the assistance of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), it monitors the operation of reservoirs and regulates water releases.
 - The State of Karnataka is required to ensure a uniform water discharge at the inter-state gauging station located at Biligundlu.
 - The Yash Pal Committee (1993) recommended the "Learning Without Burden" approach to reduce the educational burden on children.
 - The National Curriculum Framework (2005) emphasized child-centered learning and the construction of knowledge, rather than rote memorization.

