

OFFICERS IAS ACADEMY™

# OFFICERS' PULSE



MARCH 2026 (Digest)

CURRENT AFFAIRS  
MONTHLY

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# Foreword

**Officers Pulse Digest** is a comprehensive monthly current affairs magazine that serves as a complete resource for UPSC CSE Prelims. It includes significant topics from sources like **The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, Yojana, Kurukshetra, Down to Earth**, and more.

Although “**Officers Pulse- Digest**” is primarily oriented towards Prelims, reading “**Officers Pulse- In depth**” along with it is crucial for effectively tackling the Prelims examination

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## POLITY

### 1) INTER-STATE WATER COUNCIL

#### Why in News?

Punjab CM **Bhagwant Mann** has sought ₹1.44 lakh crore from **Rajasthan** for alleged unpaid river water usage since 1960, citing a pre-Independence agreement revived an inter-state river water dispute.

#### About

- **Inter-state river water** refers to **rivers and river valleys that flow through two or more states**, making their use, distribution, and control a matter of shared concern.
- Water is a **State subject (Entry 17, State List)**, but inter-state rivers require **central regulation (Entry 56, Union List)**.
- **Article 262** empowers the Parliament to provide for the **adjudication of any dispute** or complaint with respect to the **use, distribution, or control of the waters** of any inter-state river or river valley.
- Under this Article, Parliament is empowered to enact a law excluding the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and other courts over such disputes.

#### Statutory framework

##### River Boards Act, 1956

- It is a law enacted by the Indian Parliament to enable the establishment of river boards for the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys.
- Despite its intent, **no river board has been established under this Act so far**, mainly because states prefer dispute resolution mechanisms like tribunals.

##### Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956

- It was enacted by the Parliament to provide a **mechanism for adjudicating disputes between states over river waters**.

- **Composition**

- The Tribunal consists of a **Chairman and two other members**.
- All members are **nominated by the Chief Justice of India**.
- The members must be sitting or retired judges of the Supreme Court or a High Court.
- The Central Government may appoint **two or more expert assessors** from **technical fields** to assist and advise the Tribunal.
- The Tribunal is dissolved after it submits its report.

#### Procedure of setting up a Tribunal

- A state raises a dispute to the Centre.
- Centre tries to negotiate through **fact-finding committees**.
- If it remains unresolved, then a **Tribunal is constituted under the ISRWD Act, 1956**.
- The Tribunal examines data, hears states, and gives **award (decision)**.

#### Amendments of ISRWD Act, 1956

##### 2002 amendment:

- A tribunal must be set up within **1 year** of request.
- Decision to be given within **3 years** which is extendable by 2 years.

##### 2019 amendment (currently used):

- The amendment proposes replacing the existing system of multiple ad-hoc tribunals with a **single, permanent tribunal**, with multiple benches.
- The amendment introduces a **mandatory pre-litigation conciliation mechanism**.
- When a state raises a dispute, the Central Government will first refer it to a **Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)**.

- The DRC will include **experts from relevant fields and representatives of the concerned states**.
- It is required to resolve the dispute through negotiation within **one year**, extendable by **six months**.
- Only if the DRC fails to reach a settlement will the dispute be **referred to the Tribunal**, making it an effective filtering mechanism.
- The **tribunal's decision final and binding immediately**.
- The DRC must complete its process within **1 year**, which is **extendable to 1.5 years**.
- The Tribunal must deliver its decision within **2 years**, which is **extendable to 3 years**.
- Thus, the **total maximum duration** for dispute resolution is approximately **4.5 years**.

While the 1956 Act bars the SC from the adjudication of the dispute itself, the SC can still hear appeals under **Article 136** (Special Leave Petition) regarding the implementation or legal interpretations of the awards.

## 2) RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS

### Why in News?

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, Biennial elections to the **Rajya Sabha** were conducted for **37 seats across 10 States**.

### About

- **Article 79** of the constitution provides for Two houses of the Parliament: Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- The **Rajya Sabha** is the **Upper House of the Indian Parliament**.
- It represents the **States and Union Territories** at the national level, which is why it is also called the **Council of States**.
- It is a **permanent body** and is not subject to dissolution.
- One-third of its members retire every **two years**, ensuring continuity.
- Each member has a fixed tenure of **six years**.

- The distribution of Rajya Sabha seats among States and Union Territories is given in the **Fourth Schedule of the Constitution**.
- Seat allocation is primarily based on the **population of each State/UT**, ensuring proportional representation.

### Electoral process

#### Electoral College

- **Article 80** mentions about **the composition of the Rajya Sabha**.
- The Rajya Sabha members are elected through an **indirect election system**.
- In the case of States, the **elected members of the State Legislative Assembly (MLAs)** form the electoral college.
- **Nominated MLAs do not participate** in the election of Rajya Sabha members.
- Only Union Territories that have a Legislative Assembly namely **Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu & Kashmir** are represented in the Rajya Sabha.
- The representatives of Union Territories in the Rajya Sabha are elected in a manner decided by Parliament through law.

#### Nominated members

- The President of India nominates **12 members** to the Rajya Sabha under Article 80.
- These members are selected for their contribution to **art, literature, science, and social service**.
- Nominated members **do not participate in elections** for Rajya Sabha seats.

#### Method of election

- **Article 80(4)** mentions about the method of election.
- The Rajya Sabha elections are conducted using the **Proportional Representation system through Single Transferable Vote (PR-STV)**.
- This system ensures proportional representation of political parties based on their strength in the State Assembly.
- A candidate must secure a minimum number of votes known as the **Quota** to get elected.

- The quota is calculated using the formula:
- $\text{Quota} = (\text{Total Valid Votes} / \text{Number of seats to be filled} + 1) + 1$
- This ensures that only the required number of candidates corresponding to available seats are elected.

#### Voting process

- Each MLA casts a **preferential vote**, marking candidates as 1, 2, 3, and so on.
- If a candidate receives more votes than the quota, the **surplus votes are transferred** to other candidates based on next preferences.
- If no candidate meets the quota, the candidate with the **least votes is eliminated**, and their votes are redistributed based on next preferences.
- This process continues until all seats are filled.

#### Procedural features

##### Open Ballot System

- Rajya Sabha elections follow an **open ballot system** to reduce corruption and cross-voting.
- MLAs must show their marked ballot to an **authorized party agent** before casting it.
- However, **independent MLAs are not required to show their ballot** to anyone.

##### Anti-Defection Law

- The Supreme Court has clarified that the **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law) does not apply to Rajya Sabha elections**.
- Although political parties may take disciplinary action against members for cross-voting, the vote remains **legally valid**, and MLAs do not lose their membership automatically.

##### NOTA Provision

The Supreme Court ruled in 2018 that **NOTA (None of the Above) is not applicable in Rajya Sabha elections**, as it is meant only for direct elections.

### 3) VACATION OF SEATS

#### Why in News?

**Nitish Kumar** will to continue as Chief Minister after being elected to the **Rajya Sabha** on March 16, 2026.

#### About

A person cannot be a member of both Houses of Parliament and both a House of Parliament and a State Legislature at the same time.

**Article 101** of the constitution talks about the vacation of seats which also includes Dual membership.

- **Double Membership in Parliament:** If elected to both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, the person must **intimate within 10 days** which House they wish to serve in. **Failing this, their Rajya Sabha seat becomes vacant.**
- **Sitting Member elected to the other House:** If a **sitting member** of one House is elected to the other, their **seat in the first House becomes vacant.**
- **Election to two seats in the same House:** If elected to two seats in the same House, the person must **exercise an option** for one; otherwise, **both seats become vacant.**
- **MP and MLA simultaneously:** A person **cannot be both an MP and an MLA.** If a person is elected to both, they must **resign** their seat in the State Legislature **within 14 days**, or their **seat in Parliament becomes vacant.**

The **procedure and time limit** to vacate the seats are given in the **Representation of the People Act, 1951.**

### 4) REMOVAL OF SPEAKER

#### Why in News?

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, a motion to remove **Om Birla**, Speaker of the **Lok Sabha**, came into focus after opposition parties submitted a formal notice seeking his removal.

## About

- The Speaker is the **presiding officer of the Lok Sabha**, responsible for maintaining order and conducting its proceedings.
- The office of the Speaker is provided under **Article 93**, which mandates the election of a Speaker and Deputy Speaker.
- The Speaker acts as a **neutral authority**, ensuring smooth functioning of the House and safeguarding parliamentary traditions.

The Speaker remains in office during the life of the Lok Sabha. When the Lok Sabha is dissolved, the Speaker **does not vacate** their office immediately. They continue until immediately before the first meeting of the newly elected Lok Sabha. However, they must vacate their office in the following three cases:

- If they cease to be a member of the Lok Sabha.
- If they resign by writing to the **Deputy Speaker**.
- If they are removed by a resolution passed by the Lok Sabha.

## Removal process

- **Article 94** of the constitution mentions about the **removal of the Speaker**.
- A resolution for removal can only be moved after giving at least **14 days' advance notice**.
- The resolution for removal must be passed by an **Effective Majority**.
- Effective Majority = 50% + 1 of (Total Strength – Vacancies)
- While a resolution for their removal is under consideration:
  - The Speaker **cannot preside** over the sitting of the House, though they may be present.
  - They have the **right to speak** and take part in the proceedings.
  - **Voting Rights:** The Speaker can vote in the first instance on such a resolution but **cannot vote in the case of an equality of votes** (no casting vote). Normally, the Speaker only votes to break a tie.

Once, the resolution is passed, the Speaker is deemed to have vacated their office from the **moment the resolution is passed**.

## 5) BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Why in News?

The **Business Advisory Committee** decided on the early conclusion of the ongoing Budget Session, to allow political leaders sufficient time to participate in campaigning for elections in various States.

### About

- Business Advisory Committee(BAC) is a **Standing (permanent) committee of Parliament**.
- The committee was **first constituted in July 1952**.
- Its primary function is to **regulate the programme and timetable of the House**.
- It is **not explicitly mentioned** in the Constitution.
- It derives its authority from **Article 118 of the Indian Constitution**, which empowers each House to frame rules for its procedure.
- The BAC is created under these Rules of Procedure.

### BAC of Lok Sabha

- In the **Lok Sabha**, the Business Advisory Committee consists of **15 members, including the Speaker**.
- **Speaker** acts as its **ex-officio Chairman**.

### BAC of Rajya Sabha

- In the **Rajya Sabha**, the committee comprises **11 members, including the Chairman**.
- **Chairman** serves as its **ex-officio Chairman**.
- The members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are **nominated by the Speaker**, and the term of the committee is **usually one year**.
- Notably, **Ministers are not nominated** to the committee.

## Functions

- BAC recommends the **time to be allotted for various legislative and other business**.
- It advises on the **order in which business should be taken up**, in consultation with the Leader of the House.
- It can **suggest subjects for discussion** and recommend time allocation.
- It serves as a platform for coordination between ruling and opposition parties regarding the legislative agenda.

## 6) PRIVILEGE COMMITTEE

### Why in News?

Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad is appointed as the **Chairperson of the Lok Sabha Committee of Privileges**.

### About

- It is a **Standing Committee**, and usually reconstituted annually, not just when a breach occurs.
- The **Lok Sabha Committee** consists of **15 members**, whereas the Rajya Sabha Committee consists of 10 members.
- In the **Lok Sabha**, members of the committee are **nominated by the Speaker**, while in the **Rajya Sabha**, they are **nominated by the Chairman**.
- The **Chairperson of the Lok Sabha Committee** is **appointed by the Speaker**, whereas in the **Rajya Sabha**, the **Chairperson is usually the Deputy Chairman**.
- The procedure for raising a "**Privilege Motion**" is **governed** under the rules of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

### Powers and Functions

- It **examines cases of "Breach of Privilege" or "Contempt of the House"** referred to it by the Presiding Officer or the House.
- It has the **power to summon individuals (members or outsiders)**, record evidence, and demand relevant documents.
- After evaluating facts, it **submits a report to the House**. It can recommend punishments

ranging from a warning/admonition to suspension or expulsion.

- Under the Anti-Defection Law, the Presiding Officer can refer disqualification petitions to this committee for a preliminary inquiry.
- The **Committee is the "investigatory arm,"** but the **final decision** to punish usually rests **with the House** after the report is tabled.

### PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES

- **Parliamentary privileges:** They are **special rights, immunities, and exemptions** enjoyed by Members of Parliament (MPs), Parliamentary committees, Attorney General of India.
- The **President of India** does **not** enjoy parliamentary privileges.
- **Article 105** defines powers, privileges, and immunities of Parliament, its members, and its committees.
- **Source of Privileges** are **not yet codified** by any law. They are derived from the Constitution, Parliamentary conventions, Rules of Houses, and British Parliamentary conventions.
- It is to ensure **free and independent functioning** of the legislature without external interference.

#### Individual privileges

- **Freedom of Speech:** No member is liable to any proceedings in any court for anything said or any vote given in Parliament.
- **Freedom from Arrest:** MPs cannot be arrested in **civil cases** 40 days before, during, and 40 days after a session.
- This immunity does **not** extend to **criminal cases** or preventive detention.

#### Collective privileges

- The right to exclude **strangers** (secret sittings).
- The right to prohibit the **publication** of its debates and proceedings.
- The right to receive **immediate information** of the arrest, detention, conviction, or release of a member.

## 7) TRANSFER OF GOVERNOR

### Why in News?

Governor **R. N. Ravi** has been transferred from **Tamil Nadu to West Bengal.**

### About

- The Governor is the **constitutional head of a State** in India, functioning as the nominal executive authority.
- The **office of the Governor** is established under **Article 153** of the Indian Constitution, which provides that there shall be a Governor for each State.
- The Governor holds office **“during the pleasure of the President.”**

### Transfer of Governor

- The **transfer** of a Governor is **not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution** but is derived from **Article 156** of the Indian Constitution, which allows the **President to remove or transfer a Governor.**
- The President has the formal power, but the **decision is effectively made by the Central Government** on the advice of the Council of Ministers.
- Transfer means **shifting a Governor from one State to another**; it is a **continuation of tenure**, not a new appointment, though a fresh oath is taken in the state where he was transferred to.

### Judicial interpretation

#### B.P. Singhal v. Union of India (2010)

- The Supreme Court held that under the doctrine of pleasure, the President **can remove or transfer** a Governor without assigning reasons, but the power **cannot be exercised arbitrarily or in bad faith.**
- Such decisions are **subject to judicial review** if they are based on political bias or irrelevant considerations.
- However, **courts interfere only** when the Governor can prima facie **show that the action was mala fide.**

## Committee recommendations

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ON TENURE / TRANSFER OF GOVERNORS**

- SARKARIA COMMISSION (1988)**: Governors should not be disturbed before their 5-year term except for extremely compelling reasons. CM of the state should be consulted before appointment.
- VENKATCHALIAH COMMISSION (2002)**: If a Governor is removed/transferred before 5-year term, the Union Government should consult the Chief Minister of the state.
- PUNCHHI COMMISSION (2007)**: Suggested deleting the "pleasure of the President" doctrine. Governors should only be removed by a resolution of the State Legislature.

## 8) GARO HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Why in News?

Meghalaya Governor Chandrashekhar H. Vijayashankar ordered the postponement of the election to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), as violence continued in parts of the western half of the State.

### About

- The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) is a **Sixth Schedule autonomous body** in **Meghalaya**, providing self-governance to tribal areas of the Garo Hills.
- It exercises **legislative, executive, and judicial powers** to preserve tribal customs and ensure decentralized administration.

### Constitutional Basis

- The **Article 244(2)** of the Indian Constitution and **Article 275(1)** of the Indian Constitution provide for administration of tribal areas under the **Sixth Schedule.**
- The **Sixth Schedule** applies to **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram (AMTM states).**
- It grants **autonomous self-governance ("State within a State")** to tribal areas.

- It is based on **recommendations of the Bordoloi Committee.**

#### Jurisdiction

- The **Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC)** functions in Meghalaya.
- GHADC is **one of three ADCs in Meghalaya**, the other two are Jaintia and Khasi ADCs.
- Its **headquarters** is in Tura, Meghalaya.

#### Composition and Tenure of Autonomous District Council

- ADCs are composed of up to **30 members**, typically **26 elected and 4 nominated** by the Governor.
- **Elected Members:** Have a 5-year term, extendable during Emergency by up to 1 year at a time.
- **Nominated Members:** Serve at the pleasure of the Governor and can be removed anytime.

#### Powers and Functions of Autonomous District Council

##### Legislative Powers:

- They can make laws regarding land, forests (other than reserved forests), canal water, village administration, inheritance of property, marriage/divorce, and social customs.
- However, these laws require the **assent of the Governor.**

##### Judicial Powers:

- ADCs can **constitute village councils or courts** for trials of suits and cases **between members of Scheduled Tribes.**
- They can **appoint officers for the administration of justice**, though the jurisdiction of High Courts is specified by the Governor.

##### Regulatory & Fiscal Powers:

- They have the authority to establish and manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, and roads.

- Crucially, they have the power to **assess and collect land revenue** and impose taxes on professions, trades, animals, and vehicles.

#### Role of Governor

The Governor acts as the central authority regarding the administration of these districts:

- **Boundary Alteration:** The Governor has the power to **create new autonomous districts**, increase or decrease their area, or change their names.
- **Legislative Oversight:** Laws passed by the ADCs do not take effect until they **receive the Governor's assent.**
- **Nomination:** The Governor **nominates a small portion of the ADC members** (usually 4), who hold office during the Governor's pleasure.
- **Commission of Inquiry:** The Governor **can appoint a commission to examine** and report on any matter relating to the administration of the autonomous districts.
- **Governor's power of Dissolution:** The Governor can **dissolve the Council on a Commission's recommendation** if its administration is unsatisfactory or against public interest.

## 9) NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

### Why in News?

The **National Human Rights Commission** has taken suo motu cognizance of the reported deaths of 16 people due to consumption of adulterated milk in **East Godavari district** since mid-February.

### About

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a **statutory body** established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
- Its creation is in accordance with the **Paris Principles (1991)**, which lay down international standards for national human rights institutions.

- The NHRC functions as the “**watchdog of human rights**” in India, safeguarding rights related to **life, liberty, equality, and dignity**.

### Composition

The NHRC is a **multi-member body** with both full-time and ex-officio members.

#### Chairperson:

- He/She must be a **retired Chief Justice of India** or a **retired Judge of the Supreme Court**.

#### Full-time members:

- One member is a **serving or retired Judge of the Supreme Court**.
- One member is a **serving or retired Chief Justice of a High Court**.
- Three members are **persons having knowledge or practical experience in human rights**, and at least **one of them must be a woman**.

#### Ex-officio members:

The body includes **ex-officio members drawn from key national commissions and authorities**, representing minorities, SCs, STs, women, backward classes, children, and persons with disabilities.

### Appointment and Tenure

- The **President of India** appoints the Chairperson and members of NHRC.
- These appointments are made on the recommendation of a **high-powered selection committee**, which includes:
  - The Prime Minister (Chairperson)
  - Speaker of the Lok Sabha
  - Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
  - Leaders of Opposition in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha
  - Union Home Minister
- The tenure of the Chairperson and members is **3 years or until the age of 70 years**, whichever is earlier.
- Members are **eligible for re-appointment**.

- After completion of tenure, they are **not eligible for further employment under the Central or State Government**.

### Powers and Functions

- The NHRC has the **powers of a civil court** during its inquiry proceedings.
- It can take up **suo motu cognizance** of human rights violations or act on petitions received.
- It can **intervene in court proceedings** involving human rights issues, with the permission of the court.
- It is empowered to **visit jails, police stations, and detention centres** to examine living conditions of inmates.
- In cases involving armed forces, its jurisdiction is limited; it can only **seek a report from the Central Government and make recommendations**.
- It can inquire into matters only if the incident occurred **within one year of the complaint or notice**.
- Its recommendations are **not binding on the government**.

## 10) SCHEDULES CASTE STATUS

### Why in News?

The Supreme Court on March 24, 2026 held in a judgment that a person professing any religion other than Hinduism, Buddhism, or Sikhism should not be considered a member of a Schedule Caste community.

### About

- **Scheduled caste (SC)** : “Scheduled Castes” are those castes or groups that are officially listed (notified) by the President under **Article 341** for the purposes of the Constitution.
- The primary criterion for inclusion in the SC list is **historical social, educational, and economic backwardness** arising out of the traditional practice of **untouchability**.
- Unlike Scheduled Tribes (ST), which is religion-neutral, SC status is linked to specific religions.

Under the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950**:

- **1950 (Original rule):** Only **Hindus** could be recognized as SCs.
- **1956 Amendment:** Extended SC status to **Sikhs**.
- **1990 Amendment:** Extended SC status to **Buddhists**.

**Present situation:** Only **Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists** can be classified as SCs.

**Christians and Muslims are excluded** because these religions do not traditionally recognize caste distinctions.

### How SC status is given?

- Under **Article 341(1)** of the Constitution, the **President** is the authority who officially "initiates" the list by issuing a public notification.
- If the list is for a State, the President **must consult the Governor** of that State before issuing the notification.
- This was the original "initiation." The President issued the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950**, which listed the castes deemed to be SCs across various states.

### Process

- **State Proposal:** A State/Union Territory initiates the process by recommending a community based on evidence of historical untouchability and backwardness.
- **Central Ministry Review:** The Ministry of Social Justice scrutinizes the proposal and forwards it for further verification.
- **RGI Verification:** The Registrar General of India examines socio-historical data and can reject weak claims.
- **NCSC Opinion:** The National Commission for Scheduled Castes provides an independent constitutional recommendation.
- **Cabinet Approval:** The Union Cabinet approves introducing a Bill to amend the SC list.

- **Parliamentary Approval:** Parliament passes the law, making the inclusion legally valid under **Article 341**.

### President's role

#### 1. First List (1950)

- The Constitution did not list castes directly.
- Under **Article 341**, the President was given power to identify them.
- Accordingly, the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950** was issued became the **initial SC list**.

#### 2. Lock-in Mechanism

- To prevent frequent changes, **Article 341(2)** created a safeguard:
- After the first list is issued, the **President cannot modify it**.
- Any change (addition/removal) can be done **only by Parliament through a law**.

#### 3. Exception: New States/UTs

- When a new state/UT is created (e.g., **Telangana** in 2014), a fresh Presidential Order may be issued.
- This usually **adjusts existing lists**, not creates entirely new ones.

## 11) FLAG RULES

### Why in News?

On March 19, 2026, Indian cricketer Hardik Pandya faced a police complaint filed by a Pune-based lawyer, Wajid Khan, for alleged disrespect to the Indian national flag during T20 World Cup victory celebrations.

### About

- The **National Flag of India**, popularly known as the **Tiranga**, is a symbol of the nation's sovereignty, unity, and constitutional ideals.
- The present design of the flag was adopted on **22 July 1947** by the Constituent Assembly.
- The flag consists of three horizontal stripes **saffron** at the top (**representing strength & courage**), **white** in the middle (**representing**

peace & truth), and green at the bottom (representing fertility & growth), with navy blue Ashoka Chakra of 24 spokes at the centre.

### Statutory and Constitutional framework

- **Article 51A(a)** imposes a **Fundamental Duty** on every citizen to **respect** the Constitution, **the National Flag**, and the National Anthem.
- The **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950** restricts the use of the National Flag for commercial or professional purposes.
- The **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** prohibits desecration of the National Flag (e.g., burning, mutilation, trampling). Amendments in 2003 and 2005 expanded “disrespect” to include its use as clothing below the waist or as items like napkins or cushions.

### Flag code of India, 2002

The **Flag Code of India, 2002** is not a law but a compilation of rules, conventions, and practices relating to the display of the National Flag.

It is divided into three parts:

- **Part I** deals with the general description of the flag.
- **Part II** governs display by the public, private organizations, and individuals.
- **Part III** relates to display by the Central and State Governments.

### Recent amendments

- **2021 amendment:** Polyester and machine-made flags are now allowed (earlier only Khadi was allowed).
- **2022 amendment:** The flag can be flown **day and night**, not just from sunrise to sunset.

### Specifications of the National flag

- The flag must be **rectangular**, with a length-to-height ratio of **3:2**.
- The saffron band must always be at the top and should never be inverted.

- The **flag must always occupy the position of honour**, typically on the right side from the observer’s perspective.
- A damaged flag must not be displayed.
- The **right to display the flag on vehicles is restricted to certain dignitaries** such as the President, Vice-President, Governors, Prime Minister, and Chief Justice of India. Private individuals are not permitted to do so.
- The flag **cannot be used as drapery for buildings**, statues (except during unveiling ceremonies), or as a covering for a speaker’s desk.
- **No lettering, slogans, or inscriptions** should be written on the flag.
- The flag must **not be allowed to touch the ground**, floor, or water intentionally.

### Judicial interpretation

- In **Naveen Jindal vs. Union of India (2004)**, the Supreme Court held that the right to fly the National Flag with dignity is a **Fundamental Right under Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression)**.
- However, this right is not absolute and is subject to reasonable restrictions.

## 12) PANCHAYATI RAJ DEVOLUTION INDEX

### Why in News?

The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has released the report titled “Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States – An Indicative Evidence-Based Ranking, 2024.”

### About

- The **Panchayati Raj Devolution Index (PRDI)** measures the **extent of devolution of powers, finances, and functions** to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by States/Union Territories, as envisioned under **Article 243G** and the **11th Schedule** (29 functional subjects).
- It is released by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.
- It is prepared by **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)**, New Delhi.

- It's purpose is to create a competitive and **cooperative federalism environment** among states to strengthen grassroots democracy.

### Key Parameters of Devolution Index Ranking

PRDI is built on **six key dimensions** that together assess how effectively States have devolved powers to Panchayats:

- **Framework:** It assesses the legal and institutional setup, including regular elections and State Finance Commissions.
- **Functions:** Assesses the extent to which the **29 subjects** listed in the Eleventh Schedule have been actually **transferred to Panchayats**, along with clear activity mapping.
- **Finances:** Measures the fiscal autonomy of Panchayats, including their **ability to generate own-source revenue (OSR)**, and the timely and **adequate transfer of grants**.
- **Functionaries:** Examines the **availability, adequacy, and administrative control of staff working** under Panchayats, which is crucial for effective service delivery.
- **Capacity Enhancement:** Looks at efforts made to **strengthen the capabilities** of elected representatives and officials through **training and support programs like the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**.
- **Accountability:** Focuses on mechanisms that ensure transparency and answerability, such as **social audits, public disclosure systems**, and anti-corruption measures.

### Latest Findings & Rankings (2024-25 Report)

- The **overall Devolution Progress** increased from **39.9%** (2013-14) to approximately **43.9%**.
- **Karnataka** ranked **1st**, excelling in **finances and accountability**.
- **Kerala** secured **2nd place**, leading in the **framework (institutional setup)**.

- **Tamil Nadu** stood **3rd**, with the highest score in **functions (power transfer)**.

## 13) CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX

### Why in News?

India improved to **91st rank with a score of 39**, though it continues to remain below the global average in the Corruption Perception Index.

### About

- It measures **perceived levels of public sector corruption** in countries worldwide.
- It does not measure actual corruption, rather it is based on **expert assessments and business surveys**.
- It is published annually by the **Transparency International**, a global non-governmental organization (**NGO**) headquartered in Berlin, Germany.
- The results are given on a score scale of **0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)**.

### 2025 Report and its highlights

- The latest data reflects a "worrying global trend" where the **global average score has dropped to 42**.
- The **Top Performers** (Least Corrupt) are **Denmark (Score 89), Finland, Singapore**.
- The **Bottom Performers** (Most Corrupt) are **Somalia & South Sudan (Score 9), Venezuela**.
- India is ranked **91st out of 182 countries**, with a **score of 39**.
- **India** shows improvement from its **96th position in 2024**.
- Among India's neighbours, **Bhutan** leads South Asia (18th, score 71), **China** ranks above India (76th, score 43), while **Pakistan** trails behind (136th, score 28).

## ECONOMY

### 1) RICE FORTIFICATION

#### Why in News?

The Central Government has **temporarily suspended the rice fortification scheme** under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana and other welfare programmes** after a study by **Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur** raised concerns.

#### About

- Rice fortification is a specialized process of increasing the content of essential micronutrients (**like Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12**) in rice to improve its nutritional quality and provide a public health benefit.
- It specifically targets **Anaemia** (Iron), prevents birth defects in the **brain and spine** (Folic Acid), and supports the **nervous system** (B12).
- **Extrusion Technology:** This is the most common method where broken rice grains are ground into flour, mixed with nutrients, and "extruded" back into the shape of rice kernels.
- **The "+F" Logo:** All fortified food products in India must carry the blue "+F" logo for easy identification by consumers.
- **Labelling:** Packaging must clearly state "Fortified with Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12."
- **WHO Support:** The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends rice fortification as a safe and effective strategy to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.
- **Shelf Life:** Fortified rice generally has a shelf life of at least 12 months, similar to regular rice.
- **Medical Exceptions:** People with **Thalassemia** or **Sickle Cell Anaemia** are often advised to limit iron intake; they are usually cautioned regarding high-iron fortified rice.

- **Taste Neutrality:** Fortification does not alter the natural flavor of the rice variety it is blended with.
- **Storage:** It requires no special storage conditions beyond what is normal for regular rice (cool, dry place).
- **FSSAI Role:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) sets the operational standards for fortification.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) oversees the nationwide rollout.

#### Findings of IIT Study

- The study found that **nutrients degrade over time** during storage.
- Key factors affecting stability:
  - Moisture
  - Temperature
  - Humidity
  - Storage duration & packaging

Since government rice stocks are often stored **2-3 years**, the **nutritional value reduces significantly**, defeating the purpose



**Blending Ratio:** For every 100 kg of regular rice, 1 kg of Fortified Rice Kernels is added.

### 2) ONLINE GAMING RULES

#### Why in News?

The CEO of Fino Payments Bank, Rishi Gupta, was **arrested by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI)** in connection with a major probe into **illegal online gaming and GST evasion**.

#### About

- **The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025** is the primary central law governing the sector, under which the **Online**

**Gaming Authority of India (OGAI)** has been established as the national-level regulator.

- **Ban on Money Games:** Most forms of online real-money games (**Fantasy Sports, Rummy, and Poker**) that involve stakes and cash payouts are now prohibited.
- **E-sports Promotion:** While money games are restricted, the Act explicitly provides for the recognition and promotion of **E-sports** and social games.
- All online gaming (including casinos and horse racing) is **taxed at a flat 28% GST**.

### IT Rules

**Online Gaming Intermediaries (OGIs)** must comply with strict IT rules, including obtaining a **visible verification mark for permissible games and prohibiting surrogate ads** for illegal gambling. They are required to appoint a resident **Chief Compliance Officer and a 24×7 nodal officer** for law enforcement coordination, and must publish regular compliance reports on complaints and actions taken.

### Consumer Protection & Safety

Mandatory Aadhaar-based KYC is required for real-money platforms, and **users below 18 are prohibited from participating**. Platforms must display continuous addiction and financial risk warnings, ensure grievance redressal within 24 hours with an appeal option to the **Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC)**, and comply with the CCPA ban on dark patterns that manipulate users into spending more time or money.

### Tax

- On the indirect tax side, a uniform **28% GST** is levied on the **full face value of bets or entry fees**, rather than only on the platform's commission or Gross Gaming Revenue (GGR).
- On the direct tax front, players are required to pay a **flat 30% income tax on net winnings**.

## 3) COCONUT DEVELOPMENT BOARD

### Why in News?

India has reaffirmed its status as the world's largest coconut producer, accounting for 30.37% of

global output, while the Union Budget 2026–27 introduces a new Coconut Promotion Scheme to further strengthen the sector.

### About

- The Coconut Development Board was established under the **Coconut Development Board Act, 1979**. It is headquartered in Kochi, Kerala, and functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- **Regional Presence:** It has 4 Regional Offices (Bangalore, **Chennai**, Guwahati, and Patna) and several State Centres across India.
- India remains the world's largest coconut producer, contributing over **31% of global output, with one of the highest productivity levels at around 9,400 nuts per hectare**.
- **Major Producing States-**Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka.

### Functions

- **Integrated Development:** Ensures overall development of coconut production and utilization.
- **Area Expansion:** Provides financial support to expand cultivation, especially in non-traditional regions.
- **Replanting & Rejuvenation:** Replaces old and unproductive palms with high-yielding varieties.
- **Technology Transfer:** Connects research institutions (e.g., ICAR-CPCRI) with farmers.
- **Standardization:** Sets grades, specifications, and standards for coconut and its products.

### Key Schemes and Programs

- **Coconut Promotion Scheme (2026):** Aims to boost productivity and double farmers' income.
- **TMOC (Technology Mission on Coconut):** Focuses on pest management, processing, and market research.

- **Kera Suraksha Insurance:** Provides accident insurance cover for coconut climbers and tappers.
- **Export Promotion:** Acts as the Export Promotion Council for coconut products (excluding coir).

#### Agro-Climatic Requirements for Coconut Cultivation:

- **Temperature:** Tropical climate; 20–32°C
- **Rainfall:** 1000–2500 mm annually
- **Soil:** Well-drained sandy loam, laterite, and coastal alluvial soils
- **Altitude:** Sea level up to 600 m
- **Humidity:** High humidity is favorable



- **Crop Type:** Major plantation crop of tropical India
- **Global Status:** India is the world's largest producer and consumer of coconut
- **Nickname:** Known as "Kalpavriksha" (tree of heaven) due to its multiple uses

## 4) MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS

### Why in News?

The **Mobile World Congress (MWC)** signalling a global shift from 5G-led connectivity to an AI-driven "supercycle," where artificial intelligence becomes the primary driver of technological and economic transformation.

### About

- **Mobile World Congress (MWC)** is the world's largest and most influential exhibition for the connectivity industry. It is hosted by the **GSMA (Global System for Mobile Communications Association)** and serves as the primary stage for the launch of new

smartphones, 6G prototypes, and AI-integrated hardware.

- The event is organized by the **GSMA**, which represents the interests of over 750 mobile operators worldwide. Since 2006, Barcelona has served as its permanent host city.
- The official headline **theme** for 2026 was "**The IQ Era**,"
- **Mobile Economy Report 2026:** The GSMA projected that mobile technologies will contribute **\$11.3 trillion to global GDP by 2030** (approx. 8.4%).

- *The **India Mobile Congress (IMC)** has evolved into Asia's largest digital technology forum, jointly organized by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).*
- ***Theme: "Intelligence to Impact"***



**The Usage Gap:** A critical policy fact: While **96% of the global population** lives within mobile coverage, **over 3 billion people remain unconnected** due to affordability and literacy.

## 5) INSURANCE REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF INDIA

### Why in News?

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued an **exposure draft (March 2026)** proposing adoption of **Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS)**.

### About

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is a **statutory body** established under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999, based on the recommendations of the **Malhotra Committee**, headquartered in Hyderabad,

with the core objective of **protecting policyholders** and regulation of the insurance industry under **Ministry of Finance**.

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India permits FDI in the insurance sector, allowing up to **100% for intermediaries** (like brokers), while **insurance companies** (life, general, health) can have **up to 74% FDI**, subject to Indian management and control.

### Functions

- It acts as the **licensing authority for insurers**
- Sets investment norms for funds allocation,
- Ensures financial stability through a **mandated solvency ratio (150%)**,
- It has power to adjudicate disputes and **impose penalties** for non-compliance.

## 6) PM-DAKSH

### Why in News?

Recent data tabled in the Lok Sabha revealed that less than half of the candidates trained under the PM-DAKSH Yojana between 2021 and 2024 were successfully placed in jobs, raising concerns about the effectiveness of post-training employment linkages.

### About

- **PM-DAKSH** (*Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi*) is a flagship Central Sector Scheme under the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, designed to bridge the skill gap for India's most marginalized communities.
- **Target Groups:** Focuses on Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), Denotified Tribes (DNTs), and Safai Karamcharis (including waste pickers).
- The eligibility criteria specify an age range of **18 to 45 years**, with youth-specific programs often targeting the **18–35 age bracket**, and an **annual family income limit of ₹3 lakh** for candidates from OBC/EBC categories.

- **Women's Reservation:** At least **30%** of seats are reserved for women.
- The scheme is implemented using a digital platform via the **PM-DAKSH portal and app**. Training is delivered through government and empaneled private institutes under PMKVY, with all courses aligned to the **National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)**.
- **Placement Guarantee:** Training institutes are mandated to provide wage/self-employment to at least **70%** of trained candidates
- **Penalty for Failure:** If placement targets aren't met, **the final 30% of the training cost is withheld from the institute**.
- The scheme is now being integrated with the **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)** for a unified "One-Stop Shop" experience.

## 7) NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA

### Why in News?

The Supreme Court directed the Centre and the National Mission for Clean Ganga to submit a **report on illegal constructions and encroachments along the Ganga's banks**.

### About

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga is a flagship program initiated by the Government of India with the **primary objective of rejuvenating the Ganga River**. It initially registered as a society, was later converted into a **statutory authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, granting it formal legal powers for river management and conservation.
- It ensures to maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring
  - water quality and
  - Environmentally sustainable development.
- **Jurisdiction:** The mission covers the main stem of the Ganga and its tributaries across **11 states**.

- **UNESCO Recognition:** The Namami Gange initiative was recognized as one of the "Top 10 World Restoration Flagships" at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15).
- **Ganga 2.0:** The current phase (2021–2026) focuses on tributaries like the **Yamuna, Hindon, and Gomti**.
- The National Ganga Council is chaired by the **Prime Minister**, while the **Empowered Task Force** under the council is headed by the Minister of Jal Shakti.
- **Headquarters:** The main office is located in **New Delhi**, operating under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.

### Government Initiatives

- **Namami Gange** is one of the Coveted Programmes of NMCG to clean Ganga.
- Ganga Knowledge Centre (GKC)
- Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGANGA)

## 8) OPEN MARKET OPERATION

### Why in News?

The **Reserve Bank of India** conducted an **Open Market Operation (OMO)** in which it **purchased ₹50,000 crore worth of government securities** from the market to inject liquidity.

### About

- Open Market Operation refers to the **buying and selling of government securities (G-Secs)** by the central bank in the open market.
- In India, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) uses OMOs to manage liquidity and ensure financial stability.
- The primary goal is to **manage the quantity of money (liquidity) in the banking system** and stabilize short-term interest rates.
- When the RBI **buys** securities, it injects liquidity into the system; when it **sells** securities, it absorbs or sucks out excess liquidity.

**Open Market Operation are used to:**

**Control inflation:** By selling government securities, the RBI reduces liquidity, causing interest rates to rise. This, in turn, helps control inflation by curbing excess demand.

**Boost economic growth:** During economic slowdowns, the RBI can buy securities to inject liquidity into the system. Lower interest rates encourage borrowing and investment, which can help stimulate growth.

**Manage exchange rates:** OMOs can influence the exchange rate of the Indian Rupee by impacting the supply of money. This can be particularly relevant in maintaining stability amidst volatile foreign exchange markets.

## 9) BHARAT TAXI

### Why in News?

Bharat Taxi, a cooperative ride-hailing service, is rapidly expanding across India, empowering drivers with a zero-commission model and prioritising user safety with features like 'Sarthi Didi' for female drivers and passengers.

### About

Bharat Taxi is India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform registered under the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**.

It is a government-supported initiative developed under the **Union Ministry of Cooperation and the National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**.

It is India's first cooperative taxi network, allowing drivers to become shareholders and co-owners.

**Promoted:** It is being jointly promoted by leading cooperative and financial institutions including NCDC, IFFCO, AMUL, KRIBHCO, NAFED, NABARD, NDD Band NCEL.

### Key Features of Bharat Taxi Initiative

- **Driver-Owned Fleet:** Drivers can purchase shares and become cooperative members, giving them transparency and decision-making power.

- **Zero Commission:** Unlike private cab aggregators that take a large cut, Bharat Taxi transfers the full fare to the driver.
- **Transparent, No-Surge Pricing:** Fares will remain predictable, with no surge charges.
- **Platform Integration & Technical Architecture:** Integration of the Bharat Taxi platform with national digital platforms such as **DigiLocker, UMANG, and API Setu.**
- **Security, Compliance & Infrastructure:** Ensuring adherence to Government of India's data protection norms and cybersecurity standards and advising on robust technical infrastructure.

*"Sarathi Didi": empower women by providing them employment opportunities as drivers*

## 10) ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES ACT

### Why in News?

The Government of India has **invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955** to ensure **uninterrupted supply of LPG (cooking gas)** amid global disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

### About

- The Essential Commodities Act is a central legislation enacted to **control the production, supply, and distribution of specific commodities deemed essential for the general public.** It empowers the government to prevent hoarding and black marketing while ensuring equitable distribution at fair prices.
- The Act is typically invoked in situations such as **war or famine, natural calamities,** periods of **extraordinary price rise,** and during **festive seasons or elections,** in order to regulate supply, prevent hoarding, and ensure the availability of essential commodities at fair prices.

### Key Features

- **Declaration of Commodities:** Essential commodity means any item specified in the Schedule of the Act.
- **Amending the Schedule:** The Central Government can add or remove commodities from the Schedule in consultation with State Governments.
- **Stock Limits:** The government can fix the quantity of a commodity any person or trader can hold in stock.
- **Price Regulation:** The Act allows for the fixation of prices, particularly for items like food grains, edible oils, and sugar.
- **Penalties:** Contravention of orders under Section 3 can lead to imprisonment ranging from three months to seven years, plus fines.
- **Confiscation:** Authorities have the power to seize and confiscate commodities, along with the vehicles or animals used for their transport, if the Act is violated.

### Latest Invoked items

**LPG and Natural Gas (March 2026):** In response to global energy supply shocks, the Centre invoked the ECA to prioritize domestic cooking gas.

**Kerosene (March 2026):** Additional allocations and storage regulations for PDS Kerosene were notified to ensure energy security for cooking and lighting in underserved districts.

## 11) ECONOMIC STABILISATION FUND

### Why in News?

Finance Minister has announced an allocation of **₹57,381 crore** for a new Economic Stabilisation Fund to help India navigate global headwinds, such as the West Asia conflict and supply chain disruptions.

## About

- It is designed to act as a **"financial shock absorber,"** protecting the Indian economy from global headwinds such as the West Asia conflict, oil price spikes and supply chain disruptions **without breaching fiscal deficit targets.**
- The **fund** will be placed under the **reserve funds** managed by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**, Ministry of Finance.
- **Fiscal Discipline:** The government has emphasized that this allocation **does not entail additional borrowing** and will not impact the **fiscal deficit target of 4.4%** for 2025–26 (Revised Estimates).

### Primary Objectives of the ESF:

- Shock Absorption
- Inflation & Price Stability
- Fiscal Discipline and Deficit Protection
- Currency and Forex Management
- Counter-Cyclical Fiscal Policy

*Under Article 115, Supplementary Demands for Grants are required when funds authorised by the Appropriation Act for a service prove insufficient. The President lays them before both the Houses of Parliament for approval before the financial year ends.*

## 12) INDIA AI SUMMIT

### Why in News?

India hosted the **India AI Impact Summit 2026** in New Delhi, marking the **first global AI summit held in the Global South**, highlighting India's leadership in inclusive AI governance.

### About

- The India-AI Impact Summit 2026 commenced at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, organised by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, marking the first major global **Artificial Intelligence (AI) summit hosted in the Global South** and showcasing India's leadership in inclusive, development-focused AI.

- The Summit is hosted under the **India AI Mission**, shifting the global narrative from **"AI Safety"** to **"AI for Development and Impact."**
- **Theme and Philosophy:** The summit is anchored in Indian ethos, specifically the motto **"Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya"** (Welfare for all, happiness for all). **The Three Sutras (Pillars):** People, Planet, and Progress.
- **The Seven Chakras (Working Groups):** Focused themes including Health, Agriculture, Safe & Trusted AI, Science, Inclusion, Democratizing AI Resources, and Economic Development.

### Major outcomes

**GPU Expansion:** India announced the addition of **20,000 more GPUs** to its existing pool of 38,000 under the **IndiaAI Mission**, strengthening sovereign compute capacity.

**Sovereign AI Models:** Three major indigenous models were launched:

- **BharatGen Param2:** A 17-billion parameter model supporting 22 Indian languages.
- **Sarvam AI:** Unveiled next-gen LLMs (up to 105-billion parameters) and **Kaze smartglasses.**
- **Gnani.ai:** A multilingual voice model for 12 languages designed for low-bandwidth areas.

**Pax Silica Deal:** India formally joined this coalition with the US to secure strategic AI chip supply chains.

## 13) BHARAT AUDYOGIK VIKAS YOJNA (BHAVYA)

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has **recently approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA)** with an outlay of about **₹33,660 crore** scheme to develop **100 plug-and-play industrial parks.** It aims to boost manufacturing, attract investments, and strengthen India's industrial ecosystem amid global supply chain disruptions.

### About

- It aims to develop **world-class industrial infrastructure**, unlocking manufacturing potential and driving India's growth story.
- Aligned with PM GatiShakti principles for seamless multimodal connectivity.
- **Target:** Developing 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country.
- **Implementation:** BHAVYA will be implemented in partnership with states and private sector players.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Implementing Agency:** **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)**, under the DPIIT

## 14) CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Why in News?

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) underwent a major legislative shift with the introduction of the **Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**. This bill aims to balance "Ease of Doing Business" with deeper social accountability.

### About

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations. In India, it is mandated under the Companies Act, 2013, requiring eligible companies to contribute a portion of their profits to social development activities.
- **Applicability (Thresholds):** Applies to every company (including foreign companies with branches in India) having:
  - Net worth of **₹500 crore** or more, or
  - Turnover of **₹1,000 crore** or more, or
  - Net profit of **₹5 crore** or more during any financial year.
- **CSR Spend Requirement:** Eligible companies **must allocate at least 2% of their average net profit from the previous 3 years towards CSR activities.**

- **Penalty for Non-Compliance:** Penalties are imposed if companies **fail to meet the 2% CSR spend requirement** and do not transfer the unspent amount to a specified fund.
- **CSR Registration:** Companies intending to undertake CSR activities must register with the Registrar of Companies. This ensures their CSR initiatives comply with the legal framework and are monitored.
- **CSR Committee:** Companies must constitute a CSR Committee of the Board consisting of **three or more directors**, out of which at least one must be an **Independent Director**.
- **Non-Tax Deductible:** CSR expenditure is **not** a business expenditure and therefore is not deductible for income tax purposes (unlike charitable donations under 80G).
- **Unspent CSR Funds (Ongoing Projects):** Must be transferred to a "**Unspent CSR Account**" within 30 days of the end of the FY and spent within 3 years.
- **Unspent CSR Funds (General):** If not related to an ongoing project, funds must be transferred to a **Schedule VII Fund** (like PM CARES or PMNRF) within 6 months of the end of the FY.

## 15) MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Regional Connectivity Scheme - Modified UDAN** with a **Rs 28,840 crore outlay** for 2026-2036, aiming to strengthen regional aviation and address viability issues in earlier phases.

### About

- The **Modified UDAN scheme**, introduced in the **Union Budget 2025-26**, is a revamped version of the **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) initiative**, to promote both infrastructure development and long-term operational sustainability.

- The Modified UDAN scheme aims to revolutionize India's aviation landscape by significantly **improving regional connectivity across Tier-2 and Tier-3** cities through a strategy that makes air travel affordable for common citizens while simultaneously promoting balanced regional development.
- The scheme/initiative is implemented by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**

### Key Features

- Airlines are selected through a competitive bidding mechanism.
- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** is provided to airlines to operate on less profitable routes.
- 50% of seats are offered at a capped fare of around Rs. 2,500 per hour of flight.
- Focus on connecting remote, hilly, and island regions.
- Development of Modern Helipads

### UDAN Scheme

**UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** scheme is a flagship regional airport development program launched by the Government of India. Its primary goal is to make air travel affordable and widespread across the country's "unserved" and "underserved" regions.

### Evolution of Versions (UDAN 1.0 to 5.0)

- **UDAN 4.0:** Focused on North-Eastern regions, Hilly States, and Islands.
- **UDAN 5.0:** Removed the distance cap (previously 500km) and increased the focus on **Heliports** and **Water Aerodromes** (Seaplanes).

## 16) COTTON CORPORATION OF INDIA

### Why in News?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) funding to the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for the cotton season.

### About

- The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), is a Public Sector Undertaking incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956, and functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Textiles**, Government of India.
- **Headquarters:** The central office is located in **Navi Mumbai**, Maharashtra.
- Key operations are concentrated in **Gujarat, Telangana, and Maharashtra**.

### Functions:

- **Primary Mandate:** Its chief role is to undertake **Price Support Operations** whenever market prices of seed cotton (kapas) fall below the Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- Cotton Corporation of India undertakes **commercial purchase operations**.

### Technology

- **KapasKisan App:** The CCI recently launched this mobile app for farmers to self-register and book "slots" for selling their produce, reducing long queues at mandis.

#### Cotton cultivation

- Cotton is a **tropical and subtropical** crop that requires warm conditions.
- **Temperature:** The ideal temperature ranges in between **21°C to 30°C**. It needs 210 frost-free days annually, as frost is highly damaging.
- **Rainfall:** The crop requires **50–100 cm of rainfall**, ideally well-distributed.
- **Soil:** Cotton grows best in deep black soils (*regur*) of the **Deccan Plateau, Malwa Plateau, and Gujarat**.

## 17) FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND

### Why in News?

The Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has been implementing the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)** since **2018-19**, with a **total outlay of ₹7,522.48 crore**, to create and strengthen fisheries and aquaculture infrastructure across the country.

### About

- The Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) is a dedicated **financial instrument** aimed at transforming India's fisheries sector by addressing critical infrastructure gaps; it was **established in 2018-19 by the Department of Fisheries** to boost investment in fisheries and aquaculture infrastructure, enhance productivity, and improve value chain efficiency.
- FIDF inter-alia **provides concessional finance** for development of various fisheries infrastructure facilities to **the Eligible Entities (EEs)** for development of identified fisheries infrastructure facilities.
- **Interest Subvention:** The Government provides an interest subvention of **up to 3% per annum** to make loans more affordable.
- **Nodal Implementing Agency (NIA):** The **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)** in Hyderabad serves as the primary coordinator and monitor of the projects.
- **Nodal Loaning Entities (NLEs):** Concessional finance is provided through **NABARD**, the **National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC)**, and all scheduled banks.

## 18) APEDA (AGRICULTURAL AND PROCESSED FOOD PRODUCTS EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY)

### Why in News?

APEDA showcased India's agricultural and processed food export potential at the **AAHAR 2026 international food exhibition**. It displayed products like organic foods, millets, fruits, vegetables, and ready-to-eat items to attract global buyers.

### About

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, established under the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985**, and serves as the **apex organization for the promotion and development of agricultural and processed food exports** from India.
- **Objective:** Develop and promote the export of **scheduled products** which include fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. In addition, APEDA has been entrusted with monitoring sugar imports.
- APEDA serves as the **Secretariat** to the National Accreditation Board (NAB).
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.

### Functions

- Development of industries relating to the scheduled products for export.
- Registration of persons as exporters of the scheduled products.
- Fixing standards and specifications for the scheduled products for exports.
- Carrying out inspection of meat and meat products in slaughterhouses, processing plants, storage premises, conveyances, or other places where such products are kept or handled.
- Improving packaging of the Scheduled products.

- Improving marketing of the Scheduled products outside India.

- *APEDA facilitated the first-ever export consignment of Joha Rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy*
- *APEDA facilitated the flag-off of the first-ever direct export of GI-tagged Salem Sago (Sabudhana) to Canada.*
- *Indi Lime (Karnataka): Known for its high juice yield and zesty aroma.*
- *Puliyankudi Lime (Tamil Nadu): Famous for its thin peel and high vitamin C content (GI tag received in April 2025).*
- *During the AAHAR 2026 international food fair*

*This initiative focused on:*

- *Karbi Anglong Ginger (Assam)*
- *Jalgaon Banana (Maharashtra)*
- *Prayagraj Surkha Guava (Uttar Pradesh)*

## 19) SOAR PROGRAMME

### Why in News?

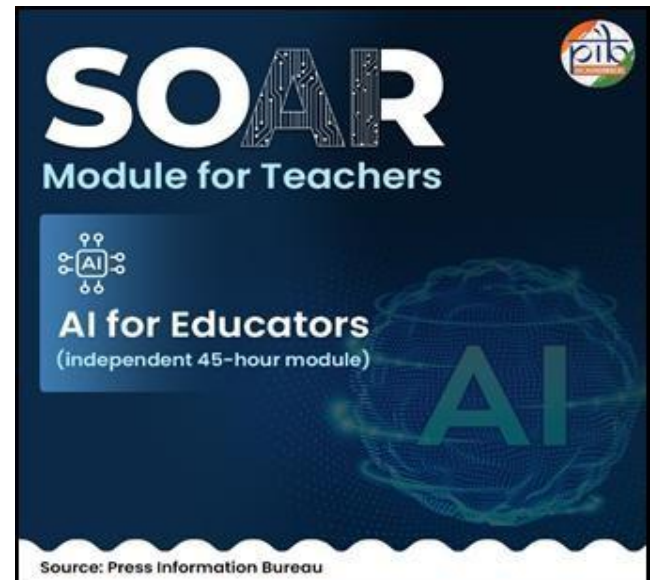
The Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) programme including the 04 courses (AI to be Aware, AI to Aspire, AI to Acquire, AI for educators) in phase 1 has been implemented as a national initiative to build foundational awareness and readiness in Artificial Intelligence across learners, educators and citizens.

### About

- SOAR aims to integrate artificial intelligence learning into India's school education and training ecosystem, preparing both students and teachers for a rapidly evolving digital world.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.
- It has a vision to position India as a global leader in AI by preparing its youth for AI-driven careers and entrepreneurial ventures.

## Features of Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) Programme

- **Target:** It focuses on school students from classes 6 to 12 and educators across India.
- **Course:** It offers three targeted 15-hour modules for students and a 45-hour module for teachers. These courses introduce foundational AI and machine learning concepts, along with data literacy and the ethical use of technology.
- **Funding:** To this government provided ₹500 crore to establish a Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence for Education.
- The center will focus on developing AI-based learning tools, promoting multilingual AI resources for Indian languages, and fostering innovative classroom practices.
- It will also strengthen AI curriculum development across technical institutions and complement existing efforts by IITs and AICTE-approved colleges that already offer advanced courses in machine learning, deep learning, and data analytics.



## 20) CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY

### Why in News?

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) imposed a penalty of ₹8 lakh on **Raising Superstars Enterprises Pvt Ltd** for disseminating

misleading advertisements and violating consumer rights.

### About

- The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** is an executive regulatory body in India established to protect, promote, and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) was established as a **statutory body of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, and came into force on **2020**; it functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, with its **headquarters located in New Delhi**.
- It is headed by a **Chief Commissioner**, and is supported by two Commissioners,
- It also has a dedicated **Investigation Wing** led by a Director General (DG) with powers to conduct **search and seizure**.

### Functions

- It can take **suo motu action**
- It order **recall/refund for unsafe goods and services**.
- It imposes **penalties**, and **ban misleading advertisement** endorsers for up to 1 year (3 years for repeat offences).

***e-Jagriti portal:** which facilitates the digital filing and tracking of consumer grievances across the country.*

## 21) NATIONAL MINERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

### Why in News?

NMDC Limited has become the first mining company in India to produce 50 million tonnes of iron ore in a single financial year (FY 2025–26).

### About

- NMDC Limited is a **Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** under the Ministry of Steel, established in **1958** with its

**headquarters in Hyderabad**, and is the **largest producer of iron ore in India**, playing a key role in the country's mineral resource development.

- The primary aim of NMDC Limited is to **explore, develop, and sustainably exploit mineral resources in India**, ensure a **reliable domestic supply of iron ore for the steel industry**, and support the country's goal of **expanding steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030**.

### Top Producing States in India

- **Odisha:** Produces over **50%** of India's total output (centered in Keonjhar and Sundargarh).
- **Chhattisgarh:** Accounts for ~15–20% (famed for the high-grade Bailadila mines).
- **Karnataka:** Known for both Haematite and Magnetite ores.
- **Jharkhand:** Home to some of India's oldest mines like Noamund



India is the **4th largest producer of iron ore in the world**.

- **Australia** remains the undisputed #1 (accounting for ~37% of global supply), followed by **Brazil** and **China**

## 22) NON RESIDENT INDIAN ACCOUNTS

### Why in News?

To stabilize the Indian rupee amid high global volatility in **April 2026**, there is significant market speculation that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may revive its famous **2013 "Taper Tantrum" playbook**.

### About

#### NRE Account (Non-Resident External)

This is a **Rupee-denominated** account (savings, current, or fixed deposit) used for parking foreign earnings in India.

- **Purpose:** To park overseas income in India.
- **Taxation:** The interest earned is **completely tax-free** in India.
- **Reparability:** Both the principal and interest are **fully repatriable** (can be moved back abroad without limits).
- **Form:** Available as Savings, Current, Recurring, or Fixed Deposits.
- Can be opened and held by **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** and **Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)**.

#### **NRO Account (Non-Resident Ordinary)**

This is a **Rupee-denominated** account used primarily to manage income generated **within India**.

- **Purpose:** To manage Indian-sourced income.
- **Taxation:** Interest is **taxable** (usually a 30% TDS plus cess/surcharge).
- **Repatriability:** Restricted. You can only repatriate up to **\$1 million** per financial year.
- **Joint Holding:** Can be held jointly with a **Resident Indian** (unlike NRE/FCNR).
- Can be held by **NRIs and OCIs** to manage **income earned in India**, such as rent, pension, dividends, etc.

#### **FCNR Account (Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank)**

Unlike the NRE/NRO, this is a **Foreign Currency-denominated** term deposit (Fixed Deposit).

- **Purpose:** To avoid "exchange rate risk" (if the Rupee falls, your value in Dollars stays the same).
- **Taxation:** Interest is **tax-free** in India.
- **Tenure:** Fixed terms ranging from **1 to 5 years**. No interest is paid if withdrawn before 1 year.
- **2026 Context:** Currently in the news as a tool for the RBI to "mop up" foreign funds to stabilize the Rupee.
- Can be opened only by **NRIs and OCIs**, specifically to hold **foreign currency deposits** without exchange rate risk.

#### **RFC Account (Resident Foreign Currency)**

This account is for **returning NRIs** who have come back to India permanently but want to keep their foreign earnings in foreign currency.

- **Eligibility:** Must have been a resident outside India for at least one continuous year.
- **Benefit:** Funds can be used for local expenses or sent back abroad if you decide to become an NRI again.
- **Taxation:** Interest is taxable once you lose your **RNOR (Resident but Not Ordinarily Resident)** status (usually after 3 years).

## **23) GST COLLECTION INCREASED**

### **Why in News?**

India's gross GST collections **crossed ₹2 lakh crore (₹2.00 lakh crore+) in March 2026**, registering about **8.8% year-on-year growth**, marking one of the highest-ever monthly collections.

### **About**

**GST (Goods and Services Tax)** is a comprehensive, multi-stage, destination-based indirect tax levied on the supply of goods and services. Launched in India on 2017, it replaced nearly all previous central and state indirect taxes (**like Excise Duty, VAT, and Service Tax**) to create a unified national market under the motto "**One Nation, One Tax.**"

As of **April 2026**, the total gross GST revenue for FY 2025–26 has reached approximately **₹22.27 lakh crore**, reflecting a steady growth of roughly 8.3% over the previous year.

### **Five-Year Growth Trend**

The following table illustrates the year-on-year growth in gross GST collections:

Financial Year	Gross Collection (₹ Crore)	YoY Growth
2021-22	₹14,83,291	+30.5%
2022-23	₹18,07,680	+21.9%
2023-24	₹20,18,249	+11.6%
2024-25	₹22,08,000*	+9.4%
2025-26	₹22,27,096	+8.3%

Source: National Statistical office

### Key Drivers of Increase

- **Improved Compliance & Tech Integration:** The mandatory implementation of **e-invoicing** (currently for businesses with turnover > ₹5 crore) and the use of AI/Deep Data Analytics by the GSTN have significantly reduced tax evasion and "fake billing" scams.
- **Expansion of Tax Base:** The number of registered taxpayers has grown from approximately 65 lakh at the time of GST launch (2017) to over **1.51 crore** by late 2025.
- **Economic Resilience:** Strong domestic consumption and a rebound in the manufacturing and services sectors post-COVID have stabilized the tax flow.
- **Import Growth:** A significant portion of the increase, particularly in 2025-26, has been driven by **Integrated GST (IGST)** on imports, which saw a growth of over 14% this past year.
- **State-Level Performance:** Industrial hubs like **Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka** continue to lead, with Maharashtra alone contributing over ₹3.18 lakh crore in the latest fiscal cycle.

In **March 2026**, the monthly collection hit **₹2,00,064 crore**, marking only the second time in history that the monthly gross revenue crossed the ₹2 lakh crore mark

## 24) RELIEF SCHEME

### Why in News?

The Government launched the **RELIEF (Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation)** scheme with an outlay of about **₹497 crore** to support exporters hit by the **West Asia conflict**.

### About

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently launched a specific program called the **RELIEF Scheme** to assist Indian exporters affected by the **West Asian crisis**.
- **Objective:** To provide insurance and financial surety for shipments stuck or impacted by war-related risks in the Middle East.
- Implemented under **Export Promotion Mission (EPM)**
- **ECGC (Export Credit Guarantee Corporation)** is the nodal agency

### Three Components:

- **ECGC Credit Insurance:** Reimburses insurance premiums at pre-disruption rates for those already covered.
- **New Consignments:** Provides 95% loss cover for new shipments to specified countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia, etc.) through June 2026.
- **MSME Support:** The largest share (₹282 crore) is dedicated specifically to smaller exporters who were previously uninsured.

## 25) FOREX RESERVE

### Why in News?

The FOREX reserves saw a steep decline of over **\$40 billion** due to the West Asia crisis.

### About

Foreign Exchange reserves or FOREX reserves are assets such as foreign currencies, gold reserves,

treasury bills, etc retained by a central bank or other monetary authority. **RBI is the custodian** of the Foreign exchange reserves in India.

It checks the balance payments and influences the foreign exchange rate of its currency and maintains stability in financial markets.

Year	Forex Reserves (USD Billion)
2021	~633
2022	~563
2023	~578
2024	~642
2025	~650 (approx)

Source: Reserve Bank of India

### Composition of India's Forex Reserves

**Foreign Currency Assets:** Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

**Gold:** Gold acts as a "safe haven" asset. Unlike fiat currencies (like the Dollar or Euro), gold maintains intrinsic value and protects the central bank's portfolio against inflation and currency fluctuations.

**SDR:** It is an international reserve asset used by IMF for internal accounting purposes. Also known as paper gold, the value of SDR is based on a basket of five currencies – the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Chinese renminbi, the Japanese yen, and the British pound sterling.

**Reserve with the International Monetary Fund** (also known as reserve tranche position)

Reserve tranche position is the difference between the IMF's holdings of that country's currency and the country's IMF-designated quota.

## 26) INDIA FIRST SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION

### Why in News?

India inaugurated its **first commercial semiconductor assembly, testing, marking, and packaging (ATMP) facility** by Micron Technology at **Sanand, Gujarat**.

### About

- Marks India's **entry into the global semiconductor manufacturing value chain** (beyond design).
- Investment: **~\$2.75 billion (₹22,000+ crore)** by Micron and partners.
- Function: Converts semiconductor wafers into **finished memory chips (DRAM & NAND products)**.
- Located in **Sanand (Gujarat)**—emerging as a semiconductor hub.
- Part of the **India Semiconductor Mission** to reduce import dependence and build a domestic ecosystem.

## 27) INDIA ENERGY EXCHANGE

### Why in News?

Indian Energy Exchange traded electricity volume of 13.90 bu in March, increase of 23.5% Y/Y.

### About

- Indian Energy Exchange Limited (IEX) is the **first and largest energy exchange** in India providing a nationwide, automated trading platform for physical delivery of electricity, Renewable Energy Certificates and Energy Saving Certificates.
- It operates under the regulatory oversight of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), ensuring transparency and efficiency in electricity trading. Additionally, IEX is a publicly listed company, with its shares traded on both the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), reflecting its significant role in India's power market ecosystem.
- The exchange platform has been instrumental in providing competitive price discovery,

bringing efficiency, transparency, flexibility in procurement and payment security across the power sector value chain.

- The IEX ecosystem today comprises more than **8,100** stakeholders located across **28 states** and **8 union territories**.
- It has a strong foundation of more than **4900** commercial and industrial users representing various industries such as metal, textile, cement, chemicals, automobiles, information technology, real estate, and several more.

## 28) KOTA-BUNDI GREENFIELD AIRPORT

### Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma, laid the foundation stone for this ambitious project, marking a historic milestone for the Hadoti region.

### About

- The new airport is being developed to address the decades-old demand for air connectivity in India's "Coaching Capital."
- **Location:** Shambhupura (Kota-Bundi border).
- **Education Hub:** Over 2 lakh students who travel to Kota every year for competitive exam coaching will benefit from direct flights, reducing travel time significantly.

## 29) LPG-LNG-CNG-PNG

### Why in News?

The Ministry of Petroleum is actively promoting a shift where urban households are encouraged to move to PNG, freeing up LPG cylinders for remote rural areas.

### About

## Comparison of Fuel Gases: LPG, LNG, CNG, and PNG

This report provides a detailed comparison of common fuel gases based on their physical properties, chemical composition, and primary applications.

Feature	LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas)	LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas)	CNG (Compressed Natural Gas)	PNG (Piped Natural Gas)
<b>Full Form</b>	Liquefied Petroleum Gas	Liquefied Natural Gas	Compressed Natural Gas	Piped Natural Gas
<b>Composition</b>	Primarily Propane ( $C_3H_8$ ) & Butane ( $C_4H_{10}$ )	Primarily Methane ( $CH_4$ )	Primarily Methane ( $CH_4$ )	Primarily Methane ( $CH_4$ )
<b>State</b>	Liquid (stored under pressure)	Liquid (chilled to $-162^\circ C$ )	Gas (highly compressed)	Gas (low pressure supply)

<b>Source</b>	Crude oil refining / Natural gas processing	Natural gas cooled to liquid state	Natural gas compressed at high pressure	Natural gas distributed via pipelines
<b>Storage</b>	Heavy steel cylinders	Specialized cryogenic tanks	High-pressure cylinders	No local storage (direct continuous supply)
<b>Density</b>	Heavier than air (settles on floor/low areas)	Lighter than air (disperses quickly if leaked)	Lighter than air (disperses quickly)	Lighter than air (disperses quickly)
<b>Primary Use</b>	Domestic cooking, heating, and small industrial use	Industrial use and long-distance heavy transport	Transport fuel (passenger cars, buses, commercial vehicles)	Domestic and industrial cooking/heating

## ENVIRONMENT

### 30) NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AUTHORITY (NBA)

#### Why in News?

The National Biodiversity Authority constituted an Expert Committee to address the ecological and socio-economic threats posed by invasive alien species.

#### About

- NBA is a **statutory body** established under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.
- It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Its main objective is to **conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable use of biological resources**.
- It regulates **access to biological resources and associated traditional knowledge**, especially for foreign entities.
- It advises the government on biodiversity conservation and helps implement international agreements like the Convention on Biological Diversity.

#### INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

*Invasive alien species are **non-native species** introduced outside their natural habitat that **harm ecosystems, biodiversity, or human activities**. They spread rapidly due to **lack of natural predators** in the new environment.*

*Examples in India include **Lantana camara**, **Parthenium hysterophorus**, and **African catfish**.*

#### NBA Composition

- The National Biodiversity Authority is designed to combine government representation with expert knowledge in biodiversity governance.
- It is headed by a Chairperson who is an eminent person with experience in biodiversity

conservation, sustainable use of resources, and fair benefit sharing.

- The Authority includes 10 ex-officio members representing different ministries and departments of the Government of India.
- These ex-officio members help in policy coordination and inter-ministerial cooperation on biodiversity matters.
- The Authority also has 5 non-official members who are experts from relevant fields and provide independent and specialized inputs.

#### NBA Functions

- The National Biodiversity Authority advises the Government of India on biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biological resources, and equitable sharing of benefits.
- It regulates access to biological resources and frames guidelines to ensure fair and equitable benefit-sharing.
- The Authority takes measures to prevent illegal use of India's biological resources and traditional knowledge.
- It can oppose the grant of foreign intellectual property rights based on biological resources or knowledge obtained unlawfully from India.
- The Authority also advises State Governments on identifying Biodiversity Heritage Sites and recommending their management strategies.

### 31) GREEN HYDROGEN

#### Why in News?

India has commissioned about **8,000 tonnes per annum of green hydrogen capacity** under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

#### About

- Green hydrogen is **produced using renewable energy sources like solar and wind through electrolysis**, making it a clean and carbon-free fuel.

- It is used in fertilizers (ammonia), refining, steel production, and transport, thereby reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
- It emits zero greenhouse gases, supporting climate goals and decarbonization.
- The National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched in **2023** to make India a global hub for production, usage, and export of green hydrogen.
- It aims to achieve a production target of **5 million metric tonnes (MMT) annually by 2030**.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy with a focus on infrastructure, electrolyzers, and industry adoption.
- It contributes to energy security, reduces import dependence, creates jobs, and supports India's net-zero emission goals.

## 32) GREEN AMMONIA & GREEN METHANOL

### Why in News?

The government announced standards for green ammonia and green methanol under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

### About

#### Green ammonia:

- Green ammonia is classified as “green” if its emissions do not exceed **0.38 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kg**, averaged over 12 months.
- It is produced by combining green hydrogen (from renewable energy) with nitrogen and serves as a **carbon-neutral fuel and fertilizer feedstock**.
- It provides a sustainable alternative to fossil-based ammonia, helping decarbonize sectors like **shipping, power, and agriculture**.

#### Green methanol:

- Green methanol is classified as “green” if its emissions do not exceed **0.44 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kg**, averaged over 12 months.
- It is a **low-carbon fuel and chemical feedstock** produced from biomass or green hydrogen, capable of reducing emissions by **60–95%**, with carbon sourced from biogenic sources, direct air capture, or industrial emissions.
- These standards under the National Green Hydrogen Mission provide regulatory clarity and support decarbonization of hard-to-abate sectors like fertilizers, shipping, and heavy industry.
- Green methanol is used as a **clean fuel and industrial feedstock** in shipping, power generation, transport, and chemical manufacturing to reduce carbon emissions.

## 33) ETHYL CHLOROFORMATE

### Why in News?

India has initiated an anti-dumping investigation into imports of Ethyl chloroformate from China.

### About

- Ethyl chloroformate is a highly reactive organic compound and an ethyl ester of chloroformic acid, widely used in organic synthesis.
- It is mainly used as an intermediate in the **pharmaceutical and agrochemical industries**, including in the production of drugs and pesticides.
- It reacts with water (hydrolysis) to form **ethanol, carbon dioxide, and hydrochloric acid**.
- It is used for **activation of carboxylic acids**, forming reactive intermediates for synthesizing esters and amides.
- It is hazardous in nature, being **toxic, corrosive, and highly flammable**, and can

cause serious health effects like lung damage and skin burns.

### 34) ETHYLENE GLYCOL POISONING

#### Why in News?

The deaths in Andhra Pradesh occurred due to consumption of adulterated milk contaminated with a toxic substance.

#### About

- Ethylene glycol is a toxic chemical commonly found in **antifreeze, industrial solvents, and coolants**.
- Poisoning occurs through accidental or intentional ingestion, often **mistaken for alcohol due to its sweet taste**.
- It is metabolized into toxic compounds that cause **metabolic acidosis and acute kidney (renal) failure**.
- It leads to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, confusion, seizures, and multi-organ damage.
- Early treatment with antidotes like **ethanol or fomepizole and hemodialysis** is crucial to prevent fatal outcomes.
- It poses a public health risk in cases of food or beverage adulteration and accidental exposure.
- Proper regulation, labeling, and awareness are essential to prevent such poisoning cases.

#### ANTI-DUMPING DUTY

**Anti-dumping duty** is a trade protection measure imposed by a country on imported goods that are sold below their normal value (usually lower than the domestic price in the exporting country). It aims to protect domestic industries from unfair competition and prevent injury caused by cheap imports. In India, it is imposed by the government based on investigations conducted by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies under the Ministry of Commerce.

### 35) GREENLAND CLIMATE CHANGE

#### Why in News?

Greenland's fishermen are facing disruptions to traditional ice fishing due to rising temperatures caused by climate change.

#### About



- The Greenland Ice Sheet is the second largest in the world after Antarctica and could raise global sea levels by over 7 meters if fully melted.
- Melting of Greenland's ice sheet has contributed **over 20% to global sea-level rise since 2002**.
- Climate change has led to **ecological transformation**, turning many lakes from carbon sinks into carbon emitters.
- Increased and warmer **atmospheric rivers** are causing rainfall instead of snowfall, accelerating ice melt.
- Rapid melting threatens the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Current, which could disrupt global climate patterns.

#### GREENLAND

It is the **world's largest island**, located in the North Atlantic and Arctic regions, with most of its area inside the Arctic Circle. Greenland is a **self-governing territory of Denmark**, handling internal affairs while Denmark manages defense and foreign policy.

## 36) WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

### Why in News?

World Wildlife Day 2026 was observed on **3 March 2026**, bringing global attention to biodiversity conservation

### About

- World Wildlife Day was proclaimed by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in December 2013 to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora.
- The date of **March 3rd** was specifically chosen to commemorate the signing of the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** in 1973, an international agreement ensuring that global trade does not threaten the survival of wild species.
- The **2026 theme**, "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage, and Livelihoods," highlights the vital role of nearly 15,000 Indian medicinal species in global healthcare and indigenous economies while addressing the legal protections offered under **CITES Appendices I, II, and III**.
- This observance directly aligns with **SDG 15 (Life on Land)** and complements India's internal initiatives, such as the **National Ayush Mission** and the **e-CHARAK** digital platform, emphasizing a shift toward sustainable "wild-harvesting" and the protection of traditional knowledge against bio-piracy.
- As climate-induced shifts in the Himalayas threaten the potency of aromatic flora, the day serves as a critical intersection of environmental law, rural livelihoods, and national health security, calling for the preservation of these biological resources for future generations.

## 37) BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS

### Why in News?

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was in the news for **withdrawing a significantly updated seismic zonation map and building code** that would have placed the entire Himalayan arc into a new, highest-risk Zone VI.

### About

- The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** serves as the institutional backbone of India's quality infrastructure, evolving from its 1986 roots into a powerful statutory body under the **BIS Act, 2016**.
- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) operates under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, Government of India.
- By formulating the **National Building Code (NBC) 2016**, BIS transcends mere product certification to provide a sophisticated **techno-legal framework** essential for safeguarding the ecologically fragile Himalayan region.
- Through the mandatory enforcement of standards like **IS 1893**, which governs seismic-resistant design, and the advocacy for lightweight, sustainable materials under **NBC Part 11**, the organization harmonizes rigorous scientific engineering with environmental stewardship.
- This dual approach not only addresses the immediate structural vulnerabilities of the "Himalayan Arc"—potentially reclassified as **Zone VI** due to its extreme risk—but also aligns India's developmental trajectory with the global **Sendai Framework**, ensuring that high-altitude infrastructure is both resilient to disasters and sensitive to the region's finite carrying capacity.

## 38) NAGOYA PROTOCOL

### Why in News?

Over 2.76 lakhs Biodiversity Management Committees have been established in India, enhancing community participation in biodiversity governance and benefit-sharing under the Nagoya Protocol.

### About

- India submitted its **First National Report (NR1)** on 27 February 2026 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (**CBD**), covering the period 2017–2025.
- The report is aligned with **Target 13 of India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)** and follows Article 29 (monitoring & reporting) of the Protocol.
- India's Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework operates under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, supported by **Biological Diversity Rules, 2024** and **ABS Regulations, 2025**.
- BPA act follows a **three-tier structure**: National Biodiversity Authority (national), State Biodiversity Boards/UT Councils (state), and Biodiversity Management Committees (local).
- Over **2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)** have been established, ensuring **community participation and benefit-sharing**.
- India issued **12,830 ABS approvals** and published **3,556 internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs)**—over 60% of the global total.
- The ABS mechanism generated **₹216+ crore benefits**, supporting local communities, farmers, and conservation efforts through monetary and non-monetary benefits.

### NAGOYA PROTOCOL

The Nagoya Protocol is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity, adopted in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, and entered into force in 2014. It aims to ensure the **fair and equitable sharing of benefits** arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The protocol establishes a legal framework for **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)**, requiring prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms between resource providers and users. It also emphasizes the protection of **traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities** and includes provisions for monitoring, compliance, and capacity building among member countries.

## 39) INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA)

### Why in News?

India welcomed the International Energy Agency's decision to release emergency oil stocks amid supply disruptions and said it will support global energy market stability.

### About

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) is an **autonomous intergovernmental organization** established in **1974 in response to the 1973 oil crisis** to ensure energy security among member countries.
- The IEA is headquartered in Paris, France, and provides policy advice, research, and forecasts on global energy trends and markets.
- Its key functions include coordinating emergency oil stock releases, enhancing energy security, promoting energy efficiency, and supporting clean energy transition and reduction of carbon emissions.

- The International Energy Agency regularly releases major global energy reports include:
  1. **World Energy Outlook (WEO)**
  2. **Energy Efficiency Report**
  3. **Global EV Outlook**
  4. **Net Zero Roadmap**
  5. **India Energy Outlook**
- Emergency oil stocks, also known as **Strategic Petroleum Reserves**, are maintained by countries to address **sudden disruptions in oil supply and stabilise markets**.
- The IEA announced a coordinated release of emergency oil stocks to stabilise global crude oil prices amid supply disruptions and geopolitical tensions.
- **India is an Associate Member of the IEA**, actively participates in its energy cooperation initiatives, and welcomed the recent decision as it helps stabilise energy markets.
- India is **heavily dependent on crude oil imports**, making it vulnerable to global price fluctuations, and the coordinated release of reserves is a key mechanism used by the IEA to manage global energy crises.

#### 40) **NATIONAL MISSION ON NATURAL FARMING (NMNF)**

##### Why in News?

The Telangana government plans to promote natural farming across 61,000 acres during the kharif season.

##### About

- NMNF is a **centrally sponsored scheme** aimed at promoting chemical-free, sustainable farming practices across India.
- The **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)** comes under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, Government of India.
- It adopts a cluster-based approach and provides training to farmers through

institutions like **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**.

- The mission encourages the use of indigenous inputs such as cow dung, cow urine, compost, and biomass for improving soil health.
- It aims to reduce input costs, enhance farmers' income, and promote climate-resilient agricultural practices.
- The mission is aligned with sustainable development goals by promoting environmentally friendly and resource-efficient farming systems.

#### 41) **NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT)**

##### Why in News?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) questioned the Himachal Pradesh government's claim that 100% of solid waste is being treated in 16 urban local bodies.

##### About

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a **specialised statutory body established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010** for expeditious disposal of environmental cases.
- India is the third country after Australia and New Zealand to establish a dedicated environmental tribunal and the first among developing nations.
- The NGT is mandated to dispose of cases within six months of filing.
- The Principal Bench is located in New Delhi, with zonal benches in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai.

##### Structure of NGT

- The Tribunal consists of a Chairperson, Judicial Members, and Expert Members.
- Members hold office for three years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier, and are not eligible for reappointment.
- The Chairperson is appointed by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

- Judicial and Expert Members are appointed by a Selection Committee constituted by the Central Government.
- The Tribunal must have a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 full-time members.

### Powers & Jurisdiction

- The NGT has jurisdiction over civil cases involving substantial environmental issues and enforcement of environmental rights.
- The Supreme Court has recognised NGT as a “unique” forum with suo motu powers to take up environmental issues.
- The Tribunal performs adjudicatory, preventive, ameliorative, and remedial functions.
- It exercises **both original and appellate jurisdiction** in environmental matters.
- The **NGT is not bound by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908** and follows principles of natural justice.
- It applies key environmental principles such as sustainable development, precautionary principle, and polluter pays principle.

### Jurisdiction under Environmental Laws

- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974,
- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977,
- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980,
- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981,
- The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986,
- The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 and
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

### Key Judgements

- **Alaknanda Hydro Power Co. Ltd. vs. Anuj Maharaj:** Held that the project developer was liable for compensation for damages caused to downstream areas.
- **Vardhaman Kaushik vs. Union of India:** Addressed air pollution in Delhi-NCR, leading

to orders on vehicle emissions and waste burning.

- **Betty C. Alvares vs. State of Goa:** Focused on protection of coastal areas from illegal constructions.
- **NGT Bar Association vs. Ministry of Environment & Forests:** Highlighted the need for strict compliance with environmental norms.

## 42) SMALL HYDRO POWER (SHP) DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approved a new **Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme (2026-2031)**.

### About

- **The Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme (2026-2031)** under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) **approved by the Union Cabinet in March 2026** with an outlay of **₹2,584.60 crore**, is a strategic initiative by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** to install **1,500 MW** of renewable capacity through projects between **1 MW and 25 MW**.
- **Utilizing run-of-the-river technology to minimize environmental displacement and forest submergence, the scheme provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of ₹3.6 crore/MW (capped at ₹30 crore) for North Eastern states and international border districts, and ₹2.4 crore/MW (capped at ₹20 crore) for other states**
- It supports the Vibrant Villages Programme by providing decentralized, “baseload” power to remote border regions, mandates 100% indigenous machinery

under Atmanirbhar Bharat, and aims to trigger ₹15,000 crore in investment while creating 51 lakh person-days of employment.

- Beyond clean energy, the scheme includes a dedicated ₹30 crore fund for preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for 200 new sites, ensuring a long-term pipeline for India's Panchamrit climate goals and energy security in geologically fragile zones.

### 43) INDIA'S NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION

#### Why in News?

In March 2026, the Union Cabinet approved India's updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)** for the period 2031–2035, marking a significant leap in climate ambition ahead of the UNFCCC communication.

#### About

- The evolution of India's climate commitments highlights a progressive shift toward more ambitious sustainability goals across three Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) cycles.
- For **Emissions Intensity of GDP**, India raised its target from a 33–35% reduction in NDC 1.0 (2015) to 45% in NDC 2.0 (2022), finally reaching a **47% reduction target by 2035** in NDC 3.0 (2026), bolstered by an already achieved 36% reduction as of 2020.
- Regarding **Non-Fossil Fuel-Based Electric Power**, the capacity target transitioned from 40% to 50% by 2030, and has now been set at **60% by 2035** under NDC 3.0, reflecting the country's rapid progress as non-fossil sources already reached 52.57% of capacity by early 2026.

- Finally, the **Creation of Carbon Sink goal**, which remained steady at 2.5–3 billion tonnes of \$CO\_2\$ equivalent for 2030 in the first two iterations, has been scaled up to a target of **3.5–4.0 billion tonnes by 2035** in the latest framework, building on the 2.3 billion tonnes established as of 2021.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 44) CONCENTRATED SOLAR THERMAL (CST) TECHNOLOGY



#### Why in news?

Concentrated Solar Thermal (CST) technology is being highlighted as an alternative to LPG for heating needs, with potential to reduce import dependence and support clean energy transition in India.

#### About

- **Concentrated Solar Thermal (CST)** is a technology that uses **mirrors or reflective surfaces to concentrate sunlight onto a receiver** to produce heat.
- The concentrated heat is used to **heat a fluid (water, oil, molten salt)** and can generate **steam to drive turbines for electricity**.
- Unlike solar photovoltaic (PV), CST **does not directly produce electricity**, but works through **thermal energy conversion**.

#### Key Features

- Uses **concentrating collectors** (parabolic trough, dish, Fresnel reflectors)
- Suitable for **high-temperature applications (>80°C)**
- Can include **Thermal Energy Storage (TES)** (e.g., molten salt) for use even after sunset.
- Used in **electricity generation, industrial heating, desalination**.
- Considered a **clean alternative to fossil fuels**

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#### Types of CST

1. **Parabolic Trough:** Curved mirrors focus sunlight onto a **linear receiver tube** to heat a fluid and produce steam.
2. **Solar Power Tower (Central Receiver):** A field of mirrors (heliostats) reflects sunlight onto a **central tower receiver** for high-temperature heat generation.
3. **Linear Fresnel Reflector:** Uses **flat or slightly curved mirrors** arranged in rows to focus sunlight onto an elevated receiver.
4. **Parabolic Dish System:** A dish-shaped mirror concentrates sunlight onto a **single focal point**, often used with a Stirling engine for power generation.

### 45) THUNDERSTORM CORONA



#### Why in News ?

A recent study reported that a **UV-sensitive camera captured treetops glowing during a thunderstorm**, revealing previously unseen electrical activity in vegetation when lightning conditions are present.

### What was observed?

Trees appeared to **emit a faint glow under ultraviolet (UV) light** during a thunderstorm. This glow is **not visible to the human eye**, but detected using specialised UV cameras.



### Scientific Explanation

The glow is due to **corona discharge**, a phenomenon where strong electric fields ionise air molecules, producing light. During thunderstorms, intense electric fields build up between clouds and the ground, and sharp objects like treetops, leaves, and branches intensify these fields, leading to **ionisation of surrounding air and emission of UV radiation (faint glow)**.

## 46) EARTH'S MAGNETIC FLIPS

### Why in news?

Scientists in a new study in Communications Earth & Environment, analysed **deep-sea sediment cores** have found that **Earth's magnetic reversals (flips) can take much longer than previously thought**, with some lasting up to **70,000 years**.

### What are Earth's Magnetic Flips?

A **magnetic flip**, also called a **geomagnetic reversal**, is a phenomenon where **Earth's magnetic north and south poles switch places**. In other words, the magnetic field reverses its polarity.

- **Normal polarity:** Magnetic north roughly aligns with the geographic North Pole.
- **Reversed polarity:** Magnetic north aligns near the geographic South Pole.

### How It Happens

- Earth's magnetic field is generated by the **geodynamo**, which is the motion of **molten iron and nickel in the outer core**.
- Changes in the flow of these conducting fluids can destabilize the magnetic field, eventually causing a **complete reversal** over thousands of years.

### Frequency & Duration

- Reversals are **irregular** there is no fixed cycle.
- On average, they occur every **200,000-300,000 years**, but some reversals have **lasted tens of thousands of years**.
- The recent study shows that some flips can **take up to 70,000 years** to complete.

### Impact on earth

1. **Protective Shield:** The magnetic field protects Earth from solar wind and cosmic radiation. During reversals, it weakens temporarily.
2. **Geological Dating:** Magnetic reversals help in **magnetostratigraphy**, which is used to date rock layers.
3. **Climate & Life:** Weak fields may slightly affect atmosphere and radiation exposure, but mass extinctions are **not directly caused** by flips.

## 47) SUPERCONDUCTORS

### Why in news?

A new study has reported a breakthrough in **superconductivity**, where scientists achieved a **record-high transition temperature at normal**

(ambient) pressure, breaking a 33-year-old record.

### What is Superconductivity?

A phenomenon in which a material conducts electricity with **zero electrical resistance** below a certain temperature (critical temperature,  $T_c$ ).

### Key findings

Scientists developed a new technique that allows a superconductor to retain its enhanced properties at **ambient pressure**, breaking a **33-year-old temperature record**.

While superconductivity is typically achieved at extremely low temperatures, and recent advances reached temperatures as high as  $-13^\circ\text{C}$ , those required **extreme pressures comparable to Earth's core**, making them impractical.

The new method overcomes this limitation by stabilizing high-temperature superconductivity without such pressures, marking a significant step toward the long-sought goal of **room-temperature superconductors**, which could revolutionize energy transmission and advanced technologies.

### New Technique: Pressure Quenching

Steps:

- Apply **extremely high pressure** to enhance superconducting properties.
- Cool the material.
- **Rapidly release pressure** to “lock” the improved state.

**Result:** Superconductivity persists even at **normal pressure conditions**

### Applications

- **Power transmission** (no energy loss; current loss  $\sim 8\%$  can be reduced).
- **MRI machines & medical imaging**
- **Maglev trains**
- **Quantum computing & advanced electronics**
- **Fusion energy systems**

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## SPACE

### 48) ASTEROID 2024 YR4



### Why in news?

NASA has confirmed that asteroid **2024 YR4 will miss both Earth and the Moon in 2032**, ruling out earlier concerns of a possible lunar impact.

### Asteroids

*Asteroids are **small, rocky or metallic celestial bodies** that orbit the Sun, primarily found in the region between **Mars and Jupiter** known as the **asteroid belt**. They are **remnants of the early solar system formation** that never coalesced into a planet due to gravitational disturbances.*

### Key Findings

- **Type:** Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA)
- **Discovered:** December 2024
- **Size:**  $\sim 50\text{--}70$  metres
- Initially had a **small probability of Earth impact (2032)** then, later showed  **$\sim 3\text{--}4\%$  chance of hitting the Moon (Dec 22, 2032)**
- Latest observations (including **James Webb Space Telescope**) refined its orbit and now confirmed to **miss both Earth and Moon safely**, Will pass at a safe distance ( $\sim 20,000$  km+ from Moon).

## 49) NAVIGATION WITH INDIAN CONSTELLATION (NAVIC) SYSTEM

### Why in news?

An atomic clock onboard a NavIC (IRNSS) satellite has failed, affecting the operational capability and accuracy of India's regional navigation system.

### NavIC System

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



### Key features

1. NavIC is designed with a constellation of 7 satellites and a network of ground stations operating 24 x 7.
2. **Three** satellites of the constellation are placed in **geostationary orbit**, at 32.5°E, 83°E and 129.5°E respectively, and **four satellites are placed in inclined geosynchronous orbit** with equatorial crossing of 55°E and 111.75°E respectively, with inclination of 29° (two satellites in each plane).
3. The ground network consists of control centre, precise timing facility, range and integrity monitoring stations, two-way ranging stations, etc.

4. NavIC offers two services: Standard Position Service (SPS) for civilian users and Restricted Service (RS) for strategic users.
5. NavIC coverage area includes India and a region up to 1500 km beyond Indian boundary.
6. NavIC can determine a user's location with an accuracy of **within about 20 metres** and provide **very precise timing (within 50 nanoseconds)**. Its signals can also **work together with other global navigation systems** like GPS, GLONASS, Galileo and BeiDou, ensuring better reliability and wider usability.

## BIO-TECHNOLOGY

## 50) EVG7 SUPER ANTIBIOTIC



### Why in news?

Researchers at **Leiden University** have developed a new antibiotic **EVG7** that effectively targets *Clostridioides difficile* while **preserving beneficial gut bacteria**, offering a potential solution to recurring infections and antibiotic resistance.

### What Is EVG7?

- **EVG7** is an **experimental glycopeptide antibiotic** developed by researchers at **Leiden University** (Netherlands).
- It is designed as a **more powerful and efficient version of the established antibiotic vancomycin**.
- Unlike many antibiotics that harm the gut's beneficial bacteria, **EVG7 is shown to spare protective microbes in the intestine**.
- The antibiotic reduced the **risk of relapse** much more than current treatments.

- **Beneficial gut bacteria**, especially those from the **Lachnospiraceae family**, were preserved. These bacteria help naturally suppress *C. difficile* growth.

## 51) CRISPR TECHNOLOGY

### Why in news?

India is advancing **self-reliance in gene-editing and CRISPR technologies** through domestic R&D, clinical trials, and regulatory frameworks.

### What is CRISPR?

**CRISPR** = *Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats*. It is a **precise gene-editing tool** that can **cut, delete, or modify specific DNA sequences** in living cells.

### how CRISPR works?

1. **Identify target DNA** - Scientists choose the specific DNA sequence they want to edit.
2. **Design guide RNA (gRNA)** - A short RNA sequence is made to match the target DNA.
3. **Cas9 protein binds** - Cas9 enzyme attaches to the guide RNA.
4. **DNA cut** - Cas9 cuts the DNA at the precise target location.
5. **Cell repairs DNA** - The cell naturally repairs the cut: It can **disable a gene** (knockout) or **insert/correct a gene** (knock-in or correction).

### Applications

- **Medical:** Treating genetic disorders like **thalassemia, hemophilia**, certain cancers (CAR-T therapy).
- **Agriculture:** Developing crops resistant to pests, diseases, and climate stress.
- **Research:** Studying gene functions, developing vaccines, and experimental therapies.

## 52) HPV VACCINATION

### Why in news?

The Government of India is moving towards **including the HPV vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)** to prevent cervical cancer.

### Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):

*India's flagship public health programme that provides **free vaccines against major vaccine-preventable diseases** to children and pregnant women to reduce mortality and morbidity.*

### About

The HPV vaccine protects against **Human papillomavirus**, a group of viruses responsible for cervical cancer and other cancers (anal, oropharyngeal, etc.) as well as genital warts. HPV vaccines like **Cervavac** and **Gardasil** are preventive vaccines against cervical cancer-causing HPV strains, most effective when given before onset of sexual activity, typically administered to girls aged 9–14 years (can include boys as well), Works by generating antibodies against HPV virus types.



*Cervical cancer is the **second most common cancer among women** in India, and the country accounts for nearly **one-fourth of global cervical cancer deaths**. It is caused primarily by **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** infection, **HPV-16 and HPV-18** are specific **types (strains)** of the **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** that are classified as **high-risk (oncogenic) strains** which are responsible for **around 70–80% of cases**.*

## 53) PROBIOTIC SYMPOSIUM

### Why in news?

The **16th India Probiotic Symposium** was organised in New Delhi by the Gut Microbiota and Probiotic Science Foundation, highlighting the growing importance of the **gut microbiome and probiotics** in preventive healthcare and nutrition.

### Gut Microbiome

Refers to the **community of microorganisms** (bacteria, viruses, fungi) living in the human digestive tract.

Plays a crucial role in:

- **Immunity regulation**
- **Metabolism and digestion**
- **Mental health (gut-brain axis)**

### Probiotics

- **Live beneficial microorganisms** that, when consumed in adequate amounts, provide health benefits.
- Commonly found in: Curd, yogurt, Fermented foods

### Key Highlights from Symposium

- Emphasis on **preventive healthcare** through gut health.
- Around **56.4% of India's disease burden** linked to **unhealthy diets**.
- Rising concern:
  - Urbanisation
  - Increased consumption of **ultra-processed foods**
- Need for:
  - **Multidisciplinary research**
  - Collaboration between academia, industry, and regulators.

## DEFENCE

### 54) IRAN INTERCEPTOR MISSILES

#### Why in News?

Recent missile attacks by Iran on Israel have brought **interceptor missiles** into focus, as a U.S.-led coalition deployed a **new integrated air defence network** to intercept incoming threats.

#### What are interceptor missiles

**Interceptor missiles** are **defensive missiles** used to **detect, track, and destroy incoming enemy missiles (like ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, or drones)**.

They detect and track incoming threats using radars, then launch interceptors (like PAD/AAD) to

destroy them mid-air by direct hit or explosion before they reach their target.

### Interceptor missiles in India

India's interceptor missiles are part of its **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Programme** developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation.

Key Interceptor Missiles:

1. **Prithvi Air Defence (PAD)**- Intercepts missiles **outside the atmosphere (exo-atmospheric)**
2. **Advanced Air Defence (AAD)**- Intercepts missiles **within the atmosphere (endo-atmospheric)**
3. **AD-1 Missile** – Designed to intercept long-range ballistic missiles.

**Imported or "Borrowed" Systems:**

1. **S-400 Triumph** – Advanced system capable of intercepting aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles.
2. **Barak-8** – Jointly developed with Israel; intercepts aircraft and incoming missiles.
3. **Akash Missile System** – Indigenous but inspired by earlier Soviet designs; intercepts aerial threats.

### 55) INS SUDARSHANI



### Why in news?

The Indian Naval Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini arrived at **the historic port of Valletta, Malta on 12 Mar 2026.**

### About

INS Sudarshini is an indigenously built Sail Training Ship of the Indian Navy, constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited and commissioned in 2012. Based in Kochi under the Southern Naval Command, it is a follow-on vessel to INS Tarangini.

INS Sudarshini is undertaking **LOKAYAN 26**, a 10-month transoceanic voyage covering about 22,000 nautical miles, visiting 18 ports across 13 countries, and participating in major international tall-ship events like Escale à Sète and SAIL 250.

The mission also provides **intensive sail training** to Indian Navy and Coast Guard trainees, helping them gain practical experience in **long-distance ocean navigation.**

### 56) INS KAUNDINYA



### Why in news?

The INSV Kaundinya was recently flagged into Mumbai after successfully completing its **maiden overseas voyage to Oman.**

### Historical Importance

INSV Kaundinya is a **stitched sail training ship** inducted into the Indian Navy, inspired by a **5th century CE vessel depicted in the Ajanta Caves paintings.**

Named after **Kaundinya**, associated with early maritime links to Southeast Asia, Features traditional motifs: such as Gandabherunda (mythical bird), Sun symbols, Simha Yali (mythical creature), Harappan-style stone anchor.

The project was launched in **July 2023** through a collaboration between the **Ministry of Culture, Indian Navy, and Hodi Innovations**, and the vessel was launched in **February 2025 at Goa.** Since no historical blueprints exist, its design was **reconstructed from iconographic sources.**

Built in Kerala by artisans led by **Babu Sankaran**, it uses traditional shipbuilding methods where wooden planks are stitched (not nailed) using **coir rope, coconut fibre, and natural resin.** Classified as an Indian Naval Sailing Vessel, it will be based at **Karwar** and is intended for **maritime heritage promotion, seamanship training, and diplomatic outreach.**

### 57) ADVANCED LIGHT HELICOPTER (ALH) MK -III

#### Why in news?

The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts worth ₹5,083 crore for the procurement of **Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role)** for the Indian Coast Guard and **Shtil surface-to-air missiles** for the Indian Navy.



### About

Advanced Light Helicopter Mk-III (Maritime Role), **Manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and is indigenously made

Equipped with:

- Advanced radar and electro-optical sensors
- **Shakti engines**
- **Full glass cockpit**
- High-intensity searchlight
- **Advanced communication systems**
- **Automatic Identification System (AIS)**
- **Search-and-rescue homer**

### Capabilities

- **Maritime reconnaissance** at extended ranges
- **Search and Rescue (SAR)** operations, day and night
- Operates from **ships at sea**

### Multi-role Features

Can switch between:

- **Offensive role:** Equipped with heavy machine gun
- **Humanitarian role:** Equipped with **medical intensive care unit (ICU)** to transfer critically ill patients.

## 58) SUKHOI SU-30 MKI FIGHTER JET



### Why in news?

An Indian Air Force (IAF) Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet crashed in Assam's Karbi Anglong district on March 6, 2026, during a routine training mission, resulting in the deaths of two pilots.

### About

The **Sukhoi Su-30MKI** is a **two-seater, twin-engine, multirole air superiority fighter** developed by Russia's **Sukhoi Corporation** and built under license by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** in India.

### Key features

1. It is a long-range, all-weather fighter designed for air dominance over the Indian subcontinent, capable of performing **air-to-air, ground, and maritime strike missions**.
2. The aircraft integrates Russian airframe technology with **Indian avionics** and sub-systems from France and Israel.
3. It features **super-maneuverability** through canards and thrust-vectoring nozzles, advanced radar and electronic warfare suites,
4. It can carry a **maximum payload of 8,000 kg**, including the **BrahMos-A supersonic cruise missile**.
5. With a range of 3,000 km on internal fuel and air-to-air refueling capability, it can conduct extended missions.
6. The Su-30MKI has **over 62% indigenous content** and forms the **largest component of India's fighter strength**, with some optimized for **nuclear strike capability** under the Strategic Forces Command.

## 59) INS DUNAGIRI



### Why in news?

Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) has **simultaneously delivered three indigenously built frontline warships Dunagiri, Sanshodhak, and Agray** to the Indian Navy, marking a **first-of-its-kind “triple delivery”** in India’s shipbuilding history.

### About

- INS Dunagiri
- **5th ship of Project 17A (Nilgiri-class stealth frigates).**
- Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).
- Designed by **Warship Design Bureau (WDB)** of the Indian Navy.
- Named after the earlier **Leander-class INS Dunagiri.**

### Project 17A

- Follow-on of **Project 17 (Shivalik-class frigates).**
- Focus on:
  - **Stealth features** (reduced radar signature)
  - **Advanced weapons & sensors**
- Total ships under project: **7** (built by GRSE & Mazagon Dock).

## Key Features of INS Dunagiri

### 1. Propulsion System

- **CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) configuration:**
  - Diesel engine for cruising
  - Gas turbine for high speed
- Equipped with:
  - **Controllable Pitch Propeller (CPP)**
  - **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)**

**Controllable Pitch Propeller (CPP):** A propeller system where the **blade angle can be adjusted in real time** to optimize thrust, speed, and fuel efficiency without changing engine speed.

**Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS):** A **centralized automated control system** that monitors and manages a ship’s machinery, propulsion, power, and auxiliary systems from a single interface.

### 2. Armament & Combat Systems

- **Missiles:**
  - BrahMos (Surface-to-Surface Missile)
  - **MRSAM (Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile)**
- **Radar: MF-STAR (Multi-Function Surveillance and Threat Alert Radar)**
- **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW):**
  - Torpedoes
  - Rocket launchers

### Operational Role

Multi-role **stealth guided-missile frigate:**

- Surface warfare
- Anti-air warfare
- Anti-submarine warfare

**INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

## 60) G-SPIDER ROBOT



### Why in news?

Under Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0, Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation has deployed an AI-powered G-SPIDER robot for safe, precise, and human-free canal cleaning in high-risk areas.

### About

The **G-SPIDER** is an innovative canal cleaning robot developed by **Genrobotic Innovations** to automate the process of cleaning canals without human intervention. It operates in **high-risk canal environments**, powered by **AI-enabled vision and sensor intelligence** for precise waste detection and removal.

### Key Features & Functionality

1. **Architecture:** Built on a **Cable-Driven Parallel Robotics (CDPR)** system for efficient, automated operation.
2. **Robotic Mechanism:** Features a **five-degrees-of-freedom** robotic arm with a **biomimetic claw-type grabber** to accurately handle and remove mixed, irregular, and hazardous debris.
3. **Waste Management:** Extracted waste is directly transferred into collection vehicles, ensuring an end-to-end **hands-free canal cleaning process**.
4. **Advanced Vision:** Utilizes **machine vision** to adapt to different waste types, water flow

conditions, and structural obstacles in real-time.

### Waste Types Handled

- Capable of safely extracting **mixed waste**, including **plastics, sharp debris**, and other **harmful materials**.
- Enhances the overall **sanitation and drainage efficiency** of urban waterways, playing a vital role in preventing **urban flooding**.

**Scalability:** The **G-SPIDER** model is scalable and can be replicated in other high-risk canal and drainage networks across the State and beyond.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 61) 14TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

#### Why in News?

The 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) of the WTO was recently held from 26–30 March 2026 in Yaounde, Cameroon.

#### About

- The World Trade Organization (WTO), established in 1995 under the **Marrakesh Agreement** after the Uruguay Round (1986–94), is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is the principal multilateral organisation governing global trade, succeeding the GATT and expanding its scope from goods to services and intellectual property. It provides a forum for trade negotiations and dispute settlement, with 166 members representing about 98% of global trade.

#### 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14)

- MC14 is the 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, which is the **highest decision-making meeting of WTO** member countries held **once every two years** to discuss global trade rules.
- It was held in 2026 in **Yaoundé, Cameroon**, where trade ministers met to negotiate key issues like e-commerce, agriculture, and WTO reforms.
- The conference ended without consensus due to disagreements between developed and developing countries on major trade issues.

#### Key Outcomes of MC14

- **E-commerce Moratorium Lapse:** For the first time since 1998, the ban on customs duties on electronic transmissions has lapsed, allowing countries to potentially impose tariffs on digital goods and services.

- **TRIPS Safeguard Lapse:** Protection against non-violation complaints under TRIPS ended, reducing policy space for developing countries, especially in public health.
- **Fisheries Subsidies:** Members agreed to continue negotiations to curb harmful subsidies for distant-water fishing fleets, with expected outcomes at MC15.
- **Investment Facilitation (IFD):** India opposed inclusion of the China-led IFD agreement, citing concerns over WTO's multilateral balance and principles.
- **Plurilateral E-Commerce Progress:** A 66-member group advanced talks on digital trade rules covering data flows, online transactions, and consumer protection.
- **Agriculture (PSH Issue):** India and African countries demanded a permanent solution for Public Stockholding to ensure food security, while developed countries showed limited flexibility.

### 62) 52nd G7 SUMMIT

#### Why in news?

France will host the G7 Summit 2026 in Evian in June as part of its rotating presidency, bringing together leaders of major advanced economies.

#### About

- The **G7 (Group of Seven)** is an **informal forum of advanced industrialized democracies** that meets annually to coordinate global economic and political responses.
- It was **established in 1975 (Rambouillet Summit, France)** in response to the **1973 oil crisis, global recession, and financial instability** to promote collective economic stabilisation.
- **1976:** Canada joined, transforming G6 into G7.

- **1997–2014:** Russia participated (G8 phase) but was suspended in 2014 after Crimea annexation.
- The group has since expanded its agenda from **economic coordination to global issues like climate change, security, digital governance, and development.**
- **Members:** United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Canada.
- The **European Union (EU)** participates as a **non-enumerated member** represented by the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission.

### Key Agenda

- Commitment to **global economic stability** amid inflation and debt concerns.
- Strengthening of **supply chain resilience and financial coordination.**
- Reaffirmation of **net-zero targets and clean energy transition.**
- Enhanced cooperation on **AI, cybersecurity, and digital governance.**
- Joint approach to **global security challenges and rules-based order.**
- Support for **reforms in IMF, WTO, and UN institutions.**

## 63) INDIA–FINLAND RELATIONS

### Why in news?

Recently, Finland's President Alexander Stubb is on a four-day visit to India to strengthen bilateral ties and enhance cooperation in trade, investment, and technology.

### About

- India and Finland issued a joint statement after bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Stubb in New Delhi.
- The visit also included participation in the **Raisina Dialogue 2026**, where the Finnish President delivered the inaugural keynote address.

- Both countries agreed to elevate bilateral relations to a **Strategic Partnership in Digitalization and Sustainability.**
- The partnership is based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, and a rules-based international order.

### Key Outcomes

- Agreement to **double bilateral trade by 2030**, supported by **India–EU Free Trade Agreement** and stronger business engagement.
- Cooperation in digital technologies such as AI, 5G/6G, quantum computing, and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), along with a **Joint Working Group on Digitalization.**
- Collaboration in sustainability areas including green hydrogen, clean energy, biofuels, circular economy, and smart grids, with a **Joint Working Group on Sustainability.**
- Expansion of cooperation in emerging technologies like semiconductors, space, and high-performance computing, along with startup and innovation linkages.
- Signing of a **Migration and Mobility Partnership** to promote skilled migration, education, research, and academic exchanges, along with cooperation on global issues like **UN reforms, Indo-Pacific, climate change, and counter-terrorism.**



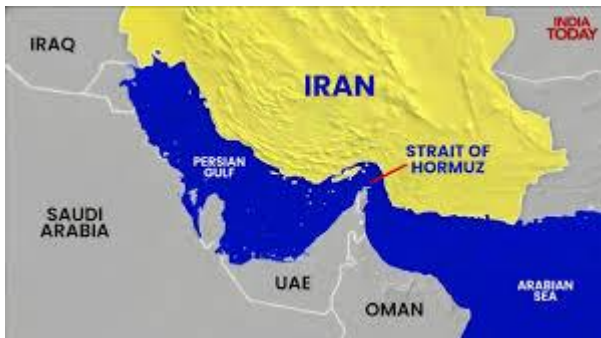
## 64) STRAIT OF HORMUZ

### Why in news?

Recently, escalating tensions involving the US, Israel, and Iran have disrupted shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, raising concerns over global energy supply and oil prices.

### About

- The Strait of Hormuz is a strategically important maritime chokepoint located between **Iran and Oman & UAE**, connecting the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea**.
- It is about 33 km wide at its narrowest point and carries **nearly 20% of the world's oil and gas trade**, making it critical for global energy security.
- Major oil-exporting countries such as **Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar** depend on this route.
- It is part of key global chokepoints like the **Strait of Malacca, Bab-el-Mandab, and Suez Canal**, and is treated as a global common under international law.



## 65) DURAND LINE

### Why in news?

Recently, intense military clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan across the Durand Line, including air and missile strikes, have signalled a serious deterioration in bilateral relations and regional security.

### About

- The **Durand Line** is the **international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan**, which has historically been a source of tension due to disputes over its legitimacy.
- The Recent clashes, including air and missile strikes, mark a serious escalation from minor border skirmishes to high-intensity military confrontation.
- The conflict is driven mainly by Pakistan's allegations that Afghanistan shelters **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)** militants, which Afghanistan denies, reflecting a breakdown of trust between both sides.
- Failed diplomatic efforts and ceasefire attempts have further worsened tensions, raising concerns over regional stability and South Asian security.

## 66) OPERATION SANKALP

### Why in news?

Recently, Indian Navy ships deployed under **Operation Sankalp** have been placed on standby in the Gulf region for potential humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

### About

- Operation Sankalp is a **maritime security initiative of the Indian Navy launched in 2019** to ensure **the safety of Indian-flagged merchant vessels** and maintain **stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**. It was started after rising threats to commercial shipping in areas like the Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz.
- It focuses on protecting key sea lanes such as **the Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Aden, and Gulf of Oman** through continuous naval deployment, coordination with government agencies, and escorting merchant ships.

- The operation enables round-the-clock surveillance using warships, aircraft, and special forces, and strengthens India's role as a **first responder in maritime emergencies**, supported by legal frameworks like the Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022. It is important for India's energy security as major oil imports pass through these routes, highlighting India's capability as a blue-water naval power.

## 67) INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS

### Why in news?

Recently, Narendra Modi and Mark Carney oversaw the signing of a major uranium supply deal between India and Cameco worth CAD 2.6 billion to ensure long-term fuel supply for India's nuclear energy needs.

### About

- A landmark agreement between India's **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and Cameco Corporation to supply 10,000 tonnes of uranium, supporting Stage I nuclear reactors.
- It strengthens India's target of achieving 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047 under the Viksit Bharat roadmap.
- An MoU on critical minerals was signed for secure supply chains of lithium and cobalt for EVs and green technologies.
- The **Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** were finalized to

advance a full trade agreement, with a bilateral trade target of USD 50 billion by 2030.

- A new India-Canada-Australia partnership was launched in AI, 6G, and semiconductors, along with a Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence at NIFTEM-K for food and nutrition research.
- Other initiatives include AICTE-Mitacs internships (300 annually from 2027), cultural cooperation through Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, Canada joining ISA and GBA, and a formal India-Canada Defence Dialogue on maritime security and counter-terrorism.



Globally, **Australia** holds the **largest uranium reserves (28%)**, while **Kazakhstan** is the leading producer. **India** possesses only about **1-2% of global uranium reserves**. Within India, **Andhra Pradesh** has the largest deposits, particularly at Tummalapalle in Kadapa district, which underpins the country's focus on thorium-based nuclear energy.

## PLACES IN NEWS

### 68) KENYA

#### Why in News?

Recently, Nairobi faced severe flooding due to heavy rains, causing at least **23 deaths and widespread disruption**, highlighting rising urban flood risks in Kenya.



#### About

- It is located in **Eastern Africa**. It sits exactly astride the **Equator**, which bisects the country almost into two equal halves.
- **Capital:** Nairobi.
- It shares borders with **five countries** **Somalia** (North East), **Ethiopia** (North), **South Sudan** (North West), **Uganda** (West), **Tanzania** (South).
- It has a coastline on the **Indian Ocean** to the southeast.
- It **contains the Great Rift Valley**, which runs north-south and includes several lakes like Nakuru, Bogoria, and Turkana.
- **Mount Kenya** is the **highest peak (5,199 m)** and an extinct volcano.
- It has **rich natural resources** including lead, zircon, iron, titanium, mica, coal, oil, diatomite, and gypsum.
- It has **diverse ethnic groups**, mainly Bantu (60%), along with Nilotic and Cushitic communities.

### 69) SLOVENIA

#### Why in News?

Recently, Slovenia is in news after a **tight election with no clear majority**, leading to coalition talks to form a new government.



#### About

- It is **located in Central Europe** at the meeting point of the Alps, Dinarides, Pannonian Plain, and Mediterranean region.
- **Capital:** Ljubljana.
- It shares borders with **four countries:** **Austria** (North), **Italy** (West), **Croatia** (South & Southeast), and **Hungary** (Northeast).
- It has a **short coastline (47 km)** along the Adriatic Sea, with Koper as the main port.

### 70) QATAR

#### Why in News?

Recently, Iran's attacks damaged LNG facilities in Qatar, wiping out about **17% of its LNG capacity**,



raising concerns over global energy supply and prices.

### About

- It is a **small peninsula in West Asia**, extending into the Persian Gulf.
- It shares its **only land border with Saudi Arabia**.
- It lies close to Bahrain and the UAE, and is strategically located near the Strait of Hormuz.
- It has a **flat desert topography**.
- It holds about **13.1% of the world's proven natural gas reserves**, ranking **3rd globally**, and is among the **top three LNG exporters**.
- It is India's **largest LNG supplier**, meeting nearly **45–48% of India's LNG imports**. In early 2024, both countries signed a **\$78 billion agreement** to extend LNG supply for **20 years up to 2048**.
- **Currently**, Qatar is both a **target of Iranian strikes due to Al Udeid Air Base** and a **key global mediator in conflicts like Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan**.

## 71) SOUTH SUDAN

### Why in News?

Recently, conflict in South Sudan has forced about **1 lakh refugees to flee into Ethiopia**, highlighting a worsening humanitarian crisis.



### About

- It is **the world's youngest country**, gaining independence in 2011, and is landlocked in East-Central Africa.

- **Capital:** Juba.
- It **shares borders with six countries:** **Sudan** (north), **Ethiopia** (east), **Kenya** (southeast), **Uganda** (south), **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (southwest), and **Central African Republic** (west).
- It has **the Sudd Wetland**, one of the world's largest freshwater swamps, regulating the White Nile flow.
- It has the **Ironstone Plateau** in the southwest, transitioning into the Congo Basin forests.
- It **has transboundary water issues**, including the unfinished Jonglei Canal, which is a major source of hydro-political tension with Egypt and Sudan.
- It **has rich natural resources** including petroleum (oil), gold, diamonds, hardwoods, limestone, iron ore, copper, chromium ore, zinc, tungsten, mica, and silver.
- It has **Mount Kinyeti as its highest peak (3,187 m)**, located in the Imatong Mountains near the Uganda border.

## 72) TIGRAY REGION

### Why in News?

Recently, over **1 million people have been displaced in Tigray, Ethiopia**, highlighting the continuing humanitarian crisis following conflict in the region.



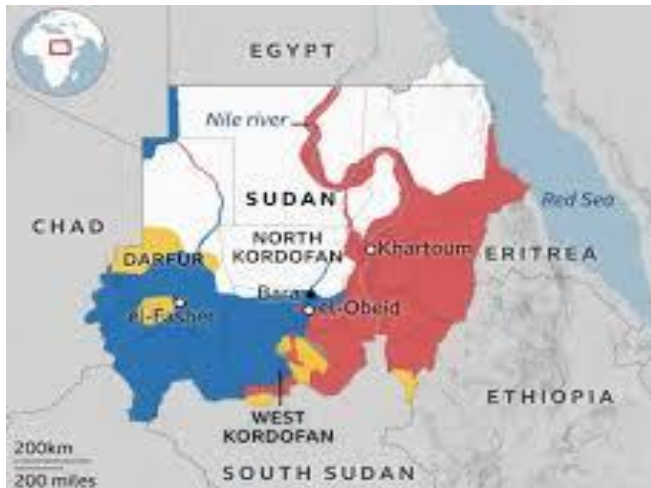
## About

- It is the **northernmost region of Ethiopia**, with a mountainous terrain
- It shares borders with **Eritrea** (north), **Sudan** (west), **Amhara** (south), and **Afar** (east).
- It is **historically significant as the cradle of Ethiopian civilization**, with the ancient Aksumite Kingdom.
- It has **key geographical features like the Tekeze River and Tekeze Dam**, important for water and power supply.
- It has **strategic infrastructure such as Aksum Airport**, which was damaged during the conflict.
- It is **currently facing a humanitarian crisis (2026)** due to conflict, displacement, and food insecurity.

## 73) WEST KORDOFAN STATE

### Why in News?

Recently, in Sudan, drone strikes in Abu Zabad and Wad Banda markets in West Kordofan killed **33–40 civilians**, highlighting escalating SAF–RSF conflict.



## About

- It is a **landlocked state in western Sudan**.
- It shares bordering **North & South Kordofan, Darfur regions, and sharing an international border with South Sudan**.
- **Capital: Al-Fulah**

- It has a **unique administrative history**, as it was abolished in 2005 and re-established in 2013.
- It is the **primary oil-producing** state in Sudan, hosting significant fields like the Heglig and Bamboo fields.
- It has **strategic transport infrastructure**, including the Babanusa railway junction connecting Darfur and South Sudan.
- It **shares a border with the disputed Abyei Area**, claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan.
- It is a **major conflict hotspot (2026)** in Sudan, where both the capital Al-Fulah and key oil fields are being contested between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

## 74) COLOMBIA

### Why in news?

Recently, Colombia reported that border-area bombings near Ecuador resulted in 27 charred bodies, amid rising tensions over anti-narcotics operations and alleged narco-terrorism activities.



## About

- It is a country located in the northwestern part of South America, connecting South America with Central and North America, often called the **“gateway to South America.”**
- **Capital: Bogota**
- It is bordered by **Panama** (northwest), **Ecuador and Peru** (south), **Venezuela**

(east), and **Brazil** (southeast), and has coastlines along both the **Caribbean Sea** (north) and the **Pacific Ocean** (west).

- It has the **Andes** in the west and eastward lowlands (**Amazon–Orinoco**) with major rivers like the **Magdalena** supporting transport and farming.

## ECUADOR

- It is a country located on the northwestern edge of South America.
- It shares **land borders** with Colombia (north) and Peru (south & east), and a **maritime boundary** with the Pacific Ocean (west).



## 75) CUBA

### Why in news?

Recently, The President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel confirmed talks with the United States amid a severe energy crisis caused by a US oil blockade, which has led to fuel shortages and widespread blackouts.

### About

- It is the largest island country located in the **north western Caribbean** at the confluence of the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.
- **Capital:** Havana
- It shares maritime borders with the **US, Mexico, Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, and Honduras.**
- It is surrounded by major water bodies such as the **Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Straits of Florida, and the Cayman Trench.**



## ART & CULTURE

### 76) SHRAVASTI

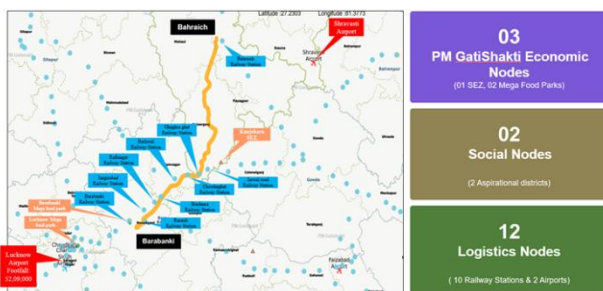
#### Why in News?

A new highway project is set to boost connectivity and tourism to Buddhist sacred sites in Shravasti.

#### About



- Shravasti was the capital of the ancient Kosala Kingdom and is regarded as one of the six largest cities of ancient India.
- It is closely associated with the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha, who is believed to have spent 24 monsoon seasons (**Varshavasa**) there and delivered many important sermons.
- Many important sermons and teachings of Buddha were delivered at Shravasti.
- Important Buddhist sites in the region include Jetavana Monastery, one of the most famous monasteries donated by the merchant Anathapindika, Gandhakuti, believed to be Buddha's residence, and Angulimala Stupa, associated with the conversion of Angulimala.



- Excavations at Shravasti have revealed monasteries, stupas, sculptures, inscriptions, and ancient structures, making it an important site for studying Buddhist art, architecture, and urban history.
- Shravasti is part of the Buddhist Circuit tourism initiative, attracts pilgrims from countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, Japan, and Myanmar, and strengthens India's soft power and cultural diplomacy.

### 77) MADHAVPUR MELA

#### Why in News?

PM Modi invited people to visit the Madhavpur Mela held at Madhavpur in Gujarat's Porbandar district.

#### About



- Madhavpur Mela is an **annual cultural and religious festival** held at Madhavpur in Gujarat.
- The festival commemorates the legendary **marriage of Lord Krishna and Rukmini**.
- It symbolises the cultural linkage between **western India (Gujarat) and northeastern states**, especially Arunachal Pradesh.
- The festival is celebrated over several days with rituals, fairs, and traditional performances.
- It showcases folk dances, music, and cultural traditions from different parts of India.

- The event is supported by the **Government of India** to promote national integration and tourism.

## 78) HOLA MOHALLA

### Why in News?

The Hola Mohalla festival has commenced at Takht Sachkhand Sri Abchalnagar Sahib in Nanded.

### About

- Hola Mohalla is a **Sikh festival initiated by Guru Gobind Singh** in the 17th century to promote martial spirit and unity among Sikhs.
- It is celebrated a day after Holi, mainly at **Anandpur Sahib**, a significant Sikh pilgrimage site.
- The festival features mock battles, military exercises, horse riding, and display of martial arts like Gatka.
- It highlights the valor, discipline, and preparedness of the Sikh community, especially the Khalsa.
- Devotional activities such as kirtans, processions (Nagar Kirtan), and community kitchens (Langar) are an integral part of the celebrations.



## 79) MAHAD SATYAGRAHA

### Why in News?

March 20 is being observed across the country as **Social Empowerment Day**, honouring the landmark 1927 **movement led by B.R. Ambedkar for social equality** and the right of Dalits to access public water resources.

### About

- **Dalits** (“Depressed Classes”) were traditionally **denied access** to public water sources, roads, temples, and other common facilities.
- In **1923**, the Bombay Legislative Council passed the **Bole Resolution**, moved by S.K. Bole which **allowed Dalits access to public utilities maintained by the government**.
- However, in **1924**, when the Mahad Municipal Council supported this decision, **upper-caste opposition prevented its actual implementation**.



### Mahad Satyagraha Phase-I

- The first phase of the Mahad Satyagraha took place on **20 March 1927** which was held at the **Chavdar Tank in Mahad, Maharashtra**.
- It was led by **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**.
- The **purpose of the march** was to assert the **right of Dalits to use public water sources**.
- At the tank, Ambedkar **publicly drank water**, to show that Dalits also had equal rights over public facilities.
- “Upper caste” groups opposed the act and refused to accept Dalits’ access to the tank.
- They also performed a so-called “**purification ritual**” using cow dung and cow urine.

### Phase- II

- The second phase of the Mahad Satyagraha took place on **25 December 1927** which was also held at **Mahad in Maharashtra**.
- During this phase, a **second conference** was organised.
- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** and his followers participated in this gathering.

- In this conference, they **publicly burned the Manusmriti**.
- The Manusmriti is an ancient text that supported and justified the **caste system and social hierarchy**.
- The burning of the Manusmriti was a symbolic act.
- It represented a **strong rejection of caste discrimination and untouchability**.
- It also showed opposition to religious texts used to justify social inequality.

### Outcomes

- In 1937, the **Bombay High Court** upheld their legal right to **use public water tanks like the Chavdar Tank without any discrimination**, strengthening the principle of equality in public spaces.
- 20 March is observed as **Social Empowerment Day (Samajik Sabalikiran Din)**.
- The ideas of this movement influenced key constitutional provisions:
  - **Article 17:** Abolition of Untouchability
  - **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination

## 80) DANDI MARCH

### Why in News?

India remembered and commemorated the Dandi March on its **96th anniversary** in March 2026.

### About

- The **Dandi March** was a non-violent protest led by **Mahatma Gandhi** in 1930 against the British salt tax.
- It marked the launch of the **Civil Disobedience Movement**, where Gandhi symbolically broke the salt law at Dandi.
- Gandhi sent an ultimatum to **Viceroy Lord Irwin** with **11 demands**, including the **abolition of the salt tax and the government monopoly on salt**. Irwin ignored these demands which led to the march.
- Gandhi viewed **salt as a "human necessity"** that united the rich and poor. It was a tangible symbol of British economic exploitation, since

the **1882 Salt Act gave Britain a monopoly and levied a tax**.

- The **Dandi March began on March 12, 1930** and ended on **April 6, 1930**, when the Salt Law was broken.
- The march started **from Sabarmati Ashram and ended at Dandi**, located on the coast of Gujarat.
- On **April 6, 1930**, Gandhi picked up a handful of natural salt from the sea. This act **symbolically broke the British Salt Law** and officially started the **Civil Disobedience Movement**.
- Other important leaders of the march:
  - **C. Rajagopalachari** led a salt march to **Vedaranyam** in the Madras Presidency.
  - **K. Kelappan** organised salt marches in Malabar from **Calicut to Payyannur**.
  - After Gandhi's arrest, **Sarojini Naidu** led the **Dharasana Salt Works protest**.

## 81) DURGA PUJA

### Why in News?

The Government of India has announced the provision of **Grant-in-Aid to international organizations** under the **Global Engagement Scheme of the Ministry of Culture** to promote **Durga Puja at the global level**.

### About

- Durga Puja, also called **Durgotsava**, is a major Hindu festival celebrated mainly in **West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Tripura, and Bihar**.
- It celebrates the victory of **Goddess Durga over the buffalo demon Mahishasura**, symbolizing the triumph of **Dharma (good) over Adharma (evil)**.
- The festival is also seen as a celebration of **art, culture, devotion, and social unity**, going beyond religious boundaries.
- Durga Puja is celebrated in the **Ashvin month of the Hindu calendar**, which usually falls in **September–October**.

### Durga's depiction

- Goddess Durga is depicted with **ten arms**.
- Each arm carries a weapon gifted by different gods.
- Example: **Shiva's Trident, Vishnu's Sudarshana Chakra**
- These weapons symbolize divine power united to defeat evil forces.

### Important Artistic Components

- **Kumartuli (Kolkata):** Traditional area where clay idols (pratimas) are made using river clay.
- **Pandal Art:** Temporary structures made of bamboo and cloth; often themed on social issues or architecture.



- **Sholapith Craft:** Decorative white carvings made from a plant-based material used for idol decoration.
- **Dhunuchi Naach:** Traditional dance performed with incense burners during rituals.

### UNESCO recognition

In **December 2021, Durga Puja in Kolkata** was inscribed on the **UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity** for its unique **blend of religion, art, and culture**.

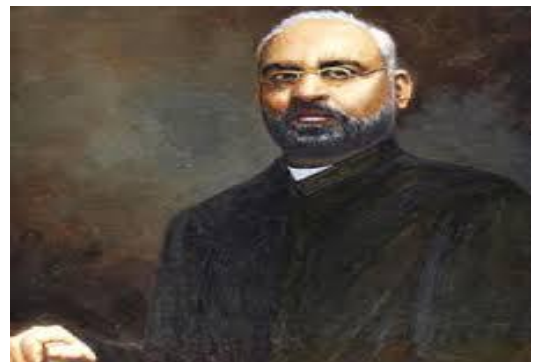
## 82) SHYAMJI KRISHNA VERMA

### Why in News?

PM Narendra Modi paid homage to Shyamji Krishna Varma on his death anniversary, recognising his contribution to India's freedom movement.

### About

- Shyamji Krishna Varma was born on **4th October 1857** in Mandvi and was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar.
- He became the **first non-Brahmin** to be conferred the title of "**Pandit**" by the scholars of Kashi.
- He was deeply influenced by **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** and served as the **first President of the Bombay Arya Samaj in 1877**.
- He held administrative positions as Diwan (Chief Minister) in princely states such as Ratlam, Ajmer, and Junagadh.
- In 1905, he launched the journal "**The Indian Sociologist**" in London to promote nationalist and anti-colonial ideas.
- He founded the Indian Home Rule Society and established "**India House**" in London, which became a centre for revolutionary activities.
- He was among the earliest leaders to advocate "**Swaraj**" (self-rule) and demand complete **independence** from British rule.



- He mentored prominent revolutionaries like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Bhikaji Cama, and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya.
- He moved from **London to Paris** and later settled in Geneva during **World War I**, where he stayed until his death on **30th March 1930**.
- A memorial named **Kranti Teerth** was built in his honour and inaugurated in **2010**.

## 83) JNANPITH AWARD

### Why in News?

Eminent Tamil poet and lyricist Vairamuthu has been announced as a recipient of the prestigious Jnanpith Award, becoming the third Tamil writer to receive this honour.

### About

- The Jnanpith Award is considered the **highest literary honour in India**, often referred to as the “*Nobel Prize of Indian Literature*.”
- It was established in **1961** by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, a cultural organization founded by industrialist **Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain** and his wife **Rama Jain**.
- The award was first given in **1965**.
- It is awarded **once every year**.
- Only **Indian citizens** are eligible.
- Works in **22 Scheduled Languages (Eighth Schedule of the Constitution)** are eligible for this award **along with English** which was included in 2013.
- The award is **not given after the death** of the author.
- The selection criterion from **1965 to 1981** was a **specific literary work**.
- From **1982** onwards, the award is given for an **author’s lifetime contribution to literature**.
- If a language receives the award in a particular year, it is generally not considered for the next two years.

### Components of the award

1. Cash prize of **₹11 lakh**
2. A **citation (certificate of honour)**
3. A **bronze statue of Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati)**

### Recipients of the award



## 84) NATIONAL MISSION ON MANUSCRIPTS

### Why in News?

The National Mission for Manuscripts, rebranded as Gyan Bharatam Mission, has been upgraded with ₹491.66 crore (2025–2031) to survey, document, and digitize India’s manuscript heritage.

### About



- The **Gyan Bharatam Mission** is a flagship initiative of the **Ministry of Culture** aimed at surveying, documenting, conserving, digitizing, and providing access to India’s manuscript heritage.
- The mission seeks to cover manuscripts across academic institutions, museums, libraries, and **private collections irrespective of region, language, or script**.
- It proposes a nationwide network of Cluster Centres (CCs) and Independent Centres (ICs), with over 40 centres and 28 States/UTs onboarded as nodal coordinating authorities.
- The mission adopts a technology-driven framework including metadata creation, AI-integrated digital platforms, and integration with the **National Digital Repository (NDR)**.

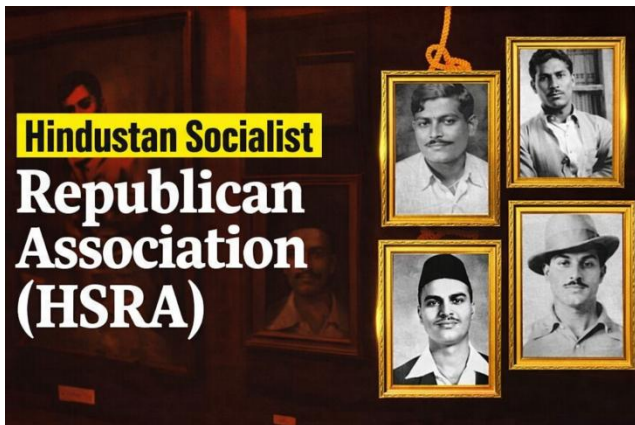
- It ensures preservation through scientific conservation methods, high-quality digitization, and secure storage using LTO-9 tapes, cloud backup, and disaster recovery systems.
- The initiative aims to digitize around one crore manuscripts and enhance accessibility, authenticity, and long-term preservation of India's cultural heritage.

## 85) HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION (HSRA)

### Why in News?

The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association was remembered on Shaheed Diwas during the 95th anniversary of the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.

### About



- HSRA was formed in **1928 at Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi**, by reorganising the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA).
- The organisation aimed to overthrow British rule in India and establish a **Federal Republic of the United States of India** based on socialist principles.
- The term **“Socialist”** was added to reflect the growing influence of socialist and anti-imperialist ideas among revolutionaries.
- Prominent members included Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Sukhdev Thapar, Shivaram Rajguru, and Batukeshwar Dutt.

- HSRA was responsible for the assassination of J. P. Saunders in 1928 to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.
- In 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly to protest against repressive laws.
- HSRA used slogans such as **“Inquilab Zindabad”** and popularised revolutionary nationalism among Indian youth.
- The activities of HSRA declined after the death of Chandrasekhar Azad in 1931 and the execution of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev in 1931.

## 86) KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES

### Why in News?

India is hosting its first Khelo India Tribal Games from March to April 2026 in Chhattisgarh (Raipur, Jagdalpur and Surguja), providing a national platform for tribal athletes.

### About



- The **Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026** is India's first national multi-sport event exclusively for tribal athletes, held from **25 March–3 April 2026**.
- The **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026** is being collaboratively organised by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India, Indian Olympic Association, various National Sports Federations, and the Chhattisgarh state organising committee**, ensuring that the competitions are conducted in line with international technical standards.

- Hosted in Chhattisgarh (Raipur, Jagdalpur, Surguja), it brings **60,000+ athletes from 30 States/UTs** onto a national platform.
- Conducted under the Khelo India Programme, the Games aim to promote **inclusivity, grassroots talent identification, and tribal participation**.
- Events include **7 medal sports** (athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming, wrestling) and **indigenous sports** like kabaddi and mallakhamb.
- The official mascot, *Morveer*, reflects the spirit of the Games. Derived from the Chhattisgarhi words '*Mor*' (our own) and '*Veer*' (bravery), it symbolises pride, spirit and the identity of India's tribal communities.
- A total of **338 medals** (106 gold, 106 silver and 126 bronze medals) are contested, with structured selection trials and talent scouting for future development.
- The initiative integrates **sports development with socio-economic inclusion**, especially in tribal and LWE-affected regions.

#### **KABADDI & MALLAKHAMB**

- *Kabaddi is an ancient indigenous sport of India that evolved into a modern competitive game and gained global recognition after being showcased at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.*
- *Mallakhamb is a traditional sport combining gymnastics, yoga, and strength training, originally used for wrestler training and also showcased at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.*

## **87) RAMAKRISHNA MISSION**

### **Why in News?**

President **Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated the Nand Kishor Somani Oncology Block at the **Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram** 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.

### **About**

- The **Ramakrishna Mission** was founded in **1897** at **Belur, West Bengal**.

- It was established by **Swami Vivekananda**, the chief disciple of **Ramakrishna Paramahansa**.
- The motto of the mission is "*Atmano mokshartham jagad hitaya cha*" (For one's own salvation and for the welfare of the world)

### **Core philosophy**

- It is based on teachings of **Ramakrishna Paramahansa**, a 19<sup>th</sup> century saint of Bengal and interpreted by **Swami Vivekananda**.
- It believes in **unity of all religions**; all paths lead to the same truth.
- It emphasises on "**Service to mankind is service to God**".
- It follows **Practical Vedanta (Neo-Vedanta)** which is spirituality applied in daily life.
- It promotes a **balance between spiritual growth and social service**.
- The RKM is unique because it functions both as a monastic order (**Ramakrishna Math**) and a social service society (**Ramakrishna Mission**).

### **Ramakrishna Math**

- It is a monastic and religious organisation.
- It focuses on **spiritual practice and monastic life**.
- It emphasises **study and teaching of Vedanta**.

### **Ramakrishna Mission**

- It is the social service wing of Ramakrishna Math.
- It focuses on **education, healthcare, and welfare services**.
- It works in **disaster relief and rural development**.

### **About Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

- Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Indian saint and spiritual teacher known for his deep devotion to Goddess Kali.
- He emphasized the unity of all religions, teaching that different faiths lead to the same ultimate truth.

- His simple teachings and intense spiritual experiences inspired many followers across India.
- He was the Guru of Swami Vivekananda, who later spread his ideas worldwide.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

### 88) WORLD OBESITY ATLAS 2026

#### Why in News?

Childhood Obesity in India is rising rapidly, with the country ranking second globally after China as per the World Obesity Atlas 2026.

#### About

- The **World Obesity Atlas 2026**, published by the **World Obesity Federation**, redefines obesity as a complex chronic disease rather than a lifestyle failure, highlighting a "double burden" where undernutrition and obesity coexist.
- Globally, childhood obesity has surpassed underweight rates for the first time, with projections suggesting half the world will be overweight by 2035 due to sedentary habits and ultra processed foods.
- India specifically ranks second globally with over 45 million obese children and a 74% adolescent inactivity rate, leading to a surge in early-onset Type 2 diabetes.
- To address this, the Atlas advocates for a "Whole-of-Government" strategy, including mandatory Front-of-Package Labeling (FOPL), sugar taxes, and integrating obesity management into primary healthcare systems like India's Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.

### 89) NATIONAL POLICY FOR RARE DISEASES (NPRD)

#### Why in News?

The **National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021** is in the news primarily due to a **humanitarian crisis regarding funding delays** and the potential lapsing of allocated funds, which has left patients and children.

#### About

- Rare diseases are health conditions that affect a small percentage of the population—in India, typically 1 in 5,000

people—and are primarily genetic, often appearing **in childhood**.

- **Under the** National Policy for Rare Diseases (2021), these conditions are categorized into three groups based on treatment type and cost, with the government recently increasing financial support to ₹50 lakhs for all categories through designated Centers of Excellence.
- Recent developments include a major **Basic Customs Duty waiver** on imported "orphan drugs" and specialized foods, the launch of a national crowdfunding portal to bridge funding gaps, and a push for indigenous drug manufacturing to lower treatment costs.
- Some examples are: **Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome, Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva and Aquagenic Urticaria**.



#### What are Orphan Drugs ?

They are medicines developed for rare diseases that are commercially unviable due to limited demand. To encourage production, governments provide **market exclusivity, tax exemptions, and expedited approvals** for these life saving treatments.

### 90) YUVA SANGAM: PORTAL AND PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

#### Why in News?

Yuva Sangam gained attention in March–April 2026 with the launch of Phase VI under the "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" initiative. Registrations were open from March 2–25 for youth aged 18 – 30.

## About

The **Yuva Sangam** portal is the digital backbone of the **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB)** initiative by the Ministry of Education. It facilitates multi-dimensional exchange tours for youth to experience India's diversity firsthand, bridging regional divides through experiential learning and national integration.

### **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**

*It is a central initiative aimed at strengthening national integration by pairing different States and Union Territories for structured cultural exchange. It promotes "Unity in Diversity" through activities like language learning, food festivals, and student exchange programs, such as **Yuva Sangam**. The scheme seeks to foster deep emotional bonds and mutual understanding among citizens, celebrating India's shared civilizational heritage across regional*

## 91) TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

### Why in News?

Women in India face problems from the very beginning of their TB journey: late diagnoses or misdiagnoses are compounded by stigma, limited mobility, lack of finances and multiple barriers to care.

### About

- Tuberculosis (TB) is a highly infectious airborne disease caused by the **bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis**, which primarily spreads through tiny droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- While it most **commonly affects the lungs (Pulmonary TB)**, it can also become "**Extrapulmonary**" by spreading to the brain, bones, or lymphatic system; importantly, many people carry "**Latent TB**," where the bacteria stay dormant until

triggered by malnutrition or a weak immune system (such as HIV).

- Treatment typically involves a long-term course of antibiotics, including the new BPaLM regimen which has recently reduced the treatment time for drug resistant TB from 20 months down to just six.
- However, significant challenges remain, including social stigma that prevents people from seeking care, high rates of treatment dropouts leading to **Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB**, and the "silent spread" caused by asymptomatic cases that traditional screening methods often miss.

### **Initiatives for Tuberculosis**

- Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (Ni-kshay Mitra)
- BPaLM Regimen
- Ni-kshay 2.0
- Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana
- TB Mukh Panchayat Initiative
- Augmented Active Case Finding (ACF)

## 92) UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA

### Why in News?

The a major milestone in March 2026 by completing over 1.2 crore Mandatory Biometric Updates (MBUs) for schoolchildren across more than 1.03 lakh schools nationwide.

### About

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a **statutory authority** established under the **Aadhaar Act, 2016**, operating under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- Its primary **mandate is to issue unique 12 digit identification numbers**, known as **Aadhaar**, to all residents of India by

collecting and managing their biometric and demographic data in a centralized database.

- Organizationally, it is headed by a Chairperson and a CEO who oversee the entire "Aadhaar life cycle," which includes enrollment, authentication, and maintaining the security of the identity infrastructure.
- Essentially, UIDAI acts as the government's identity manager, ensuring that subsidies and services reach the correct beneficiaries directly while eliminating duplicates and fraud in the system.

#### **Initiatives of UIDAI**

- *The "Invisible Shield" Project*
- *Mandatory Biometric Update (MBU) Special Drive*
- *Multi-Modal Authentication Rollout*
- *Map Integration Partnerships*
- *Aadhaar Mascot "Udai"*
- *Document Updation Project*

### **93) MATERNITY BENEFIT ACT**

#### **Why in News?**

In a landmark judgment delivered in March 2026 (Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India), the Supreme Court of India struck down the restrictive age limit for maternity benefits for adoptive mothers, declaring that "a mother is a mother,"

#### **About**

- The Maternity Benefit Act, now integrated into the **Code on Social Security (2020)** and administered by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**, applies to all factories, mines, plantations, and commercial establishments employing 10 or more persons.

#### **Key Provisions of The Maternity Benefit Act**

1. **Eligibility:** A woman must have worked for at least 80 days in the 12 months immediately preceding her expected delivery date.
2. **Leave Duration:**
  - a. **First & Second Child:** 26 weeks (182 days) paid leave.
  - b. **Third Child Onwards:** 12 weeks (84 days) paid leave.
  - c. **Pre-natal Leave:** Up to 8 weeks before the expected delivery date for the first/second child, and up to 6 weeks for the third child onwards.
  - d. **Miscarriage/Medical Termination:** 6 weeks paid leave.
  - e. **Adopting/Commissioning Mothers:** in 2026 judgement, they are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, regardless of the child's age (before upto children under 3 months only).
3. **Wages During Leave:** Paid at the rate of the average daily wage for the period of actual absence.
4. **Other Benefits:**
  - a. **Medical Bonus:** ₹3,500 if no prenatal/post-natal care is provided by the employer.
  - b. **Work from Home:** Employers may allow this for a mutually agreed period after the 26 weeks, if the nature of work permits.
  - c. **Creche Facility:** Mandatory for establishments with 50+ employees.
  - d. **Nursing Breaks:** Two breaks of 15 minutes until the child is 15 months old.
5. **Protection against Dismissal:** Employers cannot terminate a woman for being pregnant or absent during her maternity leave.
6. **Penalties:** Violations can lead to imprisonment (up to one year) and fines (up to ₹5,000)

## 94) DRUG FREE INDIA CHAMPAIGN

### Why in News?

In 2026, the government transitioned this into a high-intensity, three-year national mission aiming for a completely drug-free India by 2029.

### About

- The "**Drug-Free India Campaign**," popularly known as **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)**, is primarily led by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)**, under its new **Three-Year Action Plan (2026-2029)**, adopts a "Whole-of Government" approach that treats narcotics as a national security and narco-terrorism threat.
- This framework relies on a **three-pillar strategy**: ruthless supply control using AI/Darknet tools, demand reduction via "Jan Andolan" awareness, and a humane harm reduction model for user rehabilitation.
- Key initiatives include the **Nasha Mukta Vidyalaya (mandating 500-meter drug free zones)** and **Maanya Bharat**, the communication wing targeting 372 vulnerable districts through community and religious leaders.
- Supported by a four-tier NCORD mechanism, Integrated Rehabilitation Centers (IRCA), and a 24/7 helpline (14446).

## SCHEMES

### 95) AYUSHMAN BHARAT - PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AROGYA YOJANA (AB-PMJAY)

#### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the expansion, hospital empanelment, and performance of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

#### About

- Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is the **world's largest public health insurance** scheme, launched on **September 23, 2018**, as a key component of the Ayushman Bharat mission.
- **Objective:** To achieve **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** by providing financial protection to over **12 crore vulnerable families**.
- It is implemented by the **National Health Authority** at the central level, along with State Health Agencies at the state level.
- The scheme functions in coordination with other pillars such as **Ayushman Arogya Mandir, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, and PM-ABHIM**.

#### Provisions

- The scheme provides an insurance cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year for **secondary and tertiary care hospitalization**.
- It enables cashless and paperless treatment at empanelled public and private hospitals across India, ensuring nationwide portability.
- It includes the **Ayushman Vay Vandana (VVS) Card**, which provides coverage for **senior citizens aged 70 years and above**.
- The network consists of 19,483 public hospitals and 16,746 private hospitals as of February 2026.

- Claims are required to be settled within 15 days for intra-state cases and within 30 days for inter-state portability cases.
- A three-tier grievance redressal mechanism operates at the district, state, and national levels, supported by nodal officers and the 14555 helpline.
- The scheme uses ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) for digital integration of health records, ensuring continuity of care.
- It covers a wide range of medical specialties, including cardiology, oncology, neonatal care, and general surgery.
- The scheme has empanelled 36,229 hospitals and authorized 11.69 crore hospital admissions.
- More than 42 crore Ayushman cards have been issued as of October 2025.
- It has resulted in out-of-pocket savings of over ₹1.52 lakh crore.
- The government aims to further expand the healthcare network and infrastructure under the PM-ABHIM by 2027.

### 96) PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI

#### Why in news?

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Guwahati and released the 22nd instalment of PM-KISAN worth about ₹18,640 crore to over 9 crore farmers, along with inaugurating key development projects.

#### About

- PM-KISAN is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched in 2019 and **one of the world's largest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) initiatives**. It reflects a shift from entitlement-based assistance to empowerment-oriented support, ensuring **"Annadata Samman"** for farmers.

- The scheme provides assured income support to landholding farmer families for purchasing agricultural inputs and improving productivity. Since its launch, more than ₹4.27 lakh crore has been disbursed, with ₹60,000 crore allocated in the Union Budget 2026–27. It is inclusive, with over 25% beneficiaries being women (around 2.15 crore in the latest instalment).

### Provisions of the Scheme

- Eligible farmer families receive ₹6,000 annually in three instalments of ₹2,000, directly transferred into Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts to ensure transparency and eliminate intermediaries.
- Beneficiaries are identified by States/UTs based on digitized land records, with village-level lists displayed.
- e-KYC verification (OTP/biometric/face authentication) is mandatory, supported by the Kisan-e Mitra chatbot.
- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies** are integrated through an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform. Income taxpayers, government employees, and constitutional post holders are excluded, with recovery for wrongful disbursement.
- A multi-tier monitoring mechanism ensures implementation, with grievance redressal via the **PM-KISAN portal and CPGRAMS**.

## 97) PRADHAN MANTRI VANBANDHU KALYAN YOJANA

### Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of State for Tribal Affairs informed the Lok Sabha about the progress of the scheme, highlighting its role in improving infrastructure and social services in tribal areas.

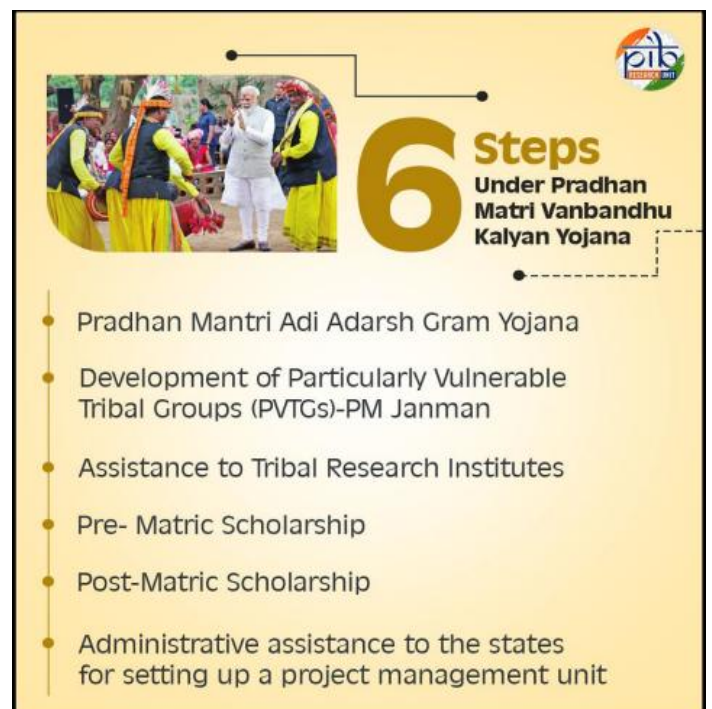
### About

PMVKY, launched in 2014, is a landmark umbrella initiative of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** aimed

at **empowering tribal communities** and addressing their historical neglect through financial assistance and a framework for sustainable development.

### Provisions

- The scheme operates as an umbrella framework covering initiatives like scholarships for ST students, development of PVTGs, support to Tribal Research Institutes, and village development programmes such as PMAAGY (now under DAJGUA).
- It is implemented through DAPST, where multiple Ministries allocate funds to bridge developmental gaps. Key missions include **PM JANMAN and Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for tribal development**.
- The scheme focuses on convergence of resources and improved service delivery in education, health, connectivity, and employment, supported by monitoring systems, digital platforms, and Centre-State coordination.



The infographic features a photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacting with tribal community members. To the right, a large number '6' is followed by the text 'Steps Under Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana'. Below this, a vertical list of six initiatives is provided, each preceded by a yellow dot.

**6 Steps Under Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana**

- Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana
- Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)-PM Janman
- Assistance to Tribal Research Institutes
- Pre- Matric Scholarship
- Post-Matric Scholarship
- Administrative assistance to the states for setting up a project management unit

## 98) DIRGHAVADHI KRISHAK PUNJI SAHAKAR YOJANA

### Why in News?

Recently, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) reported in Parliament on the performance of the Dirghavadhi Krishak Punji Sahakar Yojana, highlighting its role in strengthening long-term agricultural credit through cooperatives.

### About

- The Dirghavadhi Krishak Punji Sahakar Yojana is a long-term financial initiative launched by NCDC under the Ministry of Cooperation to strengthen agricultural credit by providing long-term capital to cooperatives for sustainable rural growth.
- It focuses on shifting from short-term lending to capital formation by ensuring uninterrupted long-term credit for investments in assets like machinery, irrigation, and storage.

### Provisions

- Cooperatives must meet strict financial conditions such as minimum **3 years** of operation, **net profit in 2 of last 3 years** with no cash losses, and full integrity of paid-up capital, along with appraisal and due diligence by NCDC.
- The scheme ensures structured credit flow through **long-term assistance** for agriculture, allied sectors, and non-farm activities, with **regular monitoring** and inspections by NCDC to ensure proper utilization of funds.

## 99) JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHAN SCHEME

### Why in news?

Recently, the government shared in Parliament the performance and impact of the scheme, highlighting its role in improving employability and income levels under the Skill India Programme.

### About

For free learning, visit [www.officerspulse.com](http://www.officerspulse.com)

- Jan Shikshan Sansthan Scheme was launched as Shramik Vidyapeeth (SVP) in 1967 and renamed in 2000. It provides vocational training to non-literates, neo-literates, and school dropouts in rural and urban areas. It functions under the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** and is a **Central Sector Scheme** implemented through NGOs.
- The objective is to enhance household income by promoting self/wage employment through skill training.

### Provisions

- The scheme covers non-literates, neo-literates, persons with basic education, and school dropouts up to Class 12.
- Priority is given to women, SCs, STs, and minorities, mainly in the 15–45 age group, with relaxation for women and Divyangjan. Around 83% of beneficiaries are women.
- Training is provided at the doorstep based on local needs.
- Courses are aligned with NSQF for quality and recognition, and also include Life Enrichment Education such as financial literacy, digital skills, and awareness of social security schemes.

## 100) ATAL VAYO ABHYUDAY YOJANA (AVAY)

### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Rajya Sabha about the implementation and funding details of the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana.

### About

- Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana is an umbrella scheme for the **holistic welfare of senior citizens in India**, implemented by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.
- It includes the Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSrC), which provides

Grant-in-Aid to NGOs and voluntary organisations.

- The scheme operates through partnerships with the private sector and civil society, while a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) conducts inspections and verifies projects.

### Provisions

- The scheme provides financial support for projects like Senior Citizen Homes, Continuous Care Homes, Mobile Medicare Units, Physiotherapy Units, and Regional Resource and Training Centres (RRTCs).
- RRTCs (e.g., HelpAge India) focus on advocacy, awareness, training, research, and monitoring, coordinating with States/UTs, and receive an annual grant of ₹19.58 lakh.
- Implementing NGOs must ensure proper fund use by submitting progress reports, Utilization Certificates, and audited accounts.

## 101) PRADHAN MANTRI BHARTIYA JANAUSHADHI PARIYOJANA (PMBJP)

### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the expansion and performance of the scheme, including plans to increase Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country.

### About

- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is a flagship campaign of the Department of Pharmaceuticals to **provide quality medicines at affordable prices**. It is implemented by the **Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)** under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, ensuring quality through WHO-GMP compliant procurement and NABL testing.
- Medicines are sold at 50–80% lower prices, leading to savings of about ₹38,000 crore (as of June 2025), with over 18,000

Kendras operational and a target of 25,000 by March 2027.

### Provisions

- The scheme provides financial incentives up to ₹5 lakh and a ₹2 lakh one-time grant for priority groups. It promotes citizen-centric healthcare through ₹1 sanitary napkins, offers support via the Jan Aushadhi Sugam app, and ensures medicine availability through an IT-enabled supply chain. It expands access through railway stations and rural networks like PACS. Individuals with D. Pharma/B. Pharma or a qualified pharmacist can open Kendras with a minimum space of 120 sq. ft.

## 102) DESIGNING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR HOLISTIC ACCESS TO JUSTICE (DISHA) SCHEME

### Why in news?

Recently, a workshop on the Tele-Law Programme under the DISHA Scheme was held in Chennai.

### About

- The DISHA Scheme is an umbrella initiative of the **Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice**, aimed at ensuring affordable, accessible, and technology-driven justice delivery to all citizens, especially in rural and marginalized areas, by integrating legal aid and awareness programmes to promote access to justice and legal empowerment.

### Provisions

- The scheme brings together initiatives like Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu, and legal literacy programmes on one platform.
- It provides technology-based legal access through digital platforms, mobile apps, and Common Service Centres (CSCs), ensuring easy availability of legal advice, and focuses

on pre-litigation services to reduce court burden.

- It facilitates pro bono legal support, conducts legal awareness programmes, and prioritizes marginalized groups such as rural populations, women, and SC/ST communities. It also strengthens last-mile justice delivery through CSC networks and helplines like 14454.

### 103) PM E-DRIVE SCHEME

#### Why in the news?

Recently, the Union Government revised guidelines under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme by setting new deadlines and caps for electric two-wheelers and e-rickshaws eligible for incentives.

#### About

- PM E-DRIVE Scheme is a flagship initiative aimed at **promoting mass adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs)** in India by reducing high upfront costs. It is implemented by the **Ministry of Heavy Industries** and follows a demand incentive model, where buyers receive upfront subsidies that are later reimbursed to OEMs. As of December 2025, about ₹1,703 crore has been reimbursed, mainly for e-2Ws and e-3Ws.

#### Provisions

- The scheme provides financial support for e-2Ws, e-3Ws (e-rickshaws, e-carts, L5), e-ambulances, and e-trucks.
- It allocates ₹4,391 crore for 14,028 electric buses in major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, and ₹2,000 crore for EV public charging stations.
- It also funds testing infrastructure and focuses on urban centres like Ahmedabad, Surat, Pune, and Hyderabad. The scheme targets 28 lakh+ EVs, with current sales dominated by e-2Ws (19.19 lakh) and e-3Ws (2.93 lakh).

### 104) PRADHAN MANTRI MATSYA SAMPADA YOJANA' (PMMSY)

#### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the implementation and fund allocation under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in Tamil Nadu.

#### About

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana was launched in May 2020 under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat package to promote a Blue Revolution** through sustainable fisheries development. It is implemented by the **Department of Fisheries** under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, aiming to harness the potential of India's EEZ and High Seas while doubling fishers' income. Initially planned for FY 2020–21 to 2024–25, it continues into 2026.

#### Provisions

- The scheme provides financial assistance for deep-sea fishing vessels with subsidies **(40% General, 60% SC/ST/Women)** to modernize fleets and promote offshore fishing.
- It supports post-harvest infrastructure like cold storages, ice plants, and processing units to reduce losses and improve value addition, along with fishing harbours and e-marketing.
- It includes capacity building in fishing technologies, safety training, and implementation through agencies like NFDB and CIFNET. It enhances exports through FTAs and quality standards, while providing institutional support like insurance and credit guarantee mechanisms with RBI support.

### 105) FASTER ADOPTION AND MANUFACTURING OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN INDIA (FAME INDIA) SCHEME

#### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the implementation status and achievements of the FAME India Scheme.

### About

FAME India Scheme was launched in 2015 under the **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP)** and is implemented by the **Ministry of Heavy Industries**. It aims to promote manufacturing and adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles through demand incentives, providing upfront subsidies to consumers that are reimbursed to Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) by the government.

### Implementation Phases

**Phase-I (2015 - 2019):** Pilot phase to assess market response and technology viability, supporting about 2.8 lakh vehicles with ₹359 crore incentives, deploying 425 buses, and focusing on R&D, testing infrastructure, and battery Centres of Excellence.

**Phase-II (2019 - 2024):** Scale-up phase with outlay revised from ₹10,000 crore to ₹11,500 crore, supporting over 16.7 lakh EVs, deploying about 5,195 buses, and installing 9,159 public charging stations.

### Provisions for Future Growth (PM E-DRIVE Integration)

Key learnings are integrated into the PM E-DRIVE Scheme, with ₹4,391 crore for 14,028 electric buses, ₹2,000 crore for charging infrastructure, and ₹780 crore for testing and R&D upgrades. The Phased Manufacturing Programme promotes localization, while institutional support strengthens testing and compliance with global standards.

## 106) BORDER DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

### Why in the news?

Recently, the **Minister of State for Home Affairs** informed the Rajya Sabha about the progress of the Border Area Development Programme.

### About

- Border Area Development Programme is a scheme launched by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** as a specialized intervention to bridge infrastructure gaps in regions near India's international land borders.
- It aims to improve infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, and overall development in border areas for balanced regional growth and national security.

### Provisions

- The programme supports projects in infrastructure, livelihood, health, education, and connectivity, with thousands of projects completed across States/UTs.
- It works in convergence with the Vibrant Villages Programme for comprehensive border village development.
- It also supports road and bridge projects to improve accessibility and promotes Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) to facilitate trade, passenger movement, and strengthen border management.

## 107) SAGARMALA PROGRAMME

### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Rajya Sabha about the progress and impact of the programme.

### About

- Sagarmala Programme was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015 and is implemented by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**. It aims to promote port-led development by utilizing India's 7,500 km coastline and 14,500 km navigable waterways, with the vision of reducing logistics costs for Export-Import and domestic trade through optimized infrastructure.
- The programme is based on **five pillars** port modernization and new port development, port connectivity enhancement through road and rail, port-

led industrialization via Coastal Economic Zones, coastal community development, and promotion of coastal shipping and inland waterways.

- A total of 129 projects has been sanctioned with a cost of ₹9,053.56 crore, of which 78 projects worth ₹5,356.89 crore have been completed, including 19 connectivity projects, leading to reduced logistics costs and improved cargo handling capacity.

## 108) NAMO DRONE DIDI SCHEME

### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the implementation and progress of the scheme.

### About

Namo Drone Didi Scheme is a **Central Sector Scheme** focusing on agriculture and women empowerment, with an outlay of ₹1,261 crore (2023–24 to 2025–26), aiming to **provide drones to Women SHGs for rental services** like spraying fertilizers and pesticides, implemented by the Department of Rural Development with support from the Department of Fertilizers and Lead Fertilizer Companies. It **provides 80% subsidy** (up to ₹8 lakh), with the remaining financed through loans under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund with 3% interest subvention, along with a complete drone package, training, and implementation across **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.**

## 109) SHE-MARTS INITIATIVE

### Why in news?

Recently, the Union Government informed the Lok Sabha about the launch of the SHE-Marts initiative to enhance market access for rural women entrepreneurs.

### About

SHE-Marts initiative is a market-driven programme under **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National**

**Rural Livelihoods Mission**, aimed at creating direct-to-consumer linkages and strengthening the SHG ecosystem by providing a structured retail platform for SHG products to improve market visibility and help women entrepreneurs scale up and move up the value chain. The initiative focuses on setting up community-owned retail outlets managed by Cluster Level Federations of SHGs to promote products of rural women entrepreneurs; however, no funds have been sanctioned or spent so far for its implementation.