

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

MAY 2026 - PART 1



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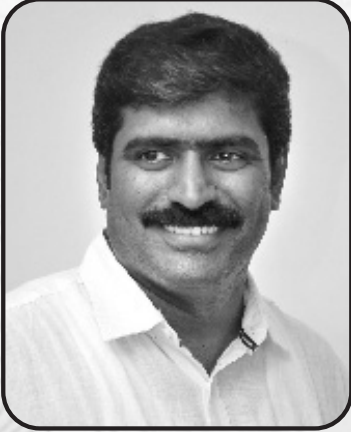
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Preface



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Director

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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.

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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

Type-IV CNG cylinders

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

Objective

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

About Type-IV Composite CNG Cylinders

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

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

Significance

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

Malaria Vaccine (RTS, S/AS01E)

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

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

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

PCOS Renamed as PMOS

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

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

Fermented Organic Manure

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

About Fermented Organic Manure

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

Benefits of Fermented Organic Manure

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

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

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

About BIRSA-101

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

LATEST INVENTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Geocell

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

Key Features of BIRSA-101

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

About Sickle Cell Disease

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

SPACE

Mission Drishti

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

About Mission Drishti

- It is the world's first "**OptoSAR**" satellite, marking a major technological advancement in Earth observation.
- OptoSAR technology integrates **Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors** on a single platform.

- The OptoSAR technology overcomes limitations of conventional satellites by ensuring reliable and continuous data acquisition across diverse environmental conditions.
- EO sensors provide **high-resolution, visually interpretable images but are limited by cloud cover and poor lighting conditions.**
- SAR sensors enable **all-weather, day-and-night imaging but require complex interpretation.**
- Drishti overcomes these limitations by enabling simultaneous, co-registered acquisition of optical and radar imagery of the same location.
- It eliminates the need for post-processing fusion of data from multiple satellites, improving efficiency and accuracy.
- The satellite uses proprietary synchronization technology to align different sensor geometries for simultaneous observation.
- It incorporates Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate optical-like images from SAR data, enhancing usability under adverse conditions.
- Particularly significant for tropical regions like India, where persistent cloud cover affects conventional optical imaging.
- Key applications include **Agriculture monitoring, Disaster management, Urban planning, Infrastructure mapping, Maritime surveillance, and Border security.**
- Ensures continuous, reliable, and consistent Earth observation data with improved interpretability.
- Reduces dependence on multiple satellite platforms for comprehensive imaging.
- Represents a major milestone in India's private space sector, complementing the role of Indian Space Research Organisation.
- Aims to build a constellation of 10 satellites by 2030 to establish a self-reliant Earth observation infrastructure for India.

GEOGRAPHY

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Western Disturbances

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

About Western Disturbances

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

Origin and Naming of Western Disturbances

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

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

The Teesta River

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

About Teesta River

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

Block-Level Monsoon Forecasting in India

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

About the New Forecasting System

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

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

About Indian Meteorological Department

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

- Built by Thermax Energy with technology from Ankur Scientific.

About Green Methanol

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

Technology Process

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

Environmental Benefits

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

Significance

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

UN Expands Methane Monitoring System

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

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

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

Background

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

Project Overview

- **India's first green methanol plant to use *Prosopis juliflora* as feedstock.**
- Located at **Deendayal Port Authority**.
- Capacity: **5 tonnes of methanol per day**.

Key Findings of UNEP Analysis

- UNEP analysis released in April 2026 identified coal mining and waste management as major methane emission sources
- **Two of the world's three largest methane-emitting sites were landfills located in Chile and India**
- The Indian site corresponds to the **Kanjurmarg landfill in Mumbai**

Methane Emission Sites in India

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

About Methane

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

Functioning of MARS

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

Significance

- Strengthens global methane monitoring and climate mitigation efforts
- Enhances transparency in industrial emissions
- Supports rapid action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Highlights growing role of satellite technology in environmental governance

Human-Wildlife Conflict

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

Causes of Human-Wildlife Conflict

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

Consequences of Human-Wildlife Conflict

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

- Crop damage, livestock loss, and property damage translate into substantial financial losses for farmers. Farmers lose 10–15 percent of their annual yield to animals that damage crops such as elephants, Nilgai, wild boars, and monkeys.
- Wildlife is frequently killed, either accidentally or as acts of retaliation; this undermines species conservation efforts.

Key Measures and Strategies Implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu

- **AI-based Early Warning Systems:** The Government of Tamil Nadu has launched a first-of-its-kind AI-based Command and Control Centre that utilizes thermal cameras, ground sensors, and satellite data to monitor and predict the movements of elephants and leopards in sensitive areas such as the Valparai Plateau and the Nilgiris.
- **Technological Applications:** With the aim of preventing animals from entering villages, a project is currently being implemented to replace traditional and less-effective barriers with “Smart” solar-powered electric fences.
- **Rapid Rescue Teams (RRTs):** 28 Rapid Rescue Teams, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, have been deployed to handle human-animal conflict situations arising in the field.
- **Habitat Improvement and Fodder Management:** The government is focusing on improving animal habitats by removing invasive alien plant species and planting nutrient-rich native vegetation with the aim of encouraging animals to remain within the forests and reducing the need for them to stray into agricultural lands.
- **Community Participation:** Protection initiatives known as “Suraksha Kavach” are being implemented by actively engaging local communities in conservation measures, such as the formation of surveillance committees.
- **Enhanced Compensation:** The compensation amount for loss of life resulting from human-animal conflicts has been increased from ₹5 lakhs to ₹10 lakhs.
- **Special Schemes:** Unique action plans have been formulated and are being implemented for specific animal species (e.g., ‘Mission SARPA’ for snakebite treatment, and special schemes for Bonnet Macaques and wild boars).
- **Anti-Poaching Surveillance Camps:** These camps have been established specifically to monitor the movements of elephant herds, particularly in areas such as Lower Kotagiri and Gudalur.

India’s Water Governance and Water Crisis

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

Declining Per Capita Water Availability

- Per capita water availability in India has declined from over 5,000 cubic metres after Independence to around 1,400 cubic metres today.
- **India is the world’s largest groundwater user,** accounting for nearly one-fourth of global groundwater extraction.
- Excessive groundwater dependence has caused **declining water tables in several regions.**

- India's water crisis is both hydrological and institutional in nature.

Water Governance Structure in India

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

Major Government Initiatives

Jal Jeevan Mission

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

Atal Bhujal Yojana

- Atal Bhujal scheme was launched on 1 April 2020.
- This scheme will improve the existing condition of several water biiodies of the country.
- Focuses on groundwater sustainability in water-stressed regions.
- Promotes participatory aquifer management and groundwater budgeting.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

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

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

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

Namami Gange Programme

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

Towards a Circular Water Economy

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

INDIAN POLITY

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

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

Digital Transformation of OCI System

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

Biometric Integration

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

Significance

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

India's First Paperless Judiciary State

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

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

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

About High Courts

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

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

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

Supreme Court of India

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

About Supreme Court of India

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

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

- Proceedings are conducted in **English**.

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

Vande Mataram

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The amendment aims to give **statutory backing** by bringing the National Song under legal protection similar to the National Anthem.
- In certain situations, the Governor may exercise discretionary powers regarding actions such as summoning or proroguing the Legislative Assembly, or dissolving the Assembly.

State Council of Ministers and Governor's Discretionary Powers

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

The Governor's Discretionary Powers

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

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

Lok Adalat

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

About Lok Adalats

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

Lok Adalat Structure

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

- Awards (decisions) passed by a **Lok Adalat are deemed equivalent to decrees passed by a Civil Court.**
- No appeal is permitted against a Lok Adalat award, thereby ensuring finality and speedy resolution.
- **No court fee is charged;** furthermore, any court fee paid prior to the proceedings is refunded once a settlement is reached.

Lok Adalat Cases

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

Jurisdiction of Lok Adalats

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

Governor's Role in Government Formation in a Hung Assembly

Constitutional Provision

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

- The Constitution does not prescribe a fixed procedure for selecting a Chief Minister in a hung Assembly.

Objective of the Governor

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

Guidance from Committees and Courts

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

Exploring Government Formation

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

President's Rule as Last Resort

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

Dissolution of Assembly

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

its first sitting if no viable government can be formed.

Order of Preference for Inviting Parties

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

Minority Governments

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

Importance of Floor Test

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

Concerns over Misuse of Powers

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

Pro-tem Speaker

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

official proceedings of the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies.

Details Regarding the Pro-tem Speaker

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

Pro-tem Speaker in Parliament and State Legislatures

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

Duties

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

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

Constitutional Position

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

Powers of the Governor over the State Legislature

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

The Governor may from time to time

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

Key Feature

- The Governor summons the **members to a legislative session**.
- It formally brings a legislative session to an end **without dissolving the House**.
- It brings the life of the Legislative Assembly to an end, thereby necessitating fresh elections.
- The Legislative Assembly must **meet at least twice a year**; this ensures that a **maximum gap of only six months** intervenes between the last sitting of one session and the first sitting of the next session.
- Although this action is usually undertaken on the advice of the Chief Minister, if such advice is received at a time when the Chief Minister's

majority strength is in doubt, **the Governor may exercise his own discretion to make a decision.**

Chief Minister and State Council of Ministers

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

Other Provisions Relating to Ministers

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

- (4) A Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of the Legislature of the State shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister.
- (5) The salaries and allowances of Ministers shall be such as the Legislature of the State may from time to time by law determine; Furthermore, until the State Legislature so determines, they shall be as specified in the Second Schedule.

Floor Test and its Procedure

- A floor test (trust vote) is a constitutional mechanism to determine whether the Council of Ministers enjoys the confidence of the Legislative Assembly.
- It is required when there is doubt over majority due to coalition instability, withdrawal of support, defection, or competing claims to form government.
- The Chief Minister moves a motion of confidence and **must prove majority support among members present** and voting, absentees are excluded.
- Voting may take place through voice vote, division vote (electronic/slip-based), or ballot vote depending on Assembly procedure.
- A composite floor test is conducted in a hung assembly when multiple groups claim majority and no clear government exists.
- If the Chief Minister wins, the government continues, **if the CM loses, resignation of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers follows.**
- If no stable majority emerges, alternative government formation or **President's Rule under Article 356 may follow.**

Governor's Role in Floor Test and Government Formation

- The Governor appoints the Chief Minister under **Article 164(1)** and plays a key role in government formation in hung assemblies.
- Under **Article 163**, the Governor acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers except in constitutionally permitted discretionary situations.
- In case of a hung assembly, the Governor exercises situational discretion to **invite a leader who is most likely to command majority support.**

- The Governor may call for or direct a floor test when there is objective material indicating doubt over the majority of the government.
- The Governor cannot act on internal party disputes and must ensure that majority is tested only on the floor of the House.

Speaker's Role in Floor Test

- When the House is in session, the **Speaker is the presiding authority responsible for conducting and regulating the floor test.**
- The Speaker ensures **orderly conduct of proceedings and decides the voting procedure (voice vote, division vote, or electronic voting).**
- The Speaker may exercise a **casting vote (Article 189)** in case of a tie, as per constitutional and procedural rules.
- In 2020, the Supreme Court in **Shivraj Singh Chouhan & Ors versus Speaker** case upheld the powers of the Speaker to call for a floor test if there is a prima facie view that the government has lost its majority.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Record GST Collections in April 2026

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

Significance

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

PaRRVA Framework

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

Institutional Structure

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

About PaRRVA

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

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

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

Compliance Requirements

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

Significance

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

Fair and Remunerative Price

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

About Fair and Remunerative Price

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

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

Key Priorities in GSDP Compilation

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

Importance of GSDP

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

MoSPI Revises National Accounts Base Year to 2022–23

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

Adoption by States and UTs

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

Role in Fiscal Federalism

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

Borrowing Limits of States

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

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

Present Status

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

Uniform Guidelines

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

India's Financial Inclusion and Digital Transformation

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

Digital Solutions Transforming Financial Access

JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile)

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

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

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

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)

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

AI and Financial Services

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

BHASHINI Initiative

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

RBI Regulatory Sandbox

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

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

MuleHunter.AI

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

Mission Digital ShramSetu

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

Significance

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

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

- **Background:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved an increase in the MSP for 14 Kharif crops for the 2026-27 marketing season.

About Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a minimum price fixed by the government to ensure that farmers get a fair price for their produce, even if market prices fall.
- MSP was introduced during the 'Green Revolution' in 1966-67 to protect farmers from losses and strengthen the country's food security.
- The government announces MSP twice every year:
 - Before the Kharif (monsoon) crop growing season
 - Before the Rabi (winter) crop growing season

- The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACAP)** recommends the MSP rates.

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** gives its final approval.

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

- **Context :** India's wholesale inflation, measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), rose sharply to 8.3% in April 2026, the highest level in nearly 3.5 years.
- The previous higher WPI inflation was recorded in October 2022.

- WPI inflation had stood at 3.9% in March 2026, indicating a significant month-on-month jump.
- The increase is mainly attributed to the West Asia crisis, which triggered a surge in global energy prices.
- Prices of crude oil and natural gas recorded steep inflation, with inflation in this category reaching 67.2% in April 2026.
- The data was released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Despite the rise in overall wholesale inflation, food inflation remained relatively low at 2% in April 2026, compared to 1.9% in March 2026.
- Economists believe the data reflects the first visible impact of the West Asia conflict on the Indian economy.
- About Wholesale Price Index (WPI)
- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) measures the change in prices of goods traded in bulk at the wholesale level between businesses.
- It covers only goods and does not include services, as services are not traded on a wholesale basis.
- WPI helps in analysing price movements and demand-supply conditions in sectors such as industry, manufacturing, and construction.
- The index is published every month by the Economic Adviser under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The month-to-month increase in WPI is used to estimate the rate of wholesale inflation in the economy.
- Calculation of WPI
- WPI is computed using the wholesale prices of a selected group of important commodities.
- Commodities are included based on their economic importance and representation across various sectors.
- These items collectively reflect different segments of the economy and help provide an overall picture of wholesale price trends.
- Base year used for calculation: 2011-12

TAMIL NADU

INITIATIVES / SCHEMES

Tamil Nadu's Initiatives Regarding Road Accidents

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

Tamil Nadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI)

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

Innuir Kappom – Nammai Kaakkum 48 Scheme

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

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

Key Details of the Scheme

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

Emergency Ambulance Scheme

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

Key Features

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

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

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

Related Services

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

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

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

Major Functions of the Force

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

complaints related to women's safety.

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

- Coordination and Administration

The force will coordinate with

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

POLITY

New Chief Minister Takes Charge in Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** C. Joseph Vijay, president of Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

- His elevation marks a major shift in **Tamil Nadu's bipolar Dravidian political system that had dominated the State since 1967.**

Formation of the Ministry

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

Historic Significance

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

Key Announcements and Decisions

- The Chief Minister signed three important files immediately after assuming office.

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

Women's Safety Measures

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

Anti-Narcotics Initiative

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

Women Ministers in Tamil Nadu: Historical Evolution

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

First Woman Minister in Madras Presidency

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

Women Ministers After Independence

- After India became a Republic, no women

were included in the Cabinet formed in 1952 under Rajagopalachari.

- During a Cabinet reshuffle in 1953, **Jothi Venkatachalam** was inducted as a Minister.

Lourdammal Simon and Kamaraj Era

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

Women Ministers in the DMK Era

- In 1967, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam formed the government for the first time.
- **Satyavani Muthu** became Minister for **Adi Dravidar Welfare** in the Cabinet headed by C. N. Annadurai.
- She later continued as Minister in Cabinets formed by M. Karunanidhi.

Later Developments

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

Presiding Officers of State Legislatures

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

Constitutional Provision

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

- They ensure smooth functioning of legislative proceedings and uphold democratic principles.

Functions of the Speaker

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

Role in Maintaining Order in the Legislature

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

Role in Ensuring Impartiality and Democratic Practices

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

REPORT / SURVEY

Tamil Nadu Records Lowest OOP Medical Spending in Public Hospitals

- According to the **National Sample Survey (NSS) report titled "Household Social Consumption: Health"**, Tamil Nadu recorded the lowest Out-of-Pocket Medical Expenditure (OOPME) for hospitalisation in public hospitals among major Indian States.
- **The average OOPME for in-patient care in government hospitals in Tamil Nadu was ₹1,357, significantly lower than the national average of ₹6,631.**
- The survey covered hospitalisation expenditure incurred during the previous 365 days, excluding childbirth-related treatment.
- **Despite low expenditure in public hospitals, Tamil Nadu reported very high OOPME levels in private and charitable hospitals.**
- Across all hospitals (urban and rural combined), the average OOPME in Tamil Nadu stood at ₹44,535 compared to the national average of ₹34,064.
- In charitable hospitals, the average OOPME in rural areas was ₹1,68,697, while in urban areas it was ₹53,237.
- In private hospitals, OOPME was ₹72,979 in rural areas and ₹75,149 in urban areas.
- The overall average OOPME for private hospitalisation in Tamil Nadu was ₹74,168, much higher than the national average of ₹50,508.
- The findings indicate strong affordability in the State's public healthcare system, but also highlight the high financial burden associated with private healthcare services.

NATIONAL - NEWS

Barrier-Free Toll Collection System Launched in Gujarat

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

10th National Health Summit

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

Purpose of the Summit

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

Major Health Achievements

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

Disease control milestones

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

Swasth Bharat Portal

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

JANANI Portal

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

Features:

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

Capacity Building Initiative

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

Focus on:

- Prevention → Detection → Treatment → Follow-up

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)

- **2.0**
- Upgrade of 2013 framework.
- Focus on 4Ds: **Defects, Diseases, Deficiencies, Developmental delays**

- One of the largest child health screening programmes globally.
- Bidders must submit an undertaking confirming no involvement in such failures (including consortium members).

Key features:

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

Significance

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

MoRTH Tightens Norms for HAM Projects to Prevent Catastrophic Failures

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

About HAM Model

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

Key Provisions Introduced

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

Definition of Catastrophic Failures

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

Significance

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

Aarogya Maitri in Jamaica

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

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

About Aarogya Maitri

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

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

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

RBSK 2.0: Strengthening Child Health Screening in India

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

Expanded Screening Coverage

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

Doorstep Screening Services

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

Digital Health Integration

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

Multi-Sectoral Convergence

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

Focus on Outcomes

- Promotes early identification and timely intervention.
- Aims to reduce disease burden and improve overall child well-being.
- **Government Commitment:** Reflects a strong push towards accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare for every child, ensuring holistic growth and long-term health outcomes.

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

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

Characteristics of DME

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

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

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

India as a Global Hub for Medical and Wellness Tourism

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

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

Global Rankings and Recognition

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

Cost Advantage

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

Budget 2026-27

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

Yoga as Global Soft Power

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

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

Nationwide Fire Safety Week in Healthcare Facilities

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

India Introduces First National Guidelines for Childhood Diabetes Care

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

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

Diabetes

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

Childhood diabetes mainly includes

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

Great Nicobar Project: Infrastructure, Environmental Safeguards and Tribal Welfare

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

The Great Nicobar Project

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

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

The project includes

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

Core Infrastructure Components of the Great Nicobar Project

- **International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT)**

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

- **Greenfield International Airport**

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

Township and Area Development

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

Power Plant

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

Environmental Safeguards and Compensatory Afforestation Plan

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

Environmental Management Plan (EMP)

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

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

Tribal Welfare and Social Considerations in the Great Nicobar Project

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

Constitutional and Administrative Safeguards

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

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

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit

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

About the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

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

Membership and Participation

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

Objectives of the Alliance

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

- Strengthen collective global action for biodiversity conservation

Theme of the Summit

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

India's Role

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

Significance

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

First Anniversary of Operation Sindoor

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

Objectives of Operation Sindoor

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

Major Military Actions

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

Non-Military Measures under Operation

Sindoor

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

Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty

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

Pakistan depends heavily on the Indus river system for

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

Suspension could lead to

- Agricultural losses
- Food shortages

- Water rationing
- Electricity shortages
- Industrial disruption

Benefits for India

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

Broader Impact

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

Significance

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

Cabinet Approves Two Semiconductor Projects

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

Projects include:

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

Investment and Employment

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

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

Significance of the Projects

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

About India Semiconductor Mission

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

Artificial Intelligence in the Indian Judiciary

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

The Significance of AI Application in the Judiciary

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

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

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

Robust Performance of the Steel Sector

- Steel is an alloy primarily composed of iron,

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

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

India's Steel Export Destinations

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

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) for Specialty Steel

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

reduce import dependence.

National Steel Policy 2017

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

Major Steel Zones in India

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

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

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

Location and Religious Importance

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

- It houses one of the sacred Jyotirlingas mentioned in the Shiva Purana.

- The temple is associated with the worship of Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna and Shakti.

- The Dwadasha Jyotirlinga Stotram places Somnath first among the twelve Jyotirlingas.

Historical Importance

- Somnath represents India's enduring spiritual faith and civilisational continuity.

- The temple faced repeated invasions and destruction between the 11th and 18th centuries.

- The first recorded attack on the temple occurred in 1026.

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

Reconstruction through History

- King Kumarapala restored the temple during the 12th century.

- The King of Junagadh rebuilt it during the 13th century.

- Ahilyabai Holkar rebuilt the temple in the 18th century.

- After Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel initiated the reconstruction of Somnath in 1947.

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

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

Somnath Swabhiman Parv

- The Somnath Swabhiman Parv commemorates 1,000 years since the first recorded attack on Somnath in 1026.

- The year 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of the reopening of the Somnath Temple.

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

Role of Prime Minister

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

Temple Architecture and Features

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

Environmental and Sustainability Measures

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

The Drug Menace in India

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

Causes of the Drug Menace in India

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

Key Measures Taken to Curb the Drug Menace in India

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

- **International Treaties:** India is a signatory to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971; and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.
- The dialogue assumed greater significance amid rising tensions in West Asia, disturbances in the **Strait of Hormuz**, and the **sinking of the Iranian naval vessel IRIS Dena near Sri Lanka in March 2026.**

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

One Case One Data Initiative

- **Context:** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday announced in open court the launch of a major digital initiative **“One Case One Data”**
- It aimed at **integrating judicial administration across all levels of courts in India.**
- The system seeks to connect courts from the taluk level to the Supreme Court into a unified digital framework.
- Objective is to **create a comprehensive, interconnected, and centralized judicial database.**
- IORA is an intergovernmental organisation **established on 7 March 1997.**
- The idea for the organisation emerged from the **vision of former South African President Nelson Mandela during his 1995 visit to India.**
- Initially, the grouping was called the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative (IORI), later renamed the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), before adopting its present name.
- The Secretariat of IORA is located in Ebene, Mauritius, and is headed by a Secretary-General appointed for a fixed tenure.
- The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest decision-making body of the organisation and meets annually.

Su Sahay AI Chatbot

- The CJI also launched **“Su Sahay”, an AI-powered assistance chatbot.**
- The chatbot has been integrated with the **website of the Supreme Court of India.**
- Purpose is to **facilitate easier access to justice and court-related services for litigants and the general public.**
- The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest decision-making body of the organisation and meets annually.

Importance of IORA for India

10th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD)

- **Context:** The 10th Indian Ocean Dialogue was organised in New Delhi with the theme **“Indian Ocean Region in a Transforming World.”**
- India, serving as Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (2025–27), used the platform to **highlight maritime security, governance of the blue economy, and technological innovation under its MAHASAGAR vision.**
- Strengthening India’s Role as a Security Provider
- Balancing Chinese Influence
- Ensuring Energy and Trade Security
- Promoting the Blue Economy
- Enhancing India’s Diplomatic Influence
- Unique Regional Platform
- Expanding Soft Power and Cultural Links
- Humanitarian and Disaster Response Leadership
- Supporting India’s Indo-Pacific Strategy

National Jute Board

- **Context:** With the aim of modernizing crop monitoring, the National Jute Board has expanded the operations of the '**Jute Crop Information System**' (JCIS) a technology-based platform developed in collaboration with ISRO.

About the National Jute Board

- The National Jute Board is an apex body functioning under the **Ministry of Textiles, Government of India**.
- It is responsible for the overall development of the jute sector.
- The Board is governed under the '**National Jute Board Act, 2008**'.
- It formally came into effect on February 12, 2009.

Objectives

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

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

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

Details regarding the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

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

- It was designed as a strategic initiative **to mitigate the adverse effects of climate variability on agriculture**, while simultaneously ensuring long-term food and livelihood security.
- Since 2022-23, it has been subsumed under the **umbrella scheme of the 'Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana' (PMRKVY)**.
- It promotes climate-resilient agricultural practices through a set of specific, target-oriented, and integrated interventions.
- It lays a strong foundation for sustainable agricultural growth by enhancing water-use efficiency, improving soil health, and strengthening climate-resilient agriculture.
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**

Key Initiatives undertaken under NMSA

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

NATIONAL SCHEMES

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

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

About PM E-DRIVE Scheme

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

Key Components of the Scheme

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

Eligibility Criteria

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

Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling

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

About Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling

- The **Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling** is part of the National Critical Mineral Mission, aimed at strengthening domestic capacity and supply chain resilience in critical minerals.
- The scheme has a tenure of six years (FY 2025–26 to FY 2030–31) and focuses on recycling of **e-waste, lithium-ion battery scrap, and other industrial scrap** to recover critical minerals.
- It supports both large recyclers and small/new recyclers (including start-ups), with one-third of the total outlay reserved for smaller players to encourage wider participation.
- Incentives are provided for full recycling value chains (not just black mass production), including a **20% capital subsidy** on plant and machinery and an operational subsidy linked to incremental sales performance.

- Financial support is capped at Rs.50 crore for large entities and Rs.25 crore for small entities, with structured operational subsidies released in phases based on production milestones.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

- Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved the 5th edition of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to mitigate economic impacts of the West Asia crisis.
- The scheme provides additional credit guarantees to MSMEs and non-MSMEs, including sectors like aviation.
- The objective is to help businesses overcome liquidity stress, sustain operations, and prevent economic slowdown due to external shocks.
- The scheme reflects the government's focus on financial stability, credit support, and economic resilience during global crises.

About Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

- The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide liquidity support to businesses, especially MSMEs affected by lockdowns.
- It offers 100% credit guarantee by the government to banks and NBFCs for loans extended to eligible borrowers.
- The scheme covers existing loan outstanding as on February 29, 2020, enabling additional working capital and term loans.
- It aims to reduce credit risk for lenders and ensure easy access to finance for stressed businesses.
- The objective is to support business continuity, protect jobs, and stabilise the economy during crisis situations.

Mission for Cotton Productivity

- Context :** The Union Cabinet approved the Mission for Cotton Productivity for the period 2026-27 to 2030-31 to address low productivity, quality issues, and stagnation in the cotton sector.
- It is aligned with the government's 5F vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign) to strengthen the textile value chain.
- The mission focuses on developing high-yielding, climate-resilient, and pest-resistant seed varieties to improve productivity.
- It promotes modern cultivation practices such as High Density Planting System and Integrated Cotton Management.
- It emphasises Extra Long Staple cotton to enhance quality and boost exports.
- It aims to strengthen ginning, processing, and testing infrastructure to meet global quality standards.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the Ministry of Textiles, with support from Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.
- The mission will initially cover 140 districts in 14 states and 2000 ginning units.
- It promotes Kasturi Cotton Bharat for traceability, certification, and branding of Indian cotton.
- It encourages digital integration of mandis to improve price discovery and enhance farmers' income.
- It supports sustainable practices, recycling, and diversification into natural fibres.
- It targets production of 498 lakh bales and an increase in productivity to 755 kg per hectare by 2031.

India Semiconductor Mission

- **Context** : The Union Cabinet approved two semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission.
- Total investment is about ₹3,936 crore with expected employment generation of around 2,230 skilled jobs, and both projects are located in Gujarat.
- Crystal Matrix Limited will establish a compound semiconductor fabrication and ATMP facility at Dholera for manufacturing Mini/Micro-LED display modules using Gallium Nitride technology, marking India's first commercial Mini/Micro-LED facility.

About India Semiconductor Mission

- India Semiconductor Mission was launched in 2021 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.
- It has a total financial outlay of ₹76,000 crore and aims to develop a **sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem** in the country.
- The mission provides **financial support and incentives** to companies investing in semiconductor fabrication, display manufacturing, and chip design.
- It focuses on strengthening the **entire semiconductor value chain**, including manufacturing, packaging, and design ecosystems.
- It promotes the development of **indigenous Intellectual Property (IP)** and encourages **Transfer of Technology (ToT)**.
- It includes a scheme for setting up **semiconductor fabrication plants (fabs)** in India.
- It includes a scheme for setting up **display fabrication plants (fabs)** in India.
- It also supports the establishment of **semiconductor, silicon photonics, and sensor manufacturing units**.

- It promotes **ATMP/OSAT facilities** (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging) as part of backend semiconductor manufacturing.
- The overall objective is to reduce import dependence, boost domestic manufacturing, and position India as a **global semiconductor hub**.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- **Context**: To implement the '**Self-Reliant India**' initiative within the maritime sector, the Indian Maritime Foundation signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in Chennai with IIT Mumbai, IIT Chennai, and the Indian Maritime University.
- Guided by the vision of '**Viksit Bharat 2047**' (**Developed India 2047**), the Central Government is actively implementing the '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**' (**Self-Reliant India**) initiative across various sectors.
- Accordingly, the Indian Maritime Foundation is undertaking efforts to execute various innovative projects within the maritime domain.

About the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- The Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is a major initiative launched with the **objective of transforming India into a self-reliant nation**.
- This scheme was launched on **May 13, 2020**.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, an **economic relief package worth ₹20 lakh crore was announced to support the nation**.

This initiative operates by focusing on the following five key pillars:

- Economy
- Infrastructure
- Systems
- Vibrant Demography
- Demand (Needs and Market)

Key Objectives of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan Initiative

- To establish India as a Global Supply Chain Hub.
- To enhance the government's confidence in the capabilities and growth potential of the private sector.
- To create effective growth catalysts (Force Multipliers) for Indian manufacturers.
- To expand opportunities for exporting products such as agricultural produce, textiles, apparel, and jewellery to global markets.
- To assess and enhance the self-reliance potential of every sector including defense, agriculture, healthcare, and infrastructure with the support of the FY22 Budget.

Key Schemes Implemented under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

Scheme to Support Startups

- A scheme aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing and promoting exports.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- A scheme providing free food and financial assistance to the poor.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- A scheme offering emergency credit assistance to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

PM SVANidhi Scheme

- A scheme providing low-interest loans to street vendors.

One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- A facility enabling individuals to procure food grains in any state using a single ration card.

PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

- A scheme providing direct financial assistance to farmers.

Make in India

- An initiative aimed at promoting manufacturing and investment within India.

Mission Mausam

- **Context:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) has established the 'Mission Mausam Urban Weather Observatory' along with associated monitoring facilities.
- This initiative was developed by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.**
- The primary objective of this facility is to **enhance real-time weather forecasting and climate research within an urban environment.**
- Its goal is to improve the prediction of severe weather events particularly in Chennai by studying sea-breeze and land-breeze dynamics, atmospheric aerosols, and cloud characteristics.

Introduction – 'Mission Mausam'

- Due to its diverse topography and climatic conditions, India is significantly influenced by various weather patterns and monsoon systems.
- Given that agriculture serves as a primary source of livelihood in India, accurate weather forecasting is absolutely essential.
- In recognition of this critical need, the Union Cabinet approved this project on September 11, 2024.
- This project is being implemented through the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is a major national initiative slated for implementation over a two-year period, with an estimated outlay of ₹2,000 crore.
- The objective of this project is to position India as a global leader in the fields of weather and climate science.
- Through this initiative, the ultimate goal is to transform India into a "Weather-Ready Nation" and a "Climate-Smart Nation."

- This initiative aims to provide accurate and reliable weather and climate information to several sectors Agriculture, Disaster Management and Rural Development

IndiaAI Mission

- **Context:** An MoU has been signed between **IndiaAI and the ICMR** to accelerate the responsible application of **AI in the healthcare sector**.
- Under this collaborative initiative, both organizations will effectively leverage their complementary strengths by integrating IndiaAI's computing infrastructure, data platforms, and AI skilling initiatives with the ICMR's biomedical research expertise and its '**Medical Information Data for AI Solutions (MIDAS) framework**, thereby enabling the innovation, research, and deployment of AI-driven healthcare solutions.

About IndiaAI Mission (2024)

- The IndiaAI Mission (2024) was launched under the aegis of **the MeitY** with an outlay of **₹10,371.92 crore**, aiming to position India as a global hub for "**Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India.**"
- **Implementing Agency:** IndiaAI – an **autonomous business division** operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- **Budget:** A financial outlay of over **₹10,371.92 crore** has been allocated over a period of five years.
- **Primary Objective:** To democratize access to AI computing resources, foster sovereign AI capabilities, and promote "**AI for Social Good.**"

The Seven Pillars of the IndiaAI Mission

- **IndiaAI Compute:** Enhancing computing capabilities.

- **IndiaAI Data Platform:** A central AI data repository (AIKosh).
- **India AI Future Skills:** Building human capital ready for Artificial Intelligence.
- **Safe and Trusted AI:** Ethical and secure deployment of Artificial Intelligence.
- **India AI Innovation Centre:** Fostering research and collaboration.
- **India AI Application Development Initiatives:** Sector-specific AI solutions.
- **India AI Startup Fund:** Funding and global support for AI startups.

JANANI Platform

- **Context:** During a National Conference on Best Practices, the Union Ministry of Health introduced the '**Janani**' platform to **strengthen maternal and child healthcare**.
- **Objective:** Janani is a **service-oriented digital platform** designed to comprehensively track and maintain the digital health records of women during their reproductive years.
- Developed as an enhanced version of the existing **Reproductive and Child Health (RCH)** system, this platform creates a longitudinal health record by documenting key service delivery events throughout the continuum of care.
- **Achievements:** To date, Janani has **achieved 1.34 crore beneficiary registrations**, over 30 lakh registrations of pregnant women, the generation of over 30 lakh MCH cards, and over 1 lakh biometric verifications.

Key Features of the Janani Platform:

- **Comprehensive Tracking:** It monitors the entire maternal journey, including Ante-Natal Care (ANC), delivery preparedness, institutional delivery, Post-Natal Care (PNC), and newborn/infant care.
- **QR-enabled Digital Cards:** This platform introduces **QR-enabled Maternal and Child**

Health (MCH) cards, allowing individuals to carry their medical records across various health centers.

- **Digital Authentication and Security:** Beneficiaries can register using their **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)**, Aadhaar (via OTP/biometrics), or mobile numbers.
- **Alerts for High-Risk Pregnancies:** Janani generates automated alerts for high-risk pregnancies and creates relevant lists for frontline health workers (such as ASHA workers) to facilitate timely intervention.
- **Pan-India Integration:** It features a Pan-India search facility that is essential for tracking migrant populations and ensuring continuity of care.
- **Self-Registration:** Beneficiaries can register themselves directly via the web or mobile applications, enabling them to access health-related information, details on nearby medical centers, and nutritional guidance.

Significance

- Ensuring accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare services, with a special focus on **enhancing digital accessibility, continuity of care, and improved maternal and child health outcomes.**

Jan Suraksha Schemes: 11 Years of Expanding Social Security Coverage in India

- **Context:** Three Jan Suraksha Schemes - Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) complete 11 years of providing social security cover.
- These flagship schemes **aim to broaden the insurance and pension landscape by shielding citizens against life's uncertainties and fostering long-term financial resilience.**

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)

- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana is a government-backed life insurance scheme providing financial protection against death due to any reason.
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana was launched in May 2015 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Finance.
- The scheme offers life insurance coverage at a premium of less than ₹2 per day.
- PMJJBY is a one-year renewable insurance scheme valid from 1 June to 31 May every year.

Eligibility

- All individual bank or post office account holders **aged 18 to 50 years are eligible to join the scheme.**
- Subscribers must provide consent for auto-debit of the premium from their bank or post office account.
- The annual premium under the scheme is ₹436 per member.

Benefits

- The scheme provides an **insurance cover of ₹2 lakh in case of the subscriber's death due to any cause.**
- A lien period of 30 days is applicable from the date of enrolment.

Significance

- PMJJBY enhances **financial security for economically vulnerable families.**
- The scheme supports the government's agenda of financial inclusion and social security coverage for all citizens.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)

- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana is a **government-backed accident insurance scheme providing coverage against accidental death and disability.**
- The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, launched **on May 9th 2015**, is a flagship social

security initiative of the Government of India.

- The scheme offers **insurance coverage up to ₹2 lakh at a very low premium of less than ₹2 per month.**

Key Features

- PMSBY is a **one-year renewable insurance scheme valid from 1 June to 31 May every year.**
- The scheme is administered through **Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs)** and other participating general insurance companies.
- Banks and post offices act as enrolment and implementation agencies for the scheme.

Eligibility

- All individual bank or post office account holders aged **18 to 70 years are eligible to enroll.**
- Subscribers must provide consent for auto-debit of the premium from their account.
- An individual can enroll through only one bank or post office account, even if multiple accounts are held.

Premium

- The annual premium under **the scheme is ₹20 per member.**
- The premium is automatically deducted from the subscriber's bank or post office account through the auto-debit facility.

Insurance Benefits

- **₹2 lakh** is payable in case of accidental death or total permanent disability.
- **₹1 lakh** is payable in case of partial permanent disability due to an accident.

Significance

- PMSBY provides **affordable social security and accident insurance coverage to economically weaker sections.**
- The scheme promotes **financial inclusion and risk protection for citizens, especially low-income households.**

- It complements other social security initiatives under the government's inclusive welfare framework.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- Atal Pension Yojana was launched **to create a universal social security system, particularly for the poor, underprivileged and workers in the unorganised sector.**
- Atal Pension Yojana is a government-supported **pension initiative introduced in 2015** with the objective of providing social security and old-age income protection to workers employed in the unorganised sector.
- The scheme aims **to provide financial security and pension support during old age.**
- APY is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority under the framework of the National Pension System.

Eligibility

- The scheme is **open to all bank account holders aged 18 to 40 years.**
- Only individuals who are not income tax payers are eligible to join the scheme.
- The contribution amount varies according to the pension amount selected by the subscriber.

Pension Benefits

- Subscribers receive a guaranteed minimum monthly pension **after attaining 60 years of age.**
- Pension options available under the scheme are: **₹1,000 per month, ₹2,000 per month, ₹3,000 per month, ₹4,000 per month, ₹5,000 per month.**
- The pension amount depends on the subscriber's contribution and age of entry into the scheme.

Disbursement of Benefits

- After the subscriber's death, **the pension is payable to the spouse.**
- After the death of both subscriber and spouse, **the accumulated pension corpus is returned to the nominee.**

- In case of premature death of the subscriber before 60 years, the spouse can continue contributing to the APY account until the subscriber would have attained 60 years.
- Furthermore, through this scheme, employment opportunities have been created for more than 3.6 million people.

Significance

- APY strengthens old-age income security for workers in the unorganised sector.
- The scheme promotes financial inclusion and social protection for economically vulnerable populations.
- It contributes to building a sustainable pension culture in India.

National AI Skill Development Program for the Creative Sector

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, in collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)**, has launched a National AI Skill Development Program for the creative sector.
- This program was developed in partnership with **Google and YouTube**.
- Implemented by **The Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)**.

Objectives

- To build industry-ready AI skills within the creative sector and to **strengthen India's creative economy**.
- To **provide 15,000 AI skill scholarships** across creative domains such as media, animation, gaming, and digital storytelling.
- To cover areas such as **Generative AI, Prompting, Workflow Automation, and Responsible AI**, aligned with industry requirements.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

- **Context:** During the cycle of the 15th Finance Commission, provisions have been made to facilitate the **establishment of over 400,000 micro-enterprises** through the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

About Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

- This is a **Central Sector Scheme launched in August 2008**.
- It is a credit-linked subsidy scheme administered by the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)**.
- The scheme aims to **create self-employment opportunities for first-generation entrepreneurs and to foster sustainable livelihoods** in the manufacturing and service sectors particularly in rural areas.
- This scheme is implemented by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.

Eligibility for the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme

- Any individual aged **18 years or above is eligible for this scheme**.
- There is **no income ceiling** for availing financial assistance to set up projects under the **PMEGP**.
- For setting up projects with a value exceeding ₹10 lakhs in the manufacturing sector, and projects exceeding ₹5 lakhs in the business/service sector, beneficiaries **must possess a minimum educational qualification of having passed the 8th grade**.

Government Launches VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 Replacing MGNREGA

- **Context:** Government of India notified the implementation of the **Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G] Act, 2025** on 11 May 2026.
- The Act will be implemented across the country from **1 July 2026**.

Replacement of MGNREGA

- With the enforcement of the new law, **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** will stand repealed from the same date.
- The transition marks a major shift in **India's rural development and employment framework.**

Objective of the New Act

- The VB-G RAM G Act aims to promote integrated, productivity-oriented and future-ready rural transformation aligned with the **vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.**

Enhanced Employment Guarantee

- Every rural household with adult members willing to undertake unskilled manual work will receive a statutory **guarantee of 125 days of wage employment annually.**
- The increased employment guarantee is intended to **strengthen livelihood security and improve rural incomes.**

Unemployment Allowance

- Employment must be provided within the prescribed timeframe after demand for work is made.
- If employment is not provided, eligible workers will receive unemployment allowance as per the provisions of the Act.

Wage Payment Provisions

- Wages will continue to be transferred directly into workers' **bank or post office accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).**
- Wage payments must be made **weekly or within 15 days after closure of the muster roll.**
- Workers will be entitled to compensation in case of delayed wage payments.

Budget Allocation

- For the financial year 2026–27, the Central Government has allocated ₹95,692.31 crore for the programme.

- It is the highest-ever Budget Estimate allocation for a rural employment scheme in India.
- Including State contributions, the total programme outlay is expected to exceed ₹1.51 lakh crore.

Expected Benefits

- The programme is expected to boost rural infrastructure development, employment generation and enhancement of rural incomes.

Smooth Transition from MGNREGA

- Employment under MGNREGA will continue **without interruption until the new Act comes into force.**
- Ongoing works under MGNREGA as of 30 June 2026 will be seamlessly carried forward under the new framework.

Support to States and UTs

- The Government has provided adequate labour budget allocations to **States and Union Territories according to demand and field requirements.**
- The aim is to **ensure that no eligible rural household faces inconvenience during the transition period.**

Features of the VB-G RAM G Framework

- The main objective of the scheme is to provide a legal guarantee of wage employment to rural households while **promoting the creation of durable and quality rural infrastructure assets.**
- The programme seeks to connect rural employment generation with larger national economic and infrastructure goals through integration of **Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans with initiatives such as PM Gati Shakti.**
- The proposed legislation is designed to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- The guaranteed annual wage employment for each rural household has been increased

from 100 days to 125 days under the new framework.

- The funding pattern for wages has been revised to a 60:40 sharing arrangement between the Centre and the States, replacing the earlier system where unskilled wages were fully financed by the Central Government.

Sahayog Portal

- **Context:** The Cyber Crime Division has sent a letter to the platform 'X' (formerly Twitter), requesting the removal of posts that disrupt public peace.
- The Sahayog Portal is an online platform launched in October 2024 to facilitate the rapid removal of illegal content from the internet.

About the Sahayog Portal

- It is an online platform launched in October 2024 to facilitate the rapid removal of illegal content from the internet.
- It enables government agencies to send direct removal notices to social media platforms and other online intermediaries.
- It derives its statutory backing from Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- It ensures that intermediaries act swiftly while retaining their 'Safe Harbour' protections.
- Nodal Ministry: Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Features of the Sahayog Portal

- Connects government agencies, State/Union Territory Nodal Officers, and 65 online intermediaries on a single platform.
- Sends rapid, documented notices to intermediaries for the immediate removal of illegal content.
- Operates under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, thereby ensuring legal enforceability and consequences for non-compliance.

PM MITRA Textile Park

- **Context:** India's first fully operational, mega PM MITRA Textile Park is located in Warangal, Telangana.
- Inaugurated by the Prime Minister, this massive facility valued at ₹1,695 crore spans an area of 1,300 acres.
- It operates based on the '5F' vision (Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign) to boost the domestic textile industry.
- Employment Generation: Expected to create more than 24,000 jobs across the entire textile value chain.

About PM MITRA Textile Park

- The Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) scheme establishes mega textile hubs.
- These hubs bring together every stage of textile production—such as spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing, and garment manufacturing—under one roof.
- Each park covers a vast area (approximately 1,000 acres or more) and functions as a comprehensive ecosystem for textile manufacturing.
- MITRA Parks can be either greenfield (new) or brownfield (existing) projects.
- The scheme is inspired by the vision: "Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Factory, Factory to Fashion, Fashion to Foreign."
- Furthermore, it aims to make Indian textiles affordable, quick to market, and of high quality.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Textiles

Key Features of PM MITRA Parks

- Each park consolidates spinning, garment manufacturing, dyeing, and processing activities within a single zone, thereby reducing transportation time and costs.

World-Class Infrastructure

- These parks feature modern roads, reliable power and water supply, worker dormitories, logistics facilities, and ready-to-use factory units. Furthermore, they provide dedicated spaces for research, skill development, and commercial operations.
- **PM MITRA allocates 50% of the park area for core manufacturing activities, 20% for common utility facilities, and 10% for commercial development.**

Employment and Investment

- Each park is expected to generate 100,000 direct and 200,000 indirect jobs.
- The scheme aims to attract investments exceeding ₹70,000 crore.

Public-Private Partnership

- The PM MITRA Park will be established through a 'Special Purpose Vehicle' (SPV); **this entity will operate under a 'Public-Private Partnership' (PPP) model, jointly owned by the State Government and the Government of India.**

Capital Support and Incentives

- The Ministry of Textiles will provide financial assistance of up to ₹800 crore per park for 'Greenfield' projects and up to ₹500 crore per park for 'Brownfield' projects.
- State Governments will provide the necessary land and upgraded basic utility infrastructure for these proposed mega textile parks.

PM MITRA Parks location

- The seven approved PM MITRA Parks are being established at the following locations: **Tamil Nadu (Virudhunagar), Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow District), and Maharashtra.**

Project Cheetah: India's Cheetah Conservation Initiative

- **Context:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister released two female cheetahs brought from

Botswana into an open forest in the **Kuno National Park** following the completion of their quarantine period.

- The reintroduction of cheetahs brought from Nigeria, South Africa, and now Botswana is achieving consistent success, and today **Madhya Pradesh has earned nationwide recognition as the 'Cheetah State.'**
- This will give impetus to 'Project Cheetah' and add another important chapter to India's wildlife conservation history.
- The objective of the project is **to restore the endangered animal species in the state, increase their numbers, and prepare them for free hunting and roaming.**

Project Cheetah

- Project Cheetah is India's premier wildlife conservation initiative focused on bringing back cheetahs, which were **declared extinct in the country in 1952.**
- The programme represents a landmark ecological effort, as **India became the first nation** to undertake the intercontinental relocation and reintroduction of an extinct large carnivore species.
- The Government of India officially **launched the project in 2022.**
- The first group of African cheetahs was translocated from **Namibia to Kuno National Park in 2022.**
- A second batch of cheetahs was brought from **South Africa in 2023 to strengthen the reintroduction programme.**
- The project is being carried out under the supervision of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** with assistance from Indian and international wildlife specialists.

Major Objectives of Project Cheetah

- **To reintroduce cheetahs into the Indian ecosystem after an absence of over seven decades.**

- **To create a self-sustaining and genetically healthy cheetah** population in natural habitats over the long term.
- **To revive and conserve grassland** and savannah ecosystems, which have historically received limited conservation attention in India.
- **To enhance biodiversity** by restoring the role of a top predator within the ecological food chain.
- **To encourage eco-tourism** opportunities and support livelihood generation for local communities through public participation.
- **To reinforce India's position** as a global leader in wildlife protection, ecological restoration, and species recovery initiatives.
- Based on the source of the raw material, ethanol is classified into three generations
 - **1G Ethanol:** Derived from food crops such as sugarcane and maize.
 - **2G Ethanol:** Derived from crop residues, bagasse (sugarcane pulp), and bamboo.
 - **3G Ethanol:** Derived from algae; this remains in the Research and Development (R&D) phase.
- **Miscibility:** Ethanol is 99.9% pure alcohol, and due to its chemical compatibility, it blends with petrol.
- Ethanol blending improves fuel combustion and reduces carbon monoxide (CO₂) and hydrocarbon emissions.

Government Initiatives for Ethanol Blending

- Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP): **Aims to reduce import dependency, save foreign exchange, boost the domestic agricultural sector, and yield associated environmental benefits.**
- The blending ratio has risen from 1.5% (2014) to 10% (2022), and is targeted to reach 20% by 2025.
- E27 Target: India aims to achieve a **27% ethanol blend by 2030**, supported by a phased approach.
- To ensure consumer awareness, the ethanol blend percentage must be mandatorily displayed on fuel pumps and vehicles.

The POCSO Act

Historical Background

- In 1992, by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), India assumed international obligations **to strengthen its child protection laws.**
- All these developments collectively paved the way for the enactment of the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)**

Ethanol Blending Program

- **Context:** India is currently exploring the possibility of utilizing 100% ethanol as an alternative to petrol. This solution is being advanced during a period of critical challenges.
- While this news may seem astonishing to us, it is not novel to Brazil. Since 2003, a vehicular fuel blend consisting of 95.6% ethanol and 4.4% water has been in use there.

About Ethanol

- Ethanol (C₂H₅OH) is a renewable, flammable, and colorless bio-alcohol used as a transportation fuel.
- It is produced either through the fermentation of sugars/starches or via the hydration of ethylene.
- Ethanol possesses a high octane rating but has an energy density that is 27% lower than that of petrol.
- It functions both as an additive when blended with petrol and as a standalone fuel (E85, E100) in flex-fuel vehicles.
- Ethanol is also utilized in the manufacture of disinfectants, perfumes, beverages, and industrial solvents.

Act, 2012, which was notified on November 14, 2012.

Objectives of the POCSO Act

- To protect children under the age of 18 from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and exposure to pornography.
- To protect both boys and girls equally, thereby ensuring non-discriminatory legal action.
- To provide a safe environment for reporting, medical examination, and investigation, with the aim of minimizing psychological trauma.
- To establish Special Courts to ensure the timely disposal of cases within a stipulated timeframe.
- To impose stringent penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty (introduced post-2019).

Government Initiatives for Child Protection

- **POCSO Act (2012) and POCSO Rules (2020):** Provide for stringent punishments for sexual offenses against children, interim compensation, support persons, and child-friendly reporting mechanisms.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Focuses on preventing female infanticide, improving the survival of the girl child, promoting education, and reducing the risk of exploitation.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):** Monitors children's rights, inspects institutions, conducts inquiries, and ensures the implementation of child protection laws.
- **PM CARES for Children Scheme (2021):** Provides financial assistance, education, health insurance, and welfare support to children who have lost their parents due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** Facilitates the online reporting of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and cyber exploitation.

- **Operation Smile and Operation Muskan (State Police):** Nationwide rescue operations aimed at recovering missing and abducted children.

PM SHRI

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Education has issued a **fresh reminder regarding the pending implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme to West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu** after Assembly elections concluded in the three States.

PM SHRI Schools Scheme

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister, approved the PM SHRI Schools Scheme.
- PM SHRI stands for **PM Schools for Rising India**. PM SHRI is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- The scheme aims to develop more than 14,500 schools across India.
- Existing schools managed by the Central Government, State Governments, Union Territories, and local bodies will be strengthened under the scheme.
- PM SHRI Schools will serve as **model schools showcasing the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020**.

Objectives of PM SHRI Schools

- To provide high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education.
- To create joyful and student-friendly learning environments.
- To support multilingual needs and diverse academic abilities of children.
- To develop holistic and well-rounded individuals with 21st century skills.
- To promote active participation of students in the learning process.

Funding Pattern

- In **General States and Union Territories**

having a legislature, the expenditure is shared between the **Centre and the State in the ratio of 60:40.**

- For **North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the funding pattern is 90:10**, with the larger share borne by the Central Government.
- In **Union Territories** without a legislature, the **entire cost of the scheme is financed by the Central Government.**

SEHAT Initiative

- **Context:** In a significant initiative to reinforce the convergence of agriculture, nutrition, and public health, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) jointly launched **"SEHAT - Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation"**, a national mission-mode programme designed to **translate agricultural advancements into tangible health outcomes for the people of India.**
- The initiative highlights India's transition from treatment-oriented healthcare towards a system focused on **prevention and health promotion.**
- Its main aim is to **strengthen coordination among agriculture, nutrition, and public health sectors for improving overall health outcomes.**
- The programme gives importance to biofortified crops, nutrient-dense foods, integrated farming practices, and prevention of non-communicable diseases.
- SEHAT encourages the concept of **"food as medicine"** by promoting nutritious and scientifically supported agricultural methods.
- The initiative is aligned with the One Health approach, which connects human, animal, and environmental health systems.

Key Features

- Developing and promoting crop varieties that are naturally enriched with essential micronutrients such as **zinc and iron.**
- Re-emphasizing the consumption of climate-resilient and **nutrient-rich millets**, such as Kodo, Kutki, Ragi, Sorghum, and Pearl Millet.
- Encouraging rural households to integrate livestock rearing, fisheries, and beekeeping with crop cultivation to ensure diverse and balanced family nutrition.
- Implementing scientific interventions and awareness programs to protect farmers from the risks associated with pesticide exposure and hazardous chemicals.
- Exploring and promoting dietary alternatives that can act as therapeutic agents to prevent and manage lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.
- Addressing the interconnected health of humans, animals, and the environment through collaborative planning between medical and agricultural scientists.
- Developing real-time dashboards and research databases to align agricultural policies with national nutrition strategies.

Extension of Samagra Shiksha and PM POSHAN Schemes

- **Context:** The Central Government has provided a temporary extension to the **Samagra Shiksha Scheme and PM Poshan** schemes till September 30, pending approval for their continuation for another five years.

About the Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- Samagra Shiksha was introduced in **2018 by the Ministry of Education** as a flagship programme for school education.
- The scheme aims to **provide equitable, inclusive, and affordable quality education across the country.**

- It covers the entire schooling cycle from pre-primary to senior secondary level.

The scheme merged three earlier programmes into one comprehensive framework

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
- Teacher Education (TE)

Objectives

- To improve the quality and efficiency of school education.
- To ensure inclusive and equitable access to education for all children.
- To strengthen holistic and integrated learning from preschool to Class 12.
- To make quality education accessible irrespective of social or regional background.

Implementation and Funding

- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Education through the Department of School Education and Literacy.**
- It functions as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme.**
- The financial sharing pattern between the **Centre and States is generally 60:40.**

NIPUN Bharat Programme

- In June 2021, the government launched the **NIPUN Bharat initiative under Samagra Shiksha.**
- The programme focuses on **children aged 3 to 9 years.**
- Its objective is to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills at an early stage of learning.

PM POSHAN Scheme

- The Government approved the PM POSHAN Scheme for the **period 2021–22 to 2025–26.**
- PM POSHAN stands for **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman.**
- The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Education.**

- It provides **one hot cooked meal to children studying in Government and Government-aided schools.**

Coverage of the Scheme

- The scheme covers children from **Classes I to VIII.**
- Children enrolled in **pre-schools or Bal Vatika in primary schools are also covered.**
- The programme is implemented **across the country without discrimination** based on gender or social background.

Objectives of PM POSHAN

- PM POSHAN was earlier known as the **Mid-Day Meal Scheme.**
- The scheme seeks to **address hunger and improve educational participation among children.**

Main objectives include

- Improving nutritional status of school children
- Encouraging regular school attendance
- Supporting children from disadvantaged sections
- Enhancing concentration and classroom participation

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) - 1995

- **Context:** A recent study indicates that the monthly old-age pension of Rs.200 to Rs.500 provided by the Central Government under NSAP has lost a significant portion of its value due to years of inflation.
- The report states inflation has reduced the value of pensions by approximately 45%. To maintain the same purchasing power, a Rs.200 pension should now be approximately Rs.353.

About NSAP

- Launched in 1995, it is a social welfare scheme providing financial aid to the poor and vulnerable.
- Under IGNOAPS, the Centre provides Rs.200/month for those aged 60–79 and Rs.500/month

for those 80 and above. Currently, over 221 lakh people benefit from this.

- It is a '**Centrally Sponsored Scheme**'.
- Managed by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- **Constitutional Basis:** Based on Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), which urges the state to provide public assistance to those in need.

Key Beneficiaries

- Elderly living below the poverty line (BPL).
- Widows and Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
- Families who have lost their primary breadwinner.

Sub-schemes under NSAP

- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (1995):** Old age pension for the poor.
- **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme. (2009):** Pension for widows.
- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (2009):** Pension for persons with disabilities.
- **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS - 1995):** One-time grant after the death of a primary breadwinner.
- **Annapurna Scheme (2000):** Food security for eligible seniors not receiving a pension.

DigiLocker

- **Context:** Gujarat, along with five other states, was honored for its outstanding contribution to expanding the use of DigiLocker in state government services.

About DigiLocker

- **Launched in 2015** by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** under the Digital India mission.
- It is an officially recognized government app following high security standards.
- Allows users to store authentic documents digitally (e.g., passports, mark sheets, ID proofs) for verification during travel or applications.

- **Under Rule 9A of the IT Rules, 2016**, digital documents issued via DigiLocker are legally equivalent to original physical documents.

- Promotes **paperless governance, reduces administrative overhead, and allows instant, secure document sharing.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- **Context:** In Satara, Maharashtra, the '**Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana**' beneficiaries' conference and the '**Maha Awas Abhiyan**' state-level awards ceremony were held.

- Till now, three crore houses have been built across the country under this scheme.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- This scheme was introduced in two phases
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban - in 2015
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Rural - in 2016
- Objectives
 - The objective s of this scheme is to **set up affordable permanent houses for poor families living in urban and rural areas.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Rural

- **Administrative Ministry**
- This scheme operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Rural Development.

Salient Features

- Selection of Beneficiaries: Priority is given to landless families in this scheme; further, at least 60% of national-level targets are allocated for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) families.

Fund Sharing Method

- In plain areas, 60:40 ratio between the Central and State Governments
- For Northeastern and Himalayan states, 90:10 ratio
- For Union Territories, 100% Central Government financial assistance

Financial Assistance Provided

- For beneficiaries in plain areas, Rs. 1.20 lakh
- For beneficiaries in hilly or difficult geographical terrain areas, Rs. 1.30 lakh

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban

- Administrative Ministry
 - This urban housing scheme is managed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Objectives
 - Providing affordable housing solutions to poor people living in urban areas, especially those living in slums, is the main objective of this scheme.
 - This scheme primarily operates as a 'Centrally Sponsored Scheme'.
- Areas Covered by the Scheme
 - All statutory towns listed in the 2011 Census, as well as towns notified later by the State Governments, come under the scope of this scheme.
- Fund Sharing Method
 - For Northeastern and Himalayan states, 90:10 fund sharing ratio
 - For Union Territories, 100% Central Government financial assistance
 - For other states and Union Territories with legislature, 60:40 fund sharing method

Scheme for Promoting Coal / Lignite Gasification Projects

- **Context** : As a measure to strengthen energy security, the Union Cabinet has approved a new scheme to **promote the process of converting coal and lignite into synthesis gas (Syngas) through gasification.**

About Coal Gasification

- Coal gasification is a **thermo-chemical process that converts coal into a versatile and combustible gas mixture called 'synthesis gas' or 'Syngas'.**
- **Syngas is a mixture of carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen, it is used to produce various by-products such as urea, methanol, synthetic natural gas (SNG), and ammonia.**

- Current status of Coal and Lignite in India: Coal reserves (401 billion tonnes); Lignite reserves (47 billion tonnes).

Objectives

- Its primary objective is to **diversify the utilization of India's vast coal reserves and to achieve the national target of 100 million tonnes (MT) of coal gasification by the year 2030.**

Key Features of the Scheme

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Coal, Government of India.
- **Financial Allocation:** A total financial allocation of ₹37,500 crore has been made to incentivize projects aiming to gasify around 75 million tonnes (MT) of coal or lignite.
- **Incentive:** Financial assistance is capped at 20% of the total cost of plant and machinery.
- **Selection Process:** Projects will be selected through a transparent and competitive bidding process, using project cost and production capacity as criteria.
- **Long-term Policy Commitment:** The government has extended the 'Coal Linkage' duration for coal gasification projects up to 30 years; this provides the stability required for long-term investments.

- **Technology-Agnostic Approach:** Although this scheme allows the use of various technologies, it actively encourages the adoption of indigenously developed coal gasification technologies.

Significance

- India's import expenditure on alternative products to coal, such as LNG and urea, stood at ₹2.77 lakh crore in the financial year 2025.
- This scheme advances a self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) by producing these domestically from indigenous coal.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Labour Day

- The International Labour Day which is also known as May Day will be observed on **May 1, 2026**.
- Theme of International Labour Day 2026: **“Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment.”**

Maharashtra Day

- Maharashtra Day is observed annually on **May 1** to commemorate the creation of the state of Maharashtra as a separate entity in 1960.

Gujarat Foundation Day

- Gujarat observes its Foundation Day **every year on May 1**, marking its establishment as a separate state in 1960 following its division from the former Bombay State.

World Press Freedom Day

- World Press Freedom Day 2026, **observed on May 3**, centers on the theme **“Shaping a Future of Peace”**, emphasizing the vital role of journalism in fostering truth and sustainability.

World Asthma Day

- World Asthma Day 2026 was observed **globally on May 5** to raise awareness about improving access to essential asthma treatment and care.
- The theme for the World Asthma Day 2026 is: **“Access to anti-inflammatory inhalers for everyone with asthma - still an urgent need.”**

World Athletics Day

- The World Athletics Day celebrated by the people **every year on May 7**.

World Red Cross Day

- World Red Cross Day is celebrated **annually on May 8** in honour of the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, the founder of the International Red Cross Movement.
- The official World Red Cross Day 2026 theme is **‘Keeping Humanity Alive’**

World Ovarian Cancer Day

- World Ovarian Cancer Day 2026 is observed **on May 8** to promote awareness about ovarian cancer and encourage greater attention toward women’s health.
- The official World Ovarian Cancer Day 2026 theme is **“No Woman Left Behind”**

World Thalassemia Day

- World Thalassemia Day is marked annually on **May 8** to spread awareness about thalassemia, a severe hereditary blood disorder that affects millions of people across the world.
- The official theme for World Thalassemia Day 2026 is **‘Hidden No More: Finding the Undiagnosed. Supporting the Unseen.’**

Mother’s Day 2026

- Mother’s Day 2026 will be celebrated on Sunday, 10 May 2026, the occasion is observed annually on the second Sunday of May.
- The theme for Mother’s Day 2026 is **“The Great Unburdening.”**

National Technology Day

- National Technology Day is celebrated annually on **May 11** to commemorate India’s successful nuclear tests carried out at Pokhran in 1998.
- **2026 Theme:** **“Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth”**

- National Technology Day is celebrated in India to **commemorate the historic Pokhran-II nuclear tests, conducted on May 11, 1998, under 'Operation Shakti'**.
- This day was officially declared in 1999.

Key Milestones

- On May 11, 1998, India successfully conducted three nuclear tests.
- Subsequently, two additional tests were conducted.
- **India officially became a nuclear-capable nation.**
- The indigenously developed 'Hansa-3' aircraft also undertook a successful test flight.

International Nurses Day

- International Nurses Day is observed annually on **the May 12** which is the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.
- The official theme for the International Nurses Day 2026 is '**Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives**'
- President today conferred the **National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026** to fifteen Nursing professionals at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The award has been given for their **outstanding contribution in the field of nursing.**

- These prestigious awards are presented to Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and Lady Health Visitors serving across Central and State Governments, Union Territories, and voluntary organisations.
- Each award includes a **Certificate of Merit, a cash prize of one lakh rupees and a medal symbolising the nation's gratitude for the invaluable service** rendered by these health warriors.

Mental Health Awareness Week

- Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 is being observed from **11 to 17 May with the theme "Action"**.

National Endangered Species Day

- National Endangered Species Day is observed annually on the third Friday of the month of May.
- National Endangered Species Day for the year 2026 is observed on the third Friday of May, on **May 15, 2026.**
- Theme for the year 2026: **"Celebrating America's Wildlife Recovery Stories; Advancing the Endangered Species Act."**

REPORTS & INDICES

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 Report

▪ **Context:** Released by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day (24 April 2026).**

▪ Acts as a performance report card for Gram Panchayats across India.

Top Performing Themes

- Theme 1: Poverty-Free & Enhanced Livelihoods
- Theme 2: Healthy Panchayats

Participation & Coverage

- 97.30% participation rate in PAI 2.0.
- 2,59,867 Gram Panchayats from 33 States/UTs submitted validated data.
- Significant improvement from 80.79% participation in PAI 1.0.

Key Improvements in PAI 2.0

- Unified data entry form for ease of reporting.
- Mandatory Gram Sabha validation to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Auto-integration of data from national portals of Union Ministries.
- Advanced validation mechanisms (soft and cross-checking) for accuracy.
- Real-time dashboards for better monitoring and navigation.
- Vernacular language support for inclusivity.

Significance

- Strengthens grassroots governance and decentralisation.
- Promotes data-driven and transparent decision-making.
- Reinforces the vision of “Viksit Gram Panchayats” (developed villages).
- Encourages inclusive and participatory rural development.

About Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0

▪ Developed by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** as a data-driven framework to assess the performance of Gram Panchayats.

▪ Acts as a tool for evidence-based planning, monitoring, and incentivising **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).**

Purpose and Utility

- Helps States/UTs prioritise development interventions.
- Supports preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs).
- Identifies high-performing Panchayats as model learning centres.

Coverage and Framework

- Covers over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across India.
- Indicators span **9 thematic areas under Localization of Sustainable Development Goals:** Poverty, Health, Child Welfare, Water, Environment, Infrastructure, Social Justice, Good Governance, Women’s Empowerment

Performance Classification

- Based on composite scores, Panchayats are grouped into:
 - Achiever (A+): 90 and above
 - Front Runner (A): 75 to < 90
 - Performer (B): 60 to < 75
 - Aspirant (C): 40 to < 60
 - Beginner (D): Below 40

Significance

- Promotes benchmarking and competitive federalism at grassroots level.
- Enables targeted policy interventions.
- Strengthens transparent, accountable, and data-driven rural governance.

“Women and Men in India 2025”

Report

- **Context:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India, released the 27th edition of its publication titled “Women and Men in India 2025: Selected Indicators and Data” at the National Deliberative Summit on “Data for Development”

About the Report

- Provides a **comprehensive gender-based statistical overview**.
- Covers key domains: Population, Education, Health, Economic participation, Decision-making, Violence against women
- Includes metadata for 50 indicators for better clarity on concepts, sources, and methodology.

Key Findings

- Demographic & Health Indicators
 - Sex ratio at birth improved from 904 (2017–19) to 917 (2021–23).
 - Infant mortality rate declined steadily for both males and females (2008–2023).
- Education
 - Gender parity achieved **from primary to higher secondary levels**.
 - **Gross Enrolment Ratio (Higher Education): Females: 28.5 → 30.2, Males: 28.3 → 28.9 (2021–22 to 2022–23)**
- Economic Participation
 - Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) increased for both genders (age 15+).
 - Rural female LFPR rose significantly from 37.5% to 45.9% (2022–2025).
- Leadership & Employment
 - Men in managerial roles increased by 73.8% (2017–2025).
 - Women in managerial roles increased by 102.54%, indicating faster growth.

Significance

- Supports evidence-based policymaking.
- Helps design gender-responsive programmes.
- Promotes inclusive and sustainable development by highlighting evolving gender trends.

World Press Freedom Index 2026

- In the World Press Freedom Index 2026, released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), India has secured the 157th position out of 180 countries.
- For the 10th consecutive year, **Norway has retained the top spot**. It is followed by the Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark, and Sweden, which occupy the subsequent positions.
- **Eritrea ranked last (180th)**. Preceding it are North Korea, China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.
- India's ranking has slipped by six places—**from the 151st position in 2025 to the 157th position in 2026**.

World Migration Report 2026

- **Context:** World Migration Report 2026 was released by the **International Organization for Migration**
- Around 304 million people were living outside their country of birth as of mid-2024
- **Mexico–United States remains the world’s largest migration corridor** with around 11 million migrants

India-Related Migration Corridors

- **India–United Arab Emirates corridor is the fifth-largest migration corridor in the world**
- Corridor mainly consists of migrant workers employed in Gulf countries
- More than 8 million international migrants live in the UAE, with Indians forming the largest nationality group
- **India–United States corridor ranks sixth globally**. It is the second-largest migration

corridor involving North America after Mexico-US.

- Indian migrants in the US mainly include highly skilled workers and international students
- **Bangladesh-India corridor ranked 11th globally.**
- India-Saudi Arabia corridor also figures among the top 20 migration corridors

Gender Dimensions of Migration

- Gulf countries such as UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have a significantly **higher proportion of male immigrants**
- **India has a higher share of female immigrants than male immigrants**
- India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and Indonesia have a larger share of male emigrants
- Male-dominated migration patterns are mainly linked to labour demand in: Construction, Manufacturing, Agriculture sectors in Gulf and Southeast Asian countries.

Significance

- Highlights India's growing role in global migration patterns
- Reflects importance of labour mobility and skilled migration in India's economy
- Demonstrates the economic and strategic influence of the Indian diaspora worldwide

National Crime Records Bureau 2024 report

- **Context** : According to data released by **National Crime Records Bureau**, 13,396 cases of crimes against women and 7,662 cases of crimes against children were registered in 2024.
- Crime rate **per lakh population declined to 418.9 from 448.3**, and overall case registrations fell by 6.0 percent compared to 2023.
- Crimes against women **decreased by 1.5 percent to around 4.4 lakh cases**, while cruelty

by husband accounted for about 42 percent of such cases, and a new category "Offences against Women and Child" was introduced under BNS.

- **Crimes against children** increased by 5.9 percent to around 1.8 lakh cases, while crimes against senior citizens rose by 16.9 percent, mainly due to theft and fraud.
- **Crimes against Scheduled Castes decreased** by 3.6 percent and against Scheduled Tribes by 23.1 percent, showing a decline in both categories.
- **Cybercrime surged** by 17.9 percent, with fraud accounting for nearly 73 percent of cases, and economic offenses increased by 4.6 percent, mainly due to forgery, cheating, and fraud.
- Juveniles in conflict with law increased by 11.2 percent, with around 77.7 percent belonging to the 16-18 age group.
- According to the report, the **number of traffic accidents increased from 4.91 lakh in 2023 to 4.95 lakh in 2024**, with 4.52 lakh people injured in 2024. The top three states in terms of fatalities are **Uttar Pradesh (27,071), Tamil Nadu (20,390) and Maharashtra (19,475)**, which account for 13.6 per cent, 10.2 per cent and 9.8 per cent of total deaths in traffic accidents, respectively, and collectively account for 33.6 per cent of all traffic deaths in 2024.

About National Crime Records Bureau

- It was established in 1986 based on recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-81), MHA Task Force (1985), and related expert committees.
- It functions as the **central repository of crime and criminal data in India to support investigation** and link crimes with offenders.
- It implements major digital policing systems such as **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems**, launched in 2009, connecting over 15,000 police stations across the country.

- It publishes major reports including Crime in India, Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI), and Prison Statistics India.
- Several tribal and rural states continue to face shortages of teachers and inadequate infrastructure.

NITI Aayog Report on India's School Education System

- **Context:** NITI Aayog has released a comprehensive policy report analyzing a decade-long period (2014-15 to 2024-25) of India's school education system.

Key Data/Statistics on School Education

- India manages the world's largest school system, providing education to over 24.69 crore students through 14.71 lakh schools.
- A workforce comprising over 1.01 crore teachers supports this system.
- While student enrollment in **elementary education has reached near-universal levels**, the National Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for secondary education stands at 58.4%.
- Government schools constitute 68.1% of the total schools; these schools provide education to 49.2% of the total student population.

Important State-wise Findings

- **Jharkhand achieved a zero primary dropout rate** in 2024-25, reflecting improvement in school retention.
- States such as Jharkhand, Maharashtra and West Bengal reported **higher pupil-teacher ratios than the national average**, affecting classroom learning quality.
- West Bengal recorded the **highest number of zero-enrolment schools among states**.
- **Telangana also reported a high number of zero-enrolment schools**, indicating uneven school distribution and migration-related challenges.
- Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand showed a **large number of students studying in single-teacher schools**.

Key Findings Related to Tamil Nadu from the Report

- Tamil Nadu recorded **one of the highest enrolment levels in school education, with around 83.4% participation** in the concerned category mentioned in the report.
- The State achieved a **very high school transition rate of about 96.7%**, reflecting strong continuity of students in the education system.
- Tamil Nadu also maintained a **high upper primary to secondary transition rate of approximately 96.6%**, placing it among the better-performing states.
- The State recorded a **low primary dropout rate of 2.7%**, indicating effective retention of children in schools.
- Tamil Nadu was identified among the states with very high infrastructure provision in schools compared to many other states.
- In higher secondary education, Tamil Nadu showed **strong female participation with around 89.1%**, ranking among the leading states in the country.
- The report highlights Tamil Nadu as **one of the better-performing states in terms of educational access, student retention, transition rates and school infrastructure**.

TERI Report on India's Nuclear Energy Vision

- **Context:** This report, titled "Strategic Pathways for Deploying SMRs", states that to reach a nuclear energy capacity of 100 Gigawatts (GW) by the year 2047, India will require an investment of ₹23-25 lakh crore, comprehensive regulatory reforms, and the rapid adoption of Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology.

Key Features of the Report

- To increase nuclear energy capacity by the year **2047**, India will require a massive amount of investment.
- The current nuclear energy infrastructure is primarily designed for large nuclear reactors; this infrastructure must be modified to introduce SMRs and to allow private sector participation.
- The report highlights financial risks, fuel security, shortage of skilled human resources, and public acceptance as major challenges.
- It recommends adopting a 'hybrid model' that includes both large-scale conventional nuclear reactors and SMRs.

Current Status of Nuclear Energy in India

- India is currently operating **25 nuclear reactors**.
- The total installed capacity is approximately **8.8 GW**.

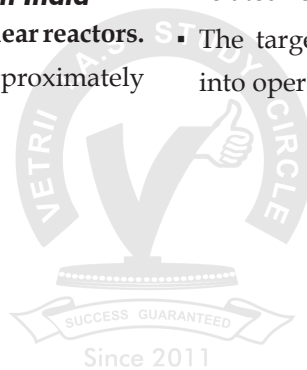
- This capacity is projected to rise to **approximately 22 GW by the year 2032**.
- India has set a target to reach a capacity of **100 GW by the year 2047**.

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

- SMRs are modern and small-scale nuclear reactors built using factory-based 'modular technology'.

India's Initiatives

- India is currently developing **three indigenous SMR designs**.
- A financial allocation of ₹20,000 crore has been made in the Union Budget for 2025-26 for SMR-related research and development activities.
- The target is to bring five indigenous SMRs into operation by the year 2033.



IMPORTANT COMMITTEES

Western Ghats Committees

Madhav Gadgil Committee Report on the Western Ghats – 2011

- The Gadgil Commission, established for environmental research, is named after its chairman, Madhav Gadgil.
- This commission is formally known as the 'Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel' (WGEEP). The commission submitted its report to the Government of India on August 31, 2011.

Recommendations of the Gadgil Committee:

- **The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) declared the entire mountain range as an 'Ecologically Sensitive Area' (ESA).**
- In its report, the committee classified the 142 taluks situated within the boundaries of the Western Ghats into **Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1, 2, and 3.**
- Since the ESZ-1 zone was considered to be of the highest priority, almost all types of developmental activities (such as mining, thermal power plants, etc.) were restricted within this zone.
- The Gadgil Report recommended that **no permission should be granted** for any new large-scale water storage dams within ecologically sensitive zones.
- The Gadgil Committee Report emphasized that the current framework for environmental governance must be overhauled. Instead of a 'top-down' approach, it called for a 'bottom-up' approach. Furthermore, it recommended the decentralization of power and the granting of greater authority to local self-governing bodies.

- The Committee recommended the establishment of a statutory body—the '**Western Ghats Ecology Authority' (WGEA)**—to function under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The Kasturirangan Committee (2013) on the Western Ghats

- The Kasturirangan Committee was constituted to review the report submitted by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP).
- This committee is frequently referred to as the '**High-Level Working Group.**'
- This refers to the **10-member High-Level Working Group (HLWG) headed by Kasturirangan.**

Recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee Report

- According to the Kasturirangan Report, rather than encompassing the entire geographical expanse of the Western Ghats, **only 37% of the region** (specifically, 60,000 sq. km) should be designated as an '**Ecologically Sensitive Area' (ESA).**
- A complete ban should be imposed on mining, quarrying, and sand extraction activities within the designated Ecologically Sensitive Areas.
- A distinction must be drawn between '**Cultural Landscapes'** (areas within the Western Ghats—comprising 58% of the total region—that are occupied by human settlements, agricultural lands, and plantations) and '**Natural Landscapes'** (areas of which, according to the Committee, 90% should be brought under the purview of the Ecologically Sensitive Area designation).
- Thermal Power Plants should not be permitted; hydroelectric projects must be authorized only after a comprehensive study.
- Highly polluting "**Red Category**" industries **must be strictly prohibited** in these regions.

- The Kasturirangan Report on the Western Ghats has put forth several recommendations favorable to farmers, including the exclusion of inhabited areas and plantations from the purview of Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).
- The Kasturirangan Report had stated that **123 villages fall within the limits of the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).**

Modernization of Courts: Supreme Court High-Level Committee

- **Background:** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has announced the formation of a high-level committee led by Justice Arvind Kumar of the Supreme Court. The committee is tasked with preparing a blueprint for modernizing courts nationwide and securing government funding between Rs.40,000 to Rs.50,000 crore for this initiative.
- **About the Justice Arvind Kumar Committee**
- This is a **Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee**, a high-level expert group aimed at completely overhauling the physical and digital infrastructure of the Indian judiciary.
- The committee includes senior judges from the Supreme Court and various High Courts, as well as top administrative and technical officials.
- **Established by:** Supreme Court of India.
- **Deadline:** The committee has been requested to submit its comprehensive report on findings and financial requirements to Sanjeev Sanyal by August 31 of this year.
- **Objectives**
 - Identify systemic bottlenecks.
 - Improve facilities for litigants and lawyers.
 - Implement cutting-edge technology for faster case disposal.
 - Bridge the digital divide through 'e-courts' initiatives and construct modern court complexes designed for the 21st century.



LATEST APPOINTMENTS

New Leadership at Prasar Bharati

- Context: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has appointed noted lyricist, writer and communication expert **Prasoon Joshi as the Chairman of Prasar Bharati**, India's public service broadcaster.
 - It was set up in **1997 as an autonomous statutory body under the Prasar Bharati Act.**
 - Its main purpose is **to deliver broadcasting services that educate, inform, and entertain the public.**
 - The organisation includes both Doordarshan and All India Radio, which were previously **operated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.**
 - The headquarters of Prasar Bharati is located in **New Delhi.**
- About Prasar Bharati**
- Prasar Bharati is the nation's public service **broadcasting organisation.**

EMINENT PERSONALITIES

Rabindranath Tagore: Life, Contributions and Legacy

- Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta. He was the son of Debendranath Tagore, a prominent leader of the Brahmo Samaj, and Sarada Devi.
- His literary works reflected themes of humanism, nationalism and social change.

National Anthems

- Two of Tagore's famous compositions, "Jana Gana Mana" and "Amar Shonar Bangla," were adopted as the national anthems of India and Bangladesh respectively.

Educational Philosophy and Visva-Bharati University

- Tagore established Visva-Bharati University to promote holistic and experiential learning.
- His educational vision aimed at blending Indian cultural traditions with international values while encouraging creativity and cultural exchange.

Santiniketan and UNESCO Recognition

- Santiniketan was founded by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore in 1863 and later developed by Rabindranath Tagore into a major cultural and educational centre.
- It was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023.

Role in India's Freedom Movement

- Tagore composed several patriotic songs that inspired the Indian independence movement.

- His notable works included "Chitto Jetha Bhayshunyo" ("Where the Mind is Without Fear") and "Ekla Chalo Re," which was admired by Mahatma Gandhi.

- Although he criticised some Gandhian approaches, Tagore played an important role in mediating between Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar on the issue of separate electorates for untouchables.

Protest against Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- Following the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, Tagore renounced his British knighthood as a mark of protest against colonial repression.

Major Literary Works

- Tagore's famous poetry collections include Gitanjali, Manasi, Sonar Tari, Gitimalya and Balaka.
- Gitanjali earned Tagore the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the first Asian Nobel laureate in literature.
- His important novels include Gora, Ghare-Baire and Chokher Bali, which explored nationalism, identity and social reform.
- Tagore wrote influential dramas such as Kal-Mrigaya, Mayar Khela, Visarjan, Valmiki-Pratibha and Muktaadhara.
- Through collections like Galpaguchchha, Tagore portrayed the everyday life and emotions of ordinary people.

Legacy

- Tagore's philosophy of universal humanism, which transcended barriers of nationality, caste and religion, continues to inspire thinkers, writers and reformers across the world.

Sukhdev Thapar

Early Life of Sukhdev Thapar

- Sukhdev Thapar was born on **May 15, 1907**, in the 'Naukhara' area of old Ludhiana in Punjab state.
- His parents were **Ramlal Thapar and Ralli Devi**.

Sukhdev's Role in the Indian Freedom Struggle

- He became a member of two revolutionary organizations namely 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' and 'Naujawan Bharat Sabha'.
- These organizations aimed to **bring an end to British rule through revolutionary methods**.
- He also participated in the famous prison hunger strike protest in the year **1929**.

Participation in the Saunders Assassination

- Sukhdev was associated with the assassination incident of British police officer **J.R. Saunders**, which was carried out by **Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru on December 17, 1928**.
- This act was undertaken to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, who died due to injuries sustained during a protest against British rule.

Lahore Conspiracy Case Trial

- Sukhdev was included as one of the main accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.
- This case was officially titled "**The Crown versus Sukhdev and others**".
- The British government accused him of being involved in hatching the plan to throw bombs inside the **Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi on April 8, 1929**.

- He and his fellow revolutionaries were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death.

Execution and Burial

- Sukhdev Thapar, Bhagat Singh, and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged on **March 23, 1931**, at the Lahore Central Jail.

Remembrance and Honouring of Sukhdev Thapar

- The 'National Martyrs Memorial' has been established at the place where the bodies of Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh, and Rajguru were cremated.
- Every year on **March 23**, 'Martyrs' Day' (**Shaheed diwas**) is observed in their memory.

DEFENCE

Op Netra 1.0

- **Context:** The Indian Army successfully carried out 'Op Netra 1.0', a four-day high-altitude eye care initiative in Leh, benefiting around 950 patients with advanced surgical treatment.

About Op Netra 1.0

- 'Op Netra 1.0' was a specialised advanced surgical eye camp organised by the Indian Army.
- Conducted at the 153 General Hospital in Leh, under the guidance of the Director General Armed Forces Medical Services.
- The main purpose was to deliver specialised ophthalmic care and extend humanitarian medical services to people living in remote, high-altitude areas.
- It focused on overcoming geographical challenges to ensure access to essential healthcare for all.

Exercise CINBAX-II 2026

- **Context :** CINBAX-II 2026 is a joint military exercise between India and Cambodia.
- It is being conducted at the Techo Sen Phnom Thom Mreas Provincial Royal Cambodian Air Force Training Centre (Camp Basil), Kampong Speu, Cambodia (4-17 May 2026).
- The Indian contingent comprises 120 personnel, mainly from the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment, while the Cambodian contingent has 160 personnel from the Royal Cambodian Army.
- The exercise is based on the UN Charter Chapter VII mandate, focusing on sub-conventional warfare and counter-terrorism scenarios.

- It includes tactical drills, joint planning, field exercises, and validation exercises, with special focus on drone operations, mortars, and sniper tactics.
- The aim is to enhance interoperability, coordination, and operational synergy, while strengthening India-Cambodia defence cooperation and contributing to regional security and stability.

INS Mahendragiri

- INS Mahendragiri (Yard 12654) is the sixth Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) frigate and was delivered to the Indian Navy on 30 April 2026 at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.
- It marks a major milestone in India's indigenous warship design and construction capability under Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- Designed by the Warship Design Bureau and built using the Integrated Construction philosophy, ensuring faster and efficient shipbuilding.
- Equipped with advanced systems including CODOG propulsion, Controllable Pitch Propellers, and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
- Project 17A frigates are multi-mission stealth warships designed for anti-surface, anti-air, and anti-submarine warfare operations. The five already delivered to the Navy are INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Taragiri and INS Vindhyagiri

Agni-VI

- **Context:** The Central Government has announced that the Agni-VI missile an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of striking targets up to 10,000 kilometers away is poised to make history.
- The Agni Missile Series consists of solid-propelled ballistic missiles.

- These missiles are capable of operating across a wide range of distances, ranging from **short-range missiles to Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)**.
- Possessing road and rail mobility, these missiles have an **enhanced chance of survivability during an enemy attack**.
- The development of the Agni missile series **began in the early 1980s** as part of the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
- This project was spearheaded by **former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**.
- **(TARA) weapon system off the coast of Odisha.**
- TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system capable of converting conventional unguided warheads into precision-guided weapons for accurately engaging ground-based targets.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, the modular range extension kit has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat along with other DRDO laboratories.
- It is aimed at improving the range and lethality of low-cost aerial weapons.

About Agni-VI

- The Agni-VI is another powerful **intercontinental ballistic missile**.
- It is currently reported to be in the initial stages of development at the laboratories of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It is expected to be the **newest and most advanced variant in the Agni missile series**.
- It is being designed with the capability to be launched from **both land-based platforms and submarines**.
- It will be capable of striking targets located at distances ranging **from 6,000 to 10,000 kilometers**.
- Furthermore, it will possess the capability to carry nuclear warheads equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), **allowing it to strike multiple distinct targets simultaneously**.
- **India Successfully Tests Agni Missile with MIRV Capability**
- **Context:** India has successfully test-fired an advanced Agni missile with the strategic ability to deploy multiple payloads to separate targets simultaneously a milestone that places the country among a select league of global powers.
- The test was conducted from **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha**.

MIRV Technology

- **Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV)** technology enables a single missile to strike several targets located hundreds of kilometres apart.
- In a MIRV system, multiple warheads are released from the missile at varying speeds and along different trajectories toward separate targets.
- Countries known to possess MIRV-capable missiles include United States, Russia, China, France, and United Kingdom. **With the successful test, India has also entered this group of nations.**

Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) Weapon System

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Indian Air Force have conducted the maiden flight-trial of the **Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation**

- Pakistan has also claimed successful tests of its MIRV-capable missile named Ababeel in 2017 and again in 2023.

Details of the Flight Test

- The missile carried multiple payloads aimed at different targets spread across a large geographical area in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Telemetry and tracking were conducted through multiple ground-based and ship-based stations.
- Tracking systems monitored the missile's trajectory from launch until the impact of all payloads.

Successful Achievement

- Flight data confirmed that all mission objectives were successfully achieved during the trial.
- The successful test demonstrated India's ability to strike multiple strategic targets using a single missile system.

Strategic Significance

- The achievement places India among a select group of nations possessing advanced MIRV missile capability.
- The capability significantly strengthens **India's strategic and defence preparedness against emerging security threats.**
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Indian Army, and industry partners played a major role in the successful mission.

DRDO's Successful Scramjet Combustor Test for Hypersonic Missile Development

- **Context:** Defence Research and Development Organisation achieved a major breakthrough

in hypersonic missile technology through the successful long-duration test of an actively cooled full-scale scramjet combustor.

- The test was conducted by **the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL).**
- The trial was carried out at **the Scramjet Connect Pipe Test (SCPT) Facility in Hyderabad**
- The scramjet combustor achieved a **continuous run-time of more than 1,200 seconds.**
- This performance improved upon the earlier successful test of over 700 seconds conducted in January 2026.

Key Technological Features

- The combustor was fully designed and developed by DRDL with support from Indian industry partners.
- The technology uses a **supersonic air-breathing engine system essential for hypersonic missile propulsion.**
- The system operates using indigenously developed **liquid hydrocarbon endothermic fuel.**
- Advanced high-temperature thermal barrier coating technology was incorporated to withstand extreme heat conditions.
- The project also utilised **advanced manufacturing techniques for high-performance aerospace systems.**

AWARDS & HONOURS

Pulitzer Prize

- **Context :** Indian journalists **Ananth R.K.** and **Suparna Sharma** have been announced as winners of the Pulitzer Prize in the illustrated reporting and commentary category.

About the Pulitzer Prize

- The Pulitzer Prize is considered the most prestigious award in the field of **journalism** in the United States.
- Established in **1917**, the awards are administered by **Columbia University** and the 'Pulitzer Prize Board.'
- The prize is named in honor of the renowned newspaper publisher, **Joseph Pulitzer**.
- Each winner receives a certificate and a cash prize of **\$15,000**. Additionally, the winner in the '**Public Service**' category is awarded a **gold medal**.
- For the year **2025**, Pulitzer Prizes were awarded in a total of **23 categories**, including 15 categories in journalism and 8 categories in books, drama, and music.

National Panchayat Awards (NPA) 2025

- **Context:** The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** announced the winners of the National Panchayat Awards (NPA) 2025.
- A total of 42 Panchayats from different States and Union Territories were selected for the awards.
- **Kawrthah North Village Council in Mizoram** has secured the top rank at the national level under the "Clean and Green Panchayat" category of the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025**, for its

work in sustainable rural development and environmental conservation.

- The Ministry and the Mizoram government have lauded the recognition, calling it an example of effective grassroots governance and sustainable development.

Categories of Awards

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)

- The award recognises outstanding Gram Panchayats for achievements under the **nine themes of Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs)**.
- Awards are given for Rank 1, Rank 2, and Rank 3 under each theme.
- The assessment is linked with Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 scores.

Nine LSDG Themes

- Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods Panchayat
- Healthy Panchayat
- Child-Friendly Panchayat
- Water-Sufficient Panchayat
- Clean and Green Panchayat
- Self-Sufficient Infrastructure Panchayat
- Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat
- Panchayat with Good Governance
- Women-Friendly Panchayat

Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat

Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP)

- This award is presented to the best-performing Panchayats on an overall basis.
- Under NPA 2025, 8 Panchayats were selected: 3 Best District Panchayats, 2 Best Block Panchayats, 3 Best Gram Panchayats

Financial Incentives

- Award-winning Panchayats receive financial incentives ranging from ₹50 lakh to ₹5 crore depending on category and level.
- The awards are provided under the **Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP)** scheme.
- IoP is a component of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA).

Special Category Awards

- On National Panchayati Raj Day 2025, Prime presented awards under special categories:
- Climate Action Special Panchayat Award (CASPA)
- Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award (ANPSA)
- Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar (PKNSSP)

Significance of National Panchayat Awards

- The awards aim to recognise and encourage high-performing Panchayats in rural governance and development.
- They promote inclusive, participatory, and sustainable rural development.
- The initiative strengthens local governance, public service delivery, and community participation.
- Since 2023, the awards framework has been redesigned in alignment with the nine LSDG themes to make evaluation more transparent, holistic, and data-driven.
- The awards reinforce the role of Panchayats in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.



CURRENT FACTS

- Tamil Nadu emerged as the leading state in marine fish landings in 2025, as per the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.
- PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE)
- The Election Commission introduced a QR code-based photo identity card system on ECI-Net to eliminate the possibility of any unauthorised persons entering counting centres.
- **Claude Mythos**
 - Claude Mythos is a next-generation frontier AI model developed by Anthropic with advanced reasoning, coding, and technical problem-solving capabilities, surpassing previous AI systems.
 - Developed by Anthropic.
 - Designed to analyze large and complex codebases to identify critical security vulnerabilities.
 - Capable of detecting long-standing and previously undiscovered software flaws (including zero-day vulnerabilities).
- **National Road Safety Education Excellence Awards 2025-26**
 - The National Road Safety Education Excellence Awards 2025–26 recognise schools, institutions, and students for excellence in promoting road safety education.
 - In Tamil Nadu, five institutions were awarded, and 69 students were recognised as Olympiad winners.
 - **National Road Safety Mission for Schools**
 - It is an initiative under the National Road Safety Mission, launched in 2024.
 - Aims to create awareness among school students about road safety and responsible behaviour.
- **Para-Legal Volunteers**
 - Tamil Nadu reports around 8,000 missing children cases annually, rising to about 13,000 cases including other child-related crimes, indicating a significant child protection challenge.
 - The State government has decided to empanel Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) in police stations to support parents, assist in case follow-up, and improve coordination with police authorities.
 - PLVs will provide emotional support, legal guidance, liaison services, post-tracing care for children, and facilitate access to welfare schemes, strengthening victim support systems.
 - The initiative operates under laws such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, with PLVs assigned through district/taluk legal services committees.
 - National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) launched the Para-Legal Volunteers (PLV) Scheme in 2009 to provide legal training to volunteers and ensure access to justice for all sections of society.
 - PLVs act as intermediaries between people and legal institutions, promoting legal awareness and enabling doorstep delivery of legal aid, especially for marginalized groups.
- **Biopharma SHAKTI**
 - Announced in the Union Budget 2026–27, the Biopharma SHAKTI (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology, and Innovation) scheme aims to transform India from a generics-focused industry into a global hub for biologics and biosimilars manufacturing.

- With a financial outlay of ₹10,000 crore over five years (from FY 2026–27), it seeks to build an end-to-end biopharmaceutical ecosystem aligned with the National Biopharma Mission (2017).
 - The scheme promotes advanced Non-Animal Methodologies (NAMs) such as organoids, organ-on-a-chip, and 3D bioprinting to improve drug safety prediction, reduce costs, and enhance innovation.
 - It prioritises affordable domestic production of therapies for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders.
 - It also strengthens infrastructure and human capital through measures such as the establishment of new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs).
- **Women Voter Trend in Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2026**
- In Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2026, women accounted for approximately 82% of additional voters, the highest in the last four elections.
 - Out of 25.3 lakh additional voters, about 20.8 lakh were women, showing a strong gender gap in voter participation.
 - In earlier elections, women's share of additional voters was lower approximately 60% in 2011 and approximately 50% in 2016 and 2021.
 - Despite the record share, the absolute increase of women voters (20.8 lakh) is only the third highest, after 2016 (34.4 lakh) and 2011 (22.3 lakh).
 - Women turnout increased from 2.32 crore in 2021 to 2.53 crore in 2026, registering about a 9% growth.
 - The high share is partly due to greater mobilisation and interest among women voters, while male participation growth remained relatively lower.
 - Welfare schemes and targeted promises by political parties are a key factor behind increased women voter participation.
- **Sahyog Portal**
- The 'Sahyog' Portal automates the process of issuing notices to intermediaries under the Information Technology Act, 2000 for removal or blocking of unlawful online content.
 - It brings together authorised government agencies and intermediaries on a single platform to ensure quick and coordinated action.
 - It aims to enable faster content regulation and promote a safer, more secure cyberspace for citizens.
 - The United Nations General Assembly declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga in 2014, recognising yoga as a tool for harmony, peace, and global well-being. Yoga has gained global recognition, including its inscription in 2016 on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, highlighting its universal relevance.
- **BioE3 Policy**
- The BioE3 Policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) provides a framework to promote cutting-edge technologies and align research for advancing high-performance biomanufacturing across diverse sectors.
 - It aims to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and quality in biomanufacturing while accelerating the development of bio-based high-value products, supporting India's Green Growth, LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), and Net-Zero carbon economy goals.
 - The policy promotes establishment of BioEnablers such as Bio-AI hubs, biofoundries, and biomanufacturing hubs to strengthen R&D, enable scaling of technologies, and support commercialization of bio-based innovations.

- Six priority thematic sectors identified include bio-based chemicals and enzymes, functional foods and smart proteins, precision biotherapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, carbon capture and utilisation, and marine & space biotechnology.
- India's bioeconomy has shown strong growth, contributing 4.25% of GDP (2023), expanding from \$10 billion (2014) to \$151 billion (2023), and increasing biotech startups from 50 to over 8,500, reflecting rapid sectoral expansion and innovation capacity.
- **H5N1 viruses**
 - H5N1 (Avian Influenza / Bird Flu) is a highly infectious and severe respiratory disease in birds caused by a subtype of the Influenza A virus.
 - Influenza A viruses are classified based on surface proteins into 18 hemagglutinin (H1–H18) and 11 neuraminidase (N1–N11) subtypes; H5N1 is one such combination.
- **Hung Assembly**
 - A Hung Assembly occurs when no single party or pre-poll alliance secures a majority in the State Legislative Assembly.
 - In such cases, the Governor exercises situational discretion to invite a leader to form the government.
 - Under Article 164(1), the Governor appoints the Chief Minister, but procedures for a hung assembly are not explicitly defined.
 - Priority of the Governor is to ensure a stable government with majority support.
 - Options before the Governor include inviting:
 - Leader of the largest party, or
 - A coalition that can prove majority on the floor of the House.
 - The appointed Chief Minister must undergo a floor test to prove majority support in the Legislative Assembly.
 - Relevant provisions:
 - Article 163 – Governor acts on aid and advice, except in discretionary situations.
 - Article 164 – Governor appoints CM and Council of Ministers.
 - Governor's decisions are subject to judicial review if found arbitrary or unconstitutional.
 - All India Institute of Medical Sciences Delhi has launched the country's first portable MRI system that can be used at the patient's bedside
- **Model Code of Conduct**
 - The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a framework of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India to govern the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections.
 - To ensure that the processes of campaigning, voting, and counting are conducted in a fair, smooth, and transparent manner.
 - To prevent the misuse of government resources and public funds by the ruling party for electoral advantage.
 - To curb electoral malpractices, offences, and corrupt activities, ensuring that elections are held with integrity.
 - The Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which guides political parties and candidates during elections, was first drafted by the Kerala government in 1960.
 - The Election Commission (EC) formalised it in 1968, revised it in 1974, and added Part VII on the "party in power" in 1979.
 - Former Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan enforced it with unprecedented rigour from 1991.

▪ **Procedures for Forming a Government in Tamil Nadu**

- In Tamil Nadu, which comprises 234 constituencies, a minimum of 118 seats is required to form a government.
- A situation in which no single party secures 118 seats is referred to as a 'Hung Assembly.'
- In such a scenario, pursuant to Articles 163 and 164(B) of the Constitution of India, the Governor may invite a party to form the government in any of the following four ways:
 - A pre-poll alliance that has secured a victory.
 - The single largest party that has won the highest number of seats in the election.
 - A post-poll alliance formed by parties joining together after the election.
 - A party forming the government with the external support of other parties.

▪ **Government Formation Procedures**

- The legislative leader of the elected party shall be appointed as the Chief Minister.
- In accordance with the Supreme Court's 1994 verdict in the S.R. Bommai case, the Chief Minister must convene the Legislative Assembly under Article 174 of the Constitution and demonstrate the support of 118 members.
- If a majority is proven, the government shall continue without interruption.
- If the Chief Minister fails to prove a majority, the Governor shall offer the opportunity to the next-largest party.
- If the second party also fails to prove a majority, President's Rule shall be imposed under Article 356, and fresh elections shall be held.

▪ **India's 18th railway zone**

- The Ministry of Railways has created South Coast Railway (SCoR) as India's 18th railway zone. The headquarters is at Visakhapatnam and it will be fully operational from June 1.
- The zone will include Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions along with a new 410-km Visakhapatnam division.
- The project includes 100% electrification and redevelopment of 74 railway stations.

▪ **UDGAM portal**

- UDGAM Portal (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to Access InforMation) is a centralised online platform developed by the Reserve Bank of India to help the public trace unclaimed bank deposits.
- It enables users to search unclaimed deposits across multiple banks covered under the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEA Fund).
- As of March 2024, 30 banks are integrated, covering about 90% of unclaimed deposits in the DEA Fund.

▪ **Securities and Exchange Board of India**

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) was established in 1988 as a non-statutory body and became a statutory regulator in 1992 under the SEBI Act, 1992.
- It functions as the principal regulator of India's securities market under the Ministry of Finance, ensuring orderly development of the capital market.
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Regional offices: Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi.
- SEBI's Board consists of 9 members, including a Chairperson, representatives from the Union Government and Reserve Bank of India, and other appointed members.
- The Chairperson is appointed by the Government of India for up to 5 years or till 65 years, based on recommendations of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

- **SEBI performs three core functions:** regulation (framing rules and monitoring markets), development (promoting innovations like demat and electronic trading), and investor protection (preventing fraud and ensuring transparency).
- It has powers to conduct inspections, investigations, impose penalties, regulate intermediaries, and oversee mutual funds and venture capital funds.
- Key initiatives include the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) for awareness and the SCORES portal for grievance redressal.
- **Thirukkural**
 - “To break the greatness and to want the invincibility pride gives effort”.
 - Meaning: One must not become weary or discouraged, thinking, "This undertaking is too arduous to execute." Rather, diligent effort will generate the very greatness and capability necessary to successfully complete it. Chapter: Possession of Diligence
- **Adi Dravidar Welfare Department**
 - The Adi Dravidar Welfare Department was created in 1988 as a separate department from the Social Welfare Department.
 - The aim to uplift the Adi Dravidar people in terms of literacy and socio-economic status and to deliver specific programs aimed at improving their standard of living.
 - The Adi Dravidar Welfare Directorate identifies the requirements of the people and function towards the improvement of basic Amenities in the habitations, issues house site pattas, run of schools and hostel for the Adi Dravidar students, implements pre-matric and post-matric education assistance programs, implements education assistance programs for the students studying in foreign countries and takes care of welfare of Adi Dravidar community.
- **Annal Ambedkar Overseas Higher Education Scholarship Scheme**
 - Scholarship of Rs.36.00 lakh per annum is provided to encourage students to undertake postgraduate and doctoral research studies in educational institutions abroad.
 - Scholarship of Rs.36.00 lakh is given if the annual family income is below Rs.8.00 lakh. Scholarship of Rs.24.00 lakh is given if the family income limit is between Rs.8.00 lakh to Rs.12.00 lakh.
 - The students should be enrolled in Universities of rank of up to 1000 in the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University rankings.
 - Graduate students must be under 35 years of age and full-time doctoral research students must be under 40 years of age on the first day of April (1st April) of the year of applying for scholarship.
 - Last 3 Years Beneficiaries with Expenditure Bar Chart
- **2023 Constitution Bench Judgment**
 - In the Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India judgment (March 2023), the Supreme Court ruled that appointments of the CEC and ECs should be made by a committee consisting of:
 - Prime Minister
 - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha or leader of the largest Opposition party
 - Chief Justice of India (CJI)
 - Court stated that this arrangement would continue until Parliament enacted a law under Article 324(2) of the Constitution.
 - Article 324(2) - The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners

shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.

▪ **SAMARTH Panchayat Portal**

- Digital Platform to empower Panchayats in augmenting and monitoring their Tax/Non-Tax Revenue Sources by streamlining & digitalization of underlying processes and online collection of revenue.
- Aims to Digitally Empower the Panchayats to efficiently collect and monitor revenue under the OSR Framework.
- Shall facilitate in strengthening of the financial capabilities and local governance of panchayats, ensuring improved quality of life for residents at the grassroots level.
- The Punchhi Commission recommended that government formation should be based on the widest legislative support.

• **Order of preference**

- Pre-poll alliance with majority
- Largest single party with support
- Post-poll coalition (all partners in government)
- Post-poll alliance with outside support

▪ **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**

- Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 aims to prevent smuggling and regulate trade in cultural artefacts.
- Defines antiquities as objects over 75 years old, including sculptures, coins, manuscripts, and carvings.
- Implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India and came into force in 1976.

▪ Sarkaria Commission 1988 have highlighted the importance of giving Governors reasonable time to “explore alternatives with political parties, groups and Independent MLAs” to form a stable government. The phrase “reasonable time” is not defined in the Constitution.

▪ A nine-judge Bench in the 1994 S.R. Bommai judgment, while endorsing this hierarchy of preference, liberally added that the Governor could either go for the single largest party or “group”. It did not matter whether the “group” was formed before or after the election. It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery if these alternatives fail, and no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government.

▪ The Supreme Court, in its seven-judge Bench judgment in Rameshwar Prasad versus Union of India 2006, has also cautioned against Governors misusing their office for partisan politics. The case flagged the criticism recorded in the Sarkaria Commission that Governors have, more often than not, used their powers to recommend President’s Rule under Article 356 to “promote the political interests of the party in power at the Centre”.

▪ **Cyphostemma annamalaii**

- A new plant species *Cyphostemma annamalaii* was discovered by students of Annamalai University and their guide.
- The species is named after Rajah Sir Annamalai.
- It was found in the southern Eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu, specifically in Villupuram district at Sanjeevi hill (290 ft) at an elevation of 86 m.

- Vitaceae, commonly known as the grape family, includes over 1,000 species across 20 genera. Cyphostemma is the second largest genus with about 250 species, found in tropical and subtropical regions. The plant was discovered at an elevation of 86 m in a tropical dry forest in Panaimalaipettai.

▪ Chief Election Commissioner Appointment (2023 Act)

- The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 replaces the 1991 Act and regulates appointment, service conditions, and functioning of the Election Commission.
- In the Anoop Baranwal case 2023, the Supreme Court directed that appointments be made by a panel consisting of the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of India until a law is enacted.
- Under the 2023 Act, the Selection Committee includes the Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, thereby excluding the Chief Justice of India.
- Search Committee is headed by the Law Minister and shortlists five candidates, but the Selection Committee can consider names beyond this list.
- Tenure is six years or up to 65 years of age, whichever is earlier, and reappointment is not permitted.
- Salary is equivalent to that of a Supreme Court judge
- The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge.
- Election Commissioners can be removed on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

▪ Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- Samagra Shiksha Scheme is an integrated scheme launched in the Union Budget 2018-19 covering school education from pre-primary to senior secondary (up to Class 12).
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership between the Centre and States/UTs.
- It subsumes earlier schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE).
- It aims to support implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the Right to Education Act, and the National Education Policy.

- Hantaviruses are a group of zoonotic viruses transmitted by rodents. They cause two main diseases: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), which leads to severe respiratory distress, and Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS), which causes internal bleeding and kidney failure.

▪ Hill Area Conservation Authority (HACA) - 1990

▪ Formation of HACA

- The Hill Area Conservation Authority (HACA) in Tamil Nadu was established on April 2, 1990.
- It was constituted under a Government Order issued by the Planning and Development Department.
- Its primary objective is to protect the ecologically highly sensitive hill and upland regions from unregulated development.

▪ **Why HACA Was Created in 1990**

- During the late 1980s and early 1990s, rapid urban and industrial growth began to adversely affect the natural ecosystem of the hill areas.
- Consequently Issues such as
 - environmental degradation,
 - destruction of forest ecosystems, and
 - loss of biodiversity became increasingly prevalent.
- To mitigate these adverse impacts and to conserve the natural resources of the hill areas, the Government of Tamil Nadu established HACA.

▪ **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)**

- The Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is a highly contagious and often fatal RNA virus that affects dogs and wild carnivores worldwide.
- It spreads primarily through respiratory droplets (via coughing and sneezing) and causes a disease that impacts multiple body systems, manifesting as fever, respiratory and gastrointestinal disturbances, and – frequently – life-threatening neurological complications.
- Although there is currently no specific cure for this disease, highly effective vaccines are available and currently in use to prevent this infection.

▪ **THIRUKKURAL**

On no right system if man toil and strive,
Though many men assist, no work can thrive

- **EXPLANATION:** The work, which is not done by suitable methods, will fail though many stand to uphold it.
- Thirukkural Chapter: The Manner of Acting with Forethought
- Jharkhand has reached a significant achievement in the field of school education by attaining a zero dropout rate at the primary level during 2024–25. This accomplishment has been highlighted through data associated with the Unified District Information System for Education Plus and a report released by NITI Aayog.

▪ **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme**

- The PM-KISAN Scheme was launched in Feb 2019.
- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), a Central Sector Scheme, aims at providing financial assistance to all cultivable landholding farmer families across the country, subject to certain exclusion criteria.
- Under the Scheme, an amount of Rs. 6000/- is transferred annually in three equal installments of Rs.2000/- directly into the Aadhaar Seeded bank accounts of the farmers.
- A farmer-centric digital infrastructure has ensured the benefits of the scheme reach all the farmers across the country without any involvement of the middlemen, maintaining absolute transparency in registering and verifying beneficiaries.

▪ **"Horse-Trading Deals"**

- A term borrowed from the business world, "horse-trading" has become synonymous with the unethical bargaining practices prevalent in Indian politics.
- It refers to the unethical practice of buying and selling the allegiance of legislators for personal gain or political advantage.

▪ **India has enacted laws to address issues related to party defections and horse-trading:**

- **Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule):** Introduced in 1985, this law disqualifies legislators who defect from their political parties. However, its effectiveness remains a subject of debate.

- Voluntary Resignation: The Supreme Court has clarified that voluntarily giving up one's membership in a political party also constitutes grounds for disqualification.

Thirukkural

Whate'er men think, ev'n as they think, may men obtain,

If those who think can steadfastness of will retain

▪ Explanation

- If those who have planned (an undertaking) possess firmness (in executing it) they will obtain what they have desired even as they have desired it.
- The Union government announced two major appointments, naming Lieutenant-General N.S. Raja Subramani (retd) as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan as the next Chief of the Naval Staff.
- Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based imaging satellite company, said that it would partner with the AI firm Sarvam to launch what is being described as India's first 'orbital data centre' satellite, named Pathfinder.
- The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), a CPSE under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), today formally unveiled Padma Doree, a unique cross-cultural textile initiative that brings together the Eri (Ahimsa) silk traditions of Northeast India with the rich Chanderi weaving heritage of Madhya Pradesh.

▪ Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation

- The Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation (TNWC) was established under the 'Agricultural Produce (Development and Warehousing) Corporations Act, 1956' and commenced its operations on May 2, 1958.
- Subsequently, the operations of this Corporation were brought under the purview of the 'Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962'. Currently, the Tamil Nadu Warehousing Corporation operates 60 warehouses spread across 7 zones throughout the State.
- The total storage capacity of this Corporation stands at 7.60 lakh metric tonnes.

▪ Coal Gasification in India

- The National Coal Gasification Mission has set a target of converting 100 million tonnes of coal into gas by 2030.
- India's first fertiliser plant based on coal gasification technology is being developed at Talcher and is expected to become operational by December 2027.
- Jindal Steel & Power operates the country's only commercial-scale coal gasification facility at Angul.
- Under commercial coal block auctions, companies are provided a 50% concession in revenue sharing if a minimum of 10% of coal production is utilised for gasification purposes.
- India's first Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) initiative was introduced in Kasta.

▪ Baiga Tribe

- The Baiga Tribe is recognised as one of India's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- The tribe is mainly concentrated in central India, especially in Madhya Pradesh, with smaller populations residing in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
- Their primary language is Baigani, a regional dialect of Chhattisgarhi that carries strong influences from Gondi and Hindi.
- Tattooing holds great cultural significance in Baiga society, with distinct tattoo patterns assigned according to age groups and different parts of the body.

- The Baiga community became the first tribal group in India to receive habitat rights, highlighting their traditional bond and close dependence on forest ecosystems.
 - Part III, Article 26(a) - to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes
 - Part III, Article 19 (1) (g) All citizens shall have the right- to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.
 - Part III, Article 30 - Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions
 - Part III, Article 30 (1) - All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
 - The National Florence Nightingale Awards were instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by nursing personnel to society.

▪ Dengue Fever

- Dengue (also known as "breakbone fever") is a mosquito-borne viral infection.
- While many dengue infections are asymptomatic or cause only mild illness, the virus can occasionally lead to severe complications and even death.
- It is transmitted to humans through the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes carrying one of the four types of dengue viruses (DENV).
- With the exception of transmission from a pregnant woman to her child, dengue is not contagious from person to person.
- There is no specific medication to cure dengue. Treatment focuses on managing the symptoms.

▪ Thirukkural

What one thing merits folly's special name.

Letting gain go, loss for one's own to claim

▪ Explanation

- Folly is one (of the chief defects); it is that which (makes one) incur loss and forego gain.

▪ Difference between LPG and PNG

- LPG is distributed in cylinders, whereas PNG flows directly into homes through pipelines.
- Since LPG is filled under pressure within cylinders, it necessitates periodic refilling; however, PNG is delivered directly to the kitchen via underground pipelines.

▪ Primary Composition

- LPG: Primarily a mixture of Propane and Butane.
- PNG: Primarily Methane; this typically constitutes 85–95% of its composition.

▪ Density

- LPG: Heavier than air.
- PNG: Lighter than air.

▪ Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary to the Governor 2023

- The 2023 judgment in Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary to the Governor laid down key principles on anti-defection disputes involving rival factions within a political party.
- It held that the political party, and not the legislature party, has the authority to appoint the whip and issue directions on voting in the legislature.
- Consequently, any claim by a rival faction within the Assembly that it has its own whip or independent voting direction cannot be accepted as valid.

- The Court further clarified that the numerical strength of competing factions is irrelevant in determining disqualification under the Tenth Schedule.
- At the same time, the Speaker may be required to identify which group represents the original political party, for which the party constitution, rules, and organisational structure outside the House become relevant.
- Importantly, the Speaker cannot decide legitimacy solely on the basis of which faction holds a majority in the Assembly, as such an approach is legally impermissible.
- The Speaker's decision on which faction constitutes the party is only a prima facie finding and has no binding effect on the Election Commission of India.
- Under Paragraph 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, the Election Commission independently decides
 - Party recognition.
 - Allocation of election symbols.
- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act),**
 - The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 derives its genesis from the Supreme Court judgment in *Unnikrishnan vs State of Andhra Pradesh*, which held that education is a fundamental right under Article 21 up to the age of 14 years.
 - This led to the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002, which inserted Article 21A, making free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 years a Fundamental Right.
 - The same amendment modified Article 45 (Directive Principles) to focus on early childhood care (0–6 years) and added Article 51A(k), making it a Fundamental Duty of parents/guardians to provide education to children aged 6–14 years.
 - To operationalise Article 21A, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) was enacted, making elementary education a justiciable right.
 - Key provisions include free and compulsory education (6–14 years), no detention policy, teacher qualification via TET, teacher–student ratio of 1:30, and 25% reservation in private schools for disadvantaged groups.
 - The Act also provides institutional mechanisms such as School Management Committees (SMCs), National/State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, and shared financial responsibility between Centre and States for implementation.
- **Whip**
 - A whip is a directive issued by a political party to its MPs/MLAs to ensure attendance in the House and adherence to party's voting instructions on Bills, motions, or resolutions.
 - It is a parliamentary convention (not mentioned in the Constitution), derived from the British practice of "whipping in" members to maintain party discipline.
 - Each party appoints a Chief Whip, who enforces discipline, ensures attendance, and communicates the party's instructions to legislators.
 - Types of whip: one-line (informative, allows abstention), two-line (attendance mandatory), and three-line (strict binding direction to vote as per party line), with the three-line whip used in crucial matters like no-confidence motions and major Bills.
 - Violation of a whip may lead to disqualification under the Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule) by the Speaker/Chairman, subject to exceptions like merger with two-thirds support under the 91st Constitutional Amendment, 2003.
- **Appointment of the CBI Director**

- According to the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act of 1946, the Director of the CBI is appointed by the Central Government based on the recommendation of a three-member Selection Committee.
- Members of the Selection Committee:
 - Prime Minister – Chairperson
 - Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
 - Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge nominated by the Chief Justice
- Thirukkural
 - “There is no age for a drunkard; he will slander and destroy his honor”
 - **Meaning:** There is no such thing as an opportune time for those who work to elevate their family/lineage. If they indulge in laziness and worry about their self-respect/pride, the greatness of the family will be ruined.
 - Thirukkural (No. 1028) Chapter: Kudiseiyal Vagai (The Way of Elevating the Family)
 - State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu
 - SIPCOT was established in 1971 under the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Act, 1965 to promote medium and large-scale industries in the state.
 - It was created to develop industrial parks, especially in industrially backward regions, with the aim of balanced regional development and employment generation.
 - SIPCOT’s first project was the establishment of the Cuddalore Industrial Complex, inaugurated in 1972.
 - SIPCOT has nurtured the development of 50 Industrial Parks including 8 SEZs, spread over 24 districts in a total extent of about 48,926.48 acres.
 - The 16th Finance Commission has, recommending that heatwaves be notified as a national disaster – a designation that would unbolt the door to dedicated central funding.
- **National Testing Agency (NTA)**
 - The National Testing Agency (NTA) is an autonomous, self-sustained body under the Ministry of Education established to conduct transparent and standardized entrance examinations.
 - It was established in 2017 and is registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and is not a statutory body created by an Act of Parliament.
 - NTA conducts major national-level entrance examinations such as JEE Main, NEET UG, and CUET UG. also conducts postgraduate and eligibility examinations including CUET PG, UGC NET, and CSIR UGC NET.
 - It is headed by a Director General (DG), who functions as the Chief Executive Officer, usually of Joint Secretary rank in the Government of India.
- Part XV, Article 324 (2) - The Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners, if any, as the President may from time to time fix and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf by Parliament, be made by the President.
- Part V, Article 141 - Law declared by Supreme Court to be binding on all courts

- Part V, Article 145 (3) - The minimum number of Judges who are to sit for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution or for the purpose of hearing any reference under article 143 shall be five:
 - Provided that, where the Court hearing an appeal under any of the provisions of this Chapter other than article 132 consists of less than five Judges and in the course of the hearing of the appeal the Court is satisfied that the appeal involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of this Constitution the determination of which is necessary for the disposal of the appeal, such Court shall refer the question for opinion to a Court constituted as required by this clause for the purpose of deciding any case involving such a question and shall on receipt of the opinion dispose of the appeal in conformity with such opinion.
- Article 142 of the Constitution confers discretionary power on the Supreme Court, according to which, it states that the Supreme Court, in the exercise of its jurisdiction, may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
- **Tamil Thai Vaazhthu**
 - Tamil Thai Vaazhthu, written by the scholar Manonmaniam Sundaram Pillai in 1891, has been sung at Tamil Nadu government functions since 1970 following an order by former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi.
 - The song is considered secular as it praises Tamil language and culture without promoting any religion.
 - Later, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government led by M. K. Stalin declared Tamil Thai Vaazhthu as the official State song on December 17, 2021 and made standing mandatory, except for persons with disabilities.
- Historical Background of Vande Mataram
- Vande Mataram originated in the 1882 Bengali novel Anandamath written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji.
- The novel was translated into English as Abbey of Bliss by Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta in 1906.
- The original novel's context was the Sannyasi rebellion (1763 to 1800).
- A revised translation in 1941 by Basanta Koomar Roy removed several communal references to align with the freedom movement.
- In 1937, a Congress committee decided that only the first two stanzas praising the motherland should be used publicly.

