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Olive Greens Institute

TILL 1 AUGUST 2026

PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of July 2026.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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Topic Wise Current Affairs

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



Chartered Accountants Day (India) : 01 July :-

Chartered Accountants Day (India) is celebrated every year on 1 July to mark the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), which was established in 1949 under the Chartered Accountants Act passed by the Indian Parliament. This day recognizes the contribution of Chartered Accountants (CAs) in strengthening India's financial system, taxation structure, auditing standards, and corporate governance. ICAI is one of the world's largest professional accounting bodies and plays a major role in regulating the CA profession in India.



World UFO Day : 02 July :-

World UFO Day is observed every year on July 2 to spread awareness about unidentified flying objects (UFOs) and encourage discussion about the possibility of extraterrestrial life. The date is linked to the famous Roswell Incident of 1947 in New Mexico, where a mysterious object crashed and sparked decades of speculation about alien spacecraft and government secrecy. Some UFO enthusiasts also recognize June 24,

marking pilot Kenneth Arnold's 1947 sighting that popularized the term "flying saucer."



International Day of Cooperatives 2026 : 04 July :-

The United Nations observes the International Day of Cooperatives every year on the first Saturday of July to recognize the contribution of cooperative societies to economic and social development. In 2026, the day is being celebrated on 4 July with the theme "Cooperatives for a Peaceful World." The theme highlights how cooperative institutions help promote equality, trust, inclusion, and community participation during times of global conflict and economic uncertainty. Cooperatives operate on principles of shared ownership and democratic decision-making, supporting sectors such as agriculture, banking, housing, dairy, and retail.



World Zoonoses Day : 06 July :-

World Zoonoses Day is observed every year on July 6 to raise awareness about zoonotic diseases — infections that spread between animals and humans. The day commemorates the historic achievement of French scientist Louis Pasteur, who successfully administered

the first rabies vaccine on July 6, 1885. Zoonotic diseases include illnesses such as rabies, bird flu, swine flu, Ebola, COVID-19, Nipah virus, and anthrax. The theme of the World Zoonoses Day 2026 is "One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses."



World Chocolate Day : 07 July :-

World Chocolate Day is celebrated every year on July 7 to honor one of the world's most loved sweet treats — chocolate. The day is believed to mark the introduction of chocolate to Europe in 1550, which later helped chocolate become popular across the globe. Modern celebrations of the occasion began around 2009 and now include chocolate festivals, special product launches, discounts by confectionery brands, and social media campaigns. Chocolate originally traces its roots to ancient Mesoamerican civilizations such as the Mayans and Aztecs, who consumed cacao as a bitter drink.



Global Energy Independence Day : 10 July :-

Global Energy Independence Day is observed every year on 10 July to promote awareness about reducing dependence on fossil fuels and encouraging the adoption of renewable and locally produced energy sources. The observance highlights the importance of energy security, environmental sustainability, and innovation in clean

technologies such as solar, wind, hydroelectric power, green hydrogen, and biofuels. Although it is not a United Nations-designated international day, it has gained recognition among governments, industries, and environmental organizations as a platform to encourage energy conservation and sustainable practices.



World Population Day : 11 July :-

World Population Day is observed annually on 11 July to raise awareness about global population issues, including population growth, reproductive health, gender equality, maternal health, family planning, education, and sustainable development. The observance was established by the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council in 1989, inspired by the global attention generated when the world's population reached approximately five billion on 11 July 1987, a milestone known as the "Day of Five Billion." Since then, the day has encouraged governments, policymakers, and communities to address the opportunities and challenges associated with population dynamics. The official theme for World Population Day 2026 is "Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people – today and for the future."



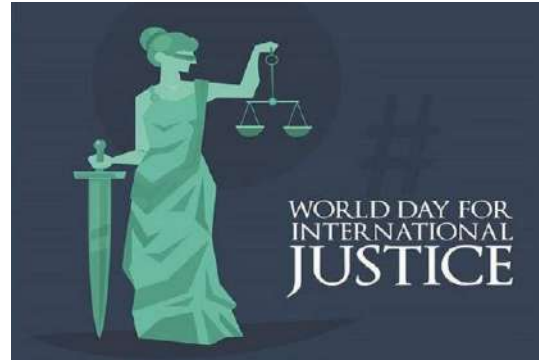
**International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms :
12 July :-**

The International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms is observed annually on 12 July following its proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly in 2023. The day highlights the growing threat posed by sand and dust storms, which affect more than 150 countries and have serious consequences for human health, agriculture, biodiversity, transportation, and economies. Climate change, desertification, unsustainable land use, and prolonged droughts have increased the frequency and intensity of these storms in many regions. The official theme for the United Nations International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms is "From Source to Impact: Protecting Land and Life from Sand and Dust Storms".



World Youth Skills Day : 15 July :-

World Youth Skills Day is observed every year on 15 July to highlight the importance of equipping young people with the technical, vocational, digital, and entrepreneurial skills needed for employment, decent work, and sustainable development. The day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, and the first observance took place in 2015. It recognizes that as technology, automation, and artificial intelligence reshape the global economy, developing relevant skills has become essential for improving employability and reducing youth unemployment. The theme for World Youth Skills Day 2026 is "Skills for a shared future".



World Day for International Justice : 17 July :-

World Day for International Justice is observed every year on 17 July to promote global efforts to end impunity for serious international crimes and strengthen the international justice system. The day commemorates the adoption of the Rome Statute on 17 July 1998, the treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court, headquartered in The Hague, prosecutes individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression when national courts are unable or unwilling to do so.



International Nelson Mandela Day : 18 July :-

International Nelson Mandela Day is observed every year on 18 July, the birth anniversary of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918–2013), South Africa's first democratically elected President and a global symbol of peace, equality, and reconciliation. The United Nations officially declared the day in 2009 to honour Mandela's lifelong struggle against apartheid, his commitment to human rights, and his efforts to promote social justice. The theme for International Nelson Mandela Day 2026 is "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity".



World Chess Day : 20 July :-

World Chess Day is observed every year on 20 July to celebrate the game of chess and its contribution to education, culture, and international friendship. The day commemorates the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) on 20 July 1924 in Paris, France. In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly officially proclaimed 20 July as World Chess Day through Resolution 74/22, recognizing chess as a universal game that promotes fairness, inclusion, mutual respect, and peaceful cooperation among nations. The International Chess Day 2026 theme is "Celebrate, create, and make a difference".



International Moon Day : 20 July :-

International Moon Day is observed every year on 20 July to mark the anniversary of humanity's first successful landing on the Moon by NASA's Apollo 11 mission on 20 July 1969, when astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to walk on the lunar surface, while Michael Collins remained in lunar orbit

aboard the command module. The observance was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2021, with the first International Moon Day celebrated in 2022. The day recognizes one of humanity's greatest scientific achievements and promotes international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and sustainable use of outer space.



National Flag Adoption Day (India) : 22 July :-

National Flag Adoption Day is observed every year on 22 July to commemorate the historic adoption of the Indian National Flag by the Constituent Assembly on 22 July 1947, just weeks before India attained independence on 15 August 1947. The present Tricolour was based on the flag designed by freedom fighter Pingali Venkayya, with the spinning wheel (Charkha) replaced by the navy-blue Ashoka Chakra containing 24 spokes, symbolising justice, righteousness, progress, and continuous movement. The saffron band represents courage and sacrifice, white signifies truth and peace, while green stands for prosperity and faith.



Income Tax Day (India) : 24 July :-

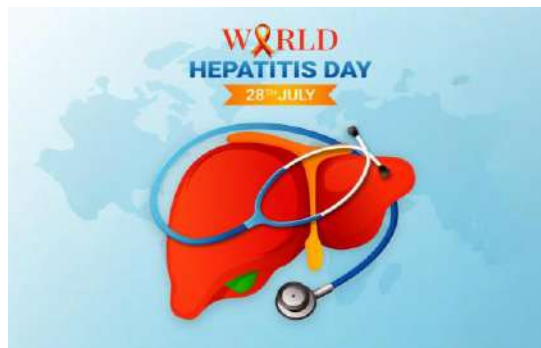
Income Tax Day (India) is observed every year on 24 July to commemorate the introduction of income tax in India by Sir James Wilson in 1860. The tax was introduced on 24 July 1860 during British rule to meet the financial burden caused by the Revolt of 1857. Although the taxation system has undergone several reforms since then, this date marks the beginning of direct taxation in India. The Income Tax Department first celebrated Income Tax Day in 2010, marking 150 years of income tax administration in the country. Since then, the day has been observed annually to recognize the contribution of taxpayers and the role of the Income Tax Department in nation-building.


World IVF Day : 25 July :-

World IVF Day is observed every year on 25 July to commemorate the birth of Louise Brown, the world's first baby conceived through In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), who was born on 25 July 1978 at Oldham General Hospital in England. This historic achievement by Dr. Robert Edwards, Dr. Patrick Steptoe, and embryologist Jean Purdy revolutionized reproductive medicine and provided new hope to millions of couples struggling with infertility. Dr. Robert Edwards was later awarded the 2010 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for the development of IVF. The day is also observed as World Embryologist Day, recognizing the vital contribution of embryologists and fertility specialists in assisted reproductive technologies.


Kargil Vijay Diwas : 26 July :-

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed every year on 26 July to commemorate India's victory in the 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan and to honour the courage and supreme sacrifice of the soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces. The day marks the successful completion of Operation Vijay, through which Indian forces recaptured strategic mountain peaks in the Kargil sector of Ladakh that had been occupied by Pakistani soldiers and infiltrators. The conflict lasted from May to July 1999 under extremely difficult high-altitude conditions, with over 500 Indian soldiers laying down their lives in defence of the nation.


World Hepatitis Day : 28 July :-

World Hepatitis Day is observed every year on 28 July to raise awareness about viral hepatitis, a group of infectious diseases that primarily affect the liver. The date marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus and developed its first vaccine, earning the Nobel Prize in Medicine. The day was officially endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2010. The World Hepatitis Day 2026 theme is "Hepatitis: Let's break it down", focusing on removing health service barriers, turning science into action, and eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.



World Nature Conservation Day : 28 July :-

World Nature Conservation Day is observed annually on 28 July to promote the protection and sustainable use of Earth's natural resources. The observance emphasizes conserving forests, rivers, wildlife, biodiversity, soil, and clean air for future generations. Although it is not an official United Nations observance, it has gained worldwide recognition through governments, educational institutions, and environmental organizations. The day encourages sustainable development, responsible consumption, afforestation, water conservation, waste reduction, and climate action.



International Tiger Day : 29 July :-

International Tiger Day, also known as Global Tiger Day, is observed every year on 29 July to raise awareness about tiger conservation and the urgent need to protect their natural habitats. The day was established in 2010 during the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit in Russia, where the 13 tiger-range countries came together to address the alarming decline in wild tiger populations and adopted a global commitment to strengthen conservation efforts. India plays a leading role in global tiger conservation, as it is home to more than 70% of the world's wild tiger population.



World Day Against Trafficking in Persons : 30 July :-

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is observed every year on 30 July to raise global awareness about the crime of human trafficking and to promote the protection of victims' rights. The day was established by the United Nations General Assembly through a resolution adopted in 2013, following the momentum created by the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted in 2010. The theme for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2026 is "Trapped Behind the Scam."



World Ranger Day : 31 July :-

World Ranger Day is observed every year on 31 July to honour the dedication, bravery, and sacrifices of forest rangers and protected area staff who work to conserve wildlife and natural ecosystems. The day was first established in 2007 by the International Ranger Federation (IRF) to mark its 15th anniversary, in collaboration with The Thin Green Line Foundation. It also pays tribute to rangers who have lost their lives or suffered injuries while protecting forests, biodiversity, and endangered species from threats such as poaching, illegal logging, forest fires, and wildlife trafficking. The theme for World Ranger Day 2026 is "Rangers: Guardians of a Changing Planet."

2: Agreements



India Signs 28 Migration and Mobility Pacts with 26 Countries :-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar highlighted India's signing of 28 Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreements with 26 countries, emphasizing safe, legal global mobility pathways. These agreements reflect India's expanding international cooperation in human resource mobility, fostering economic growth and innovation. The initiatives aim to enhance global talent exchange while addressing illegal migration and strengthening India's position in the international labor market.



ICAR and Seychelles Sign MoU for Agricultural Cooperation :-

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Seychelles have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation in agricultural research and development. The agreement focuses on climate-smart agriculture, technology transfer, and capacity building. This collaboration aims to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability, reflecting India's commitment to global food security and strengthening ties with the Global South.



India and Mali Launch Trade Forum Amid Rising Bilateral Commerce :-

India and Mali have launched the inaugural India-Mali Forum for the Promotion of Exports, marking a significant step in strengthening bilateral trade relations. The forum, attended by government officials and business leaders, aims to capitalize on the recent 55% increase in bilateral trade, focusing on sectors such as renewable energy and pharmaceuticals. This initiative reflects India's strategic focus on expanding economic ties with African nations, leveraging its Duty-Free Tariff Preference Scheme to boost trade and investment.



India-Israel Bilateral Investment Agreement Takes Effect :-

The Bilateral Investment Agreement between India and Israel came into force, enhancing economic ties. The agreement aims to provide a secure investment environment while allowing policy flexibility. It is expected to boost cross-border investments and strengthen the economic partnership. This development is a testament to the growing economic collaboration between the two nations, promoting mutual growth and innovation. The agreement reflects modern

international investment principles, supporting India's strategic economic objectives.



Historic Agreement Signed for Narmada Project Payments :-

A landmark payment agreement concerning the Sardar Sarovar and Indira Sagar projects was signed by Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. Finalized in New Delhi, it resolves long-standing financial issues as per the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award. The pact, attended by Union Ministers Amit Shah and C. R. Patil, covers cost-sharing, rehabilitation expenses, and compensation for submerged lands. This marks a major advancement in cooperative federalism and efficient inter-state water management, promoting harmony among the beneficiary states.



India, Australia, Canada Launch ACITI Partnership :-

India, Australia, and Canada have launched the Australia–Canada–India Technology and Innovation Partnership (ACITI). This trilateral framework focuses on key areas such as artificial intelligence, green energy technologies, critical minerals, resilient supply chains, and net-zero emissions. Announced after the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, the partnership aims to leverage Canada's AI research, India's digital scale, and Australia's rich resources. Concurrently, India and Australia advanced their nuclear cooperation,

highlighting a new era of strategic collaboration among the three nations.



India-New Zealand Elevate Relations to Strategic Partnership :-

India and New Zealand have elevated their bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership with a roadmap extending to 2030. During Prime Minister Modi's visit, 10 agreements were signed, covering areas such as defense, maritime security, hydrography, and counter-terrorism. The partnership aims to double bilateral trade to NZ\$7 billion by 2030, with a focus on trade, agriculture, education, and global cooperation. Key initiatives include a Maritime Security Dialogue, Kiwifruit Action Plan, and the establishment of Centers of Excellence and scientific collaborations.



IPC and UPPPC Collaborate to Boost Pharma and MedTech in Uttar Pradesh :-

The Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) signed an MoU with the Uttar Pradesh Promote Pharma Council (UPPPC) during the YEIDA MedTech Investors Meet. This partnership aims to elevate Uttar Pradesh's pharmaceutical and medical device ecosystem by focusing on quality standards, regulatory compliance, and pharmacovigilance. Joint initiatives will include training programs, workshops, and industry-academia collaborations, with special support for MSMEs via digital

tools. This collaboration is set to enhance patient safety and position Uttar Pradesh as a leading healthcare hub in India.



Delhi: MoU signed between MCD NBBD for scientific utilisation of cow dung :-

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plants for the scientific utilisation of cow dung generated by dairies and gaushalas across Delhi. The agreement was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and aims to prevent cattle waste from flowing into the Yamuna River, a major contributor to river pollution. Under the NDDB model, cow dung will be systematically collected and transported to processing facilities, where it will be converted into compressed biogas and organic manure instead of being dumped into drains.



India Joins WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement :-

India has joined the WTO's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by depositing its Instrument of Acceptance. This makes India the 123rd member to join the agreement, which was adopted in 2022 to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The agreement focuses on reducing overfishing and overcapacity in marine wild capture. India has sought a 25-year

transition period for developing nations and protections for small-scale fishers in the upcoming Phase II. With subsidies among the lowest globally (~\$15 per fisher family), India's participation is pivotal for sustainable fishing practices.



Andhra Pradesh Signs MoU with UAE for Food Processing Cluster :-

The Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UAE Food Cluster in Amaravati. This agreement focuses on establishing a food processing cluster with an emphasis on horticulture, aquaculture, and cold-chain infrastructure. Dubai-based Floor Masters International pledged a ₹100 crore investment to set up an export-oriented unit in Chittoor district. The cluster will process mangoes, bananas, cocoa, seafood, dairy, and other commodities for export to nearly 25 countries, bolstering Andhra Pradesh's position in agri-exports.



Ministry of Coal Partners with GIZ for Sustainable Mine Closure :-

The Ministry of Coal has signed a technical cooperation agreement with Germany's GIZ in New Delhi. This agreement aims to promote sustainable mining practices, focusing on scientific mine closure, institutional capacity building, knowledge sharing, and post-mining land development. It includes initiatives for

land reclamation and alternative land use in mining regions. The Ministry will release its first AAROH Annual Report on Mine Closure, documenting 42 scientifically closed mines since independence, with Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy, Bhupender Yadav, and Jitendra Singh expected to attend.



India and Romania move towards a comprehensive strategic partnership during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit :-

India and Romania have agreed to deepen bilateral ties by moving towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in trade, defence, energy, digital technology, education, healthcare, innovation, and cultural exchanges. Romania, an important member of the European Union and NATO, is viewed as a strategic partner in Central and Eastern Europe. Both countries also discussed strengthening collaboration in connectivity, renewable energy, skilled workforce mobility, and regional security.

3: Appointments



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's Tenure Extended Amid Regional Developments :-

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's tenure has been extended by one year, allowing him to continue overseeing India's diplomatic engagements amid evolving global dynamics. An IFS officer of the 1989 batch, Misri has held key positions in Indian missions worldwide, contributing significantly to India's foreign policy initiatives. The extension ensures continuity in leadership during critical times, enhancing India's presence on the global diplomatic stage.



Manoj Tiwari appointed as IG, BSF :-

Senior IPS officer Manoj Tiwari has been appointed as Inspector General (IG) in the Border Security Force, one of India's primary border guarding forces under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Tiwari belongs to the 2003 batch of the Sikkim cadre and has previously served in several important administrative and policing roles. Before this appointment, he was working as Director in the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.



IMF Appoints Silvana Tenreyro as Chief Economist :-

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has appointed Silvana Tenreyro as its new Chief Economist, effective August 10. Tenreyro, a professor at the London School of Economics, will replace Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas. With extensive experience in economic policy and research, she will oversee the IMF's economic updates and serve as a principal voice on global economic outlooks. Tenreyro's appointment comes at a time of heightened uncertainty in the global economy.



Key Appointments in Indian Police Institutions Announced :-

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved new leadership for vital police institutions. Alok Kumar Mittal of the 1993 IPS batch, Haryana cadre, was appointed as the Director General of Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR), focusing on modernization and policy. Amit Garg from the Andhra Pradesh cadre will now lead the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as Director, with responsibilities for crime data management. Sujeet Pandey of the UP cadre was named Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), Hyderabad, ensuring high standards in IPS officer training.



Sanjeev Jain Appointed as Indian Ambassador to North Korea :-

The Ministry of External Affairs announced that Sanjeev Jain, a 2008 batch IFS officer, has been appointed as India's Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Sanjeev Jain, currently serving as Ambassador to Cabo Verde, brings extensive diplomatic experience in fostering bilateral relationships. His new appointment underscores India's commitment to maintaining diplomatic engagement with East Asian nations, contributing to regional stability and international dialogue.



Mahesh Muralidhar Pai Appointed MD & CEO of South Indian Bank :-

The Reserve Bank of India has approved Mahesh Muralidhar Pai as the new Managing Director and CEO of South Indian Bank, effective October 1, 2026, for a three-year term. Succeeding P.R. Seshadri, Pai will face a board meeting on July 16, 2026, followed by shareholder approval. With nearly 30 years of banking experience, Pai has managed Canara Bank's Digital Banking and Innovation vertical and held multiple international board roles. His leadership is expected to drive innovation and growth at South Indian Bank, headquartered in Thrissur.



New Appointments in Indian Government Agencies :-

Recent appointments in Indian government agencies include Lokhande Prashant Sitaram as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, and Alok Kumar Mittal as DG BPR&D. Additionally, Amit Garg has been appointed as Director of NCRB, and Sujeet Pandey as Director of SVPNPA. These appointments reflect the government's focus on strengthening its administrative framework by assigning experienced officials to key positions. These leaders are expected to bring their expertise to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their respective departments.



Jio Platforms Appoints Pankaj Pawar as New CEO :-

In a strategic leadership change, Jio Platforms Ltd. has appointed Pankaj Pawar as its new CEO, succeeding Kiran Thomas. Pawar, who is also the Managing Director of Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., assumed the role on March 24, 2026, following Thomas's resignation on March 23, 2026. With over 30 years of experience in telecom and digital services, Pawar's appointment was disclosed in the Draft Red Herring Prospectus filed with SEBI for Jio's proposed ₹37,700 crore IPO. If successful, this IPO will be India's largest to date.



AU Small Finance Bank appoints Amol Padhye as CRO-designate :-

AU Small Finance Bank has appointed Amol Padhye as its Chief Risk Officer (CRO)-Designate, reinforcing its leadership team as the bank continues its transition towards becoming a universal bank. The appointment was approved by the bank's Board of Directors based on the recommendations of the Risk Management Committee and the Nomination and Remuneration Committee. Padhye will officially assume the role of Chief Risk Officer from September 1, 2026, after the completion of the tenure of the incumbent CRO, Deepak Jain, on August 31, 2026.



Harjit Singh Grewal appointed as the Chief of the Minorities Commission :-

Harjit Singh Grewal has been appointed as the Chief of the Minorities Commission, a body entrusted with safeguarding the rights and welfare of minority communities and monitoring the implementation of policies meant for their social, educational, and economic development. As the new head of the Commission, Grewal is expected to strengthen dialogue between minority communities and the government, examine complaints relating to discrimination, and recommend measures to ensure effective implementation of constitutional and legal safeguards.



Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala Appointed MoES Secretary :-

Dr. Srinivasa Kumar Tummala, a prominent oceanographer, has been appointed as Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences for a two-year term. Known for his work with the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, Dr. Tummala previously served as Director of INCOIS, Hyderabad. His appointment is expected to strengthen India's capabilities in deep-ocean exploration and climate modeling, vital components of the Deep Ocean Mission and blue economy initiatives. Dr. Tummala's leadership will drive advancements in oceanic science and disaster preparedness.



Khalil al-Hayya Elected as Hamas Political Bureau Chief

Khalil al-Hayya, born in 1960 and a founding member of Hamas since 1987, has been elected as the head of Hamas's Political Bureau following the death of Yahya Sinwar in 2025. Al-Hayya has been a significant figure in external negotiations, particularly in ceasefire and hostage discussions mediated by nations such as Qatar, Egypt, and the United States. Despite surviving multiple Israeli strikes, his leadership is expected to continue the group's operations primarily from Qatar, with backing from Iran.



Kanishka Narayan Appointed UK's First AI Minister :-

Kanishka Narayan was appointed as the UK's first Cabinet-level Minister for Artificial Intelligence. A Labour MP from Vale of Glamorgan, Wales, Narayan was born in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, India, and moved to Cardiff at the age of 12. He previously served as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for AI and Online Safety. His new role integrates AI policy, online safety, and digital regulation. The dissolution of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and the merger of its functions into other departments underscore the UK's ambition to strengthen its position as a global AI hub.



Anurag Jain Appointed CEO of NITI Aayog :-

Senior IAS officer Anurag Jain, belonging to the 1989 batch of the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the CEO of NITI Aayog by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. With nearly 40 years of experience in governance, industrial policy, and infrastructure, Jain will lead the organization for a two-year term. His appointment is part of recent changes at NITI Aayog, which include new vice-chairperson and members aimed at strengthening policy execution. Jain's leadership is expected to support the Viksit Bharat@2047 vision through initiatives like the Investment Friendliness Index.



Pralhad Joshi appointed Union Education Minister :-

Senior BJP leader Pralhad Joshi has been appointed Union Education Minister after President Droupadi Murmu accepted the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan. Joshi has been entrusted with the Education Ministry in addition to his existing ministerial responsibilities, making him responsible for addressing the immediate challenges facing India's education system. His appointment comes at a time when the government is under pressure to restore confidence in public examinations, strengthen anti-paper leak measures, and implement reforms to improve transparency and accountability.



Naresh Pal Gangwar Appointed Secretary, Higher Education :-

Naresh Pal Gangwar has been appointed as the Secretary of the Department of Higher Education. A 1994-batch IAS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, Gangwar succeeds Vineet Joshi, who transitions to the Department of Panchayati Raj amidst a major 13-secretary-level reshuffle. Gangwar's portfolio includes overseeing university, technical education, central universities, and regulatory bodies under the Ministry of Education. With prior roles as Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Gangwar brings a wealth of experience.



Infosys Appoints Ashiss Dash as New CEO MD :-

Infosys announced the appointment of Ashiss Dash as its new CEO and Managing Director, effective 1 April 2027. Succeeding Salil Parekh, Dash is the first internally promoted CEO in Infosys' history. An IIT Kharagpur alumnus, he joined Infosys in 1995 and has led global business portfolios, notably in Energy, Utilities Resources. Under Parekh's leadership from 2018 to 2027, Infosys witnessed a significant revenue increase from ₹70,522 Cr to ₹1,78,650 Cr and a substantial market cap growth.



Nandan Nilekani to head high-powered Task Force on Examination Reforms :-

The Government of India has appointed Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys and the chief architect of the Aadhaar digital identity programme, to lead a high-powered Task Force on Examination Reforms. The committee has been formed to recommend long-term measures for making public examinations more secure, transparent, and technology-driven in the wake of recent paper leak controversies. The task force is expected to examine the use of digital identity verification, artificial intelligence, secure examination infrastructure, encrypted question paper transmission, real-time monitoring, and data analytics to strengthen recruitment and entrance examinations.

4: Awards



PM Modi Conferred Seychelles' Highest Civilian Honour

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon', Seychelles' highest national honour, for his leadership in environmental conservation and regional cooperation. The award highlights PM Modi's commitment to sustainable development and strengthening ties in the Indian Ocean region. The recognition comes during a state visit, marking 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Seychelles.



Maharashtra govt to institute lifetime achievement award in memory of singing legend Asha Bhosle :-

The Maharashtra government has announced a new lifetime achievement honour named the "Swarsamragini Asha Bhosle Sangeet Jeevan Gaurav" award in memory of legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle. The award will recognise artistes who have made exceptional and long-term contributions to Indian music and singing. Maharashtra Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar said the honour reflects the state's rich artistic heritage in music, cinema, theatre, folk arts and literature.

According to the announcement, an expert committee from the music industry will help select awardees and frame eligibility criteria. The award is expected to be presented every year around September 8, the birth anniversary of Asha Bhosle.



KIIT founder Achyuta Samanta gets AAPI award :-

Founder of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Achyuta Samanta has been honoured with the prestigious AAPI Award by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin during the AAPICON 2026 convention held in Tampa, Florida. The award recognises his contribution to social service, philanthropy, healthcare and strengthening Indo-US relations. According to organisers, the recognition also acknowledged his support during the Global Health Summit 2026 and his long-standing work for underprivileged communities through education and healthcare initiatives.



ICMR-MINDS research project wins National Award for e-Governance :-

The ICMR-MINDS project has received the Gold Award at the National Awards for e-Governance 2026 under the category "Innovation by Use of AI and Other New Age Technologies for Providing Citizen-Centric Services." The award was presented during the 29th National Conference on e-Governance held in Jaipur by Union Minister Jitendra Singh. ICMR-MINDS is an important mental healthcare research initiative that integrates screening and management of mental and substance-use disorders with treatment for other non-communicable diseases.



Kerala High Court Receives Gold Award From Union Govt For Innovation In E-Governance :-

The Kerala High Court has won the Gold Award at the National Awards for e-Governance 2026 for its District Court Case Management System (DCMS). The award was granted under the category recognising innovation through AI and new-age technologies for citizen-centric services. Out of 104 nominations nationwide, Kerala's digital judicial initiative emerged as one of the top performers. The DCMS platform is a comprehensive digital system designed to modernise court administration and promote a paperless judiciary.



PM Modi Honored with Indonesia's Highest Civilian Award :-

During his official visit to Jakarta, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the 'Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia', the nation's highest civilian honor. The award recognizes PM Modi's efforts in strengthening India-Indonesia relations and fostering unity and prosperity. This accolade reflects the deep-rooted historical ties between the two countries, marking a significant milestone in the India-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.



Ranchhodlalji Goswami Awarded Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar :-

Acharya Shri Ranchhodlalji Goswami, a leading exponent of the Pushtimarg Haveli Sangeet tradition, received the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar-2025 by Sangeet Natak Akademi. At age 32, he has composed over 22,000 devotional padas and authored eight books. This award recognizes his contributions to preserving ancient Indian musical forms like Dhrupad and Dhamar, highlighting the cultural significance of Haveli Sangeet. Goswami's recognition reflects the importance of nurturing traditional arts and music as integral parts of India's cultural heritage.



Samridh Gram Project Wins WSIS Prize 2026 :-

The Samridh Gram Integrated Phygital Services Project, under India's Department of Telecommunications, has won the Global Winner title in the WSIS Prizes 2026

under the Enabling Environment category. Announced in Geneva, this initiative establishes Samridhi Kendras using BharatNet broadband to provide one-stop rural services like telemedicine, education, skill development, e-governance, and financial inclusion. Recognized by the International Telecommunication Union, the project combines physical hubs with digital connectivity, significantly advancing digital inclusion in rural India.



Soumya Swaminathan Inducted as Fellow of the Royal Society :-

Soumya Swaminathan was formally inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of London (FRS), having been elected in May 2026. She becomes the second Indian woman scientist to be honored after Prof. Gagandeep Kang in 2019. The Royal Society, established in 1660, is one of the world's oldest scientific academies. Swaminathan is renowned for her contributions to paediatric tuberculosis, vaccine development, immunisation policy, and global public health. She served as the WHO Chief Scientist and currently chairs the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation.



Pavizham Group MD receives Business Excellence Award :-

N. P. Antony, Managing Director of Pavizham Healthier Diet Pvt. Ltd., has been honoured with the Business Excellence Award at the Viksit Bharat Leadership Conclave 2026, held at the Grand Hyatt, New Delhi. The award was presented by Union Ministers Prataprao Jadhav and Anupriya Patel in the presence of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, recognising Antony's outstanding contribution to entrepreneurship and the growth of India's food processing sector. Under his leadership, Pavizham Group has emerged as a leading manufacturer of healthy food products, promoting quality, innovation, and sustainable business practices while expanding its presence across domestic and international markets.



James Gray to Receive Honorary Award at Locarno Film Festival :-

Renowned American filmmaker James Gray is set to receive the Pardo alla Carriera at the 79th Locarno Film Festival on August 9, 2026. Gray is celebrated for his character-driven dramas such as 'We Own the Night', 'Two Lovers', 'The Immigrant', and 'Ad Astra'. His latest work, 'Paper Tiger', starring Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson, and Miles Teller, premiered at Cannes 2026. The festival, running from August 5 to 15, will screen a selection of his films in tribute, under the artistic direction of Giona A. Nazzaro.



Mata Amritanandamayi receives Janani Award :-

Spiritual leader Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, popularly known as Amma, was honoured with the Janani Award 2026 at Amritapuri Ashram in Kollam, Kerala, in recognition of her lifelong humanitarian service and contributions to society. Amma is globally renowned for her message of compassion, selfless service, and universal love. Through the Mata Amritanandamayi Math and its humanitarian initiative Embracing the World, she has led large-scale projects in healthcare, education, disaster relief, housing, environmental conservation, women's empowerment, and rural development.



Ajit Doval Received Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 :-

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has received the Lokmanya Tilak National Award by the Tilak Smarak Trust. The award recognizes Doval's significant contributions to national security, intelligence, counter-terrorism, and strategic policy. The award ceremony is scheduled for August 1, 2026, in Pune, where Home Minister Amit Shah will present the award. Doval, a 1968-batch IPS officer, has served in key states and abroad, and his recognition highlights his role in nation-building and excellence in defense strategy.

5: Banking



UPI Expands to Greece, Strengthening India's Digital Payment Ecosystem :-

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced the launch of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in Greece, enabling instant, secure money transfers. This expansion reflects global confidence in India's technology-driven solutions. During his visit to Greece, Goyal discussed investment opportunities and

collaboration in manufacturing and infrastructure. The initiative marks a milestone in India's digital payment ecosystem, advancing international partnerships and economic growth.



RBI levies Rs 63 lakh penalty on Bank of Baroda :-

Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 63.60 lakh on Bank of Baroda for failing to comply with certain regulatory directions related to the Fair

Practices Code for Lenders and Know Your Customer (KYC) norms. According to the RBI, the action followed supervisory findings that identified deficiencies in the bank's regulatory compliance processes. The central bank clarified that the penalty is based on lapses in adherence to prescribed banking norms and does not question the validity of customer transactions or agreements.



Canara Bank conducts 'coin mela' at Uzhavar Sandhai in Madurai :-

Canara Bank organised a special Coin Mela at the Uzhavar Sandhai (farmers' market) in Madurai to improve the availability and circulation of coins among traders, vendors, and the general public. The initiative enabled people to exchange currency notes for coins of various denominations without hassle, helping small businesses that frequently face shortages of change during daily transactions. Such outreach programmes are particularly useful for vegetable vendors, farmers, transport operators, and retail shopkeepers who rely heavily on cash payments. Bank officials also used the event to create awareness about efficient cash management and customer-friendly banking services.



World Bank approves \$890 million for India's rooftop solar programme :-

The World Bank has approved \$890 million in financing to support India's expanding rooftop solar programme, reinforcing the country's transition towards clean and renewable energy. The funding will primarily strengthen the government's PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, launched in February 2024, which aims to provide rooftop solar systems to one crore (10 million) households across India. The programme seeks to help families generate their own electricity, reduce monthly power bills, and earn additional income by selling surplus electricity to the grid.



RBI Meets Bank CEOs to Discuss AI, Credit Risk and Global Challenges :-

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra recently held discussions with the heads of major public and private sector banks to review developments affecting India's banking system. The meeting covered artificial intelligence in banking, expected credit loss (ECL) implementation, geopolitical risks, foreign currency deposit mobilisation and overall financial stability. Such meetings help align regulatory expectations with industry practices while preparing banks for emerging technological and economic challenges. The discussions indicate that the RBI is maintaining close engagement with lenders to ensure the banking sector remains resilient amid changing domestic and international conditions.



IDBI Bank Disinvestment Process Moves Forward :-

The long-pending sale of a majority stake in IDBI Bank has gained momentum after revised bids were submitted by interested foreign investors. The Government of India and LIC are evaluating the updated financial offers before taking the next step in the disinvestment process. A successful transaction would mark one of the country's largest banking privatization initiatives in recent years. Besides generating revenue for the government, the move is expected to improve operational efficiency, strengthen governance, and bring fresh strategic investment into the bank. Market participants are closely monitoring the outcome because it could influence future privatization plans for public sector financial institutions.



Axis Bank Looks to Increase Stake in Its Insurance Business :-

Axis Bank is considering increasing its ownership in its life insurance joint venture, Axis Max Life Insurance, from about 20% to as much as 30%, subject to regulatory

approvals. The proposed increase reflects the bank's strategy to strengthen its presence in the insurance sector and expand its financial services portfolio. Greater ownership could improve operational coordination between the bank and the insurer while supporting cross-selling opportunities for customers. The move also highlights the growing importance of bancassurance as banks seek to diversify their revenue beyond traditional lending and deposit businesses.



RBI Proposes Simpler Rules for Institutional Investment in Banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India has proposed easing the regulatory framework governing institutional ownership in banks. Under the draft amendment, regulated entities such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds could acquire up to a 10% stake in banks through a simplified approval process. The objective is to encourage long-term capital investment, improve banks' ability to raise funds and strengthen governance through greater participation by institutional investors. The RBI has invited public comments before finalising the proposal. If implemented, the measure could deepen India's financial markets and provide banks with a more diversified and stable shareholder base.



RBI's Forex Swap Window Attracts Strong Initial Response from Banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India's recently introduced forex swap facility has received a strong response from banks, with market participants expecting foreign currency inflows of nearly USD 70 billion if the momentum continues. The scheme is designed to encourage banks to mobilise more foreign currency deposits, especially through FCNR(B) accounts, while improving liquidity in the banking system. Higher foreign currency inflows can strengthen India's foreign exchange reserves and provide banks with additional resources for lending.

**IRDAI Prepares for Risk-Based Capital Framework for Insurers :-**

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India is moving closer to implementing a Risk-Based Capital (RBC) framework for insurance companies, with rollout expected by April. The new framework will require insurers to maintain capital based on the actual risks they undertake rather than relying on uniform solvency calculations. This change is expected to improve transparency, strengthen risk management and make insurers financially more resilient. Banks distributing insurance products through bancassurance partnerships may also benefit because stronger insurers enhance customer confidence.

**Punjab National Bank to Introduce Multilingual AI Banking Through BHASHINI :-**

Punjab National Bank has partnered with the Government of India's BHASHINI initiative to integrate multilingual artificial intelligence capabilities into its digital banking platforms. Once implemented, customers will be able to interact with banking services using voice and text in multiple Indian languages, making banking more accessible for people who are not comfortable using English. This initiative is expected to improve customer experience, promote digital banking adoption and strengthen financial inclusion across diverse linguistic communities. The collaboration also demonstrates how Indian banks are increasingly using AI to simplify customer service while expanding access to digital financial services.

**EbixCash Wallet Now Integrated with BHIM UPI :-**

EbixCash has expanded its digital payment solutions by integrating its Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) Wallet with BHIM UPI. This move allows over 1.4 million active users to link their wallets for seamless UPI payments across merchants. This development is part of EbixCash's strategy to enhance customer activation and engagement, reflecting the growing trend of digital payment adoption in India. The integration underscores the importance of interoperable payment solutions in the fintech sector.

6: Books and Author



Book on friendships amid AI era launched in Chennai :-

The book "Friendship as Well-being in the AI Era: New Models of Youth Accompaniment" authored by Fr. John Alexander SDB was launched in Chennai at a private school in Kilpauk. The book focuses on the changing meaning of friendship and emotional well-being among young people in the rapidly growing Artificial Intelligence era. It discusses how technology, social media, and AI tools are reshaping human relationships and reducing direct personal interaction among youth.



Vice President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan released the book "VIP Culture in India: Power, Privilege and the Distance from Democracy" :-

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan recently released the book "VIP Culture in India: Power, Privilege and the Distance from Democracy", authored by former Rajya Sabha MP Nabam Rebia and co-authored by Sandeep Kumar, at the Uprashtapati Bhavan in New Delhi. During the launch event, the Vice President emphasized that democracy thrives when public office is treated as a responsibility rather than a privilege. The book examines

how privilege and power structures create a distance between ordinary citizens and those in authority in India.



Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla launched his debut book

Shubhanshu Shukla recently attended the launch of his debut book titled "The Second Orbit: Belief of a Man... Dreams of 1.4 Billion Hearts", where he spoke about his remarkable journey to space and shared several humorous incidents from astronaut training and life aboard the International Space Station. Shukla became widely recognized after participating in the Axiom-4 mission and emerging as one of India's key faces in the country's future human spaceflight ambitions linked to the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Gaganyaan programme.



Gadkari hails Fadnavis at launch of book on CM's journey; asks youth to gain inspiration from it :-

Nitin Gadkari praised Devendra Fadnavis while speaking at the launch of a new book "Ajinkya Yodha", authored by Arun Kaner chronicling the Maharashtra Chief Minister's political and administrative journey. During the event, Gadkari described Fadnavis as a dedicated

leader whose commitment to public service, transparent governance, and development-oriented policies has inspired many. He encouraged young people to read the book to understand the importance of perseverance, integrity, and leadership in public life.



Governor Devvrat and CM Fadnavis Launch Book 'Modi's Mission' in Mumbai :-

Acharya Devvrat and Devendra Fadnavis jointly launched the book *Modi's Mission* at Mumbai's Raj Bhavan. The book has been authored by renowned lawyer and writer Berjis Desai and traces the life and leadership journey of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his childhood in Vadnagar to becoming India's Prime Minister. It examines major policy decisions including the abrogation of Article 370, the implementation of GST, demonetisation, economic formalisation, and governance reforms.



Kolkata marks the first India launch of Eyal Nir's book 'BuDo for Life' :-

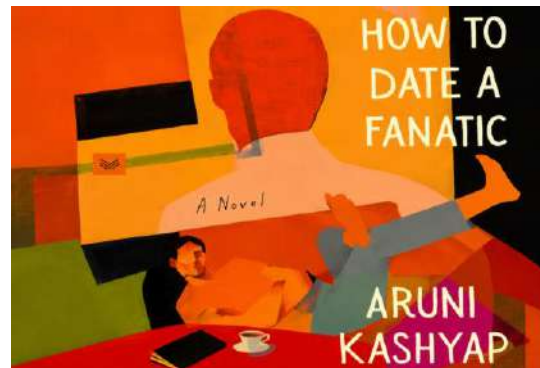
Kolkata hosted the first Indian launch of "BuDo for Life", a book authored by Israeli martial arts expert Eyal Nir, marking an important cultural and sporting exchange between India and Israel. The book explores the philosophy of BuDo, a Japanese concept that extends

beyond martial arts techniques to emphasize discipline, character development, resilience, leadership, and lifelong learning. During the launch event, Eyal Nir discussed how the principles of BuDo can be applied in everyday life, education, personal growth, and professional environments.



Vice President Launches Ex-CJI BR Gavai's Book 'The Voice Of Justice : Justice Gavai Speaks' :-

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan formally launched *The Voice of Justice: Justice Gavai Speaks* at the Vice-President's Enclave in New Delhi. The book is a curated collection of speeches, lectures, and reflections by former Chief Justice of India B. R. Gavai. It has been edited by Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar of the Indian Law Institute and published by Thomson Reuters in association with the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA). The launch ceremony was presided over by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and attended by Supreme Court judge Justice Vikram Nath along with members of the legal fraternity.



How to Date a Fanatic — New Indian literary fiction :-

How to Date a Fanatic is a newly released literary novel by acclaimed Indian author and translator Aruni Kashyap, published by HarperVia in July 2026. The novel has

attracted attention as a significant addition to contemporary Indian English fiction for blending intimate human relationships with broader social and political realities. Critics have described it as an emotionally rich and thought-provoking work that examines how personal lives are shaped by changing political landscapes while reaffirming the enduring search for dignity, connection, and freedom.



Cool Machine — New fiction from Colson Whitehead released :-

Acclaimed American novelist Colson Whitehead has released a new work of fiction titled Cool Machine. Whitehead is one of the most celebrated contemporary authors and is notably the only writer to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction twice consecutively—for The Underground Railroad (2017) and The Nickel Boys (2020). His latest novel continues his reputation for blending compelling storytelling with social

commentary, exploring themes of identity, technology, power, and modern society through imaginative fiction. Whitehead is also the recipient of the National Book Award, the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, and a MacArthur Fellowship ("Genius Grant").



Guidebook for Indian MSMEs Launched by CII :-

The Centre for Trade and Investment Law at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), launched 'Going Global: A Practical Guide for Indian MSMEs'. This guidebook is designed to assist Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in navigating the complexities of international trade, including export opportunities, market access, and sustainability standards. It offers insights into Free Trade Agreements and trade remedies, providing MSMEs with the tools to enhance their competitive edge in global markets.

7: Defence



U.S.-Iran Tensions Escalate as Ceasefire Collapses :-

The U.S.-Iran ceasefire has effectively collapsed, with both nations engaging in fresh military strikes. The U.S. conducted airstrikes on Iranian military targets in response to an attack on a commercial tanker. Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks on U.S. facilities in Kuwait and Bahrain. The escalating conflict threatens diplomatic efforts and raises concerns about regional stability, with maritime security agencies on high alert.



IAF Concludes Fifth Warfare Aerospace Strategy Programme :-

The Indian Air Force concluded its fifth Warfare Aerospace Strategy Programme (WASP) with a seminar. The event focused on aerospace power's evolving role in national security. Participants presented research on aerospace strategy and innovation. WASP aims to enhance strategic thinking and operational outlook among military leaders. The IAF plans to expand the program by inviting participants from friendly nations, fostering international cooperation in strategic studies.



President Murmu Confers Distinguished Service Awards at Defence Ceremony :-

President Droupadi Murmu awarded 105 Distinguished Service Decorations to Armed Forces and Indian Coast Guard personnel at the Defence Investiture Ceremony 2026 (Phase-II). The honors recognize exceptional leadership and distinguished service. Among the recipients were senior military leaders and veterans, highlighting their contributions to national security. The awards underscore the importance of operational excellence and dedication in safeguarding India's interests.



General Dhiraj Seth Assumes Charge as 31st Army Chief

General Dhiraj Seth took charge as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff, succeeding General Upendra Dwivedi. He unveiled the 'VIJAY' vision for a technology-driven future force, emphasizing vigilance, innovation, jointness, indigenous capability, and soldier welfare. General Seth aims to transform the Indian Army into a future-ready force through modernization and technological integration, ensuring operational readiness to counter national security challenges. His strategic roadmap reflects the armed forces' commitment to evolving security environments and national interests.



Afghanistan Launches Airstrikes on Pakistan Amid Rising Tensions :-

Afghanistan's Taliban confirmed airstrikes on Pakistani territory, targeting an alleged ISIS center in Balochistan. Pakistan reported intercepting four drones, escalating tensions between the two countries. The incidents follow ongoing clashes and accusations between Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding cross-border militancy. Both nations face internal security challenges, with the latest confrontations highlighting the fragile state of regional peace. Diplomatic efforts are crucial to

deescalate the situation and address underlying security concerns affecting South Asian stability.



Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit Assumes Charge as Vice Chief of Air Staff :-

Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit became the 51st Vice Chief of the Air Staff, succeeding Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor. His tenure as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff marked transformative leadership in strengthening tri-service integration. With extensive operational experience, Air Marshal Dixit aims to advance India's joint military capabilities and continue enhancing the Indian Air Force's operational readiness and strategic impact.



India-Malaysia Strengthen Defence Cooperation at 12th Military Meeting :-

India and Malaysia held the 12th Sub Committee Meeting on Military Cooperation in New Delhi, enhancing bilateral defence ties. Discussions focused on expanding collaboration in defence technology, cyber security, and maritime cooperation. Both nations reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The meeting underscores the strategic importance of defence cooperation as a pillar of the India-Malaysia Enhanced Strategic Partnership.



Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann Takes Command of Southern Air Command :-

Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann has assumed the role of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Air Command. With a distinguished career in the Indian Air Force, he brings extensive experience in operations and administration. His leadership is expected to enhance the operational capabilities of the command, contributing to the Indian Air Force's strategic objectives and national security.



Air Marshal PV Shivanand Assumes Command of South Western Air Command :-

Air Marshal PV Shivanand has taken charge as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the South Western Air Command. With an illustrious career in the Indian Air Force, he brings expertise in operations and air defence. His leadership is anticipated to fortify the command's strategic capabilities, playing a pivotal role in enhancing India's aerial defense and operational readiness.



Ukraine's Capital Endures Deadliest Strike of the Year Amid Ongoing Conflict :-

Kyiv faced its deadliest attack this year as Russian forces launched hundreds of drones and missiles, killing at least 30 people and injuring many more. The strike damaged over 130 buildings, prompting residents to seek shelter. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy criticized delays in air defense aid from allies. The attack underscores the ongoing intensity of the conflict, with both sides exchanging retaliatory strikes.



India and Myanmar Hold 23rd Border Coordination Meeting :-

In a bid to address mutual border and regional security concerns, India and Myanmar held the 23rd National-Level Border Coordination Meeting in New Delhi. Indian Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Major General Min Thu, led the discussions. Key focus areas included managing the 1,643-kilometer boundary, boosting intelligence sharing, and countering insurgency, cross-

border terrorism, narcotics trafficking, weapon smuggling, and cybercrime. The meeting underscores the commitment of both nations to enhance regional security and cooperation.



DRDO Successfully Tests Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR) at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur. The rocket met all performance targets, including complex in-flight maneuvers and a minimum operational range of 60 kilometers. Developed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and other DRDO labs, the indigenous system enhances battlefield precision. This achievement supports India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, aiming for self-reliance in defense technology.



INS Mahendragiri Joins Indian Navy Fleet :-

The Indian Navy has commissioned INS Mahendragiri, the sixth and final stealth frigate of Project 17A at Visakhapatnam. With 75% indigenous content, the

frigate is built by Mazagon Dock and designed by the Warship Design Bureau. It features advanced stealth, automation, and multi-role capabilities for anti-air, anti-surface, anti-submarine, and electronic warfare. This addition enhances the Navy's blue-water operational capabilities and represents a significant step towards the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative in naval shipbuilding.



Indian Air Force Ranks Third Globally in Air Power Index

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has retained its third position in the WDMMA 2026 Global Air Power Rankings, ahead of China's PLAAF. The ranking evaluates the True Value Rating (TVR), which considers fleet size, modernization, readiness, logistics, and operational capabilities. IAF's balanced fleet includes 1,716 aircraft, with 542 fighters and 498 helicopters, reflecting its strengths in modernization and domestic aerospace growth under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. The USAF leads the rankings with a maximum TVR of 242.9.



Indian Navy to Host Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 :-

The Indian Navy is set to host Operation Southern Readiness 26-2 at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi

from July 20 to 23, 2026. This multinational exercise, conducted with the Combined Maritime Forces, aims to enhance interoperability and best practices among over 40 participating nations. Training will cover maritime law, domain awareness, and counter-narcotics operations, showcasing India's naval capabilities and reinforcing Kochi's strategic importance as a maritime training hub.



Indian Air Force participates in multinational Exercise Pitch Black 2026 :-

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, a premier multinational air combat exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in Australia. Conducted once every two years, the exercise brings together air forces from several countries to enhance interoperability, strengthen military cooperation, and improve operational readiness in complex combat scenarios. The IAF has deployed frontline fighter aircraft, transport aircraft, and support personnel to take part in advanced missions involving air defence, offensive counter-air operations, aerial refuelling, and joint force integration.



Samudra Pradakshina: Women Officers Complete Global Circumnavigation :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh welcomed nine women officers from the Army, Navy, and Air Force after their successful 314-day circumnavigation on the Indian Armed Services Vessel (IASV) Triveni. The team covered a distance of 25,500 nautical miles, navigating through four oceans while crossing the equator twice, the International Date Line, and rounding key capes including Cape Horn, Cape Leeuwin, and the Cape of Good Hope. This expedition showcases the strength of 'Nari Shakti,' the concept of women's empowerment, and emphasizes the tri-service collaboration and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative through indigenous sailing technology.



Indian Navy Launches INS Malvan :-

The Indian Navy has launched INS Malvan, the second Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft, at the Karwar Naval Base. The launch was presided over by Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, and the vessel was constructed by Cochin Shipyard with over 80% indigenous content. INS Malvan is designed for a range of operations, including anti-submarine warfare, mine warfare, underwater surveillance, and coastal security. The ship is named after the town of Malvan, honoring Chhatrapati Shivaji's naval legacy, and represents a significant boost to Aatmanirbhar Bharat in shipbuilding and defense manufacturing.



DRDO Successfully Tests Kusha Long-Range SAM :-

DRDO conducted the maiden flight test of the indigenously developed Kusha Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) at Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha. The missile successfully tracked and intercepted a high-speed electronic target, showcasing its advanced tracking, guidance, and interception capabilities. Designed to counter diverse aerial threats, including airplanes and UAVs, Kusha integrates long-range interceptors, advanced radars, and command systems developed through DRDO-industry collaboration.



Rajnath Singh reiterates India will hold talks with Pakistan only on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has reiterated that India will engage in discussions with Pakistan only on the issue of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), reaffirming the government's long-standing policy on bilateral relations. The statement reflects India's position that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the country and that any dialogue concerning territorial issues should focus on the return of territories under Pakistan's control. India has consistently maintained that terrorism and cross-border infiltration remain major obstacles to improving bilateral ties.

8: Economy



Piyush Goyal Leads Business Delegation to Strengthen India-Greece Ties :-

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is spearheading a high-level Indian business delegation to Greece, aiming to deepen trade and strategic economic cooperation. This visit follows engagements in the UK, focusing on sectors like infrastructure and digitalization. The delegation will explore investment opportunities through roundtable discussions and visit Greek enterprises to foster collaboration in advanced manufacturing and technology-driven industries.



Piyush Goyal Sets Ambitious \$1 Trillion Export Target for India :-

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has set a \$1 trillion export target for India, urging states to prioritize export growth and fully utilize the BHAVYA Industrial Parks Scheme. At the Board of Trade meeting, Goyal outlined a seven-point action agenda to accelerate export growth through coordinated efforts between the

Centre and states. This ambitious target reflects India's strategic focus on boosting economic growth, enhancing global competitiveness, and positioning itself as a key player in international trade.



Indian Auto Industry Records Best June with Over 25 Lakh Units Sold :-

The Indian auto industry has achieved its best-ever June sales, with 25,57,234 units sold, marking a 21.83% year-on-year growth. According to FADA, passenger vehicle sales rose 28.6%, reaching 4,10,853 units. Notably, rural sales increased by 35.1%, while urban sales saw a 24.7% rise. The sales of alternative-fuel vehicles, including CNG, Hybrid, and EVs, crossed 40% for the first time. Two-wheeler retails also hit a record high, and commercial vehicle sales grew by 16.88%. This strong performance reflects improved OEM supplies and consumer demand, highlighting the sector's resilience and growth potential.



India-Australia Partnership: Trade Reaches A\$48.9 Billion :-

India and Australia have strengthened their economic ties with significant trade reaching A\$48.9 billion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia aims to boost the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, focusing on trade, investment, and technology. The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) has been a landmark initiative, enhancing bilateral trade. Ongoing negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) are expected to further deepen economic integration.



EPFO Launches Centralised IT Platform CITES 2.01 :-

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has launched the CITES 2.01 platform, a centralized IT framework that consolidates 340 million member accounts from 120 databases into a single national interface. Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced that the EPF interest rate of 8.25% for FY2025–26 will be credited by July 15, 2026. This platform offers real-time error alerts, dynamic interest calculations, and an updated withdrawal framework permitting up to 75% balance withdrawal. Such advancements aim to enhance transparency and efficiency in financial management for EPFO members.



India-Mali Forum Boosts Bilateral Trade Relations :-

India and Mali held the inaugural India–Mali Forum for Promotion of Exports in Bamako. This event marked a significant step towards strengthening economic ties between the two nations, focusing on sectors such as textiles, mining, and pharmaceuticals. The forum aimed to enhance bilateral trade and cooperation, providing a platform for businesses from both countries to explore new opportunities. This initiative is expected to boost trade volumes and foster economic growth in both India and Mali.



Piyush Goyal Leads Delegation to Europe for Trade Boost :-

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is leading a business delegation to Spain, Belgium, and Finland from July 13-17, 2026. The visit aims to strengthen trade, investment, and technology ties ahead of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Key engagements include business roundtables, the TTC Ministerial Meeting, and visits to the Port of Antwerp and companies like Nokia.

and VTT. Focus sectors are clean energy, advanced manufacturing, digital technology, and gems jewelry, highlighting India's commitment to enhancing economic partnerships with European nations.



Launch of Nifty 500 Ahimsa Index by NSE :-

NSE Indices Limited has introduced the Nifty 500 Ahimsa Index, which tracks companies from the Nifty 500 universe adhering to non-violence principles. The index excludes firms involved in activities harming animals and uses free-float market capitalisation for weighting. Developed with Ahimsagain Foundation, it employs Green-Orange-Red banding to exclude non-compliant companies. Reconstituted semi-annually, it serves as a benchmark for ETFs and index funds, promoting values-based investing.



Ladakh Exports First Fresh Apricot Consignment to UAE :-

Ladakh marked a significant milestone by exporting its first fresh apricot consignment to the UAE, as part of a 1,000 MT export initiative. This export includes the GI-

tagged Raktsey Karpo and Halman varieties, facilitated through a partnership between the Ladakh administration and Lulu Retail via an MoU. The export was processed via a cargo flight from Delhi, with support from APEDA and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. This initiative aims to bolster Ladakh's economy and enhance its presence in international markets, surpassing previous years' export volumes.



India Launches First Trial Index of Services Production :-

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) introduced India's first trial Index of Services Production (ISP) for April 2026. Covering 19 formal services sub-sectors, the ISP represents approximately 60% of the formal services economy, with a base year of 2024-25. Remarkably, 14 of these sub-sectors exhibited double-digit year-on-year growth, with accommodation and food services leading at 37.2%. The ISP complements the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and will be released monthly, providing critical insights into India's burgeoning services sector.



Revised Windfall Tax on Petroleum Exports Effective July 2026 :-

The Government of India has revised the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED), known as the windfall tax, on petroleum exports effective from July 16, 2026. The new rates include ₹15.5/litre for diesel and ₹14.5/litre for aviation turbine fuel, with a slight decrease for petrol. This move aims to ensure domestic fuel availability amid global oil price fluctuations and geopolitical tensions. The revised rates are part of a broader strategy to maintain energy security and curb excessive exports.



India records progress on its first geothermal energy wells at Puga Valley, Ladakh :-

India has recorded significant progress in drilling its first geothermal energy wells at Puga Valley in Ladakh, marking an important step toward harnessing geothermal resources for clean and renewable energy. Located in the Changthang region, Puga Valley is one of India's most promising geothermal fields due to its naturally occurring hot springs, steam vents, and underground heat reservoirs. The project is being developed to assess the commercial viability of generating electricity and providing direct heating using geothermal energy. Unlike solar and wind power, geothermal energy offers continuous, round-the-clock electricity generation with very low greenhouse gas emissions.



GV Electricals IPO: Strong Market Reception Ahead of Launch :-

GV Electricals is set to open its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on July 31, 2026, with a price band of Rs 123-130 per share. The IPO has generated positive investor sentiment, reflected in a grey market premium of Rs 12. This indicates a strong market reception and optimism about the company's growth prospects. The IPO is anticipated to attract significant attention from investors, highlighting the robust demand for new equity offerings in the Indian stock market.



CBDT issues guidance to operationalise OECD Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF) :-

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has issued detailed guidance to implement the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF) in India. CARF establishes an international reporting standard requiring crypto-asset service providers to collect and report information on digital asset transactions, enabling tax authorities to exchange data across jurisdictions. The framework aims to reduce tax evasion, improve transparency, and address challenges posed by cryptocurrencies and other digital assets operating beyond national borders.

9: International



India and Seychelles Announce Development Initiatives

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit, India and Seychelles signed nine agreements covering defense, healthcare, digital payments, and more. Key initiatives include gifting a Fast Patrol Vessel to Seychelles, launching a commemorative logo for 50 years of diplomatic relations, and Seychelles joining the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These developments underscore the expanding strategic partnership between the two nations.



Warren Buffett Delays Donation to Gates Foundation Amid Epstein Review :-

Warren Buffett is withholding his usual mid-year donation to the Gates Foundation, pending a review of its ties to late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The foundation has been scrutinized for its association with Epstein, and an external review is underway. Buffett's decision reflects concerns over the foundation's reputation and transparency. The outcome of the review may influence future donations.



Iran Declines Meeting with U.S. Envoys, Affecting Peace Prospects :-

Iran announced it would not meet with U.S. envoys amid ongoing hostilities, complicating peace negotiations. The development highlights challenges in U.S.-Iran relations, with key issues like nuclear program limits and regional security remaining unresolved. Diplomatic engagement is crucial to deescalate tensions and advance a sustainable framework for peace, impacting regional stability and global geopolitical dynamics.



Supreme Court Allows Transgender Sports Bans, Rejects Birthright Citizenship Move :-

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld state bans on transgender athletes in women's sports and rejected President Trump's move to restrict birthright citizenship. The decisions reflect ongoing cultural and legal debates in the U.S., with implications for civil rights and immigration policies. The rulings underscore the judiciary's role in shaping national policy on contentious issues, impacting societal norms and legal precedents.



Venezuela Faces Criticism Over Earthquake Response Amidst Ongoing Recovery :-

Venezuela's government faces criticism for its response to recent earthquakes that claimed over 2,000 lives. Allegations of delayed aid and insufficient machinery have emerged as civilians lead rescue efforts in La Guaira. Interim President Delcy Rodríguez defends the response, citing mobilization of 19,000 officials. As the nation grapples with recovery, international aid and reconstruction efforts aim to address the devastation.



Iran Prepares to Honor Slain Supreme Leader with National Mourning :-

Iran is set to observe a week of mourning following the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed in a U.S. and Israeli strike. The funeral processions, seen as a referendum on the Islamic Republic's resilience, aim to demonstrate public devotion. The events highlight the regime's call for unity amidst internal discontent and economic challenges, marking a pivotal moment in Iran's theocratic history.



India, Oman Sign CEPA, Boosting Bilateral Trade Relations :-

India and Oman have signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), facilitating the first shipment of 40 metric tonnes of Varanasi-made biscuits to Oman. This agreement, part of India's broader strategy to enhance trade with Gulf Cooperation Council countries, provides preferential tariff benefits, making Indian goods more competitive in the Omani market. The CEPA is expected to boost bilateral trade, enhance economic cooperation, and create new opportunities for Indian businesses in the Gulf region.



Venezuela Praises India's Operation Amistad for Earthquake Relief :-

Venezuela lauded India's Operation Amistad for its earthquake relief efforts. Indian medical teams provided critical healthcare services to those affected by the disaster. Venezuelan officials expressed gratitude for India's support, highlighting the strong bilateral ties. The operation underscores India's commitment to humanitarian aid and international solidarity. It reflects India's global role in providing timely assistance during crises, enhancing its diplomatic relations while

demonstrating compassion and responsibility on the international stage.



Venezuela Earthquake Toll Rises to 3,535 Amid Ongoing Relief Efforts :-

The death toll from Venezuela's recent earthquakes has risen to 3,535, with thousands still displaced. As the government faces criticism over its response, international organizations are stepping up aid operations. Health experts warn of potential outbreaks in temporary shelters, highlighting the need for urgent humanitarian assistance and effective crisis management.



PM Modi Visits Prambanan Temple, Showcasing India-Indonesia Ties :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the historic Prambanan Temple in Indonesia, highlighting the deep cultural ties between India and Indonesia. This visit is part of India's cultural diplomacy and Act East policy. India is leading restoration efforts at several historic sites across Southeast Asia, including the Prambanan Temple, as part of its commitment to preserving shared civilizational heritage. The temple complex, a UNESCO

World Heritage site, symbolizes the rich cultural exchange between the two nations.



New Monkey Species Discovered in Congo's Lomami National Park :-

Scientists have discovered a new species of colobus monkey, *Colobus congoensis*, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Known locally as 'Likweli,' this species features distinctive black fur and pinkish-orange lips. With a limited habitat range in Lomami National Park, the species is recommended as endangered by IUCN due to habitat threats. This discovery, published in PLOS One on July 15, 2026, marks the fifth new African monkey species identified in 75 years, highlighting the region's rich biodiversity.



Andy Burnham Appointed as New UK Prime Minister :-

Andy Burnham has been appointed as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, marking a significant political transition. Burnham, previously the mayor of one of the UK's fastest-growing regions, is the seventh leader in the past decade, reflecting the ongoing political instability post-Brexit. His leadership is anticipated to bring fresh perspectives to the UK's domestic and international policies, potentially impacting global relations, especially with major economies like India.



Serhii Koretskyi Appointed as Ukraine's New Prime Minister :-

Serhii Koretskyi has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Ukraine following a significant government reshuffle. Nominated by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Koretskyi's experience in the energy sector is expected to bolster Ukraine's energy security amidst the ongoing geopolitical tensions. His leadership comes at a critical time as Ukraine prepares for another challenging winter during wartime. The appointment is a strategic move to strengthen Ukraine's position on the global stage and ensure continuity in its defense and economic policies.



France Becomes First EU Nation to Ban Social Media for Under-15s :-

France's parliament has approved a landmark law to ban social media access for children under 15, becoming the first EU country to do so. The law, rolling out from September 1, 2026, for new accounts and January 2027 for existing ones, mandates age verification tools on platforms. Exceptions are made for educational and scientific sites. This legislation addresses rising mental health concerns, including depression and self-harm, among youth, building on previous parental consent rules introduced in 2023.



President Murmu Unveils Gandhi Bust in North Macedonia :-

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the Museum of the City of Skopje, North Macedonia. This significant event was attended by North Macedonia President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova and underscores the strengthening of diplomatic ties between India and North Macedonia. President Murmu highlighted Gandhi's ideals of truth and non-violence as globally relevant for fostering peace and dialogue. The bust serves as a symbol of friendship, mutual respect, and cultural diplomacy. Additionally, Murmu's visit to Mother Teresa's Memorial House in Skopje further underscored the historical and cultural links between the two nations.



Amish Shah Wins Democratic Nomination in Arizona :-

Indian-American doctor Amish Shah has won the Democratic nomination for Arizona's 1st Congressional District. Shah, a three-term Arizona House member and emergency physician, will face Republican contender Jay Feely in the upcoming November 2026 election. Representing a highly competitive toss-up district, Shah

previously won the 2024 primary but lost the general election. His background as an NFL physician and seasoned legislator positions him as a strong candidate in a district that is pivotal for control in the U.S. House of Representatives, highlighting the growing influence of Indian-Americans in U.S. politics.



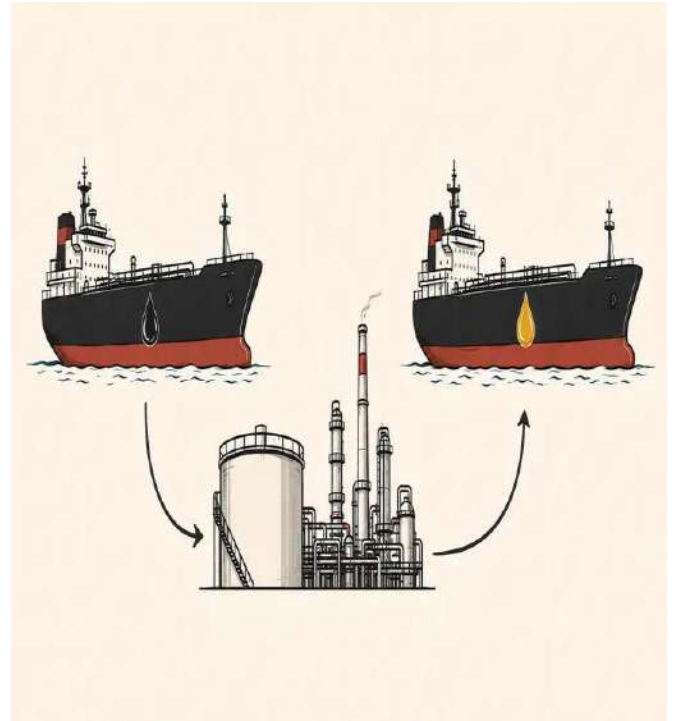
ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan removed following findings related to sexual misconduct allegations :-

The governing body of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has removed Prosecutor Karim Khan following findings related to allegations of sexual misconduct. The decision follows an investigation into complaints concerning his professional conduct, reflecting the Court's commitment to maintaining accountability and institutional integrity. Khan, who assumed office as ICC Prosecutor in 2021, had overseen several high-profile international investigations involving war crimes and crimes against humanity. His removal is expected to initiate the process of appointing an interim or permanent successor while ensuring continuity in ongoing investigations.



India Sends Medical Aid to Kenya for Ebola Preparedness :-

In a significant humanitarian gesture, India dispatched 4.5 tonnes of medical aid to Kenya aimed at bolstering Ebola preparedness and infectious disease response. The consignment, delivered to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, comprised PPE kits, sample transportation kits, infrared thermometers, face shields, and protective boots. Indian High Commissioner Adarsh Swaika handed over the aid to Kenya's Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale. While Kenya has activated nationwide surveillance and testing, no Ebola cases have been reported as of early June 2026. This aid complements India's earlier support to Africa CDC and COVID-19 vaccine distribution under the Vaccine Maitri initiative.



Russia Becomes Unexpected Importer of Indian Petrol

In a surprising reversal of trade dynamics, Russia, one of the world's largest oil producers, is now importing petrol from India. India has become the largest buyer of Russian crude, and the shift in energy trade reflects the changing global oil market. This development highlights the interconnectedness of global energy markets and the strategic economic relationships between major oil-producing and consuming nations.

10: Miscellaneous



CRPF Provides Health Services to Amarnath Yatra Devotees :-

During the ongoing Amarnath Yatra 2026, the CRPF's 84th Battalion has set up a Mobile Health Camp in Chanderkote, Ramban district. This camp provides round-the-clock medical care to pilgrims and locals, reflecting CRPF's commitment to ensuring safety and well-being. The camp, equipped with an Advanced Life Saving ambulance, treats issues such as fever and high-altitude sickness. Pilgrims have expressed satisfaction with the facilities, underscoring effective coordination among the CRPF, J Police, and District Administration.



IIM Bangalore to Establish First Overseas Campus in Indonesia :-

During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Jakarta IIM Bangalore announced its venture to set up a campus in the Singhasari Special Economic Zone, Malang, East Java. This initiative marks the first international expansion for the prestigious management school, in collaboration

with PT Intellegensia Grahatama. The campus will initially offer executive education, eventually transitioning to full management degree programs. Focus areas will include global supply chains, digital transformation, AI, and healthcare management, reinforcing India's educational footprint in Southeast Asia.



India Post, TRAI Launch Extensive Rural Telecom Survey

India's largest rural telecom survey has been launched through a collaboration between the Department of Posts and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). Covering 5.68 lakh villages, the survey will assess telecom service quality and coverage by major operators, including Airtel, Jio, Vi, and BSNL. Utilizing Gramin Dak Sevaks and mobile apps, the initiative aims to bridge connectivity gaps and aid in evidence-based policy-making, supporting the Digital India mission. This comprehensive survey is expected to provide critical insights into rural telecom infrastructure.



India Sweeps Gold at 56th International Physics Olympiad :-

India achieved a golden sweep at the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2026, held in Bucaramanga, Colombia. All five Indian students won gold medals, placing India jointly at World No. 1 with countries like China, Kazakhstan, Russia, South Korea, and Taiwan. The winners, Kanishk Jain, Riddhesh Bendale, Rishit Garg, Shresth Suraiya, and Svarit Joshi, were part of the prestigious Olympiad program by the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE-TIFR). This achievement underscores India's prowess in scientific education and talent development.



India Launches Campaign for UNSC Non-Permanent Seat :-

India officially launched its campaign for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2028-29 term. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar unveiled the campaign and its SHANTI vision at the UN Headquarters. SHANTI stands for Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust, and Integrity. India will contest the Asia-Pacific seat against Tajikistan in the June 2027 elections. The campaign focuses on key areas such as peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, maritime security, artificial intelligence, and representation of the Global South.



Delhi Unveils 'Mayur' as Mascot for Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships 2026 :-

The 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships, hosted in Delhi from 27 July to 2 August 2026, introduced 'Mayur' as its official mascot. The peacock-inspired mascot symbolizes energy, hospitality, and unity, reflecting India's cultural heritage. The event, organized by the Delhi Government and the Table Tennis Federation of India, expects participation from over 35 countries. This championship represents a significant opportunity for promoting sports diplomacy and showcasing India's organizational prowess on the international stage.



India rejects remarks by a former Japanese minister regarding delays in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project :-

India has firmly rejected comments made by a former Japanese minister concerning delays in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project, stating that the remarks do not reflect the current status of bilateral cooperation. The Ministry of External Affairs reiterated that the high-speed rail project remains a flagship symbol of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership and continues to receive strong support from both governments. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train, being developed with Japanese Shinkansen technology and substantial financial assistance through low-interest Japanese loans, is India's first high-speed rail corridor.



India Introduces First Engineering Biology Graduation Course :-

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled India's first Engineering Biology graduation course, aiming to position India as a bioeconomy powerhouse by 2035. This initiative focuses on developing a sovereign biotechnology ecosystem through education in AI-driven biology and bio-manufacturing. The course will prepare professionals for roles at the intersection of engineering and healthcare. With India's bioeconomy projected to reach USD 700 billion by 2035, this program emphasizes industry partnerships and innovation to drive sustainable growth under the BioE3 policy.



Amitabh Bachchan Joins Policybazaar as Brand Ambassador :-

Policybazaar has announced Amitabh Bachchan as its new brand ambassador, launching the campaign 'Parivaar Sabse Pehle' to promote health and term insurance awareness. The campaign features Bachchan in a series of ads encouraging timely decisions on financial protection. Aimed at reaching diverse audiences through TV, digital platforms, and social media, this collaboration highlights the importance of

insurance literacy and is a notable example of celebrity endorsements in business strategies.



Udmaroo Bridge Inaugurated to Enhance Ladakh Connectivity :-

The Udmaroo Bridge over the Shayok River in Nubra district, Ladakh, was inaugurated recently. Constructed at a cost of ₹27.18 crore under the Special Development Package, this three-span Truss System Bridge significantly reduces travel distance by 35 km between key villages. It includes 230 meters of approach roads, offering all-weather access and benefiting approximately 1,000 residents. The bridge also improves connectivity to the Buddhist pilgrimage site, Sham Gombo, and strengthens strategic infrastructure in the high-altitude terrain of Ladakh.



David Jonsson Cast as New Black Panther :-

British actor David Jonsson has been officially announced as the new lead in Marvel's Black Panther franchise, taking over the iconic role of T'Challa. This casting decision, revealed by director Ryan Coogler at San Diego Comic-Con, marks a new era for the franchise. Jonsson will portray T'Challa II, the son of the original Black Panther, in the upcoming film scheduled for release on

December 15, 2028. His multicultural heritage and acclaimed performances highlight his capacity to honor Chadwick Boseman's legacy while bringing fresh energy to the character.



India urged to modernise the publication of government laws and regulations through digital reforms :-

Policy experts and legal scholars have urged India to modernise the publication and dissemination of government laws and regulations through comprehensive digital reforms. They argue that the existing system often makes it difficult for citizens, businesses, and legal professionals to access the latest versions of statutes, notifications, rules, and amendments efficiently. Recommendations include creating a unified, searchable digital legal repository with authenticated versions of all central and state laws, incorporating advanced search tools, multilingual access, version tracking, and machine-readable formats.

11: National



Tiger Conservation Workshop Highlights India's Biodiversity Efforts :-

Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav inaugurated a workshop on tiger reintroduction, emphasizing the broader impact of tiger conservation on biodiversity. The event, marking 18 years of tiger reintroduction in Sariska, brought together wildlife experts to discuss strategies for species restoration and active management. The success of India's tiger conservation efforts was highlighted, with Sariska now hosting 56 tigers, showcasing a global model for species restoration.



Indian Railways to Modernize Signalling in West Bengal's Malda Division :-

Indian Railways has approved a ₹274-crore project to upgrade signalling systems in West Bengal's Malda Division with Electronic Interlocking technology. This modernization aims to enhance safety, reliability, and efficiency on high-density routes. The initiative aligns with Indian Railways' strategy to adopt advanced technologies, ensuring safer and more dependable train operations amidst increasing passenger and freight traffic.



Vice President Radhakrishnan Celebrates Organiser's 80th Foundation Day :-

Vice President C. P. Radhakrishnan lauded the role of 'Organiser Weekly' in strengthening democratic discourse during its 80th Foundation Day celebration. Highlighting the publication's commitment to public debate and media freedom, he praised its historical contributions to national unity and integrity. The event underscored the importance of a free press in a democratic society, emphasizing the need for responsible journalism that informs and engages the public in meaningful discussions on national issues.



Amit Shah Unveils 'Zero Coal Leakage Plan' to Curb Illegal Mining :-

Home Minister Amit Shah announced the 'Zero Coal Leakage Plan' to address illegal coal mining and theft in regions like Dhanbad. The plan involves rigorous enforcement of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, coordinated efforts with CISF, and technological integration for surveillance. The government aims to protect public resources and maintain law and order, ensuring that only legally mined

coal is used by consumers. This initiative reflects the government's commitment to safeguarding natural resources and supporting legitimate mining operations, aligning with national economic and environmental goals.



TribeX Digital Platform Launched to Preserve Tribal Knowledge :-

Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram launched the TribeX digital learning platform in Bhubaneswar. The platform is designed to preserve and promote India's tribal arts, languages, culture, and traditional knowledge. It offers 20 free certificate courses on tribal paintings, handicrafts, and musical instruments, in addition to UGC-recognized PG diploma programmes. TribeX features a heritage archive with over 5,000 multimedia resources, with plans to expand to 100+ courses and 10,000+ resources. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to safeguarding indigenous cultures.



Navi Mumbai Airport Designated as Drug Import Port :-

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare designated Navi Mumbai Airport as an authorised port for drug imports. This amendment to Rule 43A of the Drugs Rules,

1945, increases the total notified ports of entry for drugs in India to 42. The airport will facilitate the import of pharmaceuticals, APIs, and healthcare products in western India, enhancing trade efficiency near Maharashtra's manufacturing clusters. This development aligns with India's commitment to strengthening its pharmaceutical infrastructure and global trade capabilities.



Australia Repatriates Three Antiquities to Tamil Nadu :-

Australia has returned three stolen antiquities to India. The artefacts include an 11th-century Chola-era bronze trident of Goddess Bhadrakali, an 11th-12th century granite Nandi idol from the Sri Kasiviswanathaswamy Temple in Kollumangudi, and a 12th-century basalt Karthikeya sculpture from Naganatha Swamy Temple in Thanjavur. This repatriation occurred under the India-Australia Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty after a detailed investigation by Tamil Nadu's Idol Wing CID. A provenance review confirmed illegal removal, marking a significant step in cultural restitution.



Central Vista Area Renamed as Kartavya Bhawan Complex :-

The Central Vista redevelopment area in New Delhi has been officially renamed as the Kartavya Bhawan

Complex. This precinct includes government buildings, Kartavya Marg, and future structures within the Central Vista zone, which serves as the administrative axis between Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate. The Common Central Secretariat project is part of this redevelopment, featuring 10 buildings, three of which are operational as Kartavya Bhawans. This renaming follows previous changes like Rajpath to Kartavya Path in 2022 and the PMO complex to Seva Teerth in 2025, reflecting a thematic emphasis on duty and service.



PMFME Scheme Achieves Milestones in Micro-Enterprise Support :-

The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme has achieved notable milestones since its launch in June 2020 under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. By July 11, 2026, the scheme has sanctioned loans to over 2 lakh micro-units, leveraging investments exceeding ₹20,300 crore and generating nearly 11 lakh jobs. Impressively, 90% of the beneficiaries are first-generation entrepreneurs, with 44% being women. The scheme has extended its support to over 4.18 lakh SHG members with seed capital and trained 1.76 lakh individuals, 77% of whom are women.



India Implements Import Ban on Goods Produced with Forced Labour :-

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issued a notification banning the import of goods produced using forced labour, a first for India. This aligns with the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and introduces Paragraph 2.20B into the Foreign Trade Policy 2023. The DGFT is authorized to investigate allegations and enforce bans as necessary. The rule, approved by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, becomes effective 30 days post-publication in the Official Gazette, marking a significant step towards ethical trade practices.



India Approves National Investment Policy for Urea 2026 :-

The Union Cabinet approved the National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026) to boost domestic urea production. The policy aims to add 10 million tonnes of capacity through 8-9 new natural gas-based plants, offering assured returns on equity and transparent costing. It addresses the current production-demand gap, reducing reliance on imports and promoting self-reliance. This initiative is crucial for India's agricultural sector, ensuring a steady supply of urea for farmers.



Supreme Court opposes the use of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) data for non-election purposes :-

The Supreme Court of India has expressed serious concern over the possible use of data collected during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls for purposes unrelated to elections. During hearings on petitions challenging aspects of the SIR exercise, the Court observed that information gathered by the Election Commission of India (ECI) is meant exclusively for preparing and maintaining accurate electoral rolls and should not be shared with or used by other government agencies for administrative, investigative, or welfare-related purposes without legal authority. The Court emphasized that voter data contains sensitive personal information and that its misuse could violate citizens' fundamental right to privacy.



Union Cabinet Approves India's Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme :-

The Indian Union Cabinet has given a green light to the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with a budget allocation of ₹62,500 crore. This initiative aims to significantly boost India's electronics manufacturing sector, projecting a cumulative production value of ₹39,00,000 crore. The scheme is expected to create approximately 60,000 direct jobs and enhance India's global competitiveness in mobile phone exports. This development not only aims to fortify economic growth but also aligns with the government's vision of making India a global electronics manufacturing hub, a crucial aspect for understanding India's economic policies.



Delhi Government Approves PARIVARTAN Vehicle Scrappage Scheme :-

The Delhi Government has approved the PARIVARTAN Vehicle Scrappage Scheme, aimed at scrapping old commercial vehicles in the Delhi-NCR region. With a total outlay of ₹9,585 crore backed by the Centre, the scheme targets BS-IV or older vehicles, including Light, Medium, and Heavy Goods Vehicles and buses. It offers incentives like a 100% motor vehicle tax exemption for 10 years, registration fee waivers, a 5% interest subsidy, and an 8% discount from OEMs. This initiative aims to reduce air pollution by encouraging the adoption of cleaner BS-VI and electric vehicles.



NHAI Launches Digital Local Pass on RajmargYatra App

In July 2026, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) introduced a digital Local Pass facility via the RajmargYatra mobile app. Residents living within 20 km of eligible toll plazas can now obtain a monthly pass for unlimited travel. The system leverages DigiLocker, VAHAN, and GIS-based validation for seamless address and vehicle verification. Initially implemented at the Mundka-Bakkarwala Toll Plaza in Delhi, this initiative allows users to apply entirely through the app, eliminating the need to visit toll plazas. Additionally, NHAI launched the AI-enabled MargMitra Help Centre to enhance user experience.



Indian Railways Achieves 99.6% Electrification :-

As of 22 July 2026, Indian Railways has electrified 99.6% of its broad gauge network, coming second only to Switzerland, which has achieved full electrification. This milestone marks a substantial increase from the 21,801 route kilometers electrified over six decades before 2014 to 48,072 kilometers post-2014. The electrification initiative has significantly reduced diesel consumption from 293 crore litres in 2015-16 to 108 crore litres in 2024-25. Additionally, Indian Railways has commissioned over 1,260 MW of renewable energy capacity, predominantly solar, by June 2026. This strategic shift underscores India's commitment to sustainable energy practices.



Government introduces the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha :-

The Government has introduced the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha to update provisions under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971. The original Act protects the dignity of the National Flag, the Constitution of India, and the National Anthem by prescribing penalties for intentional acts of disrespect. The proposed amendment aims to strengthen legal provisions, address emerging forms of misuse, and improve enforcement in line with technological and social developments.



Supreme Court proposes special courts for speedy trials related to the 2023 Manipur violence :-

The Supreme Court has proposed the establishment of special courts to ensure the speedy trial of criminal cases arising from the 2023 Manipur violence. The ethnic clashes that erupted in May 2023 led to significant loss of life, displacement of thousands, and destruction of property, resulting in numerous criminal investigations. The Court observed that delays in trials could undermine justice and public confidence, emphasizing the need for dedicated judicial mechanisms to handle the large number of pending cases efficiently.



Dharmendra Pradhan resigns as Union Education Minister amid massive student protests :-

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned following widespread student protests demanding accountability over alleged examination irregularities and paper leaks. President Droupadi Murmu accepted his resignation on the advice of the Prime Minister under Article 75 of the Constitution. The protests, which continued for several weeks across the country, reflected growing concerns about transparency, fairness, and credibility in India's examination system. Pradhan stated that he was stepping down while respecting the sentiments of students and taking moral responsibility.



Activists Demand Consultation on Mysuru Tree Relocation :-

Environmentalists and residents in Mysuru are calling for public consultations before the relocation of 278 trees for a flyover project. The demand is for transparency and assurance of survival for 1,000 saplings proposed to compensate for the loss. This situation highlights the ongoing conflict between urban development and environmental conservation, emphasizing the need for sustainable infrastructure projects that balance ecological concerns with development needs.



Government moves to strengthen anti-paper leak law through the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 :-

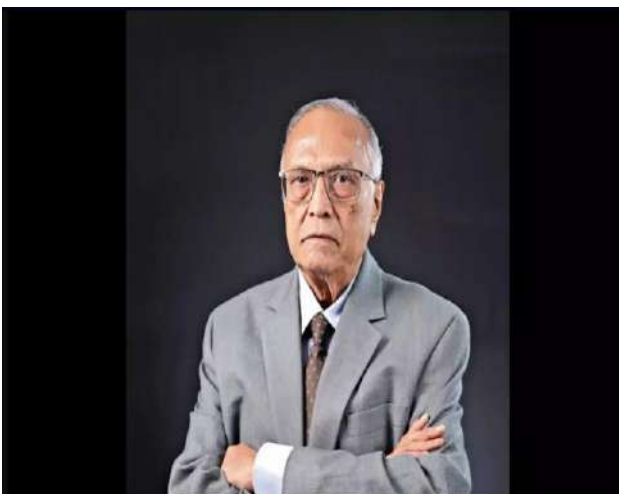
The Union Government has introduced the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 to further strengthen India's legal framework against examination malpractices. The proposed amendments build upon the original legislation by introducing stricter enforcement mechanisms, enhanced investigative powers, and tougher penalties against individuals and organised groups involved in paper leaks, impersonation, hacking, and other unfair practices. The move follows several high-profile examination controversies that affected recruitment and entrance examinations across the country.

12: Obituaries



Veteran Marathi theatre legend Vijaya Mehta passes away at 91 :-

Veteran Marathi theatre legend Vijaya Mehta has passed away at the age of 91, marking the end of a significant era in Indian experimental theatre. She died at her Mumbai residence after prolonged illness and was widely regarded as one of the pioneers of modern Marathi theatre. Apart from theatre, she also made a major contribution to Indian parallel cinema with acclaimed works such as Rao Saheb and Pestonjee. Over her long career, she received several honours including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the Padma Shri.



Eminent oncologist, Padma Shri Dr Pankaj Shah, passes away at 76 :-

Eminent oncologist Dr Pankaj Shah, a Padma Shri awardee and one of India's most respected cancer specialists, passed away at the age of 76. Dr Shah was widely recognized for his significant contribution to cancer treatment and healthcare services in Gujarat and across India. Over several decades, he played a major role in advancing oncology care, medical education, and awareness about early cancer detection. His dedication toward affordable and accessible treatment earned him immense respect in the medical community and among patients.



President Murmu and PM Modi Honor Pandavani Artist Teejan Bai :-

Indian leaders paid tribute to Pandavani legend Teejan Bai, who passed away at 72. Known for her powerful performances, Teejan Bai brought Pandavani, a traditional folk-art form from Chhattisgarh, to international acclaim. President Murmu and PM Modi praised her contributions to Indian culture, highlighting her role in preserving and promoting Pandavani. Bai was awarded the Padma Vibhushan for her dedication to the art. Her legacy continues to inspire future generations of artists, making her an enduring cultural icon.



'Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior' star Kjell Nilsson passes away at 76 :-

Kjell Nilsson, the Swedish-born actor and former Olympic-class weightlifter best known for portraying the fearsome Lord Humungus in the 1981 film Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior, has passed away at the age of 76 after a prolonged battle with end-stage kidney disease. Before entering films, Nilsson built a successful career in competitive weightlifting and later moved to Australia, where he transitioned into acting. His imposing screen presence and unforgettable performance as the masked antagonist made him a cult icon in one of director George Miller's most celebrated films, starring Mel Gibson.



Girish Bharadwaj, Known as 'Bridge Man of India', Passes Away :-

Girish Bharadwaj, renowned as the 'Bridge Man of India', passed away in Sullia, Karnataka, at the age of 76. A Padma Shri awardee, Bharadwaj revolutionized rural connectivity by constructing over 140 low-cost suspension bridges in remote regions of Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, and Odisha since 1989. His engineering innovations significantly improved access to essential services such as schools, hospitals, and markets for numerous rural communities. Bharadwaj's legacy

continues to inspire infrastructural development in underserved areas.



आकाशवाणी समाचार

Akashvani News

Sebastian Robert, a former Director of All India Radio News and an officer of Indian Information Service, passed away in New Delhi :-

Sebastian Robert, a distinguished officer of the Indian Information Service (IIS) and former Director of All India Radio (AIR) News, passed away in New Delhi, marking the end of a notable career in Indian public broadcasting and government communication. During his tenure, Robert played an important role in strengthening the credibility and reach of AIR News, one of India's most trusted public news services. As an IIS officer, he served in several key positions involving media management, public information dissemination, and communication strategy under the Government of India.



Legendary singer S Janaki, called Nightingale of South India passes away at 88 :-

S. Janaki, one of India's greatest playback singers, passed away at the age of 88, marking the end of an extraordinary musical journey that spanned more than six decades. Popularly known as the "Nightingale of South India," she recorded over 45,000 songs in Telugu,

Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and several other Indian languages, making her one of the most prolific singers in Indian cinema. Janaki won four National Film Awards and numerous state awards for her versatile singing style, which ranged from classical and devotional music to romantic melodies and folk songs.



South Africa World Cup midfielder Adams dies aged 25

Jayden Adams, the talented South African midfielder who represented his country at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, has died at the age of 25. The news shocked the football community, with South Africa's Sports Ministry, FIFA, clubs, teammates, and fans expressing deep sorrow. Adams began his professional career with Stellenbosch FC before joining Mamelodi Sundowns, where he became a key midfielder and helped the club achieve major domestic and continental success. He earned several appearances for the South African national team and played an important role during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, helping the country reach the knockout stage for the first time in its history.



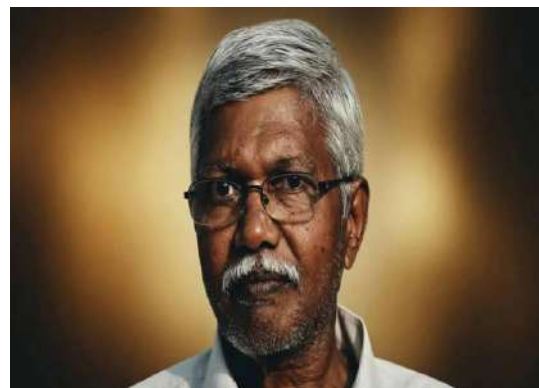
Former Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani Dies :-

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the former Emir of Qatar, passed away at the age of 74. During his reign from 1995 to 2013, he transformed Qatar into a global economic powerhouse by developing the North Field gas reserves and expanding LNG exports. Sheikh Hamad founded Al Jazeera in 1996, established the Qatar Investment Authority, and successfully bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. His leadership modernized Qatar's infrastructure and education, leaving a lasting legacy of strategic global investments.



Jurassic Park Actor Sam Neill Passed Away at 78 :-

Veteran New Zealand actor Sam Neill, best known worldwide for portraying Dr. Alan Grant in the Jurassic Park film franchise, has died at the age of 78. Sam Neill enjoyed a remarkable acting career spanning more than five decades, appearing in over 150 film and television productions. Besides Jurassic Park (1993), he starred in acclaimed works such as The Piano, Dead Calm, The Hunt for Red October, Event Horizon, Peaky Blinders, and The Twelve. His portrayal of Dr. Alan Grant made him one of the most recognizable faces in science-fiction cinema, and he reprised the role in Jurassic Park III (2001) and Jurassic World Dominion (2022).



Renowned Tamil Writer Poomani Passes Away at 79 :-

Celebrated Tamil writer Poomani, born Pulithurai Manickavasagam, passed away at the age of 79 due to age-related issues. Known for his novels and short stories vividly portraying rural life in Tamil Nadu, Poomani received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2014 for his novel

'Agnyaadi'. His work 'Vekkai' was adapted into the 2019 film 'Asuran', starring Dhanush. Poomani also directed the NFDC film 'Karuvelam Pookkal'. His contributions to literature were profound, focusing on farmers, laborers, and marginalized communities, leaving a lasting impact on Tamil literature.

13: Ranks & Reports



France Records 1,000 Excess Deaths During Heatwave :-

France's public health agency reported 1,000 excess deaths during the recent heatwave, with most fatalities involving older people. The heatwave, described as the worst recorded in Europe, has led to disruptions in power generation and infrastructure damage. The health minister warned of lingering health impacts and stressed that the episode is not yet over, with some areas still under heatwave advisories.



UPI Records 23% Growth in June, Boosting Digital Payments :-

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) witnessed a 23% year-on-year growth in transaction volumes, reaching 22.72 billion in June. This surge underscores UPI's role in transforming India's digital payment landscape. As UPI expands globally, it enhances India's fintech reputation and establishes new standards for interoperable payment systems. The platform's success is pivotal in positioning India as a global leader in digital transactions, fostering financial inclusion and innovation across the financial ecosystem.



Gujarat Leads in TB Control with Notable Decline in Cases :-

Gujarat has been ranked first among Indian states for improvement in tuberculosis control, achieving a 34% reduction in new cases and a 37% decline in TB mortality since 2015. Under the TB-Free India Campaign, the state identified over 57,000 patients this year, with 91% recovering. Efforts included door-to-door surveillance and financial assistance under the Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana. The success highlights Gujarat's commitment to public health and showcases effective implementation of health initiatives.



India-Indonesia Trade Hits New High with \$38.84 Billion in 2022-23 :-

India and Indonesia have seen a significant expansion in bilateral trade, reaching \$38.84 billion in 2022-23, up from \$4.3 billion in 2005-06. The two countries have strengthened their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with Prime Minister Modi visiting Indonesia to discuss further cooperation. Indonesia is now India's second-largest trading partner in ASEAN, with major exports including refined petroleum products and telecommunications equipment. The partnership also sees India as a major importer of Indonesian coal and crude palm oil. This trade growth highlights the deepening economic ties and mutual benefits between the two nations.



Mizoram University's Museum Becomes India's 21st Biodiversity Repository :-

The Natural History Museum at Mizoram University has been designated as a biodiversity repository under the Biological Diversity Act. Located in the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot, the museum plays a crucial role in documenting and conserving the region's rich biodiversity. This recognition strengthens India's

scientific infrastructure and commitment to preserving its natural heritage.



India Leads as Global Retail FMCG Hub with 180 GCCs :-

India has emerged as the world's largest hub for retail and FMCG Global Capability Centres (GCCs) by July 10, 2026, boasting 180 centres employing over 272,000 professionals. With significant contributions from cities like Bengaluru and Delhi NCR, the Indian retail GCC workforce surpasses the combined total of several countries. The sector has seen a rise in AI workforce penetration and job creation, highlighting India's growing prominence in technology, customer success, and supply chain roles. This development showcases India's capability as a global business services leader.



Jaipur Ranks 6th in Global Happy City Index 2026 :-

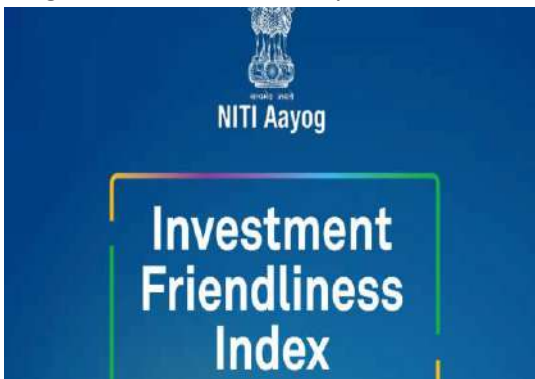
In a significant achievement for India, Jaipur has been ranked 6th globally in the Happy City Index 2026, making it the only Indian city in the top 10. The index, topped by London, evaluates cities based on governance, public health, environmental sustainability, economic stability, transport mobility, and urban well-being. Jaipur's high ranking is attributed to its balance of cultural heritage with smart city projects, clean public spaces, robust tourism, and civic involvement. This recognition

highlights Jaipur's progress in urban development and quality of life improvement.



New Delhi Ranks 120th in Global Liveability Index 2026

New Delhi has been ranked 120th out of 173 cities in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index 2026. The city scored 48.1, with notable performances in education (66.7) and infrastructure (58.9), but lower scores in healthcare (41.7) and culture environment (35.4). Among Indian cities, Mumbai ranked 121st, Chennai 123rd, and Bengaluru 127th. Copenhagen, Denmark, retained the top position. The index evaluates key factors such as stability, healthcare, culture environment, education, and infrastructure, offering insights into urban liveability.



NITI Aayog releases the latest Investment Friendliness Index to rank states on investment ecosystem :-

NITI Aayog has released the first-ever Investment Friendliness Index (IFI) 2026, a comprehensive framework designed to assess how effectively States and Union Territories create an environment that attracts domestic and foreign investment. Developed following the Prime Minister's call for an Investment-Friendly Charter and announced in the Union Budget 2025–26,

the index evaluates 36 States and UTs across 84 indicators grouped under eight pillars, including infrastructure, business climate, regulatory ease, government policy, institutional environment, financial health, resources, and environmental resilience.



MRF Tyres Named India's Most Valuable Tyre Brand :-

MRF Tyres has been recognized as India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand, also ranking among the top three globally. According to the Brand Finance India 100–2026 report, MRF's brand strength has solidified its position in the international market. The report titled 'Powering India's Global Ascent' highlights MRF's contribution to the automotive industry and its significant brand value. This accolade not only emphasizes MRF's market leadership but also reflects the growing global influence of Indian brands.



Assam Leads India in Economic Growth Over Five Years

Assam has emerged as India's fastest-growing state economy over the past five years, according to Industries and Commerce Minister Bimal Borah. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) grew by 45% between FY20 and FY25, surpassing the national growth rate of 29%. Infrastructure upgrades, policy reforms, and major

investments have driven this economic transformation. Assam's success story highlights the impact of strategic planning and investment-friendly policies on regional economic development.



Gulf nations account for over 70% of suicides by Indian citizens abroad, according to MEA data :-

Recent data released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) indicates that more than 70% of suicides involving Indian citizens overseas occurred in Gulf countries, drawing attention to the mental health and social challenges faced by migrant workers. Nations such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain host millions of Indian expatriates, many employed in construction, domestic work, transport, and service sectors. Experts attribute the high number of suicides to factors including financial stress, debt, isolation from families, demanding working conditions, job insecurity, and limited access to mental health support.

14: Schemes & Committees



Amit Shah Inaugurates PM Family Care Tracker in Gujarat :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the PM Family Care Tracker pilot project in Gandhinagar, aimed at ensuring timely delivery of welfare benefits. The initiative integrates birth and death registration data to provide unique identification numbers for automatic benefit delivery. Shah emphasized the role of Direct Benefit Transfer in enhancing transparency and efficiency in welfare programmes, reflecting the government's commitment to improving governance.



I Ministry Launches Initiatives to Boost Indian Film Industry :-

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced initiatives to enhance India's film industry, focusing on global competitiveness and infrastructure expansion. A high-level Study Group, chaired by Prasoon Joshi, will explore opportunities and challenges, including AI and virtual production. Model State Cinema Regulations have been proposed to facilitate cinema hall expansion in rural areas, aiming for uniformity in approval processes. These measures aim to modernize the industry and promote creativity and innovation.



PM Modi Lauds 11 Years of Digital India Initiative :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated 11 years of the Digital India initiative, highlighting its transformative impact on governance and citizen empowerment. Launched in 2015, Digital India has redefined public service delivery, enhanced transparency, and positioned India as a leader in digital governance. The initiative's success underscores India's commitment to leveraging technology for inclusive development and innovation.



Assam's Seva Setu Platform Revolutionizes Public Service Delivery :-

Assam's Seva Setu platform, spearheaded by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, is transforming governance by providing over 800 online government services. The platform has processed over 1.5 crore applications, achieving a 90% service disposal rate. Integrated with 47 government departments and DigiLocker, Seva Setu is a testament to Assam's digital governance success. This initiative aligns with Digital India's vision, enhancing transparency and accessibility in governance, thereby improving the ease of living for citizens.



Modi Inaugurates ₹1.06 Lakh Crore Projects in Rajasthan :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated development projects worth ₹1.06 lakh crore in Rajasthan, focusing on infrastructure, energy, and connectivity. The projects aim to boost economic growth, create jobs, and enhance living standards. Key initiatives include a new refinery and expanded metro services, reflecting the government's commitment to regional development. These efforts are crucial for Rajasthan's economic transformation, positioning the state as a key player in India's growth story. The projects underscore India's focus on sustainable and inclusive development.



PM Modi Launches 'Viksit UDAN' at Jodhpur Airport :-

Prime Minister Modi launched the 'Viksit UDAN' initiative and inaugurated a new terminal at Jodhpur Airport, enhancing regional connectivity. The scheme aims to expand air travel accessibility across India, supporting economic growth and tourism. The new terminal signifies a major upgrade in infrastructure, reflecting India's commitment to modernizing its aviation sector. These developments underscore the government's focus

on improving transportation links, fostering regional development, and promoting inclusive economic opportunities through enhanced connectivity.



West Bengal Launches ₹313 Crore Package for Tea Garden Workers :-

The West Bengal government has approved the Pradhan Mantri Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana with a financial outlay of ₹313.3 crore to benefit over 300,000 tea garden workers in North Bengal. The package includes funds for education, healthcare, and infrastructure under various schemes aimed at improving living conditions. The initiative signifies a strong commitment to enhancing the welfare of tea garden communities, supporting their education, health, and working environment, thereby fostering socioeconomic development in the region.



Approval for PM-SETU Scheme for ITI Upgradation :-

The Indian government approved the nationwide rollout of the Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU) scheme. With a total outlay of ₹60,000 crore over five years, the scheme aims to upgrade 1,000 Government ITIs across 200 clusters, focusing on industry-led curriculum and infrastructure. It also plans to establish five National Centres of Excellence. This initiative is

poised to enhance skilling in manufacturing, services, and construction sectors, aligning with the nation's goal of creating a skilled workforce.



UP Launches 'Guru Dakshina' Cashless Medical Scheme :-

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the 'Guru Dakshina' Chief Minister Teacher Cashless Medical Scheme, offering free hospitalization benefits to 10 lakh education staff. With an annual premium of ₹447 crore funded by the state, the scheme covers over 1,900 treatment packages for major illnesses in empanelled hospitals. Additionally, an SBI MoU provides up to ₹1 crore in accident insurance for permanent teachers. This initiative underscores the state's commitment to social security and healthcare for educators, enhancing their welfare.



Delhi Government Launches 'Delhi Next' Programme :-

The Delhi government initiated the 'Delhi Next – Code, Create and Change' programme to address urban challenges such as traffic congestion and waterlogging. This initiative involves piloting 60 technology-driven solutions aimed at improving the city's infrastructure and quality of life. The programme seeks to integrate innovative technologies to tackle pressing urban issues,

thereby enhancing the living standards of Delhi's residents.



Andhra Pradesh Launches Mee Bhoomi-Mee Hakku Programme Phase :-

Andhra Pradesh has launched the latest phase of the Mee Bhoomi-Mee Hakku programme in Banaganapalle, Nandyal district. This initiative provides digitally updated Pattadar Passbooks with QR codes and state emblems to farmers in resurveyed villages. With resurvey completed in 6,887 villages and plans to cover 9,833 villages, the programme aims to distribute 72.70 lakh passbooks by March 2027. The move is designed to offer error-free, tamper-proof land records, significantly strengthening land administration and benefiting the state's agricultural sector.



Delhi to Introduce Pink Saheli Smart Card for Free Bus Travel :-

The Delhi government will launch the Pink Saheli Smart Card from August 1, 2026, enabling women to travel for free on DTC and DIMTS buses. Replacing the paper-based pink tickets, the smart card aims to digitize the scheme, reduce paper consumption, and increase transparency while preventing misuse. Fifty registration centers have been set up across the city, along with awareness

campaigns to encourage card usage. This initiative is part of efforts to modernize public transport and make it more accessible and efficient for women commuters.



Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Campaign Launch :-

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports initiated the latest phase of the Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat campaign through Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat). This campaign aims at fostering a drug-free society by engaging youth aged 15-29 years through district-level competitions in dance, music, reel and short film, nukkad natak, and slam poetry. The events will be held in Hindi, English, and regional languages, with district competitions scheduled from July 24 to 27, state rounds from July 30 to August 6, and a national finale on August 12-13 in New Delhi during the National Youth Summit. The initiative highlights the government's commitment to youth empowerment and cultural engagement.



NABARD Launches Gramodyam Rural Entrepreneurship Programme :-

On its 45th Foundation Day, NABARD launched the Gramodyam programme, a three-year pilot initiative targeting around 4,000 rural entrepreneurs across India. Implemented in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation, it employs a digital-first

hybrid model to provide participants with psychometric assessments, counseling, entrepreneurship training, and industry-specific skills. The programme aligns with Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat 2047 goals, empowering rural communities and fostering economic self-reliance.



Delhi Renames Welfare Scheme as Delhi Lakshmi Yojana :-

The Delhi government has taken a significant step by renaming the Mahila Samridhhi Yojana to Delhi Lakshmi Yojana. This welfare initiative is set to provide a monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 to eligible women via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Scheduled for launch around Raksha Bandhan 2026, under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the scheme aims to empower women from economically weaker sections and enhance household financial security. The eligibility criteria, registration process, and required documents will be announced soon, ensuring direct credit of payments to beneficiaries' bank accounts for transparency and efficiency.



India held BRICS Labour Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad :-

India organised the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad on July 15-16, 2026. The meeting was focused on key areas such as labour market formalisation, skilling, social protection, women's workforce participation, and employability. This event is part of India's 2026 BRICS Chairship under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability". The second Employment Working Group Meeting took place in Thiruvananthapuram in May 2026.



Bihar Launches Mukhyamantri Bihar Heli-Tourism Scheme :-

The Bihar government launched the Mukhyamantri Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme, in Patna. This joint initiative by the Tourism and Civil Aviation departments offers subsidized helicopter and air services with a government subsidy of up to ₹15,422 per ticket. Online booking started on July 13, with operations commencing from July 18. Initial routes include Patna to Valmikinagar, Maa Mundeshwari Temple (Kaimur), and Rajgir. Ticket fares are ₹2,100 for a joy ride, ₹4,000 for Rajgir, ₹5,000 for Valmikinagar, and ₹6,000 for Kaimur, with services available on weekends initially.



Cabinet Approves Semicon Mission 2.0 and Mobile Phone Scheme :-

The Indian government has approved the Semicon Mission 2.0 and a Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme to boost the electronics sector. The Semicon Mission aims for ₹4 lakh crore investment in chip design and manufacturing over 12 years. The mobile scheme, offering incentives for domestic production, is expected to generate ₹39 lakh crore in output and create 60,000 jobs. These initiatives highlight India's commitment to becoming a global electronics manufacturing hub.



Andhra Pradesh Launches Mee Bhoomi–Blockchain Pilot :-

Andhra Pradesh launched the Mee Bhoomi–Blockchain pilot project to create tamper-proof digital land records. The project utilizes Hyperledger Fabric to integrate the revenue, survey, and registration departments and covers seven mandals across seven districts, including 89 villages and 1,37,763 land parcels. The pilot offers services like auto-mutation, subdivision, and extent correction with secure departmental access. This initiative aims to reduce land disputes and provide verified land data to citizens and institutions, marking a significant step towards digital governance and transparency in land records management.



Rajasthan Launches Mukhyamantri Yuva Suyog Platform :-

In July 2026, Rajasthan launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Suyog platform from Jaipur to enhance youth engagement in sports, skills, employment, and community activities. Initially rolled out on a pilot basis in Bagru and Baran, the program uses the Yuva Suyog portal for registration and organizing competitions. It emphasizes team sports such as cricket, volleyball, kabaddi, and football, with competitions progressing from local to assembly levels. The platform plans to map sports infrastructure and establish Yuva Suyog Clubs at district, panchayat, and ward levels, aligning with the Central Government's MY Bharat initiative.



Gujarat Launches Samras Vidyasetu Mega Campaign :-

The Gujarat government has launched the Samras Vidyasetu campaign from Ahmedabad to re-enroll over 80,000 school dropouts in Classes 1-12. The campaign aims to achieve 'Zero Dropout' status through strategies such as identification, home visits, mentoring, and bridge courses. The initiative employs AI-based Early Warning Systems and Child Tracking Systems at the Vidya Samiksha Kendra to monitor progress. Building on the success of the Shala Praveshotsav enrollment drive, the Samras Vidyasetu campaign focuses on enhancing student retention and providing academic support.



Union Cabinet approves BHAVYA Rasayan Scheme to establish three Chemical Parks across India :-

The Union Cabinet has approved the BHAVYA Rasayan Scheme, a major initiative aimed at strengthening India's chemical manufacturing ecosystem by establishing three world-class Chemical Parks. The scheme seeks to

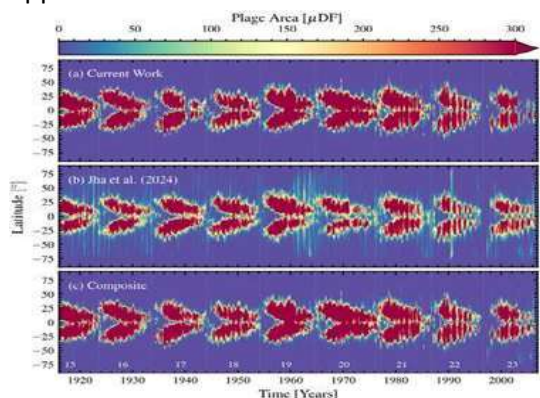
improve industrial infrastructure, encourage domestic production of specialty and bulk chemicals, attract private investment, and reduce dependence on imports. The proposed parks will provide integrated facilities such as common utilities, waste treatment systems, logistics infrastructure, and research support.

15: Science & Technology



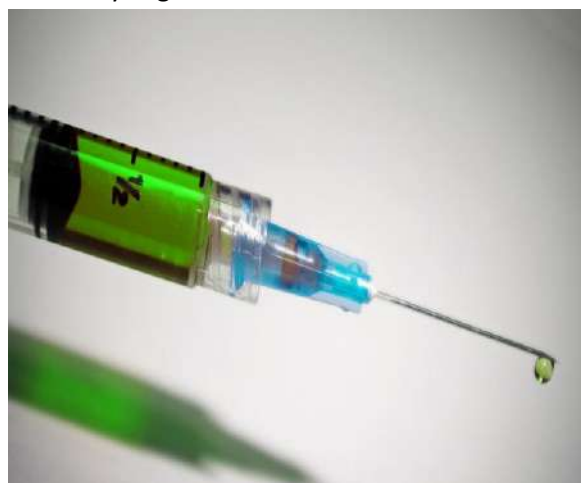
Tripura to Receive AI-Enabled Medical Equipment to Enhance Healthcare :-

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha announced the Centre's provision of modern medical equipment, including 48 AI-enabled X-ray machines, under the Prime Minister's Fund. The equipment will be installed in district hospitals to improve healthcare access and diagnostic services. The initiative aligns with efforts to strengthen Tripura's healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, the Union Ministry of AYUSH approved a new Ayurvedic Medical College, enhancing educational opportunities in traditional medicine.



AI Analyzes Solar Data to Map Sun's Magnetic Activity

Researchers have utilized Artificial Intelligence to analyze over a century of solar observations from the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory, creating a comprehensive record of the Sun's magnetic activity. This study, led by the Aryabhata Research Institute, provides insights into solar cycles, crucial for understanding space weather impacts on Earth. The AI-driven approach demonstrates the transformative potential of technology in preserving and analyzing historical scientific data.



Rajasthan Bans Bupivacaine Injection Amid Safety Concerns :-

Rajasthan has banned the sale and use of a specific batch of Bupivacaine injections following adverse reactions reported in Hyderabad. This injection, used in spinal anesthesia, has been linked to severe side effects in 16 patients. The batch, manufactured by Themis Medicare Limited, is under investigation. The state has frozen existing supplies and initiated a recall, with samples sent for testing. The ban underscores the importance of patient safety in pharmaceutical practices.



South Pole's Ancient Freeze Explained by Geological Uplift :-

Research reveals that the Antarctic froze 34 million years ago due to mountain range uplift, preceding the Arctic by 25 million years. Mantle waves, geological disturbances, elevated the Gamburtsev Mountains, allowing ice sheets to stabilize despite warm global climates. This study underscores the interplay between topography and climate in Earth's historical ice ages, providing insights into polar asymmetry and ancient climate shifts.



DRC Begins Trial for Bundibugyo Ebola Treatment Amid Ongoing Challenges :-

The DRC has commenced a trial for Bundibugyo Ebola treatment despite facing security threats and logistical challenges. The trial evaluates Mapp Biopharmaceutical's MBP134 antibody and Gilead Sciences' remdesivir. With over 1,400 cases and 438 deaths, effective treatment is crucial. WHO's efforts to expand testing and improve logistics highlight the need for robust healthcare responses in epidemic-prone regions.



OpenAI Gets US Approval for GPT-5.6 Rollout :-

The U.S. Department of Commerce has approved OpenAI's launch of its GPT-5.6 model, following government testing under a new oversight framework for frontier AI. OpenAI plans to release GPT-5.6 this week, having addressed concerns about potential threats. The approval follows a June executive order, allowing AI developers to provide models to the U.S. government for review before wider release. The move aims to identify potential risks in AI deployment.



ISRO Tests Solid Motor for Gaganyaan's Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle :-

ISRO successfully conducted the ground test of the solid motor for the Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments (SOLVE) at Sriharikota. This test is crucial for the Gaganyaan programme, validating the propulsion system needed for parachute and crew module recovery trials. SOLVE aims to launch the crew module to altitudes of 10–17 km for critical tests on parachute deployment and safe water landings. This milestone is an essential step towards India's first indigenous human spaceflight mission, highlighting ISRO's advancing capabilities in space exploration.



India Launches World's First Once-Weekly Insulin Awiqli :-

India has introduced Awiqli, the world's first once-weekly basal insulin containing insulin icodec. This innovation, marketed by Novo Nordisk, is approved for adults with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, significantly reducing injection frequency from 365 to just 52 per year. The FlexTouch pen device, priced at Rs 2,611 for a 700-unit pack, is 30-40% cheaper per unit than daily insulin alternatives, offering better glycaemic control. India is the seventh country to launch this drug, marking a significant milestone in diabetes care and management.



NASA Astronaut Anil Menon Launched to ISS :-

NASA astronaut Anil Menon launched to the International Space Station on 14 July 2026 aboard Russia's Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft from Baikonur Cosmodrome. Joining Expedition 74 alongside cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina, Menon will embark on an eight-month mission set to conclude in April 2027. His research will focus on astronaut vein structure, blood flow in microgravity, producing intravenous fluids from ISS water, and growing semiconductor crystals. Menon, selected in 2021,

completed his training in 2024, marking a significant step in his space career.



Karnataka Announces India's First Government-Driven AI University :-

Karnataka unveiled plans for India's first government-driven Artificial Intelligence University in Bengaluru, during the Google I/O Connect India 2026 event. This university will be integrated with an AI Hub, supporting startups and researchers, and offering programs in AI, Machine Learning, Robotics, and Data Science. As part of Karnataka's vision to become an AI-native state, the initiative aims to foster advancements in governance, healthcare, education, and agriculture. Additionally, plans for two green data centers in Hoskote and near Mangaluru were announced.



Portable Ammonia Sensor Developed by Indian Scientists :-

Indian scientists at the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS) in Bengaluru have developed a portable ammonia sensor. This wearable device can detect ammonia concentrations as low as 319 ppb. The sensor, which uses a VOx/VS2 heterostructure, is designed for smart bands and e-textiles, offering high selectivity and stability. Published in ACS Sensors, the invention is

poised to enhance industrial safety and environmental monitoring, reflecting India's growing expertise in sensor technology.



India has launched its first indigenous hydrogen-powered train on the 89-km Jind–Sonipat route in Haryana :-

India has achieved a major milestone in green transportation by launching its first indigenous hydrogen-powered train on the 89-km Jind–Sonipat route in Haryana. Developed under the 'Make in India' initiative, the train uses hydrogen fuel cells to generate electricity, producing only water vapour as the primary emission, making it an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional diesel-powered trains. The project forms part of Indian Railways' broader strategy to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and support India's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.



White Rabbit Technology Network Launched in Bengaluru :-

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi inaugurated the 'White Rabbit Technology'-based Indian Standard Time Distribution Demonstration Network in Bengaluru. This

initiative aims to establish a secure, indigenous high-precision time standard, minimizing reliance on foreign systems like GPS. The technology will bolster security for critical sectors including banking, defense, and telecom, aligning with global UTC protocols while enhancing national digital sovereignty. Implemented with collaboration from NPL, ISRO, BSNL, and SEBI, it represents a significant advancement in India's technological infrastructure.



Discovery of New Bee Species in Arunachal Pradesh :-

ATREE scientists have discovered two new solitary bee species in Arunachal Pradesh, named *Elaphropoda triangulata* and *Habropoda adi*. This discovery highlights the biodiversity in the region and the ecological significance of solitary bees as pollinators. Named in honor of the Adi indigenous community, these species are part of the Anthophorinae subfamily. This finding emphasizes the importance of conservation efforts and biodiversity research, providing critical insights into ecological studies and the role of pollinators in maintaining environmental balance, a crucial topic in environmental science.



Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 Rocket Achieves Major Milestone :-

Skyroot Aerospace has successfully launched the Vikram-1 rocket under Mission Aagaman, marking India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket launch. The mission placed multiple payloads into a 450-km Low Earth Orbit (LEO), showcasing India's growing presence in the private space sector. Utilizing lightweight carbon composites and 3D-printed engines, Vikram-1's achievement positions India as a key player in global space exploration, emphasizing the significance of innovation and private sector participation in space technology.



ICMR Licenses Indigenous Biomedical Technologies :-

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) licensed three indigenous biomedical technologies as part of the Medical Innovations Patent Mitra initiative. These include SHetA2, an anti-HPV therapeutic for Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN), transferred to Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd., and two next-generation enteric bacterial vaccine technologies licensed to Biological E Ltd. These vaccines aim to combat typhoid and provide broader Salmonella-Shigella protection. Originating from ICMR institutes, these technologies underscore the importance of commercializing publicly funded research to enhance public health benefits across India.



China Launches Gravity-1 Carrier Rocket :-

China successfully launched the Gravity-1 solid-fuel rocket from a maritime platform in the East China Sea. Developed by private firm Orienspace, the rocket successfully placed nine satellites, including the Dongpo series, Xiguang-2, Tianyi-49, and Lilac-3, into orbit. This marks the third successful flight of the world's most powerful solid-fuel rocket, and it represents the first far-sea commercial launch in the Yangtze River Delta region. The mission aims to support Earth observation and future internet satellite missions, showcasing China's growing capabilities in space exploration.



India Develops First Indigenous Expendable Turbojet Engine :-

India marked a significant achievement with the development of its first indigenous expendable turbojet engine, delivering 350 kg thrust. Designed by DRDO's Gas Turbine Research Establishment and manufactured by Azad Engineering, Hyderabad, the engine was realized within 24 months. It is set to enhance capabilities in naval anti-ship missiles, anti-drone systems, UAVs, and air-to-air/surface missiles. The engine supports compact designs and sustained high-speed flight, crucial for various defense platforms.



India Targets Five Indigenous Small Modular Reactors by 2033 :-

In a strategic move, India plans to develop and operationalize at least five indigenously designed Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) by 2033. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre is spearheading designs for the 220-MWe Bharat SMR, 55-MWe SMR (both using PWR technology), and a High-Temperature Gas-Cooled Reactor up to 5-MWth. Proposed locations include Tarapur, Maharashtra for Bharat SMR SMR-55, and Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh for HTGR aimed at hydrogen production.



Kimi K3 AI model gains global attention in the artificial intelligence sector :-

The Kimi K3 artificial intelligence model has attracted significant global attention due to its strong performance across reasoning, coding, multilingual understanding, and complex problem-solving tasks. Developed by the Chinese AI company Moonshot AI, the model represents

the latest advancement in the rapidly evolving field of generative artificial intelligence. Kimi K3 has been recognised for handling long-context inputs, supporting sophisticated conversational capabilities, and demonstrating competitive performance against several leading international AI systems.



Quantum computing and AI emerge as promising tools for designing personalised cancer vaccines :-

Researchers are increasingly combining quantum computing with artificial intelligence (AI) to accelerate the development of personalised cancer vaccines, a promising approach in precision medicine. Personalised vaccines are designed using the unique genetic mutations found in an individual patient's tumour, enabling the immune system to recognise and attack cancer cells more effectively. Artificial intelligence helps analyse vast genomic datasets, identify tumour-specific antigens, and predict the most effective vaccine targets.

16: Sports



Ben Stokes to Retire from International Cricket :-

England Test captain Ben Stokes announced his retirement from international cricket after the ongoing Test series against New Zealand. Known for his fearless batting and leadership, Stokes played a pivotal role in England's 2019 World Cup triumph and is celebrated for his iconic Ashes innings. His retirement marks the end of an era for English cricket, as fans and teammates pay tribute to his contributions.



Morocco Advances in World Cup After Penalty Shootout Win Over Netherlands :-

Morocco secured a spot in the World Cup last 16 by defeating the Netherlands 3-2 in a penalty shootout, following a 1-1 draw in regular time. Morocco's Ismael Saibari scored the winning penalty, setting up a match against Canada. The thrilling encounter in Monterrey featured a stoppage-time equalizer by Morocco's Issa Diop. Morocco's victory highlights their determination and sets the stage for an exciting clash with co-hosts Canada.



Egypt Secures First World Cup Knockout Victory Against Australia :-

Egypt advanced to the World Cup last 16 with a thrilling penalty shootout victory over Australia, marking their first knockout win in the tournament's history. Captain Mohamed Salah, returning from injury, played a pivotal role in Egypt's historic triumph. The victory not only highlights Egypt's growing prowess in international football but also underscores the competitive nature of the World Cup, where emerging teams continue to challenge traditional powerhouses, adding excitement and unpredictability to the tournament.



Morocco Reaches FIFA World Cup 2026 Quarter-Finals After Beating Canada :-

Morocco secured a spot in the FIFA World Cup 2026 quarter-finals by defeating Canada 3-0. Azzedine Ounahi scored twice, propelling Morocco forward despite challenges in the first half. The match was crucial for Morocco as they overcame a determined Canadian team, capitalizing on opportunities in the second half. The win marks Morocco's advancement to the quarter-finals for the second consecutive World Cup, demonstrating their growing prowess in international football. This victory is significant for Morocco's football aspirations on the global stage.



France Advances in FIFA World Cup 2026 with Victory Over Paraguay :-

France secured a quarter-final spot in the FIFA World Cup 2026 by narrowly defeating Paraguay 1-0, thanks to a penalty by Kylian Mbappe. The match tested France's resilience against Paraguay's physical and tactical play. Despite challenges, France's depth and Mbappe's decisive goal ensured their progression. This match serves as a reminder of the competitive nature of the World Cup, highlighting France's ability to adapt and

thrive under pressure. France will face Morocco in the next round, further testing their capabilities.



Cristiano Ronaldo Confirms 2026 World Cup as His Last
Portugal's legendary footballer Cristiano Ronaldo has announced that the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup will be his last. At 41, Ronaldo remains a key player for Portugal, having scored three goals in the tournament so far. He has become the first player to score in six consecutive World Cups. Despite announcing his final World Cup, Ronaldo has no immediate plans to retire from international football, emphasizing his continued role in the national team. His illustrious career includes leading Portugal to Euro 2016 victory and lifting the UEFA Nations League trophy twice.



Neymar Retires from International Football After Brazil's World Cup Exit :-

Brazilian football star Neymar Jr. announced his retirement from international football following Brazil's exit from the FIFA World Cup 2026. The 34-year-old forward, who scored a record 80 international goals, made the announcement after Brazil's defeat to Norway in the Round of 16. Neymar's career includes winning the FIFA Confederations Cup and Olympic gold. Despite fitness concerns, he was included in the World Cup

squad, but Brazil's campaign ended earlier than expected. Neymar's retirement marks the end of an era in Brazilian football, where he has been a celebrated figure for over a decade.



Australia Wins Seventh Women's T20 World Cup, Defeats England :-

Australia clinched their seventh Women's T20 World Cup title, defeating England by seven wickets in a dominant final at Lord's. A century partnership between Beth Mooney and Phoebe Litchfield led Australia to chase down England's target of 151 runs with ease. England's captain Nat Sciver-Brunt scored 58 runs, but the team's total proved insufficient against Australia's strong performance. This victory reaffirms Australia's dominance in women's cricket, showcasing their strategic prowess and depth of talent in the sport. The win is celebrated as a testament to the team's resilience and competitive spirit.



Portugal's World Cup Exit Marks End of Ronaldo's International Career :-

Portugal's narrow loss to Spain in the World Cup has brought an end to Cristiano Ronaldo's illustrious international career. As manager Roberto Martinez steps down, the team faces a period of transition. Ronaldo's

contributions to Portuguese football have left a lasting legacy, inspiring future generations of players.



IOC Lifts Russia Suspension, Athletes to Return to Competitions :-

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has provisionally lifted its suspension of the Russian Olympic Committee, allowing Russian athletes to participate in international competitions. The suspension, imposed due to Russia's recognition of regional Olympic councils in occupied Ukrainian territories, was lifted ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Games. While the display of Russia's flag and anthem remains undecided, the decision marks a significant step towards Russia's reintegration into the Olympic fold.



S. Aswath Becomes India's 98th Chess Grandmaster :-

S. Aswath, a 17-year-old from Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, has become India's 98th Chess Grandmaster, and Tamil Nadu's 38th, following his impressive performance at the Pune International GM Round Robin Tournament. Achieving his third and final Grandmaster norm, Aswath secured second place with 7/9 points, defeating notable competitors such as USA's FM Kannan Vaidyanathan. His previous norms were achieved at the 2025 Grenke Open and Budapest's First Saturday tournament. Aswath's

accomplishment, despite a six-month academic break, reflects his dedication and skill in chess, enhancing India's presence in the global chess community.



Indian Air Force Triumphs in Hockey Tournament :-

The Indian Air Force claimed victory in the 7th Marshal Arjan Singh Memorial Hockey Tournament by defeating the Indian Navy 2-1. Held at the Air Force Station Jalahalli this tournament commemorates the legacy of Marshal Arjan Singh, India's first Air Chief Marshal. The event serves as a platform to promote sportsmanship and camaraderie among the armed forces. The Air Force's win underscores their prowess not only in the skies but also on the sports field.



Brazilian Football Star Neymar Jr. Retires :-

Brazilian football icon Neymar Jr. announced his retirement from international football following Brazil's 2-1 defeat against Norway in the 2026 FIFA World Cup. At 34, Neymar leaves behind a remarkable legacy, having contributed significantly to Brazil's success on the global stage. His decision marks the end of an era for Brazilian football, with Neymar being one of the most celebrated players of his generation. His retirement presents an opportunity for emerging talents to step up and continue Brazil's football legacy.



Sourav Ganguly Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame :-

Former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame, becoming the 12th Indian cricketer to receive this esteemed honour. Known for his aggressive leadership and fearless approach, Ganguly transformed Indian cricket, leading the team to the 2003 World Cup final and securing memorable overseas Test victories. He also played a crucial role in nurturing talent like MS Dhoni, Virender Sehwag, and Harbhajan Singh. Ganguly joins cricket legends such as Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, and Kapil Dev in this elite group.



135th IndianOil Durand Cup Trophy Tour Begins :-

The 135th IndianOil Durand Cup Trophy Tour was commenced in Guwahati with the unveiling of the Durand Cup, President's Cup, and Simla Trophy. Asia's oldest football tournament, initiated in 1888, will see matches hosted across five cities, including Kolkata and Guwahati. Guwahati will host six Group F matches, featuring teams like NorthEast United FC and Bodoland FC, from 1 to 13 August 2026. This annual event celebrates Assam's fifth consecutive year as a host, promoting regional sports culture.



Spain Wins 2026 FIFA World Cup in Thrilling Finale :-

Spain clinched the 2026 FIFA World Cup title defeating Argentina 1-0 in a nail-biting final. Substitute Ferran Torres scored the decisive goal in extra time, leading Spain to their second World Cup victory. The team's exceptional performance, conceding only one goal throughout the tournament, earned them widespread acclaim. Captain Rodri was awarded the Golden Ball for his outstanding play. Spain's victory is a testament to its footballing prowess and serves as an inspiring story of teamwork and perseverance.



PV Sindhu Makes History at Japan Open :-

PV Sindhu has become the first Indian to win the Japan Open, defeating Akane Yamaguchi in a commanding performance. Her victory with scores of 21-17, 21-17 in Tokyo is a monumental achievement in Indian badminton, highlighting her exceptional skill and determination. Sindhu's triumph at the Japan Open adds to her illustrious career and serves as an inspiring narrative of success and resilience in sports.



Pakistan to Host the 14th South Asian Games in 2027 :-

Pakistan is set to host the 14th South Asian Games from March 23 to 31, 2027, in Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad. This marks the third time Pakistan will host the Games, previously held in 1989 and 2004. The event will witness participation from over 3,500 athletes from eight South Asian countries, competing in 27 sports categories. Originally scheduled for 2023, the Games were postponed multiple times. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sanctioned ₹11 billion for the event's preparations, highlighting the country's commitment to fostering regional sportsmanship and cultural exchange.



Rohit Sharma Scores Historic ODI Century at Lord's :-

Rohit Sharma made history by becoming the first Indian to score an ODI century at Lord's. At 39 years and 80 days, Sharma broke Sachin Tendulkar's record as the oldest Indian to achieve an international century. This feat marked his 34th ODI century and his eighth in England, surpassing Tendulkar's record for the most by a visiting batter in a single country. Sharma's performance was instrumental in India's successful chase of England's 387/3, further cementing his legacy in international cricket.



India Achieves Historic Victory at 58th International Chemistry Olympiad :-

India made history at the 58th International Chemistry Olympiad (ICHO) 2026 held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, by winning four Gold medals, becoming the first country to achieve this feat. The winning team comprised Debadatta Priyadarshi (Odisha), Harshit Singla (Punjab), Kabeer Chillar (Delhi), and Sandeep Kuchi (Telangana). The competition saw participation from 363 students across 93 countries. India ranked first jointly with China, Vietnam, and Russia Group B, solidifying its standing in the field of Chemistry. The Indian team's participation was supported by the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education.



Lovlina Borgohain Secures India's First Medal at CWG 2026 :-

Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain has secured a bronze medal in the women's 75kg category at the Commonwealth Games 2026 held in Glasgow. An Olympic medalist, Borgohain is set to compete in the semifinals on July 31. India has sent a contingent of 124 members participating across 10 sports. The boxing format of the Commonwealth Games awards bronze medals to both losing semifinalists, marking an

important achievement for India in the international sports arena.



Gyaneshwari Yadav Shines with CWG Silver Medal :-

Gyaneshwari Yadav, the daughter of an electrician from Chhattisgarh, clinched a silver medal in weightlifting at the Commonwealth Games 2026. Competing in the women's 53kg category, her achievement adds to India's medal tally and highlights the country's prowess in weightlifting. Yadav's success story is an inspiration, showcasing the potential of athletes from diverse backgrounds to shine on the international stage. Her accomplishment reflects the importance of sports development programs in nurturing talent.



Esha Singh wins ISSF World Cup gold; Manu Bhaker secures bronze for India :-

Indian shooter Esha Singh delivered an outstanding performance by winning the gold medal at the ISSF World Cup, while fellow Olympian Manu Bhaker claimed the bronze medal, adding to India's impressive medal tally in international shooting. Esha Singh demonstrated exceptional composure and consistency throughout the competition, outperforming a strong international contender to secure the top podium finish. Manu Bhaker, one of India's most accomplished shooters, once again showcased her experience and resilience by earning another World Cup medal. Their performances underline India's growing strength in precision shooting.

17: State



Pushkar Singh Dhama Completes Historic Tenure as Uttarakhand CM :-

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama is set to make history on July 4, 2026, becoming the first BJP Chief Minister to complete a continuous five-year tenure in the state. Dhama, who assumed office on July 4, 2021, was re-elected after the BJP's victory in the 2022 assembly

elections. His administration has focused on governance and development, inaugurating projects worth ₹123.79 crore. The milestone underscores political stability in a state known for frequent leadership changes since its formation in 2000.



Assam CM Launches Van Mahotsav Campaign, Encouraging Afforestation :-

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the Van Mahotsav campaign, urging citizens to plant saplings and increase green cover. Emphasizing public participation, the campaign seeks to enhance environmental conservation and sustainable development. The initiative aligns with Assam's efforts to expand forest cover and protect biodiversity, contributing to ecological balance and climate resilience in the region.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan Conducts Northeast Flood Assessment :-

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan assured flood-affected families in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam of comprehensive Central support during his flood assessment visit. Despite weather challenges, Chouhan emphasized the government's commitment to timely relief and rehabilitation efforts. The visit underscores the importance of coordinated disaster response and long-term strategies to enhance regional resilience against recurring floods.



Bihar's Munger Banyan Tree Verified as Oldest Scientifically Dated Banyan :-

Scientists have accurately dated a banyan tree in Bihar's Munger district at around 700 years, marking it as the

oldest scientifically dated banyan tree. This breakthrough in radiocarbon dating offers a robust method for determining the age of tropical trees, reinforcing the importance of preserving natural and cultural heritage. The dating not only revises historical assumptions about the banyan but also enhances understanding of India's ecological and cultural landscape.



Assam Eases Land Use Rules to Boost Rural Entrepreneurship :-

The Assam government has introduced a reform allowing rural entrepreneurs to establish small industrial and Khadi units on agricultural land without prior land conversion approval. Announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, this initiative aims to promote rural entrepreneurship and self-employment by simplifying bureaucratic processes. The reform includes automatic land conversion for eligible enterprises, reducing procedural delays and encouraging young entrepreneurs in rural areas. This move is expected to enhance employment opportunities, strengthen village-based industries, and promote value addition to agricultural produce.



Tripura Schools Mandate 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jana Gana Mana' :-

The Tripura Government has made it mandatory for all schools to start their morning assemblies with the full rendition of 'Vande Mataram' and the National Anthem 'Jana Gana Mana'. This initiative aims to enhance patriotism, discipline, and national consciousness among students. The directive, announced by Chief Minister Manik Saha, has been widely welcomed as a move to instill national identity and civic responsibility. It is part of a broader strategy to emphasize value-based education and character building.



Sirsa Kinnow Receives GI Tag, First for Haryana Fruit :-

The Sirsa Kinnow has become the first fruit from Haryana to obtain the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, as per the certificate issued by the GI Registry in Chennai. Recognized for its sweet taste, high juice content, and vibrant color, the Sirsa Kinnow's unique qualities stem from the region's climatic conditions. This status provides protection against imitation, enhances its market value, and strengthens Haryana's horticultural brand on a global scale. The GI status is expected to boost exports and improve the economic standing of local farmers.



Jalalabad Renamed to Parashurampuri in Uttar Pradesh

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, led by CM Yogi Adityanath, approved the renaming of Jalalabad town in

Shahjahanpur district to Parashurampuri. This change, unopposed by the Central Government, reflects the town's historical and religious significance as the birthplace of Lord Parashurama, the sixth avatar of Vishnu. Originally named during the Mughal era, the renaming emphasizes cultural heritage and aligns with initiatives to revive historical identities in the state, promoting tourism and local pride.



Uttar Pradesh Data Centre Policy 2026 Targets Massive Investments :-

The Uttar Pradesh Data Centre Policy 2026, recently approved by the state cabinet, aims to transform the state into a global hub for green and AI-enabled data centers. The policy targets an investment of ₹2 lakh crore and the addition of 2 GW capacity. It offers incentives for GPU-based technology and extra subsidies for Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions. By supporting Tier III IV centers, the policy is expected to generate significant employment and boost sectors such as IT and cloud computing, reinforcing UP's position as a technology leader.



Karnataka Proposes Hampi, Mysuru for Global Destination Development :-

Karnataka recommended Hampi, Mysuru, and Lakkundi for the Union Tourism Ministry's Global Destination

Development project. This initiative, finalized during a state-level meeting in Hampi, aims to boost infrastructure, connectivity, and sustainable tourism with ₹800 crore in central assistance. Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will benefit from digital preservation and heritage station redevelopment. This project signifies a significant step towards enhancing India's cultural tourism, potentially increasing both domestic and international tourist inflows.



UP Cabinet Approves Data Centre Policy 2026 :-

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved the Uttar Pradesh Data Centre Policy 2026, aiming to attract ₹2 lakh crore investment and create 2 GW capacity. The policy focuses on the development of green and AI-enabled data centres, promoting sustainable growth and technological innovation. This initiative is part of the state's efforts to position itself as a leading data centre hub in India. By fostering an environment conducive to investment, the policy aims to drive economic growth and create employment opportunities.



Thorium Deposits Identified in Karnataka :-

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) identified thorium-bearing mineral deposits in Gundlupet taluk, Chamarajanagar district, Karnataka, across 700 acres,

with 20 acres marked for core mining. Thorium, primarily found in monazite sands, serves as a potential nuclear fuel convertible to uranium-233. India, rich in thorium resources, particularly in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha's coastal belts, sees this discovery as a significant boost for its advanced nuclear energy programme. The finding follows extensive surveys in the region, supporting India's energy strategy.



West Bengal to Observe 'Ayushman Diwas' on August 16 :-

The West Bengal government, led by CM Suwendu Adhikari, announced the observance of August 16 as 'Ayushman Diwas' in place of 'Khela Hobe Diwas'. This change aims to promote awareness about the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), which provides health insurance for vulnerable families. Commemorating the completion of 100 days of the BJP-led government, the day will feature awareness campaigns and outreach programmes to educate citizens on eligibility, benefits, and cashless treatment under the scheme. This initiative underscores the government's focus on public health and welfare.



Ahmedabad Sets Guinness World Record with Plantation Drive :-

Ahmedabad set a Guinness World Record by planting 361,000 saplings in one hour at Bhadaj using the Miyawaki method. The initiative, organized by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, involved over 25,000 volunteers and featured 35 indigenous species across 76,000 sq meters. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel were present, marking a significant environmental effort. This drive surpasses Assam's previous record of 331,929 trees planted in one hour in 2023 and supports the larger goals of planting 1.25 crore trees in the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency and 50 lakh in the AMC area.



Rare Sighting of Laudankia Vine Snake in Udaipur :-

In a rare ecological observation, the Laudankia Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla laudankia*) has been photographed in Ubeshwar wildlife area, Udaipur, marking the first recorded sighting in the region in nearly 30 years. Described in 2019, this species is endemic to India and is a mildly venomous rear-fanged vine snake. The snake features a chestnut-brown body with black speckles and measures between 80 cm to 1.5 m in length. Known for its diurnal and arboreal nature, the snake inhabits dry deciduous forests, scrublands, and hill slopes.



Uttarakhand Opens First GI Products Gallery :-

Uttarakhand inaugurated its first Geographical Indications (GI) Products Gallery at the Forest Training Academy in Haldwani. The gallery showcases over 30 GI-tagged products, including agricultural produce and handicrafts such as Bedu, Ramnagar litchi, Ramgarh peach, Munsiyari rajma, Aipan art, and Tamta copperware. GI tags certify products linked to specific geographical origins and traditional qualities. The objective of the gallery is to promote awareness, connect artisans with markets, and preserve traditional knowledge.



Tamil Nadu Launches Nalam TN Digital Health Portal :-

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu launched the Nalam TN digital health portal, providing an integrated platform for government healthcare services. The portal offers a single interface for patients, hospitals, and institutions, and includes a monitored contribution system for government hospitals. Complementing this, the NalamAI WhatsApp chatbot facilitates appointment scheduling. Alongside the portal launch, the state inaugurated ₹139 crore worth of healthcare projects and issued appointment orders to 751 Assistant Medical Officers and 1,393 Health Inspectors, enhancing healthcare access and management.



New Damselfly Species Discovered in Kerala's Western Ghats :-

Researchers have identified multiple new damselfly species in Kerala's Western Ghats, enhancing the region's rich biodiversity. These discoveries, made between 2023 and 2026, include species such as *Lestes paloti* and *Euphaea wayanadensis*. Found in Silent Valley National Park and Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, these species are vital indicators of wetland and forest health. The findings, which use advanced morphological and molecular methods, underscore the ecological significance of the Western Ghats.



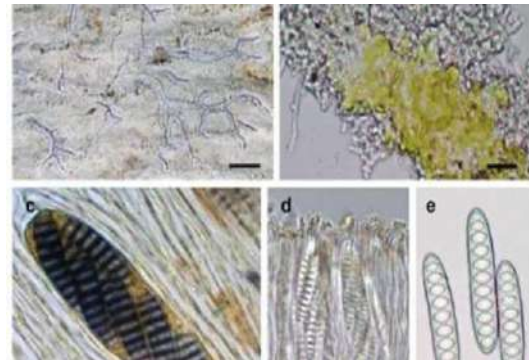
Uttar Pradesh Launches Kaushal Setu and Kaushal Sarathi Platforms :-

Uttar Pradesh launched two digital platforms, Kaushal Setu and Kaushal Sarathi, to streamline skill development. Kaushal Setu simplifies registration for training partners, while Kaushal Sarathi provides district-wise information on training centers. These initiatives, unveiled during World Youth Skills Day celebrations, aim to enhance transparency and accessibility in skill development, with partnerships formed for training in robotics, AI, and textiles, reflecting the state's commitment to empowering its workforce.



ICMR Drones Revolutionize TB Diagnosis in Telangana :-

An ICMR study in Telangana's Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district under the i-DRONE initiative has demonstrated the efficacy of using drones to transport TB sputum samples. This innovation reduced diagnosis time from 15 days to 5 days and cut patient costs significantly. The hub-and-spoke model, involving sample collection at Primary Health Centres and drone delivery to TB units, enhances access and speeds up treatment under the National TB Elimination Programme. The initiative underscores the potential of technology in transforming public healthcare delivery.



Discovery of Five New Lichen Species in Western Ghats

The MACS Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) in Pune announced the discovery of five new lichen species in the Western Ghats. Using a combination of traditional taxonomy and multi-locus DNA sequencing, these species—*Allographa keralensis*, *Allographa nayakae*, *Allographa paraconsanguinea*, *Allographa persistinspersa*, and *Allographa semicarbonisata*—were identified. This marks the first comprehensive molecular phylogenetic study of *Allographa* in this biodiversity hotspot. Lichens serve as crucial bioindicators, providing insight into air quality and ecosystem health.



India's First Immersive Language Museum Opens in Kolkata :-

India's first immersive language museum, Shabdalok (Museum of Word), was inaugurated at the National Library campus in Kolkata. The museum presents the nation's linguistic diversity, showcasing around 380 languages, including those listed in the 2011 Census. With nine galleries equipped with interactive touchscreens, holograms, AI, AR, VR, and audiovisual installations, this initiative by the Union Ministry of Culture educates visitors on linguistic evolution and cultural significance. Entry is free until August 15, 2026, offering a unique opportunity to explore India's rich linguistic heritage.



Jharkhand Film and Television Institute Established :-

The Jharkhand Film Development Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute to establish the Jharkhand Film and Television Institute in Ranchi. The institute aims to become a significant hub for film training, offering short-term certificate courses in various fields such as sound design, editing, animation, scriptwriting, cinematography, direction, and production. Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute will oversee the academic aspects, including curriculum, faculty, and certification. This initiative is expected to support Jharkhand's creative economy and enhance indigenous cultural representation in media.



Tamil Nadu's First Climate Resilient Village: Killai :-

Killai village in Cuddalore district has become Tamil Nadu's first fully operational Climate Resilient Village as of 22 July 2026. The project, implemented under the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission with an investment of ₹230.15 lakh, includes the restoration of a 3-km stretch of the Buckingham Canal, the removal of invasive *Prosopis juliflora*, and the planting of over 3,000 mangroves. The initiative also features solar panels, street lights, solar driers, and cold storage facilities to support sustainable fishing livelihoods. This comprehensive approach addresses challenges such as cyclones, erosion, salinity, and biodiversity loss in coastal areas.



Chhattisgarh Approves 10% Reservation for Agniveers :-

Chhattisgarh has approved a 10% reservation for Agniveers in direct recruitment to selected Class-III state government posts. This reservation applies to roles such as police constables, forest guards, and jail warders, and is open to eligible Agniveers from Chhattisgarh who hold a valid discharge certificate after four years of service. The decision was made during a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai under the new 2026 rules. This initiative aims to provide career opportunities

for ex-Agniveers in state services, reinforcing the state's commitment to supporting veterans.



Tamil Nadu Renames Breakfast Scheme as Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Scheme :-

Tamil Nadu renamed the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme to the Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Breakfast Scheme. Originally launched in 2022 for students in Classes 1-5, the scheme is now extended to include Classes 6-8 from September 17, 2026. The initiative will benefit over 3.4 million students with an annual budget of ₹343.55 crore. The renaming coincides with the birth anniversary of Kamaraj and aligns with the social reform legacy of prominent leaders like Periyar and Kamaraj, emphasizing the state's commitment to enhancing educational support.



Assam flood death toll rises as rescue and relief operations continue :-

Floods in Assam have continued to cause widespread devastation, with the death toll increasing as heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers affect several districts. Rescue teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), armed forces, and local authorities are conducting evacuation, relief distribution, and medical assistance operations. Thousands of people have been displaced and are staying in relief camps, while damage has been reported

to homes, roads, bridges, crops, and public infrastructure.



Jauhar University Demolition Temporarily Stayed by Court :-

The Moradabad Divisional Commissioner's court has granted interim relief to Jauhar University, staying the proposed demolition of 38 buildings on its campus until a final hearing. This legal development follows an application by the university's counsel, emphasizing the ongoing legal challenges faced by educational institutions. The case highlights issues of land use, educational infrastructure, and legal rights within the Indian education system.



Madhya Pradesh to Expand World's First White Tiger Safari :-

Madhya Pradesh is set to expand the Mukundpur White Tiger Safari, the world's first dedicated facility of its kind. The expansion will include a breeding center, enhancing wildlife conservation efforts and promoting biodiversity. This initiative aims to boost eco-tourism and create public awareness about wildlife conservation. The safari's development underscores Madhya Pradesh's commitment to preserving natural habitats while fostering tourism and educational opportunities.

18: Summits & Conferences



Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches National Rural Development Meet :-

Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Sammelan in New Delhi, emphasizing the importance of rural development for a prosperous India. The conference aims to implement Prime Minister Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by strengthening rural welfare schemes and ensuring last-mile delivery. The event will focus on reforms in flagship programmes and the newly introduced Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar Aajeevika Mission (Gramin).



Indian Mango Festival in Baku Celebrates India's Mango Heritage :-

The Embassy of India in Azerbaijan is set to host the first-ever Indian Mango Festival in Baku on July 5, 2026. This event will showcase India's rich mango heritage, featuring popular varieties like Alphonso and Kesar. The festival aims to strengthen cultural ties and promote Indian mangoes in Azerbaijan, highlighting their superior taste and nutritional benefits. India's mango exports

continue to grow, offering a promising market in Azerbaijan due to its strategic location and expanding food sector.



PM Modi to Visit Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand for Bilateral Talks :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand from July 6-11, emphasizing bilateral cooperation and engagement with the Indian diaspora. The visit aims to strengthen strategic partnerships, review key areas of collaboration, and promote cultural ties with these nations. Modi's international engagements reflect India's foreign policy priorities, focusing on enhancing global partnerships and fostering economic, cultural, and political cooperation with key international allies.



India Hosts BRICS Women Ministerial Meeting in Kochi

India is hosting the BRICS Women Ministerial Meeting in Kochi, focusing on women's empowerment and sustainable development. The meeting, under India's BRICS Chairship, aims to promote women's leadership, digital inclusion, and economic opportunities. This event

is part of India's ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation among BRICS nations and accelerate progress towards gender equality and inclusive growth.



PM Modi Holds Bilateral Talks with Indonesia's President :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto held bilateral talks in Jakarta, focusing on enhancing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The discussions covered defense, maritime cooperation, and cultural ties. The meeting marks a significant step in strengthening India-Indonesia relations, reflecting the countries' shared vision for regional stability and prosperity.



India-Rwanda Strengthen Defence Ties in Second JDCC Meeting :-

India and Rwanda conducted their second Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting in New Delhi on July 10, 2026. Co-chaired by Amitabh Prasad from the Ministry of Defence and Brigadier General Louis Kanobayier from the Rwanda Defence Force, the meeting focused on expanding cooperation in military training, joint exercises, and defence industries. An implementation plan with timelines was finalized,

emphasizing the two countries' commitment to enhancing bilateral defence relations. This collaboration underscores India's strategic engagement with African nations.



Switzerland to Host Geneva AI Summit in 2027 :-

Switzerland is set to host the Geneva AI Summit on June 21–22, 2027, at Palexpo, Geneva, alongside the ITU's AI for Good Global Summit. Spearheaded by Swiss Minister Albert Rosti, the summit aims to create a global platform for unified AI governance and innovation. Building on past summits in New Delhi, Bletchley Park, Seoul, and Paris, the event will focus on improving human lives through healthcare, education, and sustainability, while ensuring AI safety, ethics, and international regulations. This summit is pivotal for global AI collaboration and policy-making.



BRICS Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting Held in Guwahati :-

India hosted the BRICS Heads of Anti-Drug Agencies Meeting in Guwahati, focusing on enhancing operational cooperation against synthetic drugs and trafficking. The meeting underscored the collective commitment of BRICS nations to combat drug-related challenges

through strategic collaboration and information sharing. This initiative is crucial for addressing the global menace of drug trafficking and ensuring the safety and security of citizens. The meeting also aimed to strengthen international partnerships in tackling drug-related issues.



India Hosts BRICS Meeting on Consumer Protection :-

India chaired the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy at UNCTAD in Geneva. The session focused on enhancing consumer protection frameworks and addressing challenges in the digital economy. The meeting facilitated discussions on best practices and regulatory approaches to safeguard consumer interests. This initiative underscores India's commitment to strengthening consumer rights and promoting fair trade practices in the global market.



National Conference on e-Gov Reforms Held in Shillong

A two-day national conference focusing on NextGen Administrative and e-Governance reforms was held in Shillong. Organized by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration

with the Meghalaya Government, the conference was inaugurated by Dr. Jitendra Singh and Chief Minister Conrad Sangma. It featured sessions on PM Awards, e-Governance Awards, and best practices in Meghalaya and the North East. The conference aimed to enhance digital governance, citizen-centric services, cybersecurity, and innovative reforms, with over 300 delegates in attendance.



All India Water Secretaries' Conference Focuses on Water Management :-

The All India Water Secretaries' Conference took place in New Delhi under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, chaired by Union Minister C.R. Patil. The conference, attended by around 200 officials, emphasized eight priority areas, including water conservation, dam safety, and groundwater management. Key documents released included the City-level Action Plan for Varanasi's treated water reuse and an O Manual for recharge structures. This initiative is pivotal for achieving comprehensive dam safety evaluations by December 2026, aiming to enhance sustainable water resource management across India.



India Hosts BRICS Network University Meeting 2026 :-

India, during its BRICS Presidency, hosted the International Governing Board meeting of the BRICS Network University virtually. The meeting focused on reviewing the Action Plan 2025–2028, discussing the development of a new website, and enhancing institutional cooperation. New thematic groups, such as Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems, were proposed to expand BRICS NU's scope. The network also welcomed new members, including Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, and Indonesia, with new themes such as Health Sciences and Sustainable Agriculture. The meeting was accompanied by the BRICS Postgraduate Forum and the Rectors' Forum.



3rd Digital India RISC-V Symposium to be held at IIT Madras :-

The 3rd Digital India RISC-V (DIR-V) Symposium is set to take place at IIT Madras Research Park, Chennai, on 1-2 August 2026. This event is organized in collaboration with MeitY and RISC-V International, under the theme “Empowering Bharat’s Semiconductor Future”. The symposium will focus on secure computing, artificial intelligence, and the development of the RISC-V ecosystem. It will bring together policymakers, industry experts, startups, and academia, and will feature a Grand Challenge Hackathon. This initiative is part of India’s broader ambitions to boost its indigenous processor and semiconductor industry under the Digital India agenda.



2nd Bharat Green Hydrogen Summit 2026 Held in New Delhi :-

The 2nd Bharat Green Hydrogen Summit 2026, organized by FICCI, took place in New Delhi focusing on India's green hydrogen production and export potential. Discussions highlighted hydrogen-based mobility and India’s aim to capture 10% of the global green hydrogen market by 2030. Minister of State Shripad Yesso Naik addressed the summit, with Gujarat showcasing its Green Hydrogen Policy. A FICCI-EY report detailing India's export potential was released, emphasizing the strategic importance of green hydrogen in sectors like refining, fertilizers, steel, and heavy transport.



Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo 2026 Announced :-

The Bharat Renewable Energy Summit & Expo 2026 is scheduled from 2–5 November 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Coinciding with the 9th ISA Assembly and 4th International Conference on Green Hydrogen, the summit will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister. It will gather global stakeholders in renewable energy, focusing on policy, investment, technology, hybrid projects, battery storage, and green hydrogen under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) What is the main focus of the 'Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029)' unveiled by Union Home Minister Amit Shah?

- A) Expanding pharmaceutical exports
- B) Strengthening India's fight against narcotics
- C) Promoting ayurvedic medicine
- D) Regulating alcohol consumption

2) What major change was proposed by India's Health Ministry in June 2026 regarding imported drug shelf-life norms?

- A) Minimum shelf life at import set to 24 months
- B) All drugs must have 80% shelf life remaining
- C) Minimum 12 months residual shelf life at import
- D) No shelf-life requirement for imported drugs

3) Who is the Japanese Prime Minister scheduled to attend the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit in New Delhi in July 2026?

- A) Fumio Kishida
- B) Yoshihide Suga
- C) Sanae Takaichi
- D) Shinzo Abe

4) What was a key highlight of the 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Saptah' 2026 campaign?

- A) Over 1 crore citizens participated
- B) All drugs in India were legalized
- C) Ban on all tobacco products
- D) Worldwide awareness rallies held

5) What is the main objective of India's newly unveiled roadmap for green urea production?

- A) Increase urea imports
- B) Promote sustainable agriculture using green ammonia
- C) Subsidize grey ammonia
- D) Ban chemical fertilizers

6) Which country did Prime Minister Narendra Modi visit in June 2026 as the Guest of Honour for its Golden Jubilee National Day celebrations?

- A) Maldives
- B) Sri Lanka

C) Seychelles

D) Mauritius

7) What major digital health initiative was launched by the Union Health Ministry at the 16th CCHFW Conference?

- A) e-Sanjeevani 2.0
- B) Ayush Bharat 3.0
- C) Aarogya Setu 2.0
- D) Jan Aushadhi Plus

8) What cooperative-based ride-hailing service was recently launched by Amit Shah in Gujarat?

- A) India Rides
- B) Bharat Taxi
- C) Coop Cab
- D) Sarathi Express

9) Which major environmental event did Germany face in June 2026?

- A) Severe drought
- B) Record heatwave
- C) Mass flooding
- D) Hurricane

10) Which Indian Navy ships visited Thailand in June 2026 as part of an operational deployment?

- A) INS Vikrant, INS Tabar, INS Shivalik
- B) INS Udaygiri, INS Kavaratti, INS Shakti
- C) INS Sumitra, INS Kolkata, INS Trikand
- D) INS Chetak, INS Shivalik, INS Delhi

11) What is the main objective of the SUMAN Roadmap 2030 launched by the Union Health Ministry?

- A) Universal vaccination coverage
- B) Boosting AYUSH treatments
- C) Strengthening maternal and newborn healthcare
- D) Eradicating malaria

12) How many medals did Team India win at the Global Skills Challenge Australia 2026?

- A) Two
- B) Four
- C) Five

D) Seven

13) Which new rural development scheme replace MGNREGS nationwide from July 1, 2026?

- A) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
- B) VB-GRAM-G Scheme
- C) Lakhpati Didi Mission
- D) Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya

14) The Union Cabinet recently doubled the government's commitment to NIIF. What is the new total commitment amount?

- A) ₹30,000 crore
- B) ₹50,000 crore
- C) ₹60,000 crore
- D) ₹80,000 crore

15) According to MoSPI's 2026 SDG Progress Report, what percentage of India's population is now covered by social protection systems?

- A) 22%
- B) 51.3%
- C) 65.3%
- D) 87%

16) When is Chartered Accountants' Day celebrated in India?

- A) June 30
- B) July 1
- C) August 1
- D) December 1

17) Who recently assumed charge as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) of India?

- A) General Upendra Dwivedi
- B) General Praveen Kumar
- C) General Dhiraj Seth
- D) General Rajendra Prasad

18) Which new feature is WhatsApp introducing to enhance user privacy?

- A) Video calls
- B) Username-based identity
- C) Disappearing messages
- D) Group video sharing

19) What is the main purpose of the newly launched FCRA 2.0 Portal?

A) Online passport renewal

B) Digital land records

C) Streamlining foreign contribution regulation

D) Tax filing system

20) Which two countries recently reinforced their maritime partnership through a port call at Sattahip?

- A) India and Singapore
- B) India and Thailand
- C) India and Indonesia
- D) India and Malaysia

21) Which two Indian Naval Ships recently concluded a port call in Seychelles as part of the island nation's National Day and Golden Jubilee celebrations?

- A) INS Vikrant and INS Viraat
- B) INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak
- C) INS Arihant and INS Satpura
- D) INS Kolkata and INS Shivalik

22) Which Indian scientific institution's century-old solar records were recently digitized and analyzed using Artificial Intelligence to map the Sun's magnetic activity?

- A) Indian Institute of Astrophysics
- B) Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences
- C) Kodaikanal Solar Observatory
- D) Indian Space Research Organisation

23) Who had their tenure as India's Foreign Secretary extended by one year beyond July 14, 2026?

- A) Randhir Jaiswal
- B) Vikram Misri
- C) Shyam Saran
- D) Harsh Vardhan Shringla

24) Which Indian Air Marshal assumed command of the Southern Air Command of the Indian Air Force in July 2026?

- A) Air Marshal Manish Khanna
- B) Air Marshal PV Shivanand

- C) Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann
- D) Air Marshal Tejinder Singh

25) What is the primary concern raised by the Indian government regarding WhatsApp's proposed 'username' feature?

- A) Increased data storage costs
- B) User interface confusion
- C) Risk of online fraud and impersonation
- D) Network bandwidth issues

26) Which Indian programme recently completed over 360 projects aimed at the rejuvenation of the Ganga river?

- A) Clean Ganga Abhiyan
- B) Namami Gange
- C) Jal Jeevan Mission
- D) Ganga Action Plan

27) Which Indian state's Borjuli wetland was recently notified as a Biodiversity Heritage Site for wild rice conservation?

- A) West Bengal
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Assam
- D) Kerala

28) Which two countries concluded 16 key agreements in July 2026, expanding cooperation in AI, energy, and economic security?

- A) India and France
- B) India and USA
- C) India and Japan
- D) India and UK

29) Which new manufacturing facility, worth Rs 35,000 crore, was jointly inaugurated by the Indian and Japanese Prime Ministers in Haryana?

- A) Tata Motors Pune Plant
- B) Hyundai Chennai Plant
- C) Maruti Suzuki Kharkhoda Plant
- D) Honda Manesar Plant

30) Which Indian company signed major export deals for green ammonia and methanol with

Japanese firms under the National Green Hydrogen Mission?

- A) Reliance Industries
- B) NTPC Limited
- C) ACME Cleantech Solutions
- D) Indian Oil Corporation

31) Which country did Egypt defeat to secure its first-ever World Cup knockout victory 2026?

- A) Argentina
- B) Australia
- C) Cape Verde
- D) Portugal

32) What major target did Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal set at the July 2026 Board of Trade meeting?

- A) \$500 billion in exports
- B) \$863 billion in exports
- C) \$1 trillion in exports
- D) \$2 trillion in exports

33) Which Indian city recently exported its first 40 MT shipment of biscuits to Oman under a new CEPA agreement?

- A) Surat
- B) Mumbai
- C) Varanasi
- D) Chennai

34) What is the main focus of the semiconductor hub being established at IIT Gandhinagar?

- A) Pharmaceutical research
- B) Nano-fertilizer production
- C) Semiconductor research and training
- D) Aviation technology development

35) What is the expected operational start date for India's first Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train service?

- A) June 2029
- B) August 2027
- C) December 2026
- D) March 2028

36) Which scheme's next phase, 'Viksit UDAN', was launched by PM Modi to boost regional air connectivity in India in July 2026?

- A) UDAN
- B) Vande Bharat
- C) Viksit Bharat
- D) Bharat Mala

37) Which two states signed an agreement to bring water from the Hathnikund Barrage to the Shekhawati region via an underground pipeline?

- A) Punjab and Haryana
- B) Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
- C) Rajasthan and Haryana
- D) Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan

38) With which country did India's Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) come into force on July 4, 2026?

- A) Japan
- B) Israel
- C) United States
- D) France

39) Who became the first Indian Prime Minister in 40 years to visit New Zealand, as per July 2026 reports?

- A) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Indira Gandhi
- D) Manmohan Singh

40) Which country did India assist through 'Operation Amistad' after a devastating earthquake in June 2026?

- A) Peru
- B) Venezuela
- C) Chile
- D) Turkey

41) Which Indian state recently launched a comprehensive Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy aiming for over 30% EV adoption by 2030?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Delhi
- C) Karnataka

D) Gujarat

42) Who directed the adoption of a 'Zero Coal Leakage Plan' to curb illegal coal mining in India?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Amit Shah
- D) Nitin Gadkari

43) Which country won its seventh Women's T20 World Cup title in July 2026?

- A) India
- B) England
- C) Australia
- D) South Africa

44) Who lead India's official delegation to chair the UNCTAD Consumer Protection meeting in Geneva in July 2026?

- A) Piyush Goyal
- B) Nidhi Khare
- C) S. Jaishankar
- D) Anurag Thakur

45) Which Indian government digital health platform received the Gold Award at the National e-Governance Awards 2026?

- A) e-Sanjeevani
- B) ICMR-MINDS
- C) e-Jagriti
- D) Ayushman Bharat

46) Who recently announced his departure as Portugal's football coach following their exit from the 2026 FIFA World Cup?

- A) Fernando Santos
- B) Luis de la Fuente
- C) Roberto Martinez
- D) Joachim Löw

47) Which iconic form of Indonesian performing arts depicting the Ramayana did PM Modi recently praise during his Jakarta visit?

- A) Barong dance
- B) Wayang Kulit
- C) Kecak dance
- D) Lenong theater

48) What milestone did the Ministry of Cooperation celebrate on July 6, 2026?

- A) 10th anniversary
- B) 5th Foundation Day
- C) 50 years of operation
- D) Centenary celebration

49) Which of the following sectors showed the highest growth in India's steel industry during Q1 FY2026?

- A) Iron ore mining
- B) Finished steel consumption
- C) Cold rolled coils
- D) Scrap imports

50) Which new digital initiative aims to connect Indian artisans and weavers directly with online buyers?

- A) e-Kranti
- B) Indiahandmade
- C) CraftsNet
- D) Skill India Portal

51) Which country conferred its highest civilian award 'Bintang Adipurna' on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 2026?

- A) Malaysia
- B) Bhutan
- C) Indonesia
- D) Egypt

52) What major defence collaboration did India and Indonesia agree upon during PM Modi's July 2026 visit?

- A) Akash Missile System
- B) BrahMos and Astra Missile Systems
- C) Tejas Fighter Jet Supply
- D) INS Vikrant Deployment

53) Which key digital payment integration is planned between India and Indonesia as per the July 2026 bilateral discussions?

- A) Paytm-Gopay
- B) BHIM-OVO
- C) UPI-QRIS

D) RuPay-LinkAja

54) What was a key outcome regarding education in the UDISE+ 2025-26 report released by India's Ministry of Education?

- A) Dropout rates increased at all school levels
- B) Teacher numbers declined
- C) Dropout rates at preparatory and secondary levels fell
- D) No change in digital infrastructure

55) Which Indian sports contingent will wear jute-viscose blended apparel for the first time at an international event in 2026?

- A) Olympics Team
- B) Asian Games Team
- C) Commonwealth Games Team
- D) SAFF Cup Team

56) Which country topped the Global Passport Index 2026 as per Global Citizen Solutions?

- A) India
- B) China
- C) Sweden
- D) USA

57) India's rank in the Global Passport Index 2026 is:

- A) 104th
- B) 125th
- C) 136th
- D) 118th

58) Who chaired the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) on Consumer Protection Law and Policy?

- A) Rekha Gupta
- B) Nidhi Khare
- C) Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
- D) Narendra Modi

59) What major facility did Prime Minister Modi inaugurate in Sanand, Gujarat, on 4 July 2026?

- A) AIIMS Hospital
- B) CG Semi OSAT Facility
- C) ISRO Launchpad
- D) Solar Power Plant

60) What is the main objective of Mission Kayakalp launched by the Delhi Government?

- A) Enhance agricultural productivity
- B) Upgrade school infrastructure
- C) Promote digital payments
- D) Clean the Yamuna river

61) Which Indian institute is set to open its first overseas campus in Indonesia's Singhasari Special Economic Zone?

- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIM Bangalore
- C) IIM Ahmedabad
- D) IIT Bombay

62) Who was appointed as India's Ambassador to North Korea in July 2026?

- A) Alok Kumar Mittal
- B) Amit Garg
- C) Sanjeev Jain
- D) Sujeet Pandey

63) Sirsa Kinnow, which received the GI tag in March 2026, is the first GI-tagged fruit from which state?

- A) Punjab
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Haryana
- D) Gujarat

64) Who was appointed Director-General of BPR&D?

- A) Amit Garg
- B) Sanjeev Jain
- C) Alok Kumar Mittal
- D) Sujeet Pandey

65) Girish Bharadwaj, who passed away in July 2026, was popularly known as the:

- A) Waterman of India
- B) Bridge Man of India
- C) Metro Man of India
- D) Rocket Man of India

66) Which city became the only Indian city to feature in the top 10 of the Global Happy City Index 2026?

- A) Mumbai
- B) Bangalore
- C) Jaipur
- D) Hyderabad

67) Who was appointed as the new Managing Director & CEO of South Indian Bank for a three-year term starting October 2026?

- A) Govind Mohan
- B) P.R. Seshadri
- C) Mahesh Muralidhar Pai
- D) Mansukh Mandaviya

68) In July 2026, which Indian state launched the 'Guru Dakshina' cashless medical scheme for education staff?

- A) Maharashtra
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Karnataka
- D) Gujarat

69) Who became India's 98th Chess Grandmaster in July 2026?

- A) Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa
- B) Kannan Vaidyanathan
- C) S. Aswath
- D) Vidit Gujrathi

70) What is the main goal of the Geneva AI Summit scheduled for June 2027?

- A) Boosting global tourism
- B) Unified AI governance and innovation
- C) Launching AI-powered gadgets
- D) Hosting cultural festivals

71) Who was recently appointed as the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs while retaining the position of CBSE Chairperson?

- A) Sanjeev Jain
- B) Mahesh Muralidhar Pai
- C) Lokhande Prashant Sitaram
- D) Alok Kumar Mittal

72) Which Indian bank appointed Mahesh Muralidhar Pai as its new MD CEO effective from October 1, 2026?

- A) Federal Bank
- B) South Indian Bank
- C) Canara Bank
- D) Dhanlaxmi Bank

73) Which Indian city was recommended for the Global Destination Development Project along with Hampi and Lakkundi?

- A) Mysuru
- B) Varanasi
- C) Hyderabad
- D) Puri

74) Which sports tournament did the Indian Air Force win by defeating the Indian Navy in July 2026?

- A) Subroto Cup
- B) Ranji Trophy
- C) Marshal Arjan Singh Memorial Hockey Tournament
- D) Durand Cup

75) What major step did the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) recently take for Aadhaar cardholders?

- A) Launched a new Aadhaar card format
- B) Enabled free email ID updates via Aadhaar App
- C) Started Aadhaar-linked payment wallets
- D) Mandated biometric re-verification

76) Which country recently became the seventh in the world to launch the once-weekly insulin 'Awiqli' for diabetes patients?

- A) Japan
- B) India
- C) UK
- D) China

77) Who was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame in July 2026, becoming the 12th Indian cricketer to receive this honor?

- A) Rahul Dravid
- B) Kapil Dev

- C) Sourav Ganguly
- D) Virender Sehwag

78) In the Global Liveability Index 2026, what was New Delhi's ranking among 173 cities?

- A) 98th
- B) 105th
- C) 120th
- D) 134th

79) Which country recently returned three stolen antiquities, including Chola-era and Nandi idols, to India in July 2026?

- A) United States
- B) France
- C) Australia
- D) United Kingdom

80) What is the focus area of the Australia–Canada–India Technology and Innovation Partnership (ACITI) launched in July 2026?

- A) Defence hardware
- B) Textile trade
- C) AI and green energy
- D) Space exploration

81) President Droupadi Murmu recently inaugurated Saushrutam 2026 at which institution?

- A) AIIMS New Delhi
- B) All India Institute of Ayurveda
- C) National Institute of Ayurveda
- D) Ministry of Health Headquarters

82) President Donald Trump proposed what fee on cargo traversing the Strait of Hormuz?

- A) 5 per cent
- B) 10 per cent
- C) 15 per cent
- D) 20 per cent

83) Bharat Tex 2026 is scheduled to be held at which venue?

- A) Pragati Maidan
- B) Vigyan Bhawan
- C) Bharat Mandapam
- D) Yashobhoomi

84) Bharat Tex 2026 is the _____ edition of the global textile event.

- A) First
- B) Second
- C) Third
- D) Fifth

85) India's total exports, including merchandise and services, reached approximately how much in April-June 2026-27?

- A) USD 198.50 billion
- B) USD 208.98 billion
- C) USD 232.73 billion
- D) USD 250.40 billion

86) Which Indian minister recently led a business delegation to Spain, Belgium, and Finland to boost trade and technology ties?

- A) Nirmala Sitharaman
- B) Ashwini Vaishnaw
- C) Piyush Goyal
- D) S Jaishankar

87) What is the primary purpose of the new Pink Saheli Smart Card introduced in Delhi from August 2026?

- A) Subsidized Metro fares
- B) Digital health records
- C) Free bus travel for women
- D) Access to public libraries

88) Which two organizations jointly launched India's largest rural telecom survey in July 2026?

- A) TRAI and BSNL
- B) NITI Aayog and DoT
- C) India Post and TRAI
- D) Airtel and Jio

89) The National Conference on NextGen Administrative e-Gov Reforms 2026 was held in which state?

- A) Assam
- B) Kerala
- C) Meghalaya
- D) Goa

90) India recently elevated its ties to a Strategic Partnership with which country in July 2026?

- A) Australia
- B) New Zealand
- C) Japan
- D) United Kingdom

91) Who was formally inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) in July 2026, becoming the second Indian woman scientist to receive this honour?

- A) Gagandeep Kang
- B) Soumya Swaminathan
- C) Sunita Narain
- D) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

92) Which new rural entrepreneurship programme was launched by NABARD on its 45th Foundation Day in July 2026?

- A) Rural Rise
- B) Gramodyam
- C) Udyamita Setu
- D) Grameen Udaan

93) What is the new official name for the Central Vista redevelopment area in New Delhi?

- A) Rajpath Complex
- B) Seva Teerth
- C) Kartavya Bhawan Complex
- D) Azadi Bhavan Area

94) Which campaign launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in July 2026 focuses on youth competitions for a 'Nasha Mukta' (drug-free) India?

- A) Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan
- B) Yuva Shakti Mission
- C) Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat
- D) Drug Free India Challenge

95) What is the main principle behind the newly launched Nifty 500 Ahimsa Index by NSE Indices in July 2026?

- A) Corporate Social Responsibility
- B) Financial Inclusion

- C) Non-violence (Ahimsa)
- D) Renewable Energy

96) Which rare snake species was photographed in Udaipur in July 2026 after nearly 30 years?

- A) Russell's Viper
- B) Laudankia Vine Snake
- C) Banded Krait
- D) King Cobra

97) The PMFME Scheme, extended till September 2026, primarily benefits which sector?

- A) Automobile manufacturing
- B) Textile weaving
- C) Micro food processing
- D) Renewable energy

98) What is the full form of SHANTI, the vision guiding India's UNSC non-permanent seat campaign for 2028-29?

- A) Securing Harmony and Integrity
- B) Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity
- C) Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance and International Trust
- D) Supporting Human Advancement, National Trust and Innovation

99) Which city held the 2026 BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting?

- A) Mumbai
- B) Thiruvananthapuram
- C) Hyderabad
- D) Bangalore

100) Delhi's Mahila Samridhi Yojana was renamed in July 2026 to:

- A) Delhi Shakti Yojana
- B) Nari Samman Yojana
- C) Delhi Lakshmi Yojana
- D) Women Empowerment Scheme

101) Which ministry released India's first trial Index of Services Production (ISP) in July 2026?

- A) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- B) Ministry of Heavy Industries

- C) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
- D) Ministry of Finance

102) What significant ban did DGFT announce in July 2026 regarding imports?

- A) Ban on genetically modified foods
- B) Ban on single-use plastics
- C) Ban on goods made with forced labour
- D) Ban on palm oil imports

103) Which Indian state exported fresh GI-tagged apricots to the UAE for the first time in July 2026?

- A) Himachal Pradesh
- B) Jammu & Kashmir
- C) Ladakh
- D) Uttarakhand

104) What is the official mascot for the 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships 2026?

- A) Sher
- B) Mayur
- C) Chakor
- D) Hathi

105) What is a key feature of Odisha's new agricultural marketing law approved in July 2026?

- A) State-wide minimum support price
- B) State as a single unified market
- C) Ban on private traders
- D) Subsidy on chemical fertilizers

106) What is the main objective of the draft CAFE-III norms released by the Ministry of Power in July 2026?

- A) Increase vehicle engine size
- B) Reduce vehicle CO₂ emissions
- C) Promote electric two-wheelers
- D) Ban diesel vehicles

107) Which policy was approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2026 to boost self-reliance in urea production?

- A) National Fertilizer Policy 2025
- B) Urea Import Reduction Scheme
- C) National Investment Policy for Urea-2026

D) Green Revolution 2.0

108) What is one key change in the windfall tax structure for petroleum exports effective from July 16, 2026?

- A) Diesel export tax reduced
- B) Petrol export tax increased
- C) Diesel export tax increased
- D) ATF export tax abolished

109) Which new monkey species was discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2026?

- A) Colobus satanas
- B) Colobus congoensis
- C) Colobus angolensis
- D) Colobus guereza

110) Where were multiple new damselfly species discovered between 2023 and 2026?

- A) Sundarbans
- B) Aravalli Range
- C) Western Ghats
- D) Eastern Himalayas

111) Which organization released the latest Investment Friendliness Index to rank Indian states on their investment ecosystem?

- A) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- B) NITI Aayog
- C) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- D) SEBI

112) The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has primarily been established to:

- A) Promote agricultural exports
- B) Strengthen research and innovation in India
- C) Increase defence imports
- D) Expand tourism infrastructure

113) India's first indigenous hydrogen-powered train was launched on which route?

- A) Delhi–Agra
- B) Jind–Sonipat
- C) Jaipur–Ajmer
- D) Lucknow–Kanpur

114) Hydrogen fuel cell trains primarily emit:

- A) Carbon dioxide
- B) Nitrogen oxide
- C) Water vapour
- D) Sulphur dioxide

115) Exercise Pitch Black 2026, in which the Indian Air Force participated, was hosted by:

- A) United States
- B) Australia
- C) France
- D) Japan

116) Which bill, scheduled for introduction in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of July 2026, seeks to extend statutory protection to Vande Mataram?

- A) National Anthem Protection Bill
- B) Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill
- C) National Symbols Safeguard Bill
- D) Patriotic Songs Protection Bill

117) What is the main purpose of the newly launched guidebook 'Going Global: A Practical Guide for Indian MSMEs'?

- A) Improving domestic credit access
- B) Facilitating MSMEs' global market entry
- C) Enhancing GST compliance
- D) Promoting local manufacturing clusters

118) Which city is hosting Group F matches of the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup in August 2026?

- A) Kolkata
- B) Imphal
- C) Guwahati
- D) Ranchi

119) What key benefit did the ICMR's i-DRONE study in Telangana demonstrate for TB diagnosis?

- A) Increased accuracy of diagnosis
- B) Reduction in diagnosis time and patient costs
- C) Expansion of testing centers
- D) Automation of drug delivery

120) India's first graduation course in Engineering Biology was launched with the aim to:

- A) Train agricultural engineers

- B) Develop bioeconomy talent and innovation
- C) Promote pharmaceutical exports
- D) Standardize medical education

121) Which company was fined €550 million by the European Union in July 2026 for failing to control illegal and unsafe products on its platform?

- A) Amazon
- B) AliExpress
- C) eBay
- D) Flipkart

122) Who became the new Prime Minister of Ukraine in July 2026?

- A) Mykhailo Fedorov
- B) Volodymyr Zelenskyy
- C) Serhii Koretskyi
- D) Denys Shmyhal

123) Who was elected as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom?

- A) Keir Starmer
- B) Rishi Sunak
- C) Andy Burnham
- D) Boris Johnson

124) What is the total budgetary allocation for India's Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) approved in July 2026?

- A) ₹25,000 crore
- B) ₹50,000 crore
- C) ₹62,500 crore
- D) ₹70,000 crore

125) Which Indian brand was ranked as the country's most valuable and strongest tyre brand in 2026?

- A) JK Tyre
- B) Apollo Tyres
- C) MRF
- D) CEAT

126) Which city will NOT host any events during the 14th South Asian Games 2027 in Pakistan?

- A) Lahore
- B) Islamabad
- C) Faisalabad

- D) Karachi

127) Who became the first Indian to score an ODI century at Lord's as of July 2026?

- A) Virat Kohli
- B) Sachin Tendulkar
- C) Rohit Sharma
- D) Shubman Gill

128) Which Indian city's government approved the PARIVARTAN vehicle scrappage scheme in July 2026?

- A) Mumbai
- B) Delhi
- C) Chennai
- D) Bengaluru

129) India joined which WTO agreement to regulate marine resource subsidies?

- A) Agreement on Agriculture
- B) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies
- C) Trade Facilitation Agreement
- D) Services Agreement

130) Which Indian-origin MP was appointed as the UK's first Cabinet-level Minister for Artificial Intelligence in July 2026?

- A) Sadiq Khan
- B) Kanishka Narayan
- C) Rishi Sunak
- D) Priti Patel

131) Which mobile app did NHAI use to launch the digital Local Pass facility in July 2026?

- A) FASTag
- B) RajmargYatra
- C) MargMitra
- D) HighwaySathi

132) Where was India's first immersive language museum 'Shabdlok' inaugurated in July 2026?

- A) Mumbai
- B) Delhi
- C) Chennai
- D) Kolkata

133) What is the main objective of ICMR licensing the SHetA2 technology to Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd. in July 2026?

- A) COVID-19 vaccine production
- B) Cervical cancer precursor therapy
- C) Malaria treatment
- D) Diabetes management

134) Scientists from which institute discovered five new lichen species in the Western Ghats in July 2026?

- A) IISc Bangalore
- B) MACS Agharkar Research Institute
- C) CSIR-NBRI
- D) National Botanical Research Institute

135) What is the significance of the Udmaroo Bridge inaugurated in Ladakh in July 2026?

- A) Connects Sikkim to Bhutan
- B) Reduces distance between key villages by 35 km
- C) First underwater bridge in India
- D) Longest railway bridge in Ladakh

136) Who won the Democratic nomination for Arizona's 1st Congressional District in July 2026?

- A) Jay Feely
- B) Amish Shah
- C) Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova
- D) Anurag Jain

137) Which recent naval expedition showcased the first-ever global circumnavigation by a team of nine women officers from India's armed forces?

- A) Operation Samudra Setu
- B) Samudra Pradakshina
- C) Varuna Mission
- D) Navika Sagar Parikrama

138) Who unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the Museum of the City of Skopje in North Macedonia in July 2026?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Amit Shah
- C) Droupadi Murmu
- D) Ajit Doval

139) Who secured India's first medal at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow?

- A) Mary Kom
- B) Nikhat Zareen
- C) Lovlina Borgohain
- D) Vinesh Phogat

140) Who was appointed as CEO of NITI Aayog in July 2026?

- A) Rajiv Kumar
- B) Amitabh Kant
- C) Anurag Jain
- D) Ajit Doval

141) Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed every year on which date?

- A) July 24
- B) July 25
- C) July 26
- D) July 27

142) Which Union minister resigned amid nationwide student protests linked to alleged examination irregularities?

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Dharmendra Pradhan
- C) Nirmala Sitharaman
- D) Ashwini Vaishnaw

143) The European Commission fined which company €890 million under EU antitrust rules?

- A) Microsoft
- B) Apple
- C) Google
- D) Meta

144) Which regulator released a consultation paper to review its Portfolio Managers Regulations, 2020?

- A) RBI
- B) SEBI
- C) IRDAI
- D) PFRDA

145) What is Bhargavastra?

- A) A space telescope
- B) A counter-swarm drone system

- C) A nuclear reactor
- D) A river-linking project

146) World Hepatitis Day is observed every year on which date?

- A) 26 July
- B) 28 July
- C) 29 July
- D) 30 July

147) Which scheme was recently approved by the Union Cabinet to establish three Chemical Parks across India?

- A) PM Gati Shakti Scheme
- B) National Chemical Mission
- C) BHAVYA Rasayan Scheme
- D) Make in India Chemicals Programme

148) India recently moved towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with which European country?

- A) Hungary

- B) Poland
- C) Bulgaria
- D) Romania

149) Which bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha to strengthen legal provisions relating to respect for national symbols?

- A) National Flag Protection Bill, 2026
- B) Patriotism Promotion Bill, 2026
- C) National Symbols Protection Bill, 2026
- D) Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026

150) Which institution recently proposed the establishment of special courts for cases related to the 2023 Manipur violence?

- A) Election Commission of India
- B) National Human Rights Commission
- C) Ministry of Home Affairs
- D) Supreme Court of India

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: B

The Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029) aims to strengthen India's comprehensive fight against narcotics. It outlines a national roadmap focusing on enforcement, intelligence, rehabilitation, and capacity building. The document reflects the government's zero-tolerance approach to drug trafficking.

2) Correct Answer: C

The Health Ministry proposed that imported medicines must have at least 12 months of residual shelf life at import. This change, notified in June 2026, replaces the previous 60% shelf-life requirement. This regulatory reform is significant for India's pharmaceutical sector and patient access.

3) Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is set to attend the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit in New Delhi from July 1-3, 2026. This marks her first official visit to India since assuming office. The summit will strengthen the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, which is crucial for regional and global cooperation.

4) Correct Answer: A

Over 1.31 crore citizens participated in the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Saptah' 2026 campaign. The week-long initiative (June 17-26, 2026) focused on community engagement and awareness against substance abuse. This mass participation reinforces India's commitment to building a drug-free society, important for social welfare and youth empowerment.

5) Correct Answer: B

The roadmap, announced in June 2026, aims to produce green urea using green ammonia to promote sustainable agriculture and reduce carbon emissions. The government plans to procure 7.24 lakh MT of green ammonia annually.

6) Correct Answer: C

PM Modi visited Seychelles from June 27 to 29, 2026, as Guest of Honour for its National Day Golden Jubilee. The visit marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. He became the first Indian PM to address Seychelles' National Assembly.

7) Correct Answer: C

Aarogya Setu 2.0 was launched at the 16th CCHFW Conference. The app will provide comprehensive digital personal health records and integrate AI-powered health insights. This aligns with India's push for robust Digital Public Infrastructure for Health.

8) Correct Answer: B

Bharat Taxi, launched by Amit Shah in Gujarat, is India's first cooperative ride-hailing platform. It empowers drivers as cooperative owners under the 'Saarthi Hi Maalik' model. The initiative focuses on long-term welfare and social security for drivers.

9) Correct Answer: B

Germany experienced a record heatwave in June 2026, with temperatures surpassing 41°C. The heatwave disrupted transport, strained infrastructure, and caused health emergencies. Such extreme weather is attributed to man-made climate change.

10) Correct Answer: B

INS Udaygiri, INS Kavaratti, and INS Shakti visited Sattahip, Thailand, in June 2026. The visit deepens maritime cooperation between India and Thailand. It also showcases India's indigenous shipbuilding and naval capabilities.

11) Correct Answer: C

The SUMAN Roadmap 2030 aims to strengthen maternal and newborn healthcare in India. It focuses on reducing Maternal Mortality Ratio below 70/100,000 live births by 2030. The approach integrates care across all stages of pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal period.

12) Correct Answer: C

Team India secured five medals at the Global Skills Challenge 2026 in Australia. The medals included three gold, one silver, and one bronze. This performance highlights India's growing competitiveness in global vocational skills.

13) Correct Answer: B

The VB-GRAM-G Scheme replaced MGNREGS nationwide from July 1, 2026. Announced at the Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Sammelan, it aims to accelerate rural development. This major program is backed by an interim approval of ₹95,682 crore.

14) Correct Answer: C

The government increased its total commitment to the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to ₹60,000 crore. This move aims to catalyze private and institutional investment in infrastructure. NIIF supports key sectors like transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure.

15) Correct Answer: C

The SDG Progress Report 2026 mentions that 65.3% of India's population is covered by social protection systems. This is a significant increase from 22% in 2016. Such coverage boosts resilience and social security. It marks major progress toward achieving the SDGs in India.

16) Correct Answer: B

Chartered Accountants' Day is observed annually on July 1 in India. It commemorates the establishment of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) in 1949. The day recognizes the valuable contribution of Chartered Accountants to India's financial system.

17) Correct Answer: C

General Dhiraj Seth became the 31st Chief of the Army Staff. He succeeded General Upendra Dwivedi after a distinguished military career. General Seth's leadership is expected to guide the Army's modernisation and transformation efforts.

18) Correct Answer: B

WhatsApp is launching a username-based identity system to allow users to connect without sharing their phone numbers. This shift enhances privacy for billions of users globally. The feature enables communication using unique usernames.

19) Correct Answer: C

The FCRA 2.0 Portal was launched to digitise and streamline all major processes under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act. It includes registration, renewal, and real-time monitoring of foreign contributions. This initiative improves transparency and compliance monitoring.

20) Correct Answer: B

Indian Naval Ships visited Sattahip, strengthening maritime ties between India and Thailand. The visit focused on naval cooperation and interoperability. It

aligns with India's MAHASAGAR vision for regional maritime security. This engagement bolsters India's strategic outreach in Southeast Asia.

21) Correct Answer: B

INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak concluded their Seychelles port call recently. Their visit coincided with Seychelles' National Day and Golden Jubilee, reflecting India's commitment to maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. This strengthens India's diplomatic and security ties with island nations, supporting the MAHASAGAR vision.

22) Correct Answer: C

The Kodaikanal Solar Observatory's hand-drawn solar records spanning over a century were digitized and analyzed with AI in 2026. This research produced one of the world's longest continuous records of solar magnetic activity. Such records help improve models of space weather.

23) Correct Answer: B

Vikram Misri's tenure as Foreign Secretary was extended by one year beyond July 14, 2026. A 1989-batch IFS officer, he has held key diplomatic and administrative roles in India and abroad. The extension ensures continuity in India's foreign policy leadership.

24) Correct Answer: C

Air Marshal Jasvir Singh Mann took charge as AOC-in-C of the Southern Air Command on July 1, 2026. He has a distinguished career with over 3,000 flying hours and leadership roles in the IAF. His appointment follows Air Marshal Manish Khanna's retirement.

25) Correct Answer: C

The Centre warned that WhatsApp's username feature could increase online fraud, phishing, and impersonation risks. The concern is that malicious actors may adopt usernames similar to those of trusted entities. Such features could facilitate cybercrime and identity theft.

26) Correct Answer: B

Namami Gange has completed 363 out of 524 projects as of July 2026. This programme targets river rejuvenation, wastewater reuse, and biodiversity conservation. It includes major investments in sewage treatment and wetland conservation.

27) Correct Answer: C

Borjuli wetland in Assam was declared a Biodiversity Heritage Site in July 2026. It harbors *Oryza rufipogon*, a wild rice species critical for developing climate-resilient crops. This recognition supports India's food security and agricultural biodiversity.

28) Correct Answer: C

India and Japan signed 16 major agreements at their Annual Summit in July 2026. The agreements cover AI, energy, critical minerals, and supply chains. This collaboration strengthens strategic, technological, and economic ties. It boosts India's global standing in innovation and security partnerships.

29) Correct Answer: C

The Maruti Suzuki Kharkhoda plant in Haryana was inaugurated in July 2026. It is set to be one of the world's largest vehicle manufacturing facilities. The project highlights India-Japan economic ties and supports the 'Make in India' initiative. It is expected to generate over 21,000 jobs.

30) Correct Answer: C

ACME Cleantech Solutions signed long-term export agreements with Japanese companies in July 2026. These deals involve supplying green ammonia and methanol, bolstering India's green hydrogen sector. The agreements showcase India's role in global clean energy supply chains.

31) Correct Answer: B

Egypt defeated Australia 4-2 on penalties to secure their first World Cup knockout win. The match ended 1-1 before Egypt prevailed in the shootout. This historic win marks Egypt's entry into the last 16, underlining African football's growing competitiveness on the world stage.

32) Correct Answer: C

Piyush Goyal set a \$1 trillion export target at the July 2026 Board of Trade meeting. The agenda includes closer Centre-State coordination and major support for MSME-led exports. Achieving this target would strengthen India's global trade position and boost economic growth.

33) Correct Answer: C

Varanasi exported its first 40 metric tonnes of biscuits to Oman under the India-Oman CEPA, effective June 1,

2026. The agreement enables duty-free access, boosting India's processed food exports. This step strengthens bilateral trade and supports India's food processing sector.

34) Correct Answer: C

Gujarat is setting up the SAMARTH hub at IIT Gandhinagar for semiconductor research and training with a ₹190 crore investment. The centre will train over 10,000 people, supporting India's semiconductor ambitions. This initiative aims to build a skilled workforce and boost indigenous manufacturing.

35) Correct Answer: B

India's first bullet train, on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor, is expected to begin commercial service in August 2027. This project, using Japanese Shinkansen technology, will reduce travel time to about 2 hours. It's a major milestone in India's high-speed rail ambitions.

36) Correct Answer: A

The next phase of the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme, named 'Viksit UDAN', was launched by PM Modi. This marks a major push for India's civil aviation and regional connectivity. The scheme aims to develop 100 aerodromes and expand connectivity to remote regions.

37) Correct Answer: C

Rajasthan and Haryana finalized an agreement to bring water from the Hathnikund Barrage to the Shekhawati region. Announced on July 4, 2026, this ₹34,000 crore project will benefit Sikar, Churu, Jhunjhunu and nearby districts. Such inter-state water projects are vital for drought-prone regions, supporting agriculture and livelihoods.

38) Correct Answer: B

India's Bilateral Investment Agreement with Israel came into force on July 4, 2026. This agreement enhances economic ties and offers robust protection to investments. It is designed to foster cross-border investment flows. Such agreements are central to deepening India's global economic partnerships.

39) Correct Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian PM in 40 years to visit New Zealand in July 2026. His visit

focused on bilateral talks, diaspora engagement, and strategic partnerships. Such high-level visits strengthen diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between India and partner nations.

40) Correct Answer: B

India extended humanitarian assistance to Venezuela under 'Operation Amistad' after the June 24, 2026 earthquake. Indian medical teams treated over 400 people daily at a field hospital. This aid highlights India's global commitment to disaster relief and strengthens diplomatic relations.

41) Correct Answer: B

Delhi unveiled its new EV policy on July 6, 2026. The policy targets more than 30% EV adoption by 2030, with strong incentives, infrastructure expansion, and phased mandates. Delhi currently leads in electric bus deployment, indicating significant commitment.

42) Correct Answer: C

Home Minister Amit Shah directed the 'Zero Coal Leakage Plan'. The move aims to tackle illegal coal mining, especially in Dhanbad, through rigorous enforcement and technology use. Regular reviews and multi-agency coordination are part of the strategy.

43) Correct Answer: C

Australia clinched its seventh Women's T20 World Cup. They defeated England decisively, showcasing their dominance in women's cricket. Beth Mooney and Phoebe Litchfield starred in the final. Australia's consistent performance sets a global benchmark in women's sports.

44) Correct Answer: B

Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs chaired the UNCTAD meeting from July 6-8, 2026. India's leadership highlights its growing influence in global consumer protection frameworks. The session was focused on international cooperation and launch new UN principles.

45) Correct Answer: B

ICMR-MINDS, an AI-powered mental healthcare platform, won the Gold Award at the National e-Governance Awards 2026. The award, presented in July 2026, recognizes its innovative use of AI for citizen-

centric mental health services. The platform empowers frontline workers and improves nationwide mental health access.

46) Correct Answer: C

Roberto Martinez confirmed his departure as Portugal's coach after their 1-0 loss to Spain in the World Cup round of 16. Martinez cited the end of a cycle for the team. His exit marks a significant transition for Portuguese football, especially following Cristiano Ronaldo's likely final World Cup appearance.

47) Correct Answer: B

During his visit to Jakarta in July 2026, PM Modi praised Indonesia's Wayang Kulit, a shadow puppetry form depicting the Ramayana. This performance underscored the deep civilisational and cultural ties between India and Indonesia, strengthening people-to-people and diplomatic relations.

48) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Cooperation marked its 5th Foundation Day on July 6, 2026. Established in 2021, the ministry has modernised the cooperative sector, benefiting 30 crore people, and is seen as a foundation for a prosperous India by 2047.

49) Correct Answer: B

India's finished steel consumption rose by 8.3% year-on-year to 41.6 million tonnes in Q1 FY2026, the highest among sectoral growth rates. This reflects strong demand from infrastructure and manufacturing, supporting economic growth and industrial expansion.

50) Correct Answer: B

Indiahandmade, launched by the Ministry of Textiles in 2023, is an online marketplace connecting artisans and weavers directly with customers. This platform empowers over 60 lakh artisans, especially women, by increasing market access and supporting rural livelihoods.

51) Correct Answer: C

Indonesia awarded PM Modi its highest civilian honour, 'Bintang Adipurna', in July 2026. This award recognises his efforts to strengthen India-Indonesia ties. It is Indonesia's most prestigious civilian decoration. The

honour marks the growing partnership and India's global stature.

52) Correct Answer: B

India and Indonesia signed agreements for cooperation on the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and ASTRA air-to-air missiles in July 2026. This marks a significant boost in bilateral defence ties. It includes joint production and technology transfer.

53) Correct Answer: C

India and Indonesia are set to integrate India's UPI with Indonesia's QRIS payment platform. Talks are at an advanced stage for cross-border digital payments. This will boost economic connectivity and tourism. It reflects India's growing fintech leadership in Southeast Asia.

54) Correct Answer: C

The UDISE+ 2025-26 report recorded a decline in dropout rates at both preparatory and secondary levels. This shows improved student retention. Enhanced teacher strength and school facilities contributed to the progress. Such trends are crucial for India's human resource development.

55) Correct Answer: C

Indian athletes at the 2026 Commonwealth Games will wear jute-viscose blended apparel. This initiative, led by the National Jute Board, promotes sustainable textiles. It marks the first use of such eco-friendly fabric at an international sporting event.

56) Correct Answer: C

Sweden secured the top spot in the Global Passport Index 2026. The index evaluates countries based on mobility, quality of living, and investment opportunities. Sweden's strong performance in all three categories placed it at number one.

57) Correct Answer: B

India was ranked 125th among 197 countries in the Global Passport Index 2026. The ranking slipped by one position from the previous year, despite an improved composite score. Mobility, quality of living, and investment were the key factors.

58) Correct Answer: B

Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, lead the Indian delegation at the Ninth IGE Session. The

session was organized by UNCTAD in Geneva. India showcased advancements like the National Consumer Helpline and e-Jagriti AI platform.

59) Correct Answer: B

On 4 July 2026, PM Modi inaugurated the CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Gujarat. It aims to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem under the Semicon India Programme. The facility enhances chip packaging and testing capabilities.

60) Correct Answer: B

Mission Kayakalp focuses on modernizing infrastructure in Delhi's government schools. The initiative aims to improve learning environments through better facilities, sanitation, and accessibility. Led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, it emphasizes community participation.

61) Correct Answer: B

IIM Bangalore announced its first international campus in Indonesia. This move, during PM Modi's Jakarta visit, highlights the institute's global expansion. The campus will focus on executive education, followed by full management programs.

62) Correct Answer: C

Sanjeev Jain, a 2008 batch IFS officer, was named Ambassador to North Korea. He will take over after serving in Cabo Verde. Jain's appointment reflects India's continued diplomatic engagement in East Asia. This strengthens bilateral relations and India's presence in the Korean peninsula.

63) Correct Answer: C

Sirsa Kinnow became Haryana's first fruit to get a GI tag. The fruit is recognized for its unique taste and quality. The GI tag boosts its market value and export potential. This is a significant milestone for Haryana's horticulture sector.

64) Correct Answer: C

Alok Kumar Mittal, a 1993 batch IPS officer, was appointed DG of BPR&D till 2029. BPR&D is responsible for police research and modernization. His appointment was part of major police institutional changes. This ensures leadership continuity in police reforms.

65) Correct Answer: B

Girish Bharadwaj, the 'Bridge Man of India', died at 76 on 7 July 2026. He built over 140 low-cost suspension bridges in rural areas. His work improved connectivity for remote communities. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2017 for rural infrastructure development.

66) Correct Answer: C

Jaipur secured the 6th spot globally in the Happy City Index 2026. The index evaluates cities on governance, public health, sustainability, and well-being. Jaipur's rank is attributed to its blend of heritage and smart infrastructure.

67) Correct Answer: C

Mahesh Muralidhar Pai was approved as MD & CEO of South Indian Bank. The appointment was cleared by the RBI for a term starting October 1, 2026. Pai brings nearly 30 years of banking experience and will succeed P.R. Seshadri.

68) Correct Answer: B

Uttar Pradesh launched the 'Guru Dakshina' scheme in July 2026. The scheme provides free hospitalization benefits to 10 lakh education staff. It is fully funded by the state, covering 1,900 treatment packages. This initiative enhances social security for teachers in UP.

69) Correct Answer: C

S. Aswath, a 17-year-old from Tamil Nadu, achieved the Grandmaster title. He secured his third and final norm at the Pune International GM Round Robin. This makes him the 98th Indian and 38th from Tamil Nadu to attain GM status.

70) Correct Answer: B

The Geneva AI Summit aims to build a global platform for unified AI governance and innovation. Scheduled for June 21–22, 2027, it will focus on trustworthy AI and human-centric progress. The summit builds on past international efforts.

71) Correct Answer: C

Lokhande Prashant Sitaram was appointed Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. He continues to hold the additional charge of CBSE Chairperson. This dual responsibility reflects his administrative experience and government trust.

72) Correct Answer: B

Mahesh Muralidhar Pai was appointed as MD & CEO of South Indian Bank for three years from October 1, 2026. Leadership changes in banks are significant for strategic direction. Appointments at this level impact banking operations and customer service.

73) Correct Answer: A

Karnataka recommended Mysuru, along with Hampi and Lakkundi, for the Global Destination Development Project. This project aims to develop tourism infrastructure and global appeal. Such initiatives enhance cultural tourism and economic growth.

74) Correct Answer: C

The Indian Air Force won the 7th Marshal Arjan Singh Memorial Hockey Tournament in July 2026. They defeated the Indian Navy 2-1 at Air Force Station Jalahalli. This tournament honors Marshal Arjan Singh's legacy in Indian defense sports.

75) Correct Answer: B

UIDAI now allows Aadhaar holders to update or add email IDs directly and for free through the Aadhaar App. This change simplifies and digitizes the update process. It enhances user convenience and data accuracy. Such digital initiatives are key for e-governance in India.

76) Correct Answer: B

India launched Awiqli, the world's first once-weekly basal insulin. This insulin is designed for adults with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. It reduces injections needed from 365 to just 52 per year. This move marks India as the seventh country globally to introduce the drug, underscoring its advancement in healthcare and diabetes management.

77) Correct Answer: C

Sourav Ganguly was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame. He is celebrated for his aggressive leadership and impactful captaincy in Indian cricket. Ganguly led India to the 2003 World Cup final and mentored several future stars.

78) Correct Answer: C

New Delhi ranked 120th in the Global Liveability Index 2026. The index evaluates cities on stability, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and environment. New Delhi

performed better in education and infrastructure but lagged in healthcare and environment.

79) Correct Answer: C

Australia returned three stolen antiquities to India. The artefacts included rare Chola-era and Nandi idols from Tamil Nadu temples. This repatriation followed the India-Australia Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. The event strengthens international cooperation in preserving India's cultural heritage.

80) Correct Answer: C

The ACITI Partnership focuses on artificial intelligence, green energy technologies, critical minerals, supply chains, and net-zero emissions. The trilateral initiative leverages each country's unique strengths. It aims to enhance technological cooperation and sustainable development among India, Australia, and Canada.

81) Correct Answer: B

Saushrutam 2026 is a three-day international seminar on Ayurvedic surgery scheduled at the All India Institute of Ayurveda in New Delhi. President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the event on July 15, coinciding with Sushruta Jayanti.

82) Correct Answer: D

President Donald Trump proposed charging a 20 per cent fee related to guarding cargo traversing the Strait of Hormuz amid renewed regional tensions. The Strait is a strategically important energy and shipping route.

83) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Tex 2026 is being hosted at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi from July 14 to 17. The global textile event brings together India's textile value chain along with international buyers, investors, policymakers and industry leaders.

84) Correct Answer: C

Bharat Tex 2026 is the third edition of the major global textile event. It aims to showcase India's textile strength and connect domestic industry participants with international buyers, investors and policymakers.

85) Correct Answer: C

India's total exports, comprising merchandise and services, were estimated at USD 232.73 billion during April-June 2026-27. This represented an 11.37 per cent

increase compared with USD 208.98 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year.

86) Correct Answer: C

Piyush Goyal, Commerce Minister, led the delegation in July 2026. The visit aimed to strengthen trade, investment, and technology partnerships with European nations. Key engagements included business roundtables and meetings on clean energy and digital tech.

87) Correct Answer: C

From 1 August 2026, women in Delhi must use the Pink Saheli Smart Card for free DTC and DIMTS bus travel. It replaces the earlier paper-based ticket system to digitize the scheme. This modernizes public transport, increases transparency, and prevents misuse, supporting gender-focused mobility.

88) Correct Answer: C

India Post and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) partnered for this initiative. The survey covers 5.68 lakh villages to assess telecom connectivity and service quality. Data collection uses Gramin Dak Sevaks and mobile apps.

89) Correct Answer: C

Shillong, Meghalaya hosted the National Conference on NextGen Administrative & e-Gov Reforms. It was organized by DARPG with the Meghalaya Government. Key topics included digital governance, cyber security, and North East best practices.

90) Correct Answer: B

India and New Zealand launched their Strategic Partnership and Roadmap to 2030 during PM Modi's visit. Ten agreements were signed covering defense, trade, and scientific cooperation. The partnership aims to double bilateral trade to NZ\$7 billion by 2030.

91) Correct Answer: B

Soumya Swaminathan was inducted as FRS. She became the second Indian woman scientist to receive this recognition after Prof. Gagandeep Kang. Swaminathan is known for her contributions to public health and vaccine research.

92) Correct Answer: B

NABARD launched the Gramodyam programme. It is a three-year pilot for rural entrepreneurship development across India. The programme provides training, mentoring, and startup support to 4,000 rural entrepreneurs.

93) Correct Answer: C

From 12 July 2026, the area is officially called Kartavya Bhawan Complex. This precinct includes key government buildings and marks the latest phase of Central Vista redevelopment. The change follows earlier renamings like Rajpath to Kartavya Path.

94) Correct Answer: C

The 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat' campaign was launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It includes district-level contests in arts and culture categories to engage youth aged 15-29. The campaign aims to promote a drug-free lifestyle among Indian youth.

95) Correct Answer: C

The Nifty 500 Ahimsa Index is based on the principle of Ahimsa (non-violence). It tracks companies that do not harm animals and excludes those involved in animal exploitation. The index promotes values-based investing in line with animal welfare.

96) Correct Answer: B

The Laudankia Vine Snake (*Ahaetulla laudankia*) was photographed in Udaipur in July 2026. This is the first recorded sighting in the region after almost 30 years. The species is endemic to India and was described in scientific literature in 2019.

97) Correct Answer: C

The PMFME (Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises) Scheme supports micro food processing units. Launched in June 2020, it was extended to September 2026. It has sanctioned loans to over 2 lakh micro units and generated nearly 11 lakh jobs.

98) Correct Answer: B

SHANTI stands for 'Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity.' Unveiled by EAM S. Jaishankar at UN Headquarters in July 2026, it forms the core of India's UNSC campaign. The vision emphasizes

peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, and Global South representation.

99) Correct Answer: C

Hyderabad organised the BRICS Labour Ministers' Meeting on July 15-16, 2026. The event is part of India's BRICS Chairship with a focus on workforce participation, skilling, and social protection. Strengthening cooperation in employment policies among BRICS nations is a key goal.

100) Correct Answer: C

The Delhi government renamed Mahila Samridhi Yojana to 'Delhi Lakshmi Yojana' in July 2026. The scheme offers ₹2,500 per month to eligible women via DBT. It aims to empower women from weaker sections by improving household financial security.

101) Correct Answer: C

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the ISP in July 2026. The ISP covers 19 formal services sub-sectors and complements the Index of Industrial Production. The base year is 2024-25, and it aims to provide focused measurement of service sector growth.

102) Correct Answer: C

DGFT issued a notification banning imports of goods made wholly or partly using forced labour. This aligns with the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930. It marks India's first specific restriction of this kind in its Foreign Trade Policy.

103) Correct Answer: C

Ladakh sent its first fresh apricot consignment to the UAE. The export included GI-tagged Raktsey Karpo and Halman varieties. This was part of a 1,000 MT export initiative involving Lulu Retail and APEDA

104) Correct Answer: B

'Mayur', inspired by the peacock, was unveiled as the mascot in July 2026. The championship will be held in Delhi from 27 July to 2 August 2026. The mascot represents energy, hospitality, and unity. This reflects Indian culture and adds vibrancy to the international sporting event.

105) Correct Answer: B

Odisha's new law designates the entire state as a single unified market. Approved on 14 July 2026, it removes geographical trading restrictions. It enables direct marketing, e-trading, and single-point licensing.

106) Correct Answer: B

The draft CAFE-III norms aim to reduce CO₂ emissions from M1 passenger vehicles. The norms set stricter fuel economy and emission targets from 2027-28 to 2031-32. They include mechanisms like credit trading and incentives for biofuels.

107) Correct Answer: C

The National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026) was approved by the Union Cabinet. It aims to add 10 million tonnes capacity via new gas-based plants and offers incentives for investors. This policy will help bridge India's urea production gap and reduce dependence on imports.

108) Correct Answer: C

The diesel export tax was increased to ₹15.5/litre from ₹8.5. This revision is part of the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) changes announced in July 2026. The aim is to ensure domestic fuel availability and control excessive exports amid global oil price volatility.

109) Correct Answer: B

Colobus congoensis, locally called 'Likweli', was identified as a new species in July 2026. The discovery was made in the Congo Basin, highlighting the region's biodiversity. It is recommended as Endangered due to its limited habitat range.

110) Correct Answer: C

Several new damselfly species were found in Kerala's Western Ghats, a major biodiversity hotspot. Discoveries were reported from Silent Valley National Park and Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary. These species add to Kerala's rich odonate diversity of over 191 species.

111) Correct Answer: B

NITI Aayog released the latest Investment Friendliness Index to assess how effectively states create an environment conducive to investment and business growth. The index evaluates factors such as policy stability, infrastructure, ease of doing business, governance, industrial support, and investor facilitation.

112) Correct Answer: B

The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has been created to enhance India's research and innovation ecosystem. It aims to support high-quality scientific research, encourage collaboration between academic institutions and industries, and increase private sector participation in research activities.

113) Correct Answer: B

India launched its first indigenous hydrogen-powered train on the 89-km Jind–Sonipat route in Haryana. Hydrogen-powered trains generate electricity through fuel cells, emitting only water vapour as a by-product, making them environmentally friendly.

114) Correct Answer: C

Hydrogen fuel cell technology combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity, with water vapour and heat being the only direct emissions. Unlike diesel-powered trains, hydrogen trains significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

115) Correct Answer: B

Exercise Pitch Black 2026 is a multinational air combat exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force. It provides participating nations with an opportunity to enhance interoperability, improve operational planning, and conduct complex air combat training. India's participation reflects its growing defence cooperation with friendly countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

116) Correct Answer: B

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 aims to protect Vande Mataram. Introduced in July 2026, it brings Vande Mataram under the same legal framework as Jana Gana Mana. Violations may result in up to three years' imprisonment or a fine.

117) Correct Answer: B

The guidebook, launched in July 2026, helps Indian MSMEs navigate international trade. It offers insights on export opportunities, market access, and global standards. The resource addresses challenges like buyer identification and certifications.

118) Correct Answer: C

Guwahati will host six Group F matches at Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium from 1 to 13 August 2026. The Durand

Cup is Asia's oldest football tournament, started in 1888. This is the fifth consecutive year Assam is hosting matches.

119) Correct Answer: B

The ICMR i-DRONE study, reported in July 2026, showed drone transport reduced TB diagnosis time from 15 to 5 days. It also cut patient expenditure from ₹9,451 to ₹91. The hub-and-spoke model improves remote healthcare access.

120) Correct Answer: B

The course, announced in July 2026, focuses on developing talent at the intersection of engineering, biology, and healthcare. It supports India's vision to be a bioeconomy powerhouse by 2035. The initiative includes AI-driven biology and industry partnerships.

121) Correct Answer: B

AliExpress was fined €550 million by the European Commission in July 2026. The penalty was imposed under the Digital Services Act for not adequately addressing the sale of illegal and unsafe goods. The fine highlights the EU's commitment to consumer protection.

122) Correct Answer: C

Serhii Korotshuk was appointed Ukraine's Prime Minister in July 2026. He previously served as CEO of Naftogaz, Ukraine's state energy company. His appointment came during a major reshuffle amid the ongoing war.

123) Correct Answer: C

Andy Burnham was elected Labour Party leader and became UK Prime Minister on July 20, 2026. He was formerly the Mayor of a major UK region. His appointment marks the seventh UK leader in a decade. This reflects ongoing political changes in post-Brexit Britain.

124) Correct Answer: C

The Union Cabinet approved the MPMS with a ₹62,500 crore budget in July 2026. The scheme aims to boost domestic mobile manufacturing and exports. It is expected to generate significant employment and economic growth.

125) Correct Answer: C

MRF was recognized as India's most valuable and strongest tyre brand in the Brand Finance India 100–

2026 report. The Chennai-based company also ranks among the top three tyre brands globally. Founded in 1946, MRF's achievement highlights Indian manufacturing excellence.

126) Correct Answer: D

The 14th South Asian Games in 2027 will be held in Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad. Karachi is not included as a host city. The games were postponed from their original 2023 schedule. This is significant as it marks Pakistan's third time hosting and first time extending beyond Islamabad.

127) Correct Answer: C

Rohit Sharma scored an ODI century at Lord's, a first for an Indian. He was aged 39 years and 80 days, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's age record. His 34th ODI century helped India chase England's 387/3. This achievement highlights his longevity and historic performance.

128) Correct Answer: B

Delhi government approved the PARIVARTAN scrappage scheme. The scheme targets old commercial vehicles to reduce air pollution. Incentives include tax exemption and fee waivers for cleaner vehicles. It aids Delhi-NCR's shift to BS-VI and electric vehicles for environmental improvement.

129) Correct Answer: B

India joined the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. The agreement prohibits subsidies for illegal and unregulated fishing and aims to curb overfishing. India seeks a 25-year transition for developing countries. This move aligns Indian policies with global sustainability goals.

130) Correct Answer: B

Kanishka Narayan, born in Bihar, India, was appointed UK AI Minister. He became the first to hold this Cabinet-level position. The role oversees AI policy and digital regulation. This reflects the UK's focus on emerging technologies and global AI leadership.

131) Correct Answer: B

NHAI launched the digital Local Pass facility on the RajmargYatra app in July 2026. The app allows residents near toll plazas to buy monthly passes digitally. It

integrates DigiLocker, VAHAN, and GIS-based validation for verification.

132) Correct Answer: D

'Shabdlok' was inaugurated at Belvedere House, National Library campus, Kolkata. The museum showcases India's linguistic diversity with 380 languages and interactive installations. This initiative strengthens the preservation and education of India's linguistic heritage.

133) Correct Answer: B

ICMR licensed SHetA2, an anti-HPV therapeutic for Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN), to Emcure Pharmaceuticals. The technology targets cervical cancer precursors, a significant public health issue. It supports commercialization of indigenous biomedical research.

134) Correct Answer: B

MACS Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune discovered five new lichen species in July 2026. The research combined taxonomy and DNA sequencing for identification. This is the first molecular phylogenetic study of Allographa in the Western Ghats.

135) Correct Answer: B

The Udmaroo Bridge over the Shayok River reduces travel distance by 35 km between important villages in Nubra, Ladakh. It improves connectivity and all-weather access. Built under the Special Development Package, it strengthens strategic infrastructure.

136) Correct Answer: B

Indian-American doctor Amish Shah won the Democratic nomination in July 2026. He is a three-term Arizona House member and former emergency physician. Shah will face Republican Jay Feely in the November 2026 election.

137) Correct Answer: B

Samudra Pradakshina involved nine women officers from the Army, Navy, and Air Force circumnavigating the globe. The 314-day journey covered 25,500 nautical miles across four oceans. It highlights Nari Shakti, tri-service collaboration, and indigenous sailing technology.

138) Correct Answer: C

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi bust in Skopje. The event was attended by North

Macedonia's President and highlighted Gandhi's ideals of truth and non-violence. The gesture strengthens India-North Macedonia ties.

139) Correct Answer: C

Lovlina Borgohain clinched the bronze medal in women's 75kg boxing at the 2026 CWG. Lovlina is an Olympic medallist and a leading Indian boxer. Her win contributes to India's performance and motivation for upcoming events.

140) Correct Answer: C

Anurag Jain, a 1989-batch IAS officer, was appointed CEO of NITI Aayog in July 2026. He brings nearly 40 years of governance experience. Jain's appointment is part of broader reforms at NITI Aayog.

141) Correct Answer: C

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed on 26 July every year to mark India's victory in the Kargil War of 1999. The day honours the soldiers who fought in the conflict and remembers the sacrifices made during the operation.

142) Correct Answer: B

Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as Union Education Minister after student protests grew over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations. His resignation became a major political development because it was tied to public concern about fairness, transparency, and accountability in the education system.

143) Correct Answer: C

The European Commission imposed a fine of €890 million on Google for violating European Union competition rules. The action reflects the EU's strict approach toward market dominance and antitrust compliance in the technology sector.

144) Correct Answer: B

SEBI released a consultation paper for reviewing the Portfolio Managers Regulations, 2020. The move is linked to the changing structure of India's securities market and the need to update rules governing portfolio management services.

145) Correct Answer: B

Bhargavastra is an indigenous, vehicle-mounted, multi-layered Counter-Swarm Drone System developed for the

Indian Army by Solar Defence and Aerospace Ltd. It was demonstrated in Nagpur during a Make-II programme review.

146) Correct Answer: B

World Hepatitis Day is observed annually on 28 July to increase awareness about viral hepatitis and encourage prevention, testing, and treatment. The date marks the birth anniversary of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Baruch Samuel Blumberg, who discovered the Hepatitis B virus and developed its vaccine.

147) Correct Answer: C

The Union Cabinet approved the BHAVYA Rasayan Scheme to support the establishment of three world-class chemical parks in India. The initiative aims to strengthen domestic chemical manufacturing, reduce import dependence, attract private investment, and improve industrial infrastructure.

148) Correct Answer: D

India and Romania agreed to deepen bilateral relations by working towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit. The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in trade, defence, information technology, renewable energy, education, culture, and connectivity.

149) Correct Answer: D

The Government introduced the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha to update provisions related to protecting India's national symbols. The proposed amendments seek to strengthen legal safeguards concerning the National Flag, the Constitution, and the National Anthem while ensuring greater clarity in the enforcement of existing laws.

150) Correct Answer: D

The Supreme Court of India proposed setting up special courts to expedite trials linked to the 2023 Manipur violence. The objective is to ensure quicker disposal of cases, timely justice for victims, and effective prosecution of offences. Dedicated courts can help reduce delays in complex criminal cases involving multiple investigations and witnesses.

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Nine Years of GST (2017 to 2026)



Why in the News?

India marked **nine years of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)** on **1 July 2026**, celebrating one of the country's most significant indirect tax reforms. On the occasion, the Government highlighted the achievements of **GST 2.0**, introduced through reforms in 2025, which have simplified the tax structure, enhanced digital compliance, reduced the compliance burden on businesses, and strengthened revenue collection.

About Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** is a comprehensive indirect tax levied on the supply of goods and services across India. It was introduced on **1 July 2017** following the enactment of the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016**.

GST replaced the earlier system of multiple indirect taxes imposed by the Central and State Governments, creating a unified national market under the vision of **"One Nation, One Tax."**

It is a **destination-based consumption tax**, meaning that tax revenue accrues to the State where goods or services are ultimately consumed rather than where they are produced.

Taxes Replaced under GST

Before GST, businesses had to comply with numerous Central and State taxes, resulting in cascading taxation and higher compliance costs.

GST subsumed **17 major taxes and 13 cesses**, including:

- Central Excise Duty
- Service Tax
- Additional Customs Duty
- State Value Added Tax (VAT)

- Central Sales Tax (CST)
- Entry Tax
- Luxury Tax
- Entertainment Tax
- Purchase Tax
- Advertisement Tax and several other indirect levies.

The consolidation of these taxes has significantly simplified India's indirect taxation system.

Constitutional Provisions Related to GST

Article 246A

Article 246A empowers **Parliament and State Legislatures** to make laws with respect to GST. Parliament enjoys exclusive legislative power over GST on inter-State supplies.

Article 269A

Article 269A provides for the levy and collection of **Integrated GST (IGST)** on inter-State trade and commerce. The revenue collected is shared between the Centre and the destination State according to principles prescribed by Parliament.

Article 279A

Article 279A establishes the **GST Council**, the apex constitutional body responsible for recommending GST policies, tax rates, exemptions, threshold limits, model laws, and administrative reforms.

GST Council

The GST Council is one of India's most important institutions of **cooperative federalism**, ensuring that both the Union and the States participate in decisions relating to indirect taxation.

Composition

- Chaired by the **Union Finance Minister**.
- The Union Minister of State for Finance is a member.
- Finance Ministers (or nominated ministers) from all States and Union Territories with legislatures are members.

Functions

The GST Council recommends:

- GST tax rates and slabs.
- Exemptions under GST.
- Threshold limits for registration.
- Model GST laws.
- Special provisions for States.
- Measures to improve compliance and administration.

Its consensus-based decision-making process has played a crucial role in maintaining a uniform tax structure across the country.

GST 2.0 Reforms (2025)

To improve ease of doing business and simplify compliance, the Government introduced **GST 2.0** reforms in 2025.

The major reforms include:

Simplified Tax Structure

The GST rate structure was rationalised, with **5% and 18% emerging as the primary tax slabs** for most goods and services.

A **40% GST rate** was introduced for selected luxury and sin goods to improve tax efficiency while discouraging the consumption of socially undesirable products.

Faster Business Processes

GST 2.0 significantly reduced compliance time through:

- Faster GST registration.
- Quicker refund processing.
- Simplified return filing procedures.
- Greater automation of tax administration.

These reforms have particularly benefited exporters and businesses with large input tax credit claims.

Support for MSMEs

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) continue to be among the biggest beneficiaries of GST reforms.

Higher Registration Threshold

The mandatory GST registration threshold for suppliers of goods was increased to **₹40 lakh**, reducing compliance costs for small businesses.

Expanded Composition Scheme

The turnover limit under the Composition Scheme was enhanced to **₹1.5 crore**, enabling more small taxpayers to pay tax at concessional rates with simplified returns.

QRMP Scheme

The **Quarterly Return Monthly Payment (QRMP)** Scheme allows taxpayers with annual turnover up to **₹5 crore** to:

- File GST returns quarterly.
- Pay taxes every month.
- Reduce compliance burden while maintaining regular tax payments.

The scheme has improved ease of compliance for millions of small businesses across the country.

Digital Reforms under GST

Technology has become the backbone of GST administration.

Key digital initiatives include:

GST Network (GSTN)

GSTN provides an integrated online platform for:

- Registration
- Return filing
- Tax payment
- Refund processing
- Compliance management

E-Invoicing

Mandatory e-invoicing for eligible taxpayers has improved invoice authenticity, reduced tax evasion, and enabled seamless reporting.

AI-driven Analytics

Artificial Intelligence and advanced data analytics are increasingly being used for:

- Risk assessment.
- Fraud detection.
- Identification of fake invoices.
- Detection of tax evasion.
- Better compliance monitoring.

Automated Input Tax Credit (ITC)

Automated matching of invoices has made Input Tax Credit claims more accurate while reducing disputes.

Pre-filled Returns

GST returns are now increasingly pre-filled using invoice data, significantly reducing manual effort and improving filing accuracy.

Performance of GST

Nine years after its introduction, GST has witnessed remarkable expansion in both taxpayer base and revenue collection.

Growth in Registered Taxpayers

- **2017:** Approximately **66.5 lakh** registered taxpayers.
- **May 2026:** Around **1.65 crore** registered taxpayers.

This reflects a substantial increase in formalisation of the Indian economy.

Growth in GST Collections

- **2017–18:** Around **₹7.4 lakh crore**.
- **2025–26:** Approximately **₹22.27 lakh crore**.

The steady rise in collections indicates stronger compliance, improved economic activity, and greater efficiency in tax administration.

Coal Imports Decline by Nearly 13% in April 2026



Why in News?

India's coal imports declined by **12.95%** in **April 2026** compared to April 2025, reflecting the Government's sustained efforts to reduce dependence on imported coal through higher domestic production, improved coal evacuation infrastructure, and better logistics management. The decline aligns with India's broader objective of **energy security**, **import substitution**, and achieving greater self-reliance in the coal sector.

Key Highlights

- Total coal imports declined from **24.27 Million Tonnes (MT)** in April 2025 to **21.13 MT** in April 2026, registering a **12.95%** decline.
- Coal imports by the **power sector** fell by **24.89%**, from **4.67 MT** to **3.51 MT**.

- **Imported Coal-Based (ICB)** power plants recorded the sharpest decline in imports, falling from **3.97 MT** to **2.88 MT**, a reduction of **27.45%**.
- **Domestic Coal-Based (DCB)** thermal power plants importing coal for blending reduced imports by **11.26%**, from **0.71 MT** to **0.63 MT**.
- India's **coal import dependence** (imports as a share of total coal consumption) declined from **21.69%** to **19.68%**.
- Imports of **coking coal** increased marginally by **1.34%**, rising from **5.93 MT** to **6.01 MT**, owing to the limited availability of high-quality domestic coking coal required by the steel industry.

Reasons for the Decline

- Significant increase in **domestic coal production**.
- Improved coal linkage supplies to thermal power plants.
- Expansion of **First Mile Connectivity (FMC)** infrastructure for mechanised coal handling.
- Better coal evacuation through close coordination among:
 - Ministry of Railways
 - Coal India Limited (CIL)
 - Coal India subsidiaries.
- Improved monitoring of coal stocks at thermal power plants.
- Increased utilisation of domestic coal in power stations that were traditionally dependent on imported coal.

Additional Developments from Recent Reports

The reduction in coal imports is part of a broader strategy by the Government to **substitute imported coal with domestically produced coal** wherever technically feasible. Several imported coal-based power plants have successfully modified their boilers to use a higher proportion of Indian coal, with some plants now operating on **more than 50% domestic coal**. Trials are underway to further increase domestic coal usage in additional generating units.

According to recent industry reports, India's **thermal coal imports during January–May 2026 declined to a four-year low**, supported by record domestic coal production

and rapid growth in renewable energy generation. Higher renewable electricity generation has reduced pressure on thermal coal demand while simultaneously freeing more domestic coal for coastal power plants that previously relied heavily on imports.

Another factor contributing to lower imports has been the **higher international coal prices and elevated freight costs**, particularly due to geopolitical tensions affecting global shipping routes. These market conditions have made domestically produced coal comparatively more economical for Indian power producers.

The Ministry of Coal has also expanded the **doorstep coal supply mechanism** for imported coal-based power plants. This initiative ensures timely availability of suitable domestic coal while addressing quality and transportation concerns, enabling greater substitution of imported fuel without disrupting electricity generation.

Despite the overall decline in imports, **coking coal** continues to remain an exception. India possesses abundant reserves of thermal coal but has **limited deposits of high-grade coking coal**, making imports essential for the steel industry. As India expands its steel production capacity under the National Steel Policy, dependence on imported coking coal is expected to continue in the medium term.

What is First Mile Connectivity (FMC)?

First Mile Connectivity (FMC) refers to the mechanised infrastructure that transports coal from the mine pithead to railway loading points through systems such as:

- Conveyor belts
- Coal handling plants
- Silos
- Rapid loading systems

Benefits

- Faster coal evacuation.
- Reduction in transportation costs.
- Lower dust pollution and environmental impact.
- Improved quality of coal supplied to consumers.
- Reduced dependence on road transportation.

Significance of Reducing Coal Imports

- Strengthens **India's energy security**.

- Reduces the country's import bill and saves foreign exchange.
- Promotes **Atmanirbhar Bharat** through greater use of domestic resources.
- Improves the financial position of domestic coal producers.
- Enhances fuel availability for thermal power plants.
- Supports uninterrupted electricity generation during periods of high demand.
- Encourages investment in coal mining and evacuation infrastructure.

Challenges

- Limited availability of high-quality **coking coal**.
- Higher ash content in Indian thermal coal compared to imported coal.
- Need for continuous expansion of railway and evacuation infrastructure.
- Environmental concerns associated with increased coal production.
- Balancing energy security with India's long-term clean energy and climate commitments.

Footwear Quality Control Orders (QCOs)



Why in the News?

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has amended two Quality Control Orders (QCOs) relating to the footwear sector to improve ease of doing business and strengthen India's domestic manufacturing ecosystem.

The amendments were notified on 12 June 2026 through S.O. 3038(E) and S.O. 3037(E). They relate to the Footwear made from Leather and other Materials (Quality Control) Order, 2024 and the Footwear made

from All Rubber and all Polymeric Material and its Components (Quality Control) Order, 2024.

The changes provide additional time for clearing legacy footwear stock and introduce a special exemption for importing footwear samples for Research and Development (R&D).

Key Amendments

Extension of Legacy Stock Clearance Deadline

Under the amended QCOs, the deadline for clearance of legacy or existing footwear stock has been extended by one year, from 31 July 2026 to 31 July 2027.

Footwear is largely a seasonal product and inventories may remain with manufacturers, distributors and retailers beyond a single selling cycle. The additional period will therefore allow the industry to liquidate existing stock in an orderly manner without causing unnecessary disruption to trade.

The extension is expected to reduce the immediate compliance burden on businesses while facilitating a smooth transition towards mandatory quality standards. After the expiry of the extended period, footwear covered by the QCO framework will have to comply with the prescribed Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) requirements for sale in the market.

R&D Import Exemption

Another important amendment relates to the import of footwear samples for Research and Development.

Manufacturers of leather and footwear products have been permitted to import up to 4,500 pairs of footwear annually for R&D and other non-commercial purposes.

The exemption is aimed at enabling Indian manufacturers to study international product designs, evaluate samples and develop products for subsequent domestic manufacturing.

Conditions for Imported Samples

Footwear samples imported under the R&D exemption:

- Cannot be sold commercially.
- Must be prominently marked and embossed with the words "NOT FOR SALE".
- Must be disposed of as scrap after their intended use.

- Require manufacturers to maintain year-wise records of imports.
- Import records must be furnished to the Government whenever required.

The imported samples are intended primarily for vendor presentations, product evaluation, replication and subsequent manufacturing in India.

Purpose of the R&D Exemption

The exemption seeks to provide manufacturers greater flexibility in product development and innovation.

It will help companies evaluate new footwear designs and technologies, determine whether technical documentation is sufficient for product assessment and identify the actual number of physical samples required for research.

By facilitating access to global product samples, the measure can also support design capability, testing and product replication within India.

The exemption is therefore expected to encourage innovation while ensuring that imported R&D samples do not enter the commercial market.

Quality Control Orders (QCOs)

Quality Control Orders are regulatory measures through which the Central Government makes compliance with specified Indian Standards compulsory for notified products.

Products covered by QCOs are generally brought under the compulsory certification framework of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). BIS maintains lists of products covered under compulsory certification schemes and applicable QCOs.

The major objectives of QCOs are to:

- Ensure uniform product quality.
- Protect consumer health and safety.
- Prevent the sale of substandard products.
- Curb the inflow of poor-quality imports.
- Improve the competitiveness of Indian manufacturing.
- Promote compliance with nationally prescribed technical standards.

In the footwear sector, mandatory standards are particularly important because product quality, material

strength, durability and manufacturing specifications directly affect consumer experience and safety.

About the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is India's national standards body and operates under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

It is responsible for the formulation of Indian Standards, product certification, hallmarking and various conformity assessment activities.

Under compulsory certification requirements, notified products must conform to the relevant Indian Standard and fulfil prescribed certification conditions before being manufactured, imported or sold in India.

The QCO mechanism therefore plays an important role in strengthening India's overall quality infrastructure.

About DPIIT

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

The department was constituted in 1995 and restructured in 2000 following the merger of the erstwhile Department of Industrial Development. It was earlier known as the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion and was renamed DPIIT in January 2019.

DPIIT plays a key role in formulating and implementing policies relating to industrial development, investment promotion and internal trade.

It is also associated with major government initiatives and policy areas such as Startup India, Make in India, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, ease of doing business and intellectual property rights.

Importance of India's Footwear Sector

India is the world's second-largest producer of footwear, accounting for around 11.6% of global footwear production. It is also one of the world's largest footwear consuming markets, with about 12.4% of global consumption.

The sector has a strong presence of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and is highly employment intensive.

With rising domestic consumption and increasing investment in leather and non-leather footwear manufacturing, quality standards and product innovation are becoming increasingly important for India's global competitiveness.

The amended QCO provisions seek to balance these growth opportunities with the need for stronger quality compliance.

Bharat Tex 2026



Why in News?

Bharat Tex 2026, India's largest global textile and apparel exhibition, was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from 14–17 July 2026. The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers, global buyers, innovators, and investors to showcase India's strengths across the textile value chain while promoting sustainability, innovation, exports, and international collaborations.

Key Highlights

- Organised by the Bharat Tex Trade Federation (BTTF) with support from the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- Based on India's 5F Vision:
 - Farm → Fibre → Factory → Fashion → Foreign, integrating the entire textile ecosystem from raw material production to global exports.
- Witnessed participation from:
 - 1,600+ exhibitors
 - 7,000+ domestic and international buyers

- Delegates from 20+ countries, reflecting India's growing role in the global textile industry.
- Facilitated extensive business networking through:
 - 4,000+ Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings
 - 100+ Business-to-Government (B2G) meetings
 - Signing of 30+ Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering investment, technology transfer, sustainability, and trade partnerships.
- Covered the entire textile value chain, including:
 - Natural and man-made fibres
 - Yarn
 - Fabrics
 - Apparel and garments
 - Home textiles
 - Technical textiles
 - Textile machinery and accessories
- Hosted 100+ knowledge sessions featuring discussions on:
 - Sustainability and circular economy
 - Technical textiles
 - Industry 5.0 and smart manufacturing
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digitalisation
 - Innovation and research
 - Export opportunities and global market trends
- Featured the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) Textile Sustainability Awards 2026, recognising excellence in sustainable textile manufacturing.
- Introduced AI-enabled digital business matchmaking, enabling exhibitors and buyers to connect efficiently based on business interests and product requirements.

About Bharat Tex

- Bharat Tex is India's flagship global textile and apparel exhibition that showcases the country's comprehensive textile ecosystem.
- It serves as a common platform for manufacturers, exporters, investors, policymakers, designers, researchers, and international buyers.
- The exhibition aims to:
 - Promote textile and apparel exports.
 - Attract domestic and foreign investments.
 - Encourage innovation and adoption of advanced technologies.
 - Showcase sustainable and circular manufacturing practices.
 - Strengthen India's integration into global textile value chains.
- Bharat Tex also highlights India's capabilities in traditional textiles, technical textiles, sustainable fashion, and value-added textile products, reinforcing its position as one of the world's leading textile manufacturing hubs.

Major Government Initiatives Showcased

PM MITRA Parks

- Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks aim to establish world-class integrated textile manufacturing hubs with modern infrastructure, common utilities, and sustainable industrial ecosystems.
- The parks are expected to reduce logistics costs, improve competitiveness, and attract large-scale investments.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles

- Encourages large-scale investment in the production of Man-Made Fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF fabrics, and technical textiles.
- Enhances domestic manufacturing capacity, promotes exports, and strengthens India's position in high-value textile segments.

National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)

- Promotes research, innovation, and manufacturing of technical textiles used in

sectors such as healthcare, defence, agriculture, infrastructure, automotive, and geotextiles.

- Supports the development of advanced materials and sustainable textile technologies.

SAMARTH (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector)

- A flagship skill development programme of the Ministry of Textiles.
- Provides industry-oriented training to workers across the textile and apparel value chain.
- Focuses on enhancing employability, improving productivity, and generating sustainable employment, particularly for women and rural youth.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Monthly Bulletin, June 2026



Why in News?

The National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Monthly Bulletin for June 2026, indicating stable labour market conditions with marginal improvements in employment and labour force participation, particularly in urban areas. The survey showed that employment indicators remained largely steady compared to the previous month while registering modest year-on-year gains.

Key Highlights

Overall Labour Market Indicators (Age 15 years and above)

Indicator	June 2026	May 2026	June 2025
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	54.4%	54.4%	54.2%
Worker Population Ratio (WPR)	51.4%	51.4%	51.2%
Unemployment Rate (UR)	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%

Key Observations

- Labour force participation remained stable while showing a slight increase over the previous year.
- The proportion of employed persons in the population also improved marginally.
- The unemployment rate remained unchanged, indicating stability in the labour market.

Urban Labour Market

Urban employment indicators showed moderate improvement.

- LFPR increased from 49.8% to 50.1%.
- WPR improved from 46.6% to 46.8%.
- UR rose slightly from 6.4% to 6.6%, but remained significantly lower than 7.1% recorded in June 2025.

The data suggests that more people entered the urban labour force, while employment growth broadly kept pace despite a marginal increase in unemployment.

Rural Labour Market

The rural labour market remained largely stable.

- **LFPR: 56.6%** (unchanged)
- **WPR: 53.8%** (unchanged)
- **UR:** Declined marginally from 5.1% to 5.0%

The slight decline in rural unemployment indicates continued resilience in rural employment, supported by agriculture and allied activities during the period.

Female Labour Force Participation

Women's participation in the labour force continued to improve.

- Overall Female LFPR: 32.7%
- Rural Female LFPR: 36.6%
- Urban Female LFPR: 24.8%

Key Trend

- Overall female labour force participation increased by 0.7 percentage points compared to June 2025, reflecting gradual improvement in women's participation in economic activities.

About the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is India's principal survey for measuring employment and unemployment. It is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

The survey provides timely and reliable estimates of labour market indicators to assist policymakers in formulating employment and labour-related policies.

Objectives

- Estimate employment and unemployment levels across the country.
- Measure labour force participation and workforce characteristics.
- Generate periodic labour market indicators.
- Provide data for evidence-based policymaking and economic planning.
- Monitor changes in employment across rural and urban areas.

Survey Frequency

- **Launched:** 2017 to replace the earlier Employment–Unemployment Surveys.
- Since January 2025, PLFS releases:
 - Monthly estimates for key labour market indicators.
 - Quarterly estimates for urban areas.
 - Annual estimates for both rural and urban India.

Methodology

The monthly estimates are based on the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach.

Under the CWS method, a person is considered:

- Employed if they worked for at least one hour on any day during the seven days preceding the survey.

- Unemployed if they did not work but were available for and actively seeking work during the reference week.

This methodology provides a near real-time assessment of labour market conditions.

Key Labour Market Indicators**Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)**

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is the percentage of the population aged 15 years and above that is either:

- employed, or
- actively seeking or available for work.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) represents the percentage of the population aged 15 years and above that is currently employed.

Unemployment Rate (UR)

The Unemployment Rate (UR) is the percentage of unemployed persons within the labour force.

Significance of PLFS

- Provides the most comprehensive and timely assessment of India's labour market.
- Helps governments design employment generation and skill development programmes.
- Assists in monitoring economic growth, job creation, and labour market trends.
- Supports evaluation of flagship schemes related to employment, livelihoods, and social security.
- Serves as an important source of labour statistics for national planning and international reporting.

Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)**Why in News?**

NITI Aayog has launched the Investment Friendliness Index (IFI) to evaluate and improve the investment ecosystem across States and Union Territories (UTs), promoting both competitive and cooperative federalism. The index aims to encourage reforms that make States more attractive destinations for domestic and global investments.

What is the Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)?

The Investment Friendliness Index (IFI) is a data-driven assessment framework that benchmarks how effectively States and UTs attract, facilitate, and sustain investments. It evaluates the quality of the policy, regulatory, institutional, financial, and infrastructure ecosystem that supports businesses throughout the investment lifecycle. Rather than focusing only on ease of doing business, the index measures the overall investment climate and the confidence of investors.

Background

- Proposed following the 9th NITI Aayog Governing Council Meeting (2024).
- Announced in the Union Budget 2025–26 as a key reform initiative.

Key Features

- Covers 28 States and 8 Union Territories.
- Based on 84 indicators across multiple dimensions.
- Uses a combination of:
 - Secondary data from official government sources.
 - Investor Perception Survey to capture the actual experience of businesses.
- Offers a comprehensive evaluation of investment attractiveness instead of relying solely on regulatory reforms.

Eight Assessment Pillars

The IFI evaluates States and UTs across eight key pillars:

- Infrastructure
- Business Climate
- Resources
- Government Policy
- Regulatory Ease
- Institutional Environment

- Financial Health
- Environmental Resilience

Performance Categories

States and UTs are classified into four categories based on their scores:

- **Top Performers:** Above 50
- **Frontrunners:** 45–50
- **Emerging Performers:** 40 to below 45
- **Aspiring States:** Below 40

Top Performers

- **Overall:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa, and Odisha.
- **Hilly & North-Eastern States:** Uttarakhand.
- **Union Territories & City States:** Goa.

Significance

- Strengthens competitive and cooperative federalism by encouraging States to adopt best practices.
- Promotes State-level policy and regulatory reforms to improve the ease of investment.
- Helps identify strengths and gaps in the investment ecosystem, enabling targeted policy interventions.
- Enhances investor confidence through transparent benchmarking and performance evaluation.
- Supports India's long-term development goals of Viksit Bharat @2047 and Viksit Rajya @2047 by fostering investment-led economic growth, employment generation, and industrial competitiveness.

Rajasthan farmers object to GI tag for Unjha jeera and saunf



Why in News?

Rajasthan's cumin and fennel farmers have challenged the Geographical Indication (GI) tags granted to Gujarat's 'Unjha cumin' and 'Unjha Fennel', arguing that Unjha is primarily a trading and marketing hub rather than the principal cultivation area, while a substantial share of the produce originates from Rajasthan.

Key Highlights

- The GI tags for 'Unjha Jeera' and 'Unjha Fennel' have been registered in the name of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC), Unjha, Gujarat.
- Farmers and traders from Rajasthan claim that a large proportion of India's cumin and fennel is cultivated in Rajasthan, making the GI registration unrepresentative of the actual production geography.
- The Unjha APMC has defended the registrations, stating that the applications were supported by extensive scientific, historical, commercial, and documentary evidence establishing the products' reputation and association with Unjha.
- The controversy has reignited the debate on whether GI recognition should be based primarily on the place of production, unique agro-climatic conditions, historical reputation, or the region's long-established role as a trading and branding centre.
- The dispute may prompt closer scrutiny of the standards used by the Geographical Indications Registry while evaluating future GI applications.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

A Geographical Indication (GI) is a form of intellectual property right that identifies goods as originating from a specific geographical area, where a given quality, reputation, or other characteristic is essentially attributable to that place of origin.

Legal Framework

- Governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- Administered by the Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai, under the Department for

Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- India became compliant with GI protection under the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) through this legislation.
- **Validity:** 10 years from the date of registration and renewable indefinitely for successive periods of 10 years.

Products Eligible for GI Protection

GI registration can be granted to:

- Agricultural products
- Natural products
- Handicrafts
- Manufactured goods
- Food products and processed items

Criteria for Granting a GI

For a product to receive GI protection:

- It must originate from a defined geographical region.
- It should possess distinct qualities, characteristics, or reputation attributable to its geographical origin.
- The link between the product and the geographical area must be supported by historical, scientific, cultural, or commercial evidence.
- Applications are generally filed by producer associations, cooperatives, statutory bodies, or registered organizations, rather than individual producers.

Value Addition

- **First GI tag in India:** Darjeeling Tea (2004–05).
- India has more than 700 registered GI products, covering agriculture, handicrafts, textiles, food products, and manufactured goods.
- Rajasthan has several GI-tagged products, including Kota Doria, Makrana Marble, Blue Pottery of Jaipur, and Bikaneri Bhujia.
- Gujarat is known for GI products such as Gir Kesar Mango, Agates of Cambay, Kutch Embroidery, and Sankheda Furniture.

Benefits of GI Registration

- Protects producers against unauthorized use and imitation.
- Preserves traditional knowledge and indigenous production practices.
- Enhances product reputation and market value.
- Promotes exports and rural entrepreneurship.
- Generates better income and livelihood opportunities for local producers.

GI vs Trademark

Geographical Indication (GI)	Trademark
Collective right available to all eligible producers from the notified geographical area.	Exclusive right owned by an individual, company, or legal entity.
Identifies the geographical origin and unique characteristics of a product.	Identifies the commercial source or brand of goods and services.

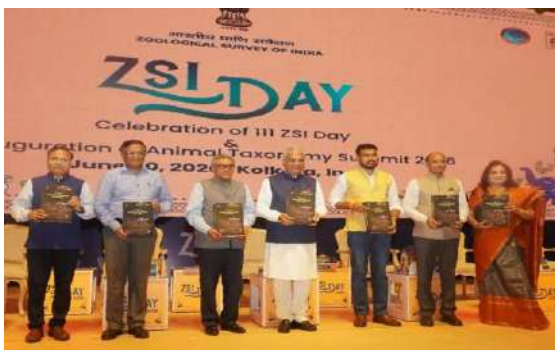
Geographical Indication (GI)	Trademark
Cannot ordinarily be assigned or licensed independently of the geographical area.	Can be sold, assigned, transferred, or licensed.
Protects traditional products linked to a region.	Protects business identity, logos, names, or brands.

Significance of the Current Dispute

- Highlights the complexities in balancing production geography, historical reputation, and commercial identity while granting GI protection.
- May influence future interpretations of the "geographical link" requirement under India's GI law.
- Emphasizes the need for transparent and evidence-based evaluation to ensure that GI protection benefits the genuine producer communities associated with the product.

Environment & Diversity

India Adds 709 New Species to Its Biodiversity Database



Why in News?

India added **709 new faunal species** and **353 plant taxa** to its biodiversity records in **2025**, reaffirming its position as one of the world's **17 mega-diverse countries**. The discoveries were documented through the annual publications of the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** and the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**. These findings highlight India's rich biological wealth and

the continued importance of scientific exploration and conservation.

India's Biodiversity at a Glance

- India is one of the **17 mega-diverse countries** in the world.
- It occupies only **2.4% of the world's land area** but supports nearly **8% of the world's recorded species**.
- The country encompasses four global biodiversity hotspots:
 - Himalaya
 - Indo-Burma
 - Western Ghats–Sri Lanka
 - Sundaland (Nicobar Islands)

Faunal Discoveries in 2025

India recorded **709 additions** to its faunal database during 2025.

Break-up

- **483 species** were **new to science**, discovered and described for the first time.

- **226 species** were **new distributional records**, meaning they were already known globally but were recorded in India for the first time.

With these additions, India's **total recorded faunal diversity has reached 1,05,953 species**, reflecting the country's enormous ecological richness.

States with the Highest Faunal Discoveries

State	New Faunal Additions
Kerala	98
West Bengal	76
Karnataka	67
Arunachal Pradesh	65

These states continue to emerge as biodiversity hotspots due to their varied ecosystems ranging from tropical forests and wetlands to Himalayan habitats.

Major Animal Groups Discovered

Animal Group	New Species
Hymenoptera (ants, bees, wasps)	106
Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths)	65
Diptera (flies)	64
Arachnida (spiders, scorpions, mites)	64
Coleoptera (beetles)	55
Pisces (fishes)	50

The predominance of insect discoveries indicates that a significant portion of India's biodiversity remains scientifically unexplored.

Notable Faunal Discoveries

Some important species discovered during the year include:

- *Myotis himalaicus* – A newly identified bat species from the Himalayan region.
- *Ptyctolaemus mamdaphaensis* and *Ptyctolaemus siangensis* – Two colourful agamid lizards discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.
- *Lycodon irwini* – A newly described non-venomous wolf snake.

Floral Discoveries in 2025

India also added **353 plant taxa** during 2025.

Break-up

- **221 taxa** were **new to science**.
- **132 taxa** represented **new distributional records** within India.

These discoveries include flowering plants, fungi, lichens, algae and microorganisms, underscoring the country's diverse flora.

States with the Highest Floral Discoveries

State	New Plant Taxa
Arunachal Pradesh	49
Uttarakhand	39
Kerala	37

The Eastern Himalayas and Western Ghats continue to be centres of botanical exploration.

Composition of New Plant Taxa

Group	Number
Angiosperms	154
Pteridophytes	3
Bryophytes	13
Lichens	62
Fungi	93
Algae	22
Microbes	6

Notable Floral Discoveries

- *Polystichum siangense* – A new fern discovered in Arunachal Pradesh.
- *Miliusa beddomei* – A rare flowering plant belonging to the custard apple family.
- *Herichium indicum* – A newly described edible mushroom with potential nutritional and medicinal value.

Significance of the Discoveries

- **Strengthens biodiversity documentation:** Continuous species discovery improves India's national biodiversity inventory.
- **Supports conservation planning:** Identifying new species helps prioritise habitats requiring protection.
- **Enhances ecological research:** New discoveries provide insights into evolution, ecosystem functioning and climate resilience.

- **Promotes sustainable use:** Newly identified fungi, plants and microbes may have applications in agriculture, medicine and biotechnology.
- **Reflects scientific progress:** The findings demonstrate the vital role of ZSI and BSI in advancing taxonomy and biodiversity research.

Way Forward

India's 2025 biodiversity discoveries underline that a substantial portion of its flora and fauna remains undocumented. Continued taxonomic research, habitat conservation, genomic studies, and greater investment in biodiversity surveys are essential for achieving the objectives of the **Convention on Biological Diversity**, the **National Biodiversity Authority**, and the country's broader environmental commitments. Protecting these newly discovered species will be crucial for maintaining ecological balance, ensuring sustainable development, and preserving India's status as one of the world's richest biodiversity nations.

Salt Marsh Restoration on Oléron Island



Why in News?

The revival of the traditional salt harvesting profession on **Oléron Island, France**, has drawn global attention as restored salt marshes are helping protect coastal communities from the growing impacts of climate change, particularly marine flooding and storm surges. Beyond reviving a centuries-old livelihood, these restored wetlands are emerging as an effective **nature-based solution (NbS)** for enhancing coastal resilience and conserving biodiversity.

Key Highlights

- The traditional occupation of salt workers (salt harvesters), which disappeared from Oléron Island during the 1980s due to declining economic viability, has been revived with active support from local authorities and environmental agencies.
- Restoration of abandoned salt marshes has dual benefits—reviving sustainable salt production and strengthening natural coastal defences against rising sea levels and extreme weather events.
- Salt marshes function as natural buffer zones by absorbing wave energy, reducing coastal erosion, and limiting the impact of marine flooding and storm surges.
- As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of coastal hazards, restoring wetlands such as salt marshes is increasingly being recognised as a cost-effective climate adaptation strategy.

What are Salt Marshes?

Salt marshes are **coastal wetlands** that develop in the **intertidal zone**, the area between land and sea that is regularly inundated and exposed by tides. They are characterized by saline conditions and support vegetation specially adapted to high salt concentrations.

Characteristics

- Found in **estuaries, lagoons, deltas, tidal flats, and sheltered coastlines**.
- Periodically flooded by seawater during high tides.
- Dominated by **halophytic (salt-tolerant) vegetation**, including grasses, sedges, reeds, and shrubs.
- Form in low-energy coastal environments where fine sediments accumulate over time.

Ecological Importance of Salt Marshes

Salt marshes provide numerous ecosystem services that are vital for both environmental sustainability and human well-being.

Natural Coastal Protection

- Dissipate wave energy and reduce the force of storm surges.

- Minimise coastal erosion by stabilising sediments through dense root systems.
- Protect nearby settlements, agricultural land, and infrastructure from flooding.

Flood Regulation

- Absorb and temporarily store excess seawater during high tides and storms.
- Reduce the severity and frequency of coastal flooding by slowing water movement.

Water Quality Improvement

- Trap sediments, nutrients, and pollutants before they enter coastal waters.
- Improve water quality by filtering contaminants and reducing eutrophication.

Biodiversity Conservation

- Provide breeding, feeding, and nursery habitats for fish, shellfish, crustaceans, and numerous invertebrates.
- Support migratory birds, amphibians, and other wildlife, making them biodiversity hotspots.

Climate Change Mitigation

- Store significant quantities of **blue carbon**, helping remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Carbon is stored both in plant biomass and in waterlogged sediments, where it can remain locked away for centuries.

What is Blue Carbon?

Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured and stored by coastal and marine ecosystems. Unlike terrestrial forests, these ecosystems can sequester carbon at exceptionally high rates while storing it for very long periods.

Major Blue Carbon Ecosystems

- Mangrove forests
- Salt marshes
- Seagrass meadows

Importance

- Capture atmospheric carbon dioxide through photosynthesis.
- Store carbon in vegetation as well as deep coastal sediments.

- Help mitigate climate change while simultaneously protecting coastlines and supporting marine biodiversity.

Threats to Salt Marshes

Despite their ecological significance, salt marshes are declining worldwide due to both natural and human-induced pressures.

- **Coastal development and land reclamation**, leading to habitat destruction.
- **Sea-level rise** associated with climate change, causing marsh submergence.
- **Pollution and eutrophication**, which degrade ecosystem health.
- **Conversion for agriculture, aquaculture, and urban expansion**.
- **Alteration of natural tidal flows** through embankments, dams, and other infrastructure.

Relevance for India

India possesses extensive coastal wetlands, including **mangroves, salt marshes, mudflats, and seagrass meadows**, which are essential for coastal protection, fisheries, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience.

Restoring and conserving these ecosystems can:

- Enhance protection against cyclones, storm surges, and coastal flooding.
- Improve livelihoods of coastal communities dependent on fisheries and salt production.
- Increase carbon sequestration, contributing to India's climate goals.
- Strengthen marine biodiversity and sustain ecosystem services.

Such restoration efforts also support India's commitments under:

- **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**
- **National Coastal Mission** under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement
- **Blue Economy and coastal resilience initiatives**

Sustainable Textiles and Circular Economy in India



Why in News?

The Ministry of Textiles recently released a Press Information Bureau (PIB) article titled “Weaving Sustainability into India’s Textile Future”, highlighting the government’s initiatives to promote a circular economy across India’s textile value chain. The article outlines efforts to enhance resource efficiency, reduce textile waste, encourage recycling, and strengthen sustainable manufacturing practices.

India’s Textile Sector: Key Highlights

- India’s textile and apparel sector contributes around 2% of the country’s GDP and nearly 11% of manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA).
- It provides employment to over 45 million people, making it one of the largest employment-generating sectors after agriculture.
- India accounts for approximately 4% of global textile and apparel exports, making it one of the world’s leading textile producers.
- The country generates nearly 7.8 million tonnes of textile waste annually, of which over 70% is recovered through:
 - Recycling
 - Upcycling
 - Downcycling
 - Reuse
- The circular textile economy supports 40–45 lakh livelihoods, particularly benefiting women engaged in collection, segregation, repair, and sorting activities.
- Major textile recycling clusters include:

- Panipat (Haryana) – renowned for recycled woollen yarns and blankets.
- Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) – a major hub for synthetic textile recycling.
- Mongolpuri (Delhi) – known for textile waste sorting and recycling operations.

Major Government Initiatives for Sustainable Textiles

1. PM MITRA Parks

- **PM MITRA (Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) Parks** aim to establish world-class integrated textile manufacturing hubs.
- These parks incorporate:
 - Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs)
 - Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) systems where feasible
 - Renewable energy integration
 - Green infrastructure and logistics
- The initiative seeks to reduce production costs while improving environmental sustainability.

2. National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)

- Promotes the cultivation and certification of organic fibres, particularly organic cotton.
- Ensures internationally accepted certification standards, improving export opportunities and reducing chemical-intensive farming.

3. Jute ICARE

- **Jute Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise (Jute ICARE)** promotes:
 - Scientific cultivation methods
 - Quality seed distribution
 - Advanced retting technologies
- It enhances fibre quality while promoting environmentally sustainable jute production.

4. National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM)

- Encourages research, innovation, and production of technical textiles.
- Supports technologies that convert textile waste into:
 - Advanced industrial materials
 - Geotextiles
 - Composites
 - Construction materials

- Promotes high-value applications of recycled fibres.

5. Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP)

The RAMP programme encourages MSMEs to adopt environmentally sustainable manufacturing through:

(a) MSE GIFT

Micro and Small Enterprise Green Investment and Financing for Transformation

- Supports adoption of:
 - Cleaner technologies
 - Energy-efficient machinery
 - Green manufacturing processes

(b) MSE SPICE

Micro and Small Enterprise Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy

- Encourages:
 - Waste minimisation
 - Recycling infrastructure
 - Circular business models
 - Resource-efficient production systems

6. Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

- Implemented under the Indian Carbon Market (ICM).
- The textile sector has been included under the scheme to encourage:
 - Carbon emission reduction
 - Energy efficiency
 - Adoption of cleaner production technologies
- Industries reducing emissions can earn and trade carbon credits.

7. Eco Mark Scheme, 2024

- Promotes eco-labelled textile products that meet prescribed environmental standards.
- Encourages sustainable consumption by enabling consumers to identify environmentally friendly products.

8. SURE (Sustainable Resolution)

- An industry-led initiative promoting sustainable apparel manufacturing.
- Focuses on:
 - Responsible sourcing
 - Reduced water and energy consumption
 - Sustainable production practices

- Ethical manufacturing standards

9. Bharat Tex

- Bharat Tex serves as India's flagship global textile exhibition.
- It showcases:
 - Sustainable textile technologies
 - Circular economy innovations
 - Eco-friendly fibres
 - Recycling technologies
 - Green manufacturing solutions
- It strengthens India's position as a global hub for sustainable textiles.

Significance

The government's circular economy initiatives are expected to transform India's textile industry by:

- Promoting resource efficiency through recycling and reuse of textile waste.
- Reducing dependence on virgin raw materials, thereby conserving natural resources.
- Lowering water consumption, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and hazardous chemical discharge during textile production.
- Enhancing the competitiveness of Indian textile exports by aligning with global sustainability standards such as ESG and circular economy principles.
- Supporting India's commitments under the Paris Agreement, Net Zero by 2070, and the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Mission.
- Creating millions of green jobs, especially for women and MSMEs involved in waste collection, recycling, and value-added manufacturing.

China's Great Green Wall



Why in News?

China's Three-North Protective Forest Program (TNPFP), popularly known as the Great Green Wall, has made significant progress in reducing desertification across northern China. Recent assessments indicate that the programme has successfully curbed the expansion of deserts, although scientists emphasize that sustained ecological restoration and long-term management are essential to secure these gains.

Key Highlights

- Launched in 1978, the Three-North Protective Forest Program (TNPFP) is one of the world's largest afforestation initiatives, aimed at combating desertification, reducing sandstorms, and restoring degraded ecosystems.
- The programme covers the northeast, north, and northwest regions of China, spanning around 4 million sq. km, nearly 42% of China's land area.
- It employs innovative techniques such as Straw Checkerboards, where straw is arranged in square grids to stabilize shifting sand dunes, reduce wind erosion, retain soil moisture, and create favourable conditions for saplings to grow.
- Forests established under the programme now cover nearly 5,00,000 sq. km.
- Since 2000, China's desertified land has been shrinking by more than 1,000 sq. km annually.
- Overall desertified land has declined by about 10%, while severely desertified areas have reduced by over 40%.
- Forest cover in the programme area increased from 5% in 1978 to around 14% in 2022.
- More than 300 million rural workers have participated in afforestation, sand control, and ecological restoration activities.
- The programme is expected to continue until 2050, with further efforts to improve biodiversity, restore native vegetation, and strengthen climate resilience.

What is Desertification?

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid regions caused by a combination of climatic variations and human activities, including:

- Deforestation

- Overgrazing
- Unsustainable agricultural practices
- Excessive groundwater extraction
- Poor land management

It results in declining soil fertility, reduced agricultural productivity, loss of biodiversity, and increased vulnerability to drought and climate change.

Significance of the Great Green Wall

- **Controls sandstorms:** Acts as a natural barrier against dust and sandstorms affecting northern China and neighbouring regions.
- **Reduces soil erosion:** Tree cover stabilizes soil and prevents wind erosion.
- **Enhances carbon sequestration:** Forests absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change mitigation.
- **Improves biodiversity:** Restores degraded habitats and supports the return of native plant and animal species.
- **Strengthens water conservation:** Vegetation improves soil moisture retention and groundwater recharge.
- **Supports rural livelihoods:** Afforestation projects generate employment and promote sustainable land management.
- **Global environmental model:** Demonstrates how sustained government policy, scientific innovation, and community participation can effectively combat land degradation on a large scale.

Challenges

- Large-scale planting of monoculture species can reduce biodiversity and increase vulnerability to pests and diseases.
- High water demand of certain tree species may strain water resources in arid regions.
- Climate change, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events continue to threaten long-term forest survival.
- Continuous monitoring, ecological restoration using native species, and sustainable land management remain crucial for the programme's long-term success.

Shrinking Yamuna Floodplains & Rising Flood Risk



Why in News?

A recent study by researchers from the University of Delhi (DU) and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Bhopal, published in the *Journal of the Geological Society of India*, found that the Yamuna River's floodplains in Delhi have shrunk by nearly one-third over the last century, significantly increasing the city's flood vulnerability.

Key Highlights

- **Study Area:** 50-km stretch of the Yamuna River flowing through Delhi.
- **Methodology:** Analysis of historical maps (from 1799 onwards) and satellite imagery up to 2024.
- **Major Findings:**
 - River channel has narrowed by nearly 68%.
 - Formative discharge has declined by about 89%.
 - Around 45 sq km (nearly one-third) of the floodplain has been disconnected from the river due to embankments.
 - Active sediment deposition declined from 20 sq km (1985) to 4 sq km (2020).
- **Major Causes:**
 - Construction of Hathnikund, Wazirabad and Okhla barrages.
 - Extensive embankments along the river.
 - Rapid urbanisation and encroachment on floodplains.
 - Reduced natural river flows because of upstream water abstraction.

About the Yamuna River

The Yamuna is the largest tributary of the Ganga and one of the most important rivers in northern India.

Origin

- Originates from the Yamunotri Glacier on the southwestern slopes of the Bandarpunch massif in the Lower Himalayas, Uttarakhand.
- Source Elevation: Approximately 6,300 metres above sea level.

Course

- Total Length: About 1,376 km.
- Flows through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh before joining the Ganga at Prayagraj (Allahabad).
- Forms the boundary between Haryana and Uttar Pradesh for a considerable distance.

Major Tributaries

- **Right-bank tributaries:**
 - Chambal
 - Sindh
 - Betwa
 - Ken
- **Left-bank tributaries:**
 - Tons (largest tributary)
 - Hindon
 - Giri

Major Cities Along the Yamuna

- Yamunanagar
- Delhi
- Mathura
- Agra
- Etawah
- Prayagraj

Importance

- Supplies drinking water to millions of people, especially in Delhi and surrounding regions.
- Supports irrigation across the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- Holds immense religious and cultural significance in Hinduism.
- Provides habitat for diverse aquatic and riparian biodiversity.

What are Floodplains?

Floodplains are flat, low-lying areas adjacent to a river that are periodically inundated during floods. They are

formed through the long-term deposition of sediments carried by the river.

Importance of Floodplains

- Act as natural buffers by storing excess floodwater and reducing flood peaks.
- Recharge groundwater aquifers.
- Improve water quality by filtering sediments and pollutants.
- Maintain fertile soils for agriculture.
- Support rich biodiversity and wetlands.
- Help sustain river ecosystems by allowing natural channel migration and sediment deposition.

Encroachment, embankments, and urban development disconnect floodplains from rivers, reducing their ability to absorb floodwaters and increasing the risk of severe urban flooding.

What is Formative Discharge?

Formative Discharge, also known as Channel-Maintaining Discharge, is the long-term average river flow that shapes and maintains the river channel.

Significance

- Transports sediments and prevents excessive siltation.
- Maintains the river's width, depth, and carrying capacity.
- Sustains channel stability and ecological health.
- Ensures effective connectivity between the river and its floodplains.

Ken-Betwa stir claims its first win, activist suspends fast



Why in News?

An activist ended an 18-day hunger strike after the Madhya Pradesh government agreed to conduct fresh surveys of families allegedly excluded from rehabilitation under the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP), reviving concerns over compensation, rehabilitation, and environmental impacts associated with India's first river interlinking project.

Key Highlights

- Jai Kisan Sangathan leader Amit Bhatnagar called off his indefinite hunger strike after the Madhya Pradesh government accepted the demand for fresh village-level surveys.
- The dispute relates to villages falling within the Daudhan Dam submergence area in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh.
- Protesters alleged that:
 - Several eligible families were excluded from compensation and rehabilitation lists.
 - Previous socio-economic surveys contained errors and omissions.
 - Gram Sabha proceedings approving rehabilitation plans were irregular.
- The government has agreed to constitute joint survey teams comprising officials and representatives of Jai Kisan Sangathan.
- Although the fast has ended, the movement will continue under the banner of "Nyay Satyagraha" to ensure fair implementation of rehabilitation measures.

Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)

- India's first river interlinking project to be implemented under the National Perspective Plan.
- It proposes to transfer surplus water from the Ken River to the Betwa River.
- The project spans Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, with major infrastructure located in Madhya Pradesh.
- Major components include:
 - Daudhan Dam on the Ken River.
 - A 221-km-long canal connecting the Ken and Betwa basins.

- Powerhouses, tunnels, barrages, and distribution networks.
- It is being implemented in two phases and is estimated to cost over ₹44,000 crore.

Objectives

- Provide irrigation to nearly 10.6 lakh hectares of farmland.
- Supply drinking water to around 62 lakh people in the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
- Generate approximately 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.
- Reduce recurring drought conditions and improve agricultural productivity in Bundelkhand.

Concerns Associated with the Project

1. Rehabilitation and Displacement

- Large-scale displacement of villages due to the Daudhan Dam reservoir.
- Allegations of exclusion of eligible families from compensation and resettlement.
- Delays in rehabilitation and concerns over the quality of resettlement sites.

2. Environmental Concerns

- Submergence of over 9,000 hectares of forest land, including parts of the Panna Tiger Reserve.
- Potential loss of wildlife habitat and biodiversity.
- Risks to endangered species such as tigers, vultures, and gharials.

3. Ecological Concerns

- Alteration of the natural flow regime of the Ken River.
- Possible impacts on aquatic ecosystems, fisheries, and downstream water availability.
- Long-term ecological consequences of inter-basin water transfer remain debated.

4. Social Concerns

- Loss of agricultural land and forest-based livelihoods.
- Impact on tribal and rural communities dependent on local natural resources.
- Demand for transparent surveys, fair compensation, and community participation in decision-making.

National River Linking Project (NRLP)

- Conceived by the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in 1982.
- Aims to transfer water from surplus river basins to water-deficit basins through a network of reservoirs and canals.
- Envisages 30 inter-basin river links:
 - 16 Peninsular links
 - 14 Himalayan links
- Objectives include:
 - Expanding irrigation.
 - Enhancing water security.
 - Mitigating floods and droughts.
 - Supporting hydropower generation and inland navigation.
- The Ken-Betwa Link Project is the first NRLP project to move into the implementation stage, making it a landmark initiative in India's water resource management strategy.

Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Area notification remains deadlocked



Why in News?

The Union Environment Ministry has extended the tenure of its expert committee on the Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) until July 2027, delaying a final decision on the long-pending ESA notification. The latest 2024 draft notification, covering 56,825 sq km across six states, remains unresolved due to continuing disagreements between the Centre and the concerned states over the extent and implementation of ecological protection measures.

Key Highlights

- Committee tenure extended till July 2027 to continue consultations with stakeholders.

- The 2024 draft notification proposes declaring 56,825 sq km across Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA).
- The notification seeks to regulate environmentally harmful activities while allowing sustainable livelihoods.
- The issue reflects the long-standing debate between the recommendations of the Gadgil Committee (2011) and the Kasturirangan Committee (2013) regarding the extent of ecological protection in the Western Ghats.
- Several states have raised concerns over the impact of ESA notification on agriculture, plantations, infrastructure development and livelihoods.

What is an Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA)?

An Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA) is a region notified by the Central Government under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to protect ecologically fragile ecosystems from adverse impacts of developmental activities.

Objectives

- Act as "shock absorbers" around national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and other ecologically important regions.
- Regulate developmental activities through graded restrictions.
- Maintain ecological balance while permitting sustainable economic activities.
- Prevent habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss.

Activities Regulated in ESAs

1. Prohibited Activities

- Mining and quarrying
- Setting up of highly polluting industries
- Thermal power plants
- Large-scale commercial exploitation of natural resources

2. Regulated Activities

- Construction projects
- Tourism infrastructure
- Hydropower projects
- Road expansion

- Commercial development

3. Permitted Activities

- Organic farming
- Traditional agriculture
- Horticulture and plantations
- Eco-tourism
- Rainwater harvesting
- Renewable energy projects

Gadgil Committee vs Kasturirangan Committee

Feature	Gadgil Committee (WGEEP, 2011)	Kasturirangan Committee (HLWG, 2013)
Area proposed as ESA	About 64% of Western Ghats	About 37% (around 59,940 sq km)
Approach	Bottom-up, community-based conservation	Scientific mapping using satellite imagery
Governance	Strong role for Gram Sabhas	Greater role for governments and expert institutions
Development policy	Strict restrictions on development	Balanced conservation with development
Mining & Quarrying	Complete ban in sensitive zones	Regulated restrictions in ESA
Agriculture & Plantations	More restrictions	Existing agriculture and plantations largely exempted
Focus	Ecological protection first	Sustainable development alongside conservation

Why is the ESA Notification Controversial?

Concerns of States

- Restrictions may affect farmers, plantation owners and local communities.
- Fear of reduced economic opportunities and infrastructure development.

- Possible impact on housing, roads and public utilities in notified villages.
- Demand for exclusion of densely populated and cultivated areas.

Environmental Concerns

- Increasing landslides and floods in the Western Ghats have highlighted the need for stronger ecological safeguards.
- Unregulated quarrying, mining and deforestation have accelerated environmental degradation.
- Scientists argue that ecological protection is essential for long-term disaster resilience and water security.

Significance of the Western Ghats

The Western Ghats, stretching for nearly 1,600 km along India's western coast, are among the country's most ecologically important mountain systems.

Global Biodiversity Hotspot

- One of the world's eight hottest biodiversity hotspots.
- Home to over 7,000 species of flowering plants, hundreds of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and freshwater fishes.
- Contains a very high proportion of endemic species found nowhere else.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

- Recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its exceptional biodiversity and ecological significance.

Water Security

- Source of major peninsular rivers including:
 - Godavari
 - Krishna
 - Kaveri
 - Periyar
 - Tungabhadra
- Supports drinking water, irrigation and hydropower for millions of people.

Climate Regulation

- Plays a vital role in influencing the South-West Monsoon.

- Acts as an important carbon sink.
- Helps regulate regional climate and rainfall patterns.

Disaster Mitigation

- Dense forests reduce soil erosion.
- Help prevent floods and landslides.
- Recharge groundwater and maintain river flows during dry seasons.

Livelihood Support

- Supports agriculture, spice cultivation, plantations, fisheries and eco-tourism.
- Provides ecosystem services essential for the livelihoods of millions of people living in and around the region.

Challenges

- Conflicting priorities between conservation and development.
- Expansion of mining, quarrying and infrastructure projects.
- Deforestation and habitat fragmentation.
- Human-wildlife conflict.
- Climate change increasing the frequency of floods, droughts and landslides.
- Delay in finalising ESA notification due to opposition from states and local stakeholders.

Way Forward

- Finalise the ESA notification through consensus-based consultations with states and local communities.
- Adopt scientifically informed, site-specific zoning instead of blanket restrictions.
- Strengthen community participation, including Gram Sabhas, in conservation planning.
- Promote sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism and green livelihoods to reduce economic concerns.
- Enhance monitoring using GIS, satellite imagery and remote sensing for effective environmental governance.
- Integrate disaster risk reduction with ecological conservation to improve resilience against climate-induced hazards.

Governance

NFSA Draft Amendment on Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)



Why in News?

The Union Government has released the **Draft National Food Security (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, proposing significant changes to the foodgrain entitlement under the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)**. The draft has been placed in the public domain, with comments and suggestions invited until **13 July 2026**. The amendment seeks to make foodgrain distribution more equitable by shifting from a household-based entitlement to a person-based entitlement for AAY beneficiaries.

About the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

The **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** provides a legal framework for ensuring food security by supplying subsidised foodgrains through the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**. It covers up to **75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population**, benefiting nearly two-thirds of India's population.

The Act classifies beneficiaries into two categories:

- **Priority Households (PHH):** Entitled to **5 kg of foodgrains per person per month**.
- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) Households:** The poorest of the poor, currently entitled to **35 kg of foodgrains per household per month**, irrespective of family size.

Key Proposed Amendment

The draft amendment proposes replacing the existing household-based entitlement for AAY beneficiaries with a **per capita allocation**.

New Entitlement

- Every AAY beneficiary will receive **7 kg of foodgrains per month**.
- The entitlement will remain **free of cost**.
- A **maximum ceiling of 35 kg per household per month** will continue to apply.

Existing Provision

- Every AAY household receives **35 kg of foodgrains per month**, regardless of whether the household has one member or several members.

Thus, while larger families of up to five members may benefit from a more equitable allocation, the 35 kg cap means households with more than five members will continue to receive less than 7 kg per person.

Rationale Behind the Amendment

The Government has stated that the amendment aims to:

- Remove inequity between small and large households within the AAY category.
- Introduce a **fairer per capita allocation** instead of a uniform household quota.
- Better align foodgrain distribution with individual nutritional requirements.
- Rationalise foodgrain allocation under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Concerns Raised

Reduction in Allocation for Small Households

States such as **Kerala** and several other southern states have expressed concern that households with fewer than five members will receive less foodgrain than they currently do, leading to a decline in their overall allocation.

North-South Disparity

Food rights activists argue that average family size is generally larger in northern India than in southern India. Consequently, the amendment could disproportionately benefit states with larger households while reducing allocations to states with smaller family sizes.

Continued Disadvantage for Large Families

Although the amendment adopts a per-person formula, the **35 kg household ceiling** remains unchanged. As a result, households with more than five members will still receive less than the proposed 7 kg per person.

Outdated Beneficiary Lists

The delay in conducting the national Census has prevented revision of NFSA coverage and AAY beneficiary lists. Many eligible poor households continue to remain outside the food security net because beneficiary numbers are still based on older population estimates.

Limited Focus on Nutrition

Experts note that the amendment addresses only cereal distribution and does not improve access to nutritionally important foods such as pulses, edible oil, or protein-rich items.

Demands by the Right to Food Campaign

The Right to Food Campaign has urged the Government to broaden the scope of food security by recommending:

- **14 kg of foodgrains per person per month** instead of the proposed 7 kg.
- Inclusion of **pulses** and **edible oil** under the NFSA to ensure balanced nutritional security rather than merely cereal security.
- Immediate updating of beneficiary lists following the Census so that newly eligible poor households are included under the Act.

Significance

The proposed amendment marks one of the most important changes to the AAY entitlement structure since the enactment of the NFSA in 2013. By shifting from a household-based to a person-based allocation, the Government seeks to improve equity among beneficiaries. However, concerns over the continued household cap, regional disparities, delayed Census-based revisions, and inadequate nutritional support indicate that the proposal may require further refinement before implementation.

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) & APAAR



Why in News?

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** directed all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to upload students' academic credits to the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** portal by **30 June 2026**, underscoring the expanding implementation of the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** and **APAAR** under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)

The **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** is a digital repository of academic credits established by the **Ministry of Education** and regulated by the **University Grants Commission (UGC)**. Introduced under the **NEP 2020**, it enables students to accumulate, store, transfer, and redeem academic credits earned from recognised Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), thereby promoting flexibility in higher education.

Objectives

- Facilitate seamless credit transfer among recognised HEIs.
- Support **Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit (MEME)** in higher education.
- Enable lifelong learning by allowing students to resume education after breaks.
- Promote interdisciplinary learning and academic mobility.
- Reduce loss of academic progress due to migration or discontinuation of studies.

APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry)

APAAR is a **unique 12-digit lifelong student identification number** introduced under the **One Nation, One Student ID** initiative.

The APAAR ID integrates a student's academic journey across school education, higher education, and skill development programmes into a single digital identity.

Key Features

- Linked with **Aadhaar**, **DigiLocker**, and the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**.
- Stores verified academic records throughout a student's educational journey.
- Facilitates seamless admission, scholarship verification, and academic mobility.
- Supports digital governance and paperless record management.

Current Status (June 2026)

- Over **26.3 crore verified APAAR IDs** have been generated across India.

How the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) Works

1. Students create an **APAAR/ABC ID** during admission.
2. Recognised HEIs upload credits directly to the ABC portal after successful completion of courses.
3. Students can accumulate credits from different recognised institutions.
4. Credits can be transferred while changing institutions or academic programmes.
5. Credits remain valid for **seven years** (or as prescribed for specific programmes).
6. Upon fulfilling programme requirements, degrees and certificates are issued through the **National Academic Depository (NAD)** and made available via **DigiLocker**.

Major Features of ABC

- Digital storage of academic credits in a secure national repository.
- Transfer of credits across recognised Higher Education Institutions.
- Supports **Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit (MEME)**:
 - **Certificate**: After 1 year
 - **Diploma**: After 2 years
 - **Bachelor's Degree**: After 3 or 4 years

- Up to **40% of programme credits** can be earned through the SWAYAM online learning platform.
- Aligned with the **National Credit Framework (NCrF)** to integrate school, higher, vocational, and skill education.
- Secure digital academic records through integration with **NAD** and **DigiLocker**.
- Promotes flexibility, interdisciplinary education, and student-centric learning.

Role in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

The ABC and APAAR ecosystem forms an important component of India's **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for education under the **Digital India** programme.

It is supported by:

- **DigiLocker**
- **National Academic Depository (NAD)**
- **Common Service Centres (CSCs)**
- **SAMARTH ERP**

The government also plans future integration with **Bharat Praman Chain**, India's sovereign blockchain platform, to enable **tamper-proof, secure, and verifiable academic credentials**, strengthening trust in digital educational records both nationally and internationally.

MANAS (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asoochna Kendra)



Why in News?

The Government of India has highlighted the achievements of **MANAS (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asoochna Kendra)**, the National Narcotics Helpline, as a technology-driven initiative supporting the vision of a **Nasha Mukh Bharat**. The platform strengthens citizen

participation in combating drug trafficking by enabling digital reporting, counselling, and rehabilitation services.

What is MANAS?

MANAS (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asoochna Kendra) is India's **National Narcotics Helpline**, established to facilitate public participation in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking through a secure digital platform.

- **Launched:** 18 July 2024
- **Implemented by:** Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
- **Developed in collaboration with:** Digital India Corporation (DIC)
- **Objective:** To provide a single national platform for reporting drug-related crimes, seeking counselling, and accessing rehabilitation support while ensuring confidentiality and ease of access.

Objectives

MANAS aims to:

- Encourage citizen participation in combating drug trafficking.
- Enable quick reporting of narcotics-related offences.
- Provide access to counselling and rehabilitation services for individuals affected by substance abuse.
- Support the Government's **Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan** through technology-driven interventions.
- Improve coordination among law enforcement agencies for prompt action against drug-related crimes.

Key Features

Multiple Access Channels

The platform can be accessed through:

- **National Helpline: 1933**
- **Official MANAS Web Portal**
- **Email**
- **UMANG App**, allowing users to report incidents and seek assistance from anywhere in the country.

Anonymous Reporting

Citizens can anonymously report:

- Drug trafficking networks
- Drug peddling and illegal sale of narcotics
- Illegal cultivation of narcotic crops such as cannabis, opium poppy, and coca plants

The identity of informants is kept confidential to encourage greater public participation.

Counselling and Rehabilitation

- Calls related to **drug addiction and de-addiction** are seamlessly transferred to the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's National De-addiction Helpline (14446)**.
- This ensures that individuals seeking treatment receive professional counselling and rehabilitation support instead of only law enforcement assistance.

Technology-Driven Features

MANAS incorporates several digital governance features, including:

- Digital ticket generation for every complaint.
- Workflow management system for efficient handling and tracking of cases.
- Smart Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) (*under development*).
- AI-enabled chatbot support for user assistance.
- Expansion of multilingual and regional language support to improve accessibility across India.

Significance

- Strengthens intelligence gathering through community participation.
- Promotes a **whole-of-society approach** in combating drug abuse and trafficking.
- Enhances transparency and accountability through digital complaint management.
- Improves coordination between enforcement agencies and rehabilitation services.
- Contributes to the Government's vision of a **Drug-Free India (Nasha Mukh Bharat)** by combining technology, public awareness, and institutional support.

PM SVANidhi Street Food Hub Initiative



Why in News?

Lakhanpur in Kathua district, Jammu & Kashmir, has been selected among the **first towns approved** under the **PM SVANidhi Street Food Hub Initiative**. The project aims to develop Lakhanpur into a modern street food destination by promoting local cuisine, improving infrastructure for street vendors, and enhancing the tourism experience.

Key Highlights

- Lakhanpur, known as the **gateway to Jammu & Kashmir**, will develop a **Street Food Hub** across **two clusters** covering **1,754.25 square metres**.
- The project will showcase **traditional Dogra cuisine**, preserving the region's rich culinary heritage while creating new economic opportunities.
- Modern amenities such as hygienic food stalls, seating areas, proper waste management, sanitation facilities, lighting, and improved pedestrian infrastructure will be developed.
- The initiative is expected to benefit **pilgrims, tourists, local residents, and street vendors** by providing a safe, clean, and organized food environment.

About the PM SVANidhi Street Food Hub Initiative

The **PM SVANidhi Street Food Hub Initiative** is being implemented by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** under the broader framework of the **PM SVANidhi Scheme**.

The initiative aims to establish **up to 50 Street Food Hubs** across India by transforming existing food streets into

well-planned, hygienic, and tourist-friendly public spaces.

Objectives

- Promote **organized and hygienic street food markets**.
- Improve the livelihoods of street food vendors.
- Enhance urban tourism through local culinary experiences.
- Preserve and promote traditional regional cuisines.
- Develop sustainable urban infrastructure supporting local economies.

Selection Criteria

Preference is given to towns and cities that possess:

- **Tourism or heritage significance.**
- **A unique local culinary tradition.**
- Convergence with flagship tourism and heritage programmes such as:
 - **Swadesh Darshan Scheme**
 - **PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) Scheme**
 - **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**
 - **UNESCO Creative Cities Network**

These criteria ensure that Street Food Hubs contribute to both urban development and tourism promotion.

Financial Support

The Government provides financial assistance of **₹4 crore per project**, released in phases:

- **30%** as the **first instalment** after project approval.
- **50%** as the **second instalment** during implementation.
- **20%** after successful completion of the project.

Additionally, cities with a **notified Street Vending Plan** are eligible for an **incentive of ₹25 lakh**, encouraging better planning and regulation of street vending activities.

About PM SVANidhi

The **Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)** was launched in **2020** by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.

Objective

The scheme aims to:

- Provide **collateral-free working capital loans** to street vendors.
- Promote **financial inclusion** through access to formal banking services.
- Encourage **digital payments** by offering cashback incentives.
- Provide **interest subsidy** on timely loan repayment.
- Enable vendors to expand and sustain their businesses while improving their credit profile.

The scheme plays a crucial role in supporting street vendors, particularly those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, by facilitating affordable institutional credit.

Significance

- Improves the **livelihoods and income** of street vendors.
- Promotes **regional cuisines** such as **Dogra cuisine**, preserving local food traditions.
- Enhances **culinary and heritage tourism**, attracting more domestic and international visitors.
- Improves **food safety, hygiene, sanitation, and visitor experience** through organized food streets.
- Generates **employment opportunities** and stimulates local economic development.
- Supports sustainable urban development by integrating tourism, infrastructure, and informal-sector livelihoods.

Commercialisation and Transfer of Government-Developed Technologies



Why in News?

The Government informed Parliament about the institutional framework, technology transfer mechanisms, and commercialization of technologies developed by publicly funded research institutions such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), and National Research Development Corporation (NRDC). The government highlighted the progress made in promoting innovation, strengthening intellectual property (IP) management, supporting startups, and facilitating the transfer of indigenous technologies to industry for commercial use.

National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)

The National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) is an autonomous organization functioning under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology. It serves as India's nodal agency for technology transfer, commercialization of publicly funded research, licensing of technologies, and management of intellectual property rights. NRDC acts as a bridge between research laboratories and industry by helping convert laboratory innovations into commercially viable products and services.

Key Achievements

- Licensed technologies to more than 5,100 entrepreneurs and industries.
- Facilitated the filing of over 2,100 Intellectual Properties (IPs), including patents.
- Provides support for:
 - Patent filing and IP protection.
 - Prototype development.
 - Pilot plant establishment.
 - Techno-economic feasibility studies.
 - Commercial licensing and technology exports.
 - Technology validation and market linkage.

These initiatives help accelerate the adoption of indigenous technologies and promote the objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Institutional Framework for Technology Transfer

India has established dedicated institutional mechanisms across scientific departments to ensure that publicly funded research reaches industries and society.

1. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

CSIR follows its Technology Transfer and Utilisation of Knowledgebase Guidelines, which provide a structured framework for:

- Licensing technologies.
- Managing intellectual property.
- Industry collaboration.
- Revenue sharing through royalty.
- Encouraging commercialization of research outputs.

2. Department of Biotechnology (DBT)

The DBT Intellectual Property Guidelines, 2023 empower research institutions to:

- Own intellectual property generated through government-funded research.
- License technologies through exclusive or non-exclusive agreements.
- Promote partnerships with private industry.
- Facilitate faster commercialization of biotechnology innovations.

3. Technology Development Board (TDB)

The Technology Development Board (TDB), established under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), provides financial assistance for:

- Commercialization of indigenous technologies.
- Scaling up laboratory innovations.
- Industrial production.
- Technology-based entrepreneurship.

The Board supports projects that have successfully completed research and are ready for market deployment.

Startup and Industry Support Ecosystem

To strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship, several specialized institutions have been established.

1. Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)

BIRAC has developed a nationwide biotechnology innovation ecosystem through:

- 7 Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) under the National Biopharma Mission (NBM).
- 94 biotechnology incubation and pre-incubation centres across 25 States and Union Territories.

These centres provide:

- Business mentoring.
- Laboratory infrastructure.
- Regulatory guidance.
- Industry networking.
- Investor access.
- Commercialization support.

2. Department of Science and Technology (DST)

DST has established 22 Technology Enabling Centres (TECs) across leading academic institutions to:

- Connect researchers with industries.
- Identify commercially viable technologies.
- Facilitate patenting and licensing.
- Promote academia-industry collaboration.

Incubation Support

Incubation centres established at IITs, research institutions, and NRDC provide:

- Startup mentorship.
- Technology Readiness Level (TRL) assessment.
- Product validation.
- Testing facilities.
- Business development support.
- Funding facilitation.
- Market access assistance.

Commercialisation Performance (2023–2025)

Government data indicate a steady increase in technology transfer and commercialization.

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

- 707 technologies licensed or developed.
- 452 technologies commercialized or transferred to industry.

CSIR remains India's leading public research organization in terms of commercialization.

Department of Biotechnology (DBT)

- 120 technologies licensed or developed.
- 18 technologies commercialized.

The technologies span biotechnology, vaccines, diagnostics, agriculture, healthcare, and industrial biotechnology.

Department of Science and Technology (DST)

- 185 technologies licensed or developed.
- 36 technologies successfully commercialized.

DST primarily supports emerging technologies with strong industrial potential.

Startup Creation

Technology commercialization has also contributed to the growth of innovation-driven startups.

CSIR

- Supported 148 startups.
- Generated royalty income through technology licensing.
- Created employment opportunities for around 7,200 people.

DBT

Facilitated 34 startups in sectors such as:

- Healthcare
- Agricultural biotechnology

- Diagnostics
- Biomanufacturing
- Medical devices

NRDC

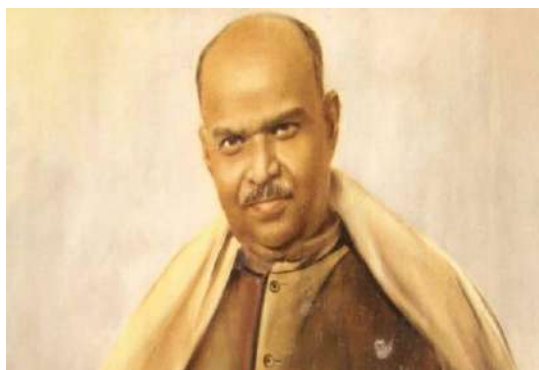
Supported 13 startups under its Technology Development, Validation and Commercialisation (TDVC) Programme, helping innovators move from prototype development to commercial production.

Significance

The government's technology transfer ecosystem plays a vital role in transforming publicly funded research into market-ready innovations. Institutions such as CSIR, DST, DBT, BIRAC, TDB, and NRDC collectively strengthen India's innovation ecosystem by promoting industry-academia collaboration, supporting startups, protecting intellectual property, and accelerating commercialization. These efforts contribute to economic growth, employment generation, technological self-reliance, and the realization of the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

History

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee



Why in the News?

Vice President of India C. P. Radhakrishnan paid floral tributes to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee at Uprashtrapati Bhawan on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary. The tribute forms part of the wider national remembrance of Mookerjee's contribution to education, politics, national integration, and post-Independence nation-building. The Government of India is

commemorating his 125th birth anniversary through a two-year programme from 6 July 2025 to 6 July 2027.

About Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee

Syama Prasad Mookerjee (1901–1953) was a prominent Indian statesman, educationist, barrister, parliamentarian, and political leader associated with the idea of cultural nationalism.

He served in the first Union Cabinet of independent India as Minister for Industry and Supply under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He later founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951, which emerged as an important political organisation in post-Independence India.

His public life covered diverse fields, including university administration, provincial politics, humanitarian relief, Constituent Assembly debates, industrial policy, and questions concerning national integration.

Early Life and Education

Lineage

Syama Prasad Mookerjee was born on 6 July 1901 in Calcutta, present-day Kolkata, into a distinguished Bengali family.

His father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, was a noted educationist, jurist, and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. His family background had a major influence on his intellectual and academic development.

Academic Record

Mookerjee studied at Presidency College and pursued higher education at the University of Calcutta. He completed his studies in English and Bengali and became a Fellow of the University Senate in 1923.

He obtained his law degree and enrolled as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court in 1924.

Legal and Academic Milestones

Mookerjee travelled to England for further legal training and was associated with Lincoln's Inn before being called to the Bar.

In 1934, at the age of 33, he became the youngest Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta and remained in office until 1938.

During his tenure, he encouraged the greater use of Indian languages in higher education. A notable development was Rabindranath Tagore delivering a university convocation address in Bengali, reflecting efforts to expand the role of vernacular languages in academic life.

Political Career

Entry into Provincial Politics

Mookerjee entered active politics in 1929 when he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council from the Calcutta University constituency.

After initially entering the legislature as a Congress representative, he later contested and served as an independent legislator.

His political career gradually focused on Bengal's governance, communal relations, education, and constitutional questions.

Finance Minister of Bengal

Mookerjee served as Finance Minister of Bengal Province from 1941 to 1942 in A. K. Fazlul Huq's Progressive Coalition government.

During this period, Bengal faced severe administrative, economic, and wartime pressures arising from the Second World War and British colonial policies.

Resignation in 1942

In November 1942, Mookerjee resigned from the Bengal government after strongly criticising British policies and demanding greater Indian control over governance.

He opposed colonial repression and questioned the British administration's handling of political unrest and humanitarian crises.

His resignation marked an important transition from provincial administration to a more assertive political role against colonial governance.

Association with the Hindu Mahasabha

Mookerjee became closely associated with the Hindu Mahasabha and served as its president during the 1940s. However, he left the organisation in 1948 amid differences over its political direction and the question of developing a broader, more inclusive political platform.

Role During the Bengal Famine

The Bengal Famine of 1943 caused widespread hunger, disease, displacement, and mortality across the province.

Mookerjee played an active role in humanitarian relief and worked with social and charitable organisations to mobilise food, medicine, and assistance for affected communities.

Relief efforts were undertaken with organisations such as the Ramakrishna Mission, Mahabodhi Society, and other voluntary groups.

His involvement during the famine strengthened his image as a public leader engaged in humanitarian mobilisation beyond legislative politics.

Role in the Partition of Bengal

During the intense political negotiations preceding India's Partition, Mookerjee strongly opposed proposals for an undivided sovereign Bengal outside the Indian Union.

He supported the division of Bengal if the wider Partition of India became unavoidable and campaigned for Hindu-majority western districts of Bengal to remain within India.

These political efforts contributed to the movement for the creation of West Bengal as a state within the Indian Union.

His role in the Bengal Partition debate remains one of the most prominent aspects of his political legacy.

Member of the Constituent Assembly

Mookerjee was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and participated in India's constitution-making process.

His interventions reflected concerns relating to national unity, minority issues, cultural identity, language, and the structure of the emerging Indian state.

As a member of the Assembly, he was part of the historic institution responsible for framing the Constitution of independent India.

Role in Independent India's First Cabinet

After Independence in 1947, Mookerjee joined Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet as the first Minister for Industry and Supply.

His tenure came at a time when India was attempting to build an indigenous industrial base, address shortages, and reorganise the economy after Partition.

He supported industrial development and the expansion of domestic productive capacity as essential elements of national reconstruction.

Resignation from the Union Cabinet

Mookerjee resigned from the Union Cabinet in 1950 following political differences with the Nehru government.

A major point of disagreement was the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950, which dealt with the protection of minorities in India and Pakistan.

He expressed serious concerns regarding the security and displacement of Hindu minorities from East Pakistan and subsequently moved into opposition politics.

Founding of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh

In 1951, Mookerjee founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and became its first president.

The organisation advocated a strong and united Indian state, national integration, cultural nationalism, and an alternative political approach to the dominant Congress system.

In India's first general elections of 1951–52, Mookerjee was elected to the Lok Sabha from a Calcutta constituency.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh later became an important force in Indian politics and is regarded as the political predecessor of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Stand on Jammu and Kashmir

One of Mookerjee's most prominent political campaigns concerned the constitutional relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian Union.

He opposed the existence of separate constitutional and administrative arrangements for Jammu and Kashmir and advocated its fuller integration with India.

In 1953, he entered Jammu and Kashmir while protesting the permit system then applicable to Indian citizens entering the state.

He was arrested and detained by the Jammu and Kashmir authorities.

Death

Syama Prasad Mookerjee died on 23 June 1953 in Srinagar while in detention. He was 51 years old.

His death generated widespread political controversy and demands for greater clarity regarding the circumstances surrounding his illness, medical treatment, and death.

The event further strengthened his symbolic association with the political movement for the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India.

Legacy and Significance

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee is remembered for his contributions to education, parliamentary democracy, industrial development, and national politics.

As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, he promoted Indian languages and educational reform. As a Union Minister, he participated in the early economic and industrial administration of independent India.

His political campaigns concerning Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir also made national unity and territorial integration central themes of his public life.

The Government of India's commemoration of his 125th birth anniversary highlights his continuing place in India's political, educational, and cultural history.

International Relations

US Supreme Court Upholds Birthright Citizenship



Why in News?

The **US Supreme Court** struck down President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to restrict birthright citizenship, reaffirming that children born in the United States are citizens under the **Fourteenth Amendment**, irrespective of their parents' immigration status. The ruling reinforces a long-standing constitutional principle that has shaped US citizenship for over 150 years.

What is Birthright Citizenship?

Birthright citizenship is the automatic acquisition of citizenship at birth without the need for any additional legal process. Countries adopt one or both of the following principles:

1. Jus Soli (Right of the Soil)

- Citizenship is granted based on the **place of birth**.
- Any person born within the territory of a country automatically acquires its citizenship, irrespective of the nationality of the parents (subject to certain exceptions).

2. Jus Sanguinis (Right of Blood)

- Citizenship is acquired through the **nationality or citizenship of one or both parents**.
- The place of birth is generally not the determining factor.

Many countries follow a combination of both principles, although one usually predominates.

US Position on Birthright Citizenship

Birthright citizenship in the United States is governed by the **Fourteenth Amendment** to the US Constitution, adopted in **1868** following the **American Civil War**.

Constitutional Provision

The Citizenship Clause states:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

This provision guarantees citizenship to nearly every child born on US soil.

Historical Background

- The amendment was enacted after the **American Civil War** to ensure citizenship for formerly enslaved African Americans.
- It overturned the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* judgment, which had denied citizenship to people of African descent.
- The amendment established equal citizenship as a constitutional right.

Exceptions to Birthright Citizenship in the US

The constitutional guarantee does **not** apply to:

- Children born to **foreign diplomats**, who enjoy diplomatic immunity.
- Children born to **enemy forces occupying US territory** during wartime.
- Certain individuals not considered fully "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States under constitutional interpretation.

Notably, children born to undocumented immigrants or temporary visitors are generally regarded as US citizens under the prevailing interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Jus Soli vs Jus Sanguinis

Feature	Jus Soli	Jus Sanguinis
Basis of citizenship	Place of birth	Citizenship of parents
Meaning	Right of the soil	Right of blood
Common in	United States, Canada, Mexico	India, Germany, Japan, China

Feature	Jus Soli	Jus Sanguinis
Parent's nationality	Generally irrelevant	Primary determining factor

India's Position

India initially followed a broad form of **jus soli** after independence but gradually shifted toward **jus sanguinis** due to concerns over illegal migration.

Citizenship by Birth under the Citizenship Act, 1955

The Act has been amended several times:

- **26 January 1950 – 1 July 1987:** Every person born in India became an Indian citizen, irrespective of the nationality of the parents.
- **1 July 1987 – 3 December 2004:** At least one parent had to be an Indian citizen.
- **On or after 3 December 2004:** A person born in India is a citizen only if:
 - Both parents are Indian citizens; **or**
 - One parent is an Indian citizen and the other is **not an illegal migrant**.

Significance of Birthright Citizenship

- Prevents **statelessness** among children.
- Ensures equal citizenship regardless of race, ethnicity, or parental immigration status.
- Promotes social inclusion and constitutional equality.
- Reduces legal uncertainty regarding nationality.
- Remains a key issue in debates over immigration, constitutional law, and national identity.

India and Costa Rica Hold First JETCO Meeting



Why in the News?

India and Costa Rica held the first meeting of the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) virtually on 6–7 July 2026, marking an important step towards strengthening bilateral economic, trade and investment relations.

The meeting was co-chaired by Vimal Anand, Joint Secretary in India's Department of Commerce, and Adriana Castro, General Director of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica. The discussions focused on expanding commercial ties, improving regulatory cooperation and identifying new sectors for economic partnership.

Bilateral merchandise trade between India and Costa Rica reached approximately USD 391 million in 2025–26, reflecting the steady growth of economic engagement between the two countries.

About the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO)

The Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) is the principal institutional mechanism for reviewing trade and investment relations between India and Costa Rica. It was established under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Economic Cooperation between the two countries.

JETCO provides a formal platform for government agencies, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders to discuss trade-related concerns, exchange information and identify new opportunities for economic cooperation.

The mechanism also seeks to address issues of mutual economic interest and facilitate regular dialogue between the concerned ministries and institutions of the two countries.

Key Discussions at the First JETCO Meeting

During the meeting, India and Costa Rica reviewed the existing state of bilateral trade and investment relations and exchanged information regarding their respective trade and investment regimes.

Both sides discussed opportunities to further expand commercial engagement and improve market access for businesses.

A major focus of the meeting was cooperation in standards, accreditation, certification and regulatory frameworks. These areas are particularly important

because differences in technical and regulatory requirements can act as non-tariff barriers to international trade.

The two countries explored cooperation in:

- Standards development and conformity assessment
- Accreditation and certification systems
- Food safety regulations
- Pharmaceutical regulation
- Export certification

Greater coordination in these areas is expected to reduce technical barriers, simplify regulatory procedures and facilitate smoother movement of goods between the two markets.

Areas of Economic Cooperation

India highlighted its capabilities in pharmaceuticals, digital technologies, manufacturing and innovation and identified these sectors as important areas for future cooperation.

India's pharmaceutical and technology sectors provide opportunities for expanding exports, investment and business partnerships with Costa Rica.

Costa Rica, meanwhile, presented an overview of the Central American trade integration regime and shared its experience in regional trade negotiations.

Costa Rica's participation in regional economic arrangements can provide Indian businesses with greater understanding of Central American markets and regional trade frameworks.

The discussions therefore have the potential to support India's broader economic engagement with Central America and the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Strengthening Business and Institutional Engagement

Both countries agreed to strengthen business-to-business engagement and encourage closer interaction between industries.

They also emphasised institutional cooperation and regular communication among ministries, regulatory authorities and industry representatives.

Such interactions can help identify practical difficulties faced by exporters and investors and allow governments

to address trade-related concerns through institutional dialogue.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to using JETCO as a key platform for advancing trade, investment and sector-specific economic cooperation.

Significance for India

The first JETCO meeting strengthens India's growing economic engagement with Latin America and Central America.

The region offers opportunities for Indian companies in pharmaceuticals, information technology, digital services, automobiles, manufacturing and innovation-driven industries.

Regulatory cooperation can also help reduce non-tariff and technical barriers that often restrict market access despite relatively low customs duties.

JETCO can therefore improve trade facilitation by promoting greater compatibility between standards, certification procedures and regulatory systems.

India and Indonesia Launch Joint Restoration Project at Prambanan Temple



Why in the News?

India and Indonesia have jointly launched a conservation and restoration project at the historic Prambanan Temple Complex in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto marked the commencement of the Archaeological Survey of India's conservation project by unveiling a plaque during the Prime Minister's state visit to Indonesia on 8 July 2026.

A Letter of Intent regarding India's support for the conservation and restoration of the UNESCO World Heritage Site was also exchanged between the two countries. The initiative represents an important step in strengthening India–Indonesia cultural cooperation and preserving their shared civilisational heritage.

About the Prambanan Temple Complex

The Prambanan Temple Complex is a monumental Hindu temple complex located in the Yogyakarta region of Indonesia. Constructed around the 9th–10th centuries CE, it represents one of the finest surviving examples of Hindu temple architecture in Southeast Asia.

The complex is Indonesia's largest Hindu temple compound and is principally associated with Shaivism. Its main group of temples is dedicated to the Hindu Trimurti—Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Shiva, the Destroyer.

The central and most prominent structure is the Shiva Temple, which rises to about 47 metres and dominates the temple skyline. The monument demonstrates the sophisticated architectural and engineering capabilities of ancient Java.

Prambanan was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991 because of its exceptional architectural and cultural value.

Historical Background

The Prambanan temples were constructed during the period of powerful Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in ancient Java. The monument reflects the strong influence of Indian religious traditions, Sanskritic culture, epics, and temple-building practices on Southeast Asian civilisation. The temple complex suffered extensive damage over the centuries due to earthquakes, volcanic activity and political changes. Historical restoration efforts have been undertaken since 1918 using both traditional stone-interlocking techniques and modern structural strengthening methods.

India's interest in supporting the restoration of Prambanan is also not entirely new. Following the devastating 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake, India had offered assistance for restoration work at the temple complex.

Architectural Features

The Prambanan Temple Complex is characterised by tall and sharply pointed temple towers that are typical of classical Hindu architecture in Java. The structures are largely built using volcanic andesite stone and contain elaborate sculptural decorations.

The three principal temples are dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Three additional temples are associated with the divine vehicles or vahanas of these deities.

The temple reliefs prominently depict episodes from the Ramayana. These sculptural narratives demonstrate the deep transmission and adaptation of Indian epics in Indonesian society. UNESCO specifically notes the Ramayana reliefs decorating the principal temples.

The original Prambanan complex is generally described as having around 240 temples and shrines. Many smaller structures were reduced to scattered stone remains following centuries of natural disasters and deterioration.

Role of the Archaeological Survey of India

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is leading India's conservation and restoration involvement at the Prambanan Temple Complex.

Established in 1861 under Alexander Cunningham, the ASI is India's premier organisation for archaeological research and the protection of the country's cultural heritage. It functions under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Its major responsibilities include the conservation and maintenance of centrally protected monuments, archaeological excavations, exploration of ancient sites and scientific preservation of archaeological remains.

The ASI also administers protected monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

Its participation in Prambanan allows India to share its expertise in archaeological conservation, structural restoration and scientific heritage management with Indonesia.

India's Heritage Conservation Diplomacy

The Prambanan project forms part of India's wider cultural and heritage cooperation with partner countries. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, more than 50 cultural and heritage projects have been completed under India's assistance programmes. These include conservation or restoration initiatives connected with the Ananda Temple in Myanmar, My Son temple complex in Vietnam, Ta Prohm and other temples in Cambodia, and Vat Phou in Laos.

Such projects use India's archaeological expertise to preserve cultural sites while strengthening long-term relations with countries sharing historical and civilisational connections with India.

Civilisational Links between India and Indonesia

India and Indonesia share cultural contacts extending over more than a millennium. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sanskrit vocabulary, Indian literary traditions and political ideas influenced several ancient kingdoms of the Indonesian archipelago.

The Ramayana and Mahabharata continue to occupy an important position in Indonesian cultural traditions, including dance, theatre and shadow-puppet performances.

Prambanan is therefore an important physical symbol of the historic movement of ideas and cultural traditions between the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

The project also highlights that the spread of Indian cultural traditions in Southeast Asia occurred through long-term maritime trade, religious exchanges and interaction among scholars, merchants and political elites.

India-Australia Civil Nuclear & Strategic Partnership



Why in the News?

India and Australia signed 18 agreements and outcome documents during the Third India-Australia Annual Summit held in Australia in July 2026, marking a major expansion of their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The most significant outcome was the finalisation of the Administrative Arrangement under the India-Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement, enabling the long-term commercial supply of Australian uranium to India for peaceful nuclear energy purposes.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

India and Australia finalised the Administrative Arrangement required to operationalise their bilateral civil nuclear cooperation framework.

The arrangement enables Australia to export uranium to India for use in civilian nuclear power facilities. Australian-origin uranium supplied to India will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and remain under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

The development builds on the India-Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed in 2014. The agreement entered into force in 2015, but the latest administrative arrangement provides the framework necessary to enable long-term uranium exports.

Australia has also reiterated its support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Importance for India's Nuclear Energy Programme

The uranium supply arrangement is important for India's rapidly expanding nuclear energy programme.

India has set a target of achieving 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047 as part of its long-term development and clean energy strategy. Access to reliable uranium supplies can improve nuclear fuel security and support the expansion of civilian nuclear power generation.

Nuclear energy provides low-carbon and round-the-clock electricity and can complement variable renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.

India-Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement

The India-Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2014 to facilitate cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The agreement provides a legal framework for the transfer of nuclear material, equipment and technology for civilian purposes.

The latest Administrative Arrangement operationalises the agreement and enables long-term Australian uranium exports to India.

The development is significant because India is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). However, India's civilian nuclear facilities placed under safeguards are monitored by the IAEA.

Australia traditionally exports uranium only to countries covered by an appropriate civil nuclear cooperation agreement.

Defence and Security Cooperation

India and Australia signed a new Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation to strengthen their strategic and defence partnership.

The declaration seeks to expand cooperation between the armed forces and defence institutions of the two countries.

Major areas of cooperation include:

- Defence industrial collaboration.
- Information and intelligence sharing.
- Military interoperability.
- Joint exercises and operational cooperation.
- Defence technology and industrial partnerships.
- Coordination on regional security challenges.

Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap

The two countries also launched the India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap.

The roadmap provides a structured framework for deeper maritime cooperation.

Key areas include maritime law enforcement, maritime domain awareness, shipbuilding, ship repair and maintenance, information sharing and operational coordination.

Maritime Domain Awareness refers to the effective understanding of activities and developments in the maritime domain that may affect security, safety, the economy or the marine environment.

Strategic Importance of Maritime Cooperation

The Indian Ocean carries some of the world's most important sea lanes of communication and energy trade routes.

Closer India-Australia maritime cooperation can help improve surveillance of maritime activities, strengthen responses to illegal activities at sea and enhance the protection of critical shipping routes.

Greater interoperability and information sharing between the two countries can also improve their ability to respond to humanitarian disasters, maritime emergencies and regional security challenges.

The initiative complements wider Indo-Pacific cooperation, including engagement between India and Australia through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad).

Critical Minerals Cooperation

India and Australia agreed to deepen cooperation in critical minerals and establish a Critical Minerals Corridor.

The proposed corridor seeks to develop resilient and trusted supply chains connecting Australia's mineral resources with India's growing manufacturing and technology sectors.

Critical minerals are minerals considered essential for modern technologies and economic security but whose supply chains may be vulnerable to disruption.

Examples include lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements.

These minerals are essential for:

- Electric vehicle batteries.
- Renewable energy technologies.
- Semiconductor manufacturing.
- Electronics.
- Defence systems.
- Advanced industrial technologies.

Australia possesses significant critical mineral resources, while India has a rapidly expanding clean energy and manufacturing market.

The partnership can therefore combine Australia's resource strength with India's manufacturing capacity and demand.

Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains

The two countries launched the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains.

The initiative aims to expand cooperation in emerging and strategic technologies while strengthening the resilience of critical supply chains.

The partnership is expected to promote cooperation in cyber security, critical technologies, trusted digital systems and emerging technological sectors.

It also reflects the growing importance of protecting critical infrastructure and technology supply chains from cyber threats and geopolitical disruptions.

Trade and Investment Cooperation

India and Australia agreed to accelerate negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

The proposed CECA is intended to build upon the existing India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA).

ECTA entered into force on 29 December 2022 and provides tariff reductions and improved market access for a wide range of goods and services. It is viewed as a stepping stone towards a broader CECA.

A comprehensive agreement could further expand cooperation in goods, services, investment and other areas of economic engagement.

The two sides also agreed to move forward on a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT).

A BIT provides a legal framework for the protection and promotion of investments between two countries and can improve investor confidence.

Energy Security Cooperation

India and Australia announced a joint framework for strengthening bilateral energy security.

The framework focuses on ensuring reliable and resilient supplies of major energy commodities, including:

- Coal.
- Natural gas.
- Diesel.
- Other liquid fuels.

The two countries recognised the importance of diversified energy supply chains amid growing geopolitical and market uncertainties.

At the same time, they agreed to expand cooperation in cleaner energy areas, including renewable energy, green hydrogen and low-carbon technologies.

Cooperation in Education

Education emerged as another major pillar of the India-Australia partnership.

Approval was granted for Victoria University to establish a campus in Gurugram, Haryana.

Meanwhile, Flinders University received a Letter of Intent to establish a campus in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

The establishment of foreign university campuses in India can improve access to international education and strengthen academic, research and people-to-people linkages.

India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

India and Australia elevated their bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2020.

The partnership covers defence and security, trade and investment, education, science and technology, critical minerals, energy and people-to-people relations.

Both countries are also members of the Quad, along with Japan and the United States.

India and Australia share a common interest in promoting a free, open, inclusive and stable Indo-Pacific. Their strategic relationship has expanded significantly due to increasing maritime security concerns, supply-chain vulnerabilities and the growing importance of critical technologies.

India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) Comes into Force

Why in News?

India and the United Kingdom have signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) along with the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), marking one of India's most comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The agreements are expected to significantly deepen bilateral trade, investment, services, and labour mobility while reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Key Highlights**Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**

- The UK will eliminate tariffs on 96.8% of tariff lines, covering 97.7% of India's export value, providing immediate duty-free access for a wide range of Indian products.
- India will remove tariffs on 30.3% of UK trade value immediately, while further tariff reductions will be implemented in a phased manner over the coming years.
- The agreement consists of 30 comprehensive chapters, making it one of India's broadest FTAs.

Major Areas Covered

- Trade in Goods
- Trade in Services
- Investment
- Digital Trade
- Government Procurement
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation
- Rules of Origin
- Competition Policy
- MSMEs
- Labour
- Environment
- Gender and Inclusive Trade
- Innovation
- Transparency and Good Regulatory Practices

Reduction of Non-Tariff Barriers

The agreement also addresses major non-tariff barriers through dedicated chapters on:

- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures to facilitate trade in agricultural and food products while maintaining safety standards.
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) to improve product standards, conformity assessment, testing, certification, and regulatory cooperation.

These provisions are expected to reduce compliance costs for exporters and improve market access.

Sensitive Sectors Protected by India

India has safeguarded several strategically important and livelihood-sensitive sectors from extensive tariff liberalisation, including:

- Dairy products
- Cereals
- Pulses
- Vegetables
- Apples and certain fruits
- Gold and jewellery
- Smartphones
- Critical polymers
- Selected agricultural products

This approach balances trade liberalisation with the protection of domestic farmers, MSMEs, and manufacturing industries.

Double Contribution Convention (DCC)

The Double Contribution Convention (DCC) is a Social Security Agreement designed to prevent Indian professionals from paying social security contributions in both countries simultaneously.

Key Features

- Indian professionals temporarily working in the UK for up to five years will be exempt from paying UK social security contributions, provided they continue contributing to India's social security system.
- Prevents double social security payments.
- Reduces employment costs for Indian companies sending employees to the UK.
- Improves the competitiveness of Indian IT, engineering, consulting, and financial service firms operating in the UK.

Expected Beneficiaries

- More than 75,000 Indian professionals are expected to benefit.
- Around 900 Indian employers sending workers to the UK will also gain through reduced employment costs.

About the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is a broad-based Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aimed at strengthening economic cooperation between India and the United Kingdom by promoting trade in goods and services, facilitating investments, enhancing market access, and improving regulatory cooperation.

Unlike traditional FTAs that mainly focus on tariff reduction, CETA also covers emerging areas such as digital trade, innovation, labour standards, environmental sustainability, and government procurement, making it a next-generation trade agreement.

Objectives

- Increase bilateral trade and investment.
- Reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers.
- Enhance market access for businesses.
- Promote digital economy and innovation.
- Facilitate smoother customs procedures.
- Strengthen cooperation in services, including IT, finance, education, and professional services.
- Encourage participation of MSMEs in international trade.
- Promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Expected Benefits for India

- Greater export opportunities for textiles, garments, leather products, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, marine products, chemicals, and processed food.
- Increased foreign investment from the UK.
- Enhanced access for Indian IT and professional services.
- Improved competitiveness of Indian exporters due to lower tariffs.

- Stronger integration into global value chains.
- Employment generation across manufacturing and services sectors.
- Boost to bilateral trade, which is expected to expand substantially over the coming years.

WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS)



Why in News?

India has deposited its Instrument of Acceptance for the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS), becoming the 123rd WTO Member to formally accept the Agreement. This follows the Agreement's entry into force on 15 September 2025, after securing acceptance from two-thirds of WTO Members.

Key Highlights

- **Adopted:** At the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) held in Geneva, Switzerland, in June 2022.
- **Entered into Force:** 15 September 2025, after acceptance by the required two-thirds of WTO Members.
- **Nature:** First multilateral WTO agreement focused primarily on environmental sustainability.
- **Objective:** Promote the sustainable use and conservation of marine fisheries resources while ensuring a fair and rules-based global trading system.

Major Provisions

The Agreement prohibits WTO Members from granting subsidies that contribute to:

- Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- Fishing of overfished stocks unless measures are in place to rebuild the stock.
- Harmful fishing practices that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, thereby threatening marine biodiversity.

Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT)

- Provides special and differential treatment for developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- Recognizes the need for flexibility, technical assistance, and capacity building to help developing countries implement the Agreement while protecting the livelihoods of small-scale fishers.

What is Outside its Scope?

The Agreement does not apply to:

- Aquaculture (fish farming).
- Inland fisheries, including fishing in rivers, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and canals.
- It mainly covers marine wild capture fisheries and fishing-related activities in oceans and seas.

Significance for India

- Protects the interests of traditional, artisanal, and small-scale fishers, who form the backbone of India's marine fishing sector.
- Disciplines subsidies provided by countries with large industrial distant-water fishing fleets, creating a more equitable competitive environment.
- Strengthens India's credentials as a responsible fishing nation committed to sustainable marine resource management.
- Supports India's growing reputation as a sustainable seafood exporter in international markets.
- Since India's aquaculture-based shrimp exports, which account for the largest share of seafood exports, are outside the Agreement's scope, the

country's major seafood export industry remains unaffected.

- Encourages sustainable fishing practices, ensuring long-term livelihood security for coastal communities.

India's Fisheries Management Framework

1. Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the EEZ Rules, 2025

- Regulates fishing activities within India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- Promotes sustainable exploitation of marine fishery resources while preventing overfishing.

2. Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025

- Provides a regulatory framework for Indian vessels operating beyond the EEZ.
- Ensures compliance with international conservation measures and responsible fishing practices.

3. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- Flagship scheme of the Government of India launched to promote the Blue Economy.
- Focuses on:
 - Fisheries infrastructure development.
 - Aquaculture expansion.
 - Fish production enhancement.
 - Conservation and management of fisheries resources.
 - Capacity building and welfare of fishers.
 - Improving value chains, cold storage, and seafood exports.

About the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) is the first WTO agreement negotiated with environmental sustainability as its central objective.

Background

- Negotiated under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14.6, which calls upon countries to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity, overfishing, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

- It forms part of the broader global effort to conserve marine biodiversity and ensure sustainable use of ocean resources.

Scope

The Agreement applies primarily to:

- Marine wild capture fisheries.
- Fishing-related activities at sea.
- Subsidies granted by governments that directly support marine fishing operations.

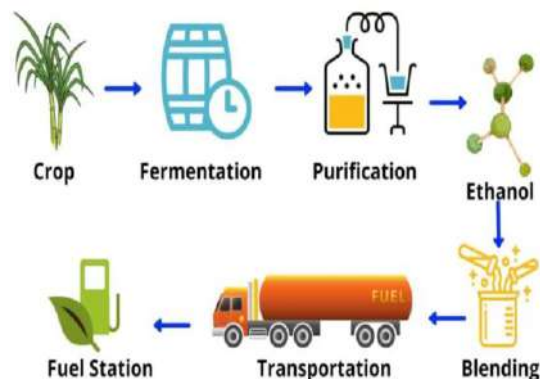
Objectives

- Eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies.

- Conserve marine fish stocks and biodiversity.
- Prevent overfishing and depletion of marine resources.
- Promote sustainable livelihoods for fishing communities.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability in fisheries subsidy programmes.
- Balance marine conservation, livelihood protection, and a rules-based international trading system.

Polity

Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme



Why in News?

The Government recently highlighted the major achievements of the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme**, outlining its policy evolution, environmental and economic benefits, and addressing several misconceptions regarding **E20 fuel**. India has successfully achieved **20% ethanol blending (E20)** in petrol during **2025–26**, five years ahead of the original target.

What is the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme?

The Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at blending ethanol with petrol to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote cleaner transportation.

Objectives

- Reduce dependence on imported crude oil and enhance **energy security**.

- Lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transport sector.
- Promote renewable and domestically produced transport fuels.
- Increase farmers' income by creating additional demand for agricultural produce.
- Encourage the development of a sustainable biofuel industry.
- Support India's commitments under the **Paris Agreement** and the goal of achieving **Net Zero emissions by 2070**.

India achieved **20% ethanol blending (E20)** in 2025–26, making it one of the fastest countries to implement large-scale ethanol blending.

Policy Evolution

Year	Development
2003	Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme launched.
2018	National Policy on Biofuels notified to promote advanced biofuels and expand feedstock availability.
2021	Target for achieving E20 advanced from 2030 to 2025–26 under the Ethanol Blending Roadmap.
2025–26	India successfully achieved 20% ethanol blending nationwide.

Major Achievements

The programme has witnessed remarkable growth over the past decade.

Indicator	Progress
Ethanol blending	Less than 1.5% (2013–14) → 20% (2025–26)
Ethanol production	421 crore litres → Nearly 2,000 crore litres
Foreign exchange saved	Over ₹1.90 lakh crore
Crude oil substituted	Around 310 lakh metric tonnes
Carbon dioxide emissions reduced	Around 930 lakh metric tonnes
Additional income to farmers	More than ₹1.60 lakh crore

These achievements have strengthened India's energy security while simultaneously benefiting farmers and reducing environmental pollution.

Feedstocks Used for Ethanol Production

India follows a diversified feedstock approach to ensure sustainable ethanol production.

Approved feedstocks include:

- Sugarcane juice
- B-heavy and C-heavy molasses
- Maize
- Surplus rice approved by the Government
- Damaged food grains
- Other approved agricultural biomass and residues

Diversification reduces excessive dependence on sugarcane and encourages the use of surplus agricultural produce.

What is E20 Fuel?

E20 fuel refers to petrol blended with **20% ethanol and 80% petrol** by volume.

Advantages

- Burns cleaner than conventional petrol.
- Higher octane rating improves engine combustion.
- Reduces emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and particulate matter.

- Lowers dependence on imported petroleum.
- Supports rural incomes through increased agricultural demand.
- Promotes renewable energy in the transport sector.

Common Misconceptions about E20 Fuel

The Government has clarified several misconceptions regarding E20.

Mileage

- E20 does **not reduce fuel efficiency by 30%**.
- The actual reduction in mileage is generally **small**, as ethanol has lower energy density but higher combustion efficiency.

Engine Compatibility

- Extensive testing by automobile manufacturers has found **no evidence of widespread engine damage** in E20-compatible vehicles.
- New vehicles manufactured in India are increasingly designed to support E20 fuel.

Vehicle Warranty and Insurance

- Use of approved E20 fuel **does not invalidate vehicle warranties or insurance**, provided manufacturer recommendations are followed.

Sugar Content

- Raw sugarcane juice is **never directly mixed with petrol**.
- Ethanol is produced only after **fermentation, distillation, and purification**, resulting in fuel-grade ethanol with no sugar content.

Environmental Concerns

- Modern ethanol distilleries employ **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)** technology to minimise water pollution and improve environmental sustainability.

Insects

- Fuel-grade ethanol contains **no sugar**, and therefore does **not attract insects**.

Environmental Benefits

The EBP Programme contributes significantly to climate change mitigation.

- Reduces lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.
- Lowers dependence on fossil fuels.

- Supports cleaner combustion.
- Improves urban air quality.
- Promotes a circular economy by utilising agricultural residues and surplus crops.

Challenges

Despite impressive progress, several challenges remain.

- Ensuring adequate feedstock availability without affecting food security.
- Reducing dependence on water-intensive sugarcane.
- Expanding second-generation (2G) ethanol production using agricultural residues.
- Developing adequate storage and distribution infrastructure.
- Increasing awareness regarding E20-compatible vehicles.

Modified UDAN Scheme (Viksit UDAN)



Why in the News?

The Prime Minister launched the **Modified UDAN Scheme (Viksit UDAN)** and inaugurated the **new terminal building at Jodhpur Airport**, marking the next phase of India's regional aviation expansion. The revamped scheme aims to strengthen regional air connectivity, expand aviation infrastructure, and support the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

About UDAN

The **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** scheme was launched in **October 2016** by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** under the **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016**.

Objective:

- Make air travel **affordable, accessible, and widespread**.

- Improve regional connectivity by linking **underserved and unserved airports** through the **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)**.
- Promote balanced regional development by connecting Tier-2, Tier-3 cities and remote regions.

How UDAN Works

- Airlines selected under the scheme receive **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** to operate on commercially unviable regional routes.
- Airfares on selected seats are capped to make flying affordable for the common citizen.
- State Governments provide support through reduced VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), security, and utility concessions.

Achievements of UDAN

Since its launch, the scheme has significantly transformed India's regional aviation landscape.

- **669 regional routes** operationalised.
- **95 airports, heliports, and water aerodromes** connected.
- More than **1.66 crore passengers** have benefited.
- Enhanced air connectivity in the **North-East, Himalayan States, islands, and aspirational districts**.
- Improved access to tourism destinations, healthcare, education, and business centres.

Modified UDAN (Viksit UDAN), 2026

The Union Cabinet approved the modified scheme on **25 March 2026** to further strengthen India's regional aviation network.

Key Features

- **Total Outlay:** Nearly **₹29,000 crore** over the next **10 years**.
- Development of **100 new aerodromes** from currently unserved airstrips.

Note: An **aerodrome** is any defined area on land or water intended for the arrival, departure, and movement of aircraft.

- Construction of **200 modern helipads** to improve connectivity in hilly, tribal, and remote regions.

- Continuation of **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** to support regional airlines operating on low-demand routes.
- **Operations and Maintenance (O&M)** support for regional airports to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Promotion of **indigenous aircraft**, including **HAL Dhruv helicopters** and **Dornier-228 aircraft**, in line with the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** initiative.

New Terminal Building at Jodhpur Airport

The **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** has developed a modern passenger terminal at **Jodhpur Airport**.

Key Features

- **Project Cost:** ₹480 crore.
- **Built-up Area:** 23,342 sq. metres.
- **Annual Capacity:** 20 lakh passengers.
- **Peak Hour Capacity:** 1,500 passengers.
- Equipped with:
 - 20 check-in counters
 - 6 aerobridges
 - Advanced baggage handling system
 - Energy-efficient and sustainable infrastructure
- Designed to achieve a **5-Star GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment)** certification for environmental sustainability.

Significance

- Strengthens connectivity to **Tier-2, Tier-3 cities and remote regions**.
- Boosts **tourism, trade, investment, employment, and regional economic development**.
- Enhances **last-mile air connectivity** through airports, heliports, and water aerodromes.
- Encourages domestic aircraft manufacturing under **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- Supports inclusive infrastructure growth and advances the goal of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.
- Contributes to balanced regional development by integrating underserved areas into the national aviation network.

PARIVARTAN Scheme



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has approved the operational guidelines for the PARIVARTAN Scheme, aimed at replacing old, polluting trucks and buses in the National Capital Region (NCR) with cleaner Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) compliant vehicles and Electric Vehicles (EVs). The scheme seeks to reduce vehicular emissions and improve air quality in the NCR.

About the PARIVARTAN Scheme

PARIVARTAN stands for Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions. It is a Central Sector Scheme approved by the Union Cabinet on 3 June 2026 with a total financial outlay of ₹9,585 crore, of which the Central Government will provide ₹5,041 crore. The remaining amount will be mobilised through institutional funding and contributions from participating stakeholders.

The scheme is designed to accelerate the scrapping of ageing commercial vehicles and promote the adoption of cleaner technologies, thereby reducing transport-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the National Capital Region.

Objectives

The scheme aims to:

- Replace old and highly polluting trucks and buses with BS-VI compliant diesel/CNG vehicles or Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- Improve air quality in the National Capital Region.
- Reduce vehicular emissions and transport-sector pollution.

- Promote vehicle scrappage and fleet modernisation.
- Encourage the transition towards cleaner and sustainable transport systems.

Implementation

- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)
- **Funding Agency:** National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB)

States Covered

The scheme currently covers:

- Delhi (NCT)
- Haryana
- Rajasthan
- Uttar Pradesh

These states have notified:

- 10-year Motor Vehicle Tax concession
- Registration fee waiver for eligible replacement vehicles.

Incentives under the Scheme

To encourage owners to replace old commercial vehicles, the scheme provides multiple financial incentives, including:

- Motor Vehicle Tax concession.
- Registration fee waiver.
- 5% interest subvention on vehicle loans.
- Minimum 8% Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) discount on eligible vehicles.
- Monthly fuel voucher support for eligible diesel and CNG replacement vehicles.
- One-time financial assistance for electric replacement vehicles.
- Support for Certificate of Deposit (CoD) trading under the vehicle scrappage ecosystem.

These incentives significantly reduce the cost of acquiring cleaner commercial vehicles and promote faster fleet renewal.

Digital Implementation

The PARIVARTAN Scheme will operate through an integrated digital platform connected with multiple government databases to ensure transparency, seamless verification, and efficient fund disbursement.

The platform will be linked with:

- **VAHAN** – National Vehicle Registry
- **V-Scrap** – Vehicle Scrapping Portal
- **DigiELV** – Digital End-of-Life Vehicle Platform
- Public Financial Management System (PFMS)
- Participating banks and financial institutions
- Fuel voucher management systems

The digital integration will enable real-time verification of scrapped vehicles, processing of incentives, and monitoring of vehicle replacement.

Significance of the Scheme

The transport sector is one of the largest contributors to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and greenhouse gas emissions in the NCR. Older commercial vehicles, especially heavy-duty diesel trucks and buses, account for a disproportionate share of transport emissions.

The PARIVARTAN Scheme is expected to:

- Accelerate the retirement of end-of-life commercial vehicles.
- Improve urban air quality across the NCR.
- Reduce fuel consumption through newer, more efficient vehicles.
- Promote electric mobility and cleaner fuel technologies.
- Support India's commitments towards reducing carbon emissions and achieving sustainable urban transport.

About the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB)

The National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) is a statutory body established under the National Capital Region Planning Board Act, 1985.

Key Facts

- **Established:** 1985
- **Administrative Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

Functions

The NCRPB is responsible for:

- Preparing regional development plans for the National Capital Region.

- Coordinating planned development among NCR states.
- Financing infrastructure and regional development projects.

Through the PARIVARTAN Scheme, the NCRPB will provide financial support and facilitate implementation to modernise the region's commercial vehicle fleet while improving environmental sustainability.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Advancing Electrolyte Engineering for Durable and Affordable Aqueous Batteries



Why in News?

Scientists at the **Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST)**, Mohali, an autonomous institute under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, have developed a novel electrolyte additive called **BDIM**, which significantly improves the performance, stability, and lifespan of **Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries (AZIBs)**. The innovation addresses key challenges such as zinc dendrite formation, corrosion, and hydrogen evolution, making AZIBs more viable for large-scale energy storage applications.

What are Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries (AZIBs)?

Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries (AZIBs) are rechargeable batteries that use **zinc metal as the anode**, a suitable cathode material, and a **water-based (aqueous) electrolyte** to facilitate the movement of zinc ions during charging and discharging.

AZIBs are emerging as one of the most promising alternatives to lithium-ion batteries, especially for stationary energy storage systems, because of their excellent safety profile, lower cost, and environmental sustainability.

Key Features

- **High Safety:** Uses a non-flammable water-based electrolyte, eliminating the fire risks associated with organic electrolytes used in lithium-ion batteries.
- **Low Cost:** Zinc is abundant, inexpensive, and widely available compared to lithium, cobalt, and nickel.
- **Environment Friendly:** Zinc is non-toxic and easily recyclable, reducing environmental concerns.
- **High Theoretical Capacity:** Zinc offers a high volumetric capacity (about **5,855 mAh/cm³**) and can transfer two electrons per ion, enabling high energy storage.
- **Suitable for Grid Storage:** Ideal for renewable energy integration, backup power systems, and large-scale stationary energy storage due to low cost and enhanced safety.

Major Challenges in AZIBs

Despite their advantages, AZIBs face several electrochemical challenges that limit their commercial adoption.

1. Zinc Dendrite Formation

- During repeated charging, zinc tends to deposit unevenly on the anode.
- Needle-like metallic structures called **dendrites** grow over time.
- These dendrites can pierce the separator, causing **internal short circuits**, reduced efficiency, and battery failure.

2. Hydrogen Evolution Reaction (HER)

- Water molecules in the electrolyte undergo electrolysis during charging.
- This produces **hydrogen gas**, leading to:
 - Pressure build-up inside the battery.
 - Loss of electrolyte.

- Reduced Coulombic efficiency.
- Safety concerns.

3. Zinc Corrosion

- Continuous contact between zinc and the aqueous electrolyte causes corrosion.
- Corrosion consumes active zinc and forms unwanted by-products.
- It lowers battery efficiency and shortens operational life.

4. Poor Cycling Stability

- Repeated charge-discharge cycles degrade the electrode surface.
- Capacity gradually fades over time.
- Batteries fail to retain long-term performance.

Key Innovation by INST Scientists

Researchers synthesized a new electrolyte additive named:

BDIM (1,3-bis(1,3-dicarboxypropyl)-1H-imidazole-3-ium chloride)

This additive modifies the electrochemical interface between the zinc anode and the electrolyte.

How BDIM Works

- BDIM molecules selectively adsorb onto the zinc metal surface.
- They regulate the **Inner Helmholtz Plane (IHP)** at the electrode-electrolyte interface.
- BDIM displaces water molecules from the zinc surface.
- This minimizes undesirable side reactions while promoting uniform zinc deposition.

Benefits of BDIM

The new additive offers multiple improvements:

- Suppresses the **Hydrogen Evolution Reaction (HER)**.
- Reduces corrosion of the zinc anode.
- Prevents dendrite formation by enabling uniform zinc deposition.
- Improves Coulombic efficiency.
- Enhances battery lifespan.
- Increases cycling stability.
- Improves overall electrochemical performance.

The innovation represents a significant step towards the commercialization of safer and more durable aqueous zinc batteries for renewable energy storage.

Important Concepts

Electrolyte

An **electrolyte** is an ion-conducting medium that allows the movement of charged particles between the battery's anode and cathode during charging and discharging.

Functions include:

- Transporting ions.
- Completing the electrical circuit.
- Enabling electrochemical reactions.

Inner Helmholtz Plane (IHP)

The **Inner Helmholtz Plane (IHP)** is the innermost region of the electrical double layer located directly at the electrode-electrolyte interface.

Characteristics:

- Contains specifically adsorbed ions and molecules.
- It is the primary location where electrochemical reactions occur.
- Controls charge transfer, reaction kinetics, and metal deposition.

Regulating the IHP helps:

- Achieve uniform zinc deposition.
- Reduce water-induced side reactions.
- Improve battery efficiency and durability.

Research Techniques Used

Ultramicroelectrode (UME)

An **Ultramicroelectrode (UME)** is an electrode with dimensions typically **less than 50 μm** .

Advantages:

- High spatial resolution.
- Faster mass transport.
- Lower electrical noise.
- Enables precise investigation of electrochemical reactions occurring on electrode surfaces.

Applications:

- Studying zinc nucleation and deposition.
- Battery interface analysis.
- Electrochemical sensing.

Fast-Scan Cyclic Voltammetry (FSCV)

Fast-Scan Cyclic Voltammetry (FSCV) is an advanced electrochemical technique in which the electrode potential is scanned at very high rates.

It is used to:

- Study rapid charge-transfer reactions.
- Monitor zinc deposition mechanisms.
- Investigate reaction kinetics.
- Understand interfacial electrochemical processes in real time.

India's First PinS Instrument Approach Procedure for Helicopter Operations



Why in News?

India has approved its **first Private Point in Space (PinS) Instrument Approach Procedure** for helicopter operations at **Undavalli Heliport**. The procedure was developed by the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** and approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The approval marks a significant milestone in India's efforts to modernise helicopter navigation through satellite-based aviation technologies and improve all-weather connectivity.

What is PinS (Point in Space)?

Point in Space (PinS) is a **satellite-based instrument approach procedure** specifically designed for **helicopter operations**. It enables helicopters to conduct safe approaches under **Instrument Flight Rules (IFR)** even at heliports that lack conventional ground-based landing aids such as Instrument Landing Systems (ILS).

Instead of relying on radio navigation equipment installed on the ground, PinS procedures use **Global**

Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and **GAGAN-enabled Performance Based Navigation (PBN)** to accurately guide helicopters to a predetermined point near the heliport.

The procedures are designed in accordance with the **Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs)** of the **International Civil Aviation Organization**, ensuring compatibility with global aviation standards.

How Does PinS Work?

The PinS procedure follows a structured approach:

1. The helicopter navigates using **GNSS/GAGAN satellite signals** along a predefined flight path.
2. It reaches a designated **Point in Space (PinS)**, which serves as the final navigation reference.
3. From this point:
 - The pilot **lands visually** if weather conditions permit.
 - Alternatively, the helicopter may continue under approved instrument guidance where applicable.
4. This system allows safe operations even during:
 - Low cloud cover
 - Heavy rain
 - Fog
 - Poor visibility
 - Mountainous and difficult terrain

Key Features of PinS

- Satellite-based helicopter approach procedure.
- Designed exclusively for helicopter operations.
- Uses **GNSS** and **GAGAN-enabled PBN**.
- Eliminates dependence on expensive ground-based navigation aids.
- Compatible with international ICAO standards.
- Improves operational safety and precision.

Significance of the Approval

1. Enhances Aviation Safety

Provides highly accurate navigation guidance, reducing the risk of accidents during poor visibility and adverse weather conditions.

2. Enables All-Weather Operations

Helicopters can safely access destinations even when visual flying conditions are not available.

3. Improves Connectivity to Remote Areas

Facilitates reliable helicopter services in:

- Hilly regions
- Tribal areas
- Border locations
- Islands
- Disaster-prone regions

4. Reduces Infrastructure Costs

Unlike conventional Instrument Landing Systems (ILS), PinS does not require costly ground-based navigation infrastructure, making it suitable for smaller heliports.

5. Supports Strategic and Civil Aviation

The technology will strengthen:

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Disaster response and rescue operations
- Char Dham and other pilgrimage services
- Tourism
- Offshore oil and gas logistics
- Corporate aviation
- Regional connectivity under the **UDAN** scheme

Instrument Flight Rules (IFR)

Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) are regulations governing flight operations in which pilots primarily rely on **cockpit instruments and air traffic control instructions**, rather than external visual references.

Features

- Used during low visibility and adverse weather.
- Requires specially equipped aircraft and trained pilots.
- Improves flight safety in clouds, rain, fog, and at night.
- Widely used in commercial aviation and critical helicopter missions.

Performance Based Navigation (PBN)

Performance Based Navigation (PBN) is a modern navigation concept that defines navigation performance requirements instead of prescribing specific navigation equipment.

Advantages

- Greater navigation accuracy.
- More direct and efficient flight paths.
- Reduced fuel consumption.

- Lower emissions.
- Enhanced airspace capacity.
- Improved operational safety.

PBN relies primarily on **satellite navigation systems (GNSS)** rather than conventional radio beacons.

GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation)

GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation) is India's **Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS)**.

It has been jointly developed by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **Airports Authority of India** to improve the performance of GPS for civil aviation.

Functions

- Enhances the **accuracy** of GPS signals.
- Provides **integrity monitoring**, alerting pilots to signal errors.
- Improves navigation reliability for aircraft.
- Supports precision approach and landing procedures.
- Enables satellite-based navigation across Indian airspace and adjoining regions.

Difference Between Conventional Instrument Approaches and PinS

Feature	Conventional Instrument Approach	PinS Approach
Aircraft	Mainly fixed-wing aircraft	Helicopters
Navigation	Ground-based navigation aids (ILS, VOR, NDB)	GNSS + GAGAN satellite navigation
Infrastructure	Expensive ground installations	Minimal ground infrastructure
Suitable for	Airports	Heliports and remote landing sites
Weather capability	High	High
Cost	Higher	Lower

Way Forward

The approval of India's first private PinS Instrument Approach Procedure marks a major step towards **modernising helicopter navigation** and expanding **satellite-based aviation infrastructure**. Wider adoption of PinS procedures, supported by **GAGAN**, **PBN**, and advanced air traffic management systems, will enhance aviation safety, strengthen emergency response capabilities, improve regional air connectivity, and promote efficient helicopter operations across remote, mountainous, and strategically important regions of the

India's First Privately Developed Orbital-Class Rocket Vikram-1 Set for Launch



Why in News?

India's first privately developed **orbital-class launch vehicle**, **Vikram-1**, developed by **Skyroot Aerospace**, is scheduled for its maiden mission, **Mission Aagaman**, with a launch window from **12 July to 4 August 2026** from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota**.

What is Mission Aagaman?

Mission Aagaman ("Arrival") is the **first orbital test flight of Vikram-1**, marking a historic milestone in India's private space sector and commercial launch capabilities.

- It is the **first attempt by an Indian private company to place satellites into orbit**.
- The mission follows the successful launch of **Vikram-S**, India's first private **suborbital** rocket, on **18 November 2022**, under ISRO's **Prarambh** mission.
- It is a **partially commercial mission**, carrying payloads from both **Indian and international customers**.

- The primary objective is to **demonstrate and validate the launch vehicle's critical systems** before commencing regular commercial launch services.

About Vikram-1

Vikram-1 is India's **first privately developed orbital-class launch vehicle**, designed and built by **Skyroot Aerospace**, a Hyderabad-based space technology startup.

Key Specifications

- **Developer:** Skyroot Aerospace
- **Height:** Approximately **24 metres** (about a seven-storey building)
- **Configuration:** Multi-stage launch vehicle
- **Payload Capacity:** Up to **350 kg** to **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**
- **Target Orbit:** Approximately **450 km** altitude with a **60° orbital inclination**
- **Launch Site:** Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota

Technological Features

Vikram-1 incorporates several advanced technologies aimed at reducing launch costs and increasing launch frequency.

- Built using an **all-carbon composite structure**, making the rocket lighter while maintaining structural strength.
- Powered by:
 - **High-thrust solid rocket motors** for the initial stages.
 - **Indigenously developed liquid propulsion systems** for precise orbital insertion.
 - **3D-printed rocket engines**, significantly reducing manufacturing time, cost, and component complexity.
- Designed for **rapid production, modular assembly, and high launch cadence**, making it suitable for the growing small satellite market.

Objectives of the Maiden Flight

Mission Aagaman seeks to validate the complete performance of Vikram-1 under actual flight conditions.

The mission will test:

- Performance of the propulsion systems.
- Stage separation mechanisms.
- Guidance, Navigation and Control (GNC) systems.
- Structural integrity and overall vehicle performance.
- Orbital insertion accuracy.

The mission will also collect **real-time flight data**, which cannot be completely replicated through ground-based simulations, enabling engineers to refine the vehicle for future operational missions.

Significance

- Marks the **entry of India's private sector into orbital launch services**, opening a new chapter in the country's space programme.
- Demonstrates the success of **space sector reforms** and increased private participation encouraged by the Government of India.
- Strengthens India's position in the rapidly expanding **global small satellite launch market**.
- Supports the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** by promoting indigenous launch vehicle technology.
- Lays the foundation for **high-cadence commercial satellite launches**, helping India emerge as a competitive global launch service provider.

Gaganyaan: ISRO Conducts First SOLVE Ground Test



Why in the News?

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully conducted the **first ground test** of the **Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments (SOLVE)** solid motor at the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota**, marking an important milestone in preparations for the **Gaganyaan Mission**.

What is SOLVE?

SOLVE (Sub-Orbital Launch Vehicle for Experiments) is a **solid motor-based test vehicle** developed by **ISRO** to support the **Gaganyaan programme**.

It is specifically designed to **validate the Crew Module's parachute-based deceleration and recovery system** under different flight conditions before actual human spaceflight missions.

SOLVE will serve as a key platform for conducting future **Gaganyaan Test Vehicle (TV)** missions and qualifying critical crew safety systems.

Key Features of SOLVE

- Solid motor-based sub-orbital launch vehicle developed for experimental missions.
- Carries the **Crew Module** to an altitude of **10–17 km**.
- After separation, the Crew Module deploys a sequence of **10 parachutes** to gradually reduce its speed before **splashdown in the sea**.
- The recovered Crew Module helps validate landing and recovery procedures.

Solid Motor Design

The SOLVE solid motor is derived from the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Strap-on Motor**, with significant modifications:

- **Slow burn-rate propellant** to achieve the required flight profile.
- **Straight nozzle configuration**.
- Equipped with **Secondary Injection Thrust Vector Control (SITVC)** for improved control and stability during flight.
- Designed to simulate various mission conditions required for testing the Crew Escape and recovery systems.

Significance

- Validates the **Crew Module's parachute recovery system**, one of the most critical safety components of human spaceflight.
- Enables testing under **different mission scenarios**, improving mission reliability.
- Reduces risk before conducting **uncrewed and crewed Gaganyaan missions**.
- Strengthens India's indigenous human spaceflight capabilities.
- Demonstrates ISRO's progress toward achieving a safe and reliable crew recovery system.

About the Gaganyaan Mission

The **Gaganyaan Mission** is India's **first human spaceflight programme**, implemented by ISRO.

Objective

- Demonstrate India's capability to send **three astronauts (Gaganyatris)** into **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** at an altitude of approximately **400 km**.
- Keep the crew in orbit for about **three days**.
- Safely bring them back to Earth with **splashdown in Indian waters**, followed by recovery by the Indian Navy.

Key Features

- First indigenous human spaceflight mission of India.
- Launch vehicle: **Human-rated LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3)**.
- Includes a **Crew Module, Service Module, Crew Escape System**, and **Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS)**.
- Several **Test Vehicle (TV) missions**, including SOLVE-based experiments, are planned before the first crewed flight to validate safety-critical systems.

Importance of Gaganyaan

- Makes India one of the few nations capable of independently undertaking **human spaceflight**.
- Promotes advances in **space technology, robotics, materials science, life-support systems, and precision engineering**.

- Strengthens India's long-term ambitions in **space exploration**, including future space station and lunar missions.
- Enhances international cooperation and supports the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** in the space sector.

China Achieves First Controlled Recovery of Reusable Rocket Booster



Why in News?

China has successfully conducted its **first controlled recovery of an orbital-class reusable rocket booster** during the maiden launch of the **Long March 10B** carrier rocket. The mission marks a major breakthrough in China's reusable launch technology and strengthens its ambitions for low-cost space access and future crewed lunar missions.

Key Highlights

- **Long March 10B** successfully placed its payload into the designated orbit.
- Following stage separation, the **first-stage booster** executed a controlled descent and was safely recovered on a **sea-based platform** using a **net capture system**.
- This is **China's first successful controlled recovery of an orbital-class rocket booster**, a capability previously demonstrated only by SpaceX.
- The achievement represents a significant milestone in China's efforts to develop fully reusable launch systems for future commercial and human spaceflight missions.

- China had made **two unsuccessful vertical landing attempts in December 2025**, making this recovery a major technological advancement.
- The successful test supports the development of the **Long March 10** rocket, which is expected to be used for **China's planned crewed Moon missions** in the coming decade.

What is a Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV)?

A **Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV)** is a rocket designed so that some or all of its components can be **recovered, refurbished, and reused** after completing a space mission, instead of being discarded after a single launch. Since the **first-stage booster** constitutes the most expensive part of a launch vehicle, recovering and reusing it substantially reduces launch costs.

Common Recovery Methods

- **Vertical Landing** on land or autonomous drone ships (used by **SpaceX Falcon 9**).
- **Sea-based Platform Recovery** using a **net capture system**, as demonstrated by China's **Long March 10B**.

Reusable launch technology is regarded as the future of space transportation because it enables faster, cheaper, and more sustainable access to space.

Benefits of Reusable Rocket Technology

- **Reduces launch costs** by allowing multiple reuse of expensive rocket boosters.
- **Increases launch frequency**, making satellite deployment more efficient.
- Supports **deep-space exploration**, lunar missions, and large satellite constellations.
- Reduces **manufacturing time**, resource consumption, and space debris.
- Encourages innovation in reusable space transportation systems and boosts competitiveness in the global launch market.

China's Long March Rocket Family

The **Long March** series forms the backbone of China's space launch programme and is developed by the **China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT)**.

Major Applications

- Launching communication, navigation, and Earth observation satellites.
- Supporting China's **Tiangong Space Station** missions.
- Carrying astronauts under China's human spaceflight programme.
- Launching lunar probes and deep-space exploration missions.
- Future **crewed Moon missions** through the development of **Long March 10**.

India's Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) Programme

India is also developing reusable launch technology through the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** with the objective of creating a **fully reusable space transportation system** that can significantly lower the cost of launching satellites.

Major Milestones

- **RLV-TD (Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstrator)** successfully completed its first flight in **2016**, validating critical hypersonic flight technologies.
- **LEX (Landing Experiment)** in **2023** successfully demonstrated **autonomous runway landing**, marking a major achievement in reusable vehicle technology.
- **LEX-02** and **LEX-03** further validated autonomous landing capabilities under different operational conditions.
- ISRO is also working on **Orbital Re-entry Experiment (OREX)** and other advanced technologies required for future reusable launch systems.

India's First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train



Why in the News?

Indian Railways has launched India's first Hydrogen Fuel Cell Trainset, marking a significant milestone in the country's transition towards green, sustainable, and low-carbon rail transportation. The train will operate on the Jind–Sonipat section of Northern Railway in Haryana and is expected to demonstrate the viability of hydrogen as a clean alternative to diesel traction.

About the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train

The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train is India's first passenger train powered by hydrogen fuel cell technology, which generates electricity onboard without requiring overhead electric lines.

Unlike conventional diesel locomotives, the train produces electricity through an electrochemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, emitting only water vapour and heat as by-products, making it a near-zero emission mode of transport.

Key Highlights

- India's first Hydrogen Fuel Cell passenger train.
- **Route:** Jind–Sonipat section, Northern Railway (Haryana).
- **Train Configuration:** 10 coaches.
- **Passenger Capacity:** Around 2,600 passengers, making it one of the largest-capacity hydrogen-powered passenger trains in the world.
- **Operational Speed:** 75 km/h.
- **Design Speed:** 110 km/h.
- Generates electricity onboard using hydrogen fuel cells, eliminating dependence on overhead electric infrastructure.
- Emits only water vapour and heat at the point of use.

How Does the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Work?

The train uses a Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) Fuel Cell, one of the most efficient fuel cell technologies for transportation.

Working Mechanism

- Hydrogen is stored in high-pressure cylinders onboard the train.
- Oxygen is drawn from the surrounding atmosphere.

- Inside the fuel cell, hydrogen reacts electrochemically with oxygen.
- The reaction generates electricity, which powers the traction motors.
- The only by-products are water vapour and heat, with no direct carbon dioxide or particulate emissions.

Unlike combustion engines, fuel cells convert chemical energy directly into electrical energy, resulting in higher efficiency and lower environmental impact.

Train Configuration

The train consists of:

- 2 Hydrogen Driving Power Cars (DPCs)
- 8 Trailer Coaches (TCs)

Each Driving Power Car produces:

- 1,200 kW (approximately 1,600 horsepower)

This provides sufficient power to haul a full passenger rake while maintaining efficient and environmentally friendly operation.

Hydrogen Refuelling Facility

To support train operations, Indian Railways has established India's largest railway hydrogen refuelling facility at Jind, Haryana.

Key Features

- Hydrogen produced through electrolysis.
- Compressed up to 500 bar.
- Dispensed into the train at 350 bar.
- Storage capacity of nearly 3,000 kg of hydrogen.
- Approved by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO).

The integrated production, storage, and refuelling infrastructure represents a complete hydrogen ecosystem for railway operations.

Safety Features

Considering hydrogen's highly flammable nature, the train incorporates multiple international-standard safety systems, including:

- Hydrogen leak detection sensors.
- Heat, flame, and smoke detection systems.
- Continuous ventilation systems.
- Automatic hydrogen shut-off mechanisms.
- Advanced fire suppression systems.

- Independent third-party safety assessment by TÜV SÜD (Germany).

The train has been designed in accordance with internationally recognised safety standards, including:

- NFPA-2 (Hydrogen Technologies Code)
- ISO 19880 standards for hydrogen fuelling infrastructure.

Indigenous Development

The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train has been developed largely through indigenous efforts under Indian Railways.

Major Organisations Involved

- **Indian Railways** – Overall project implementation.
- **Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)** – Formulated technical specifications and standards.
- **Medha Servo Drives** – Integrated the hydrogen propulsion system.
- **Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai** – Designed and manufactured the train coaches and exterior.

The project aligns with the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative by promoting indigenous design and manufacturing capabilities in advanced railway technologies.

Global Significance

Several countries, including Germany, France, Italy, China, and Japan, have introduced or are testing hydrogen-powered trains as part of their decarbonisation strategies.

India's Hydrogen Fuel Cell Train stands out because:

- It is among the largest-capacity hydrogen-powered passenger trains globally.
- It integrates the complete hydrogen value chain—from production and storage to refuelling and train operation.
- It demonstrates the feasibility of deploying hydrogen technology in large-scale passenger rail services.

Future Plans

Indian Railways plans to expand hydrogen-powered rail operations to other non-electrified and environmentally sensitive routes.

Hydrogen technology has also been proposed for heritage railways, including the Kalka–Shimla Railway, where replacing diesel locomotives with hydrogen-powered trains could help preserve fragile ecosystems while promoting sustainable tourism.

Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 Makes History: India's First Private Rocket Reaches Orbit



Why in News?

The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Department of Science & Technology (DST) congratulated Skyroot Aerospace on the successful Vikram-1 mission, recognising it as a landmark achievement for India's private space sector. TDB also highlighted that Skyroot had earlier received the National Technology Start-up Award 2022, reflecting the government's early support for the company's indigenous launch vehicle technologies.

Key Highlights

- Vikram-1 became India's first successful private orbital launch vehicle, marking a historic milestone in India's commercial space ecosystem.
- Skyroot Aerospace was conferred the National Technology Start-up Award 2022 by the Technology Development Board (TDB), DST.
- The award recognised the company's indigenous technological capabilities in:
 - Cryogenic propulsion systems
 - Liquid propulsion systems
 - Solid propulsion systems

- Skyroot has also submitted a proposal under the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund, which is currently under the consideration of TDB.
- The success of Vikram-1 reinforces India's vision of promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat in the strategic space sector and expanding private participation following the space sector reforms.

About Technology Development Board (TDB)

The **Technology Development Board (TDB)** is a statutory body established by the Government of India to accelerate the commercialisation of indigenous technologies and encourage industry-led innovation.

Establishment

- **Established:** 1996
- **Parent Ministry:** Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology
- **Statutory Basis:** Technology Development Board Act, 1995

Objective

- Promote the development and commercialisation of indigenous technologies.
- Bridge the gap between laboratory research and market-ready products.
- Encourage technology-driven entrepreneurship and industrial innovation.
- Support India's technological self-reliance and global competitiveness.

Functions

- Provides financial assistance through:
 - Equity participation
 - Soft loans
 - Grants
- Supports start-ups, MSMEs, industries and research institutions in commercialising innovative technologies.
- Encourages industry-academia collaboration for technology development.
- Promotes indigenous manufacturing and import substitution in strategic sectors.

About Skyroot Aerospace

Skyroot Aerospace is a Hyderabad-based private space technology company, founded in 2018 by former ISRO scientists Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka. It is among India's leading private launch service providers and focuses on developing affordable, reliable and responsive launch vehicles for small satellites.

The company gained national prominence by launching Vikram-S in 2022, India's first privately developed rocket to reach space under the Prarambh Mission. Building on this achievement, Vikram-1 became India's first successful privately developed orbital launch vehicle, demonstrating the country's growing capabilities in commercial space transportation.

India Approves First Dengue Vaccine (QDenga)



Why in News?

India has approved its first dengue vaccine, QDenga (TAK-003), developed by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals, after receiving market authorization from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI). The approval marks a major milestone in India's efforts to reduce the growing burden of dengue, which affects millions of people annually in tropical and subtropical regions.

Key Highlights

- First dengue vaccine approved in India.
- Developed by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals (Japan).
- Approved for individuals aged 4 to 60 years.
- **Type:** Live attenuated tetravalent vaccine.
- Provides protection against all four dengue virus serotypes:
 - DENV-1

- DENV-2
- DENV-3
- DENV-4
- **Dosage:** Two-dose schedule administered 3 months apart.
- Can be administered irrespective of previous dengue infection.
- No pre-vaccination screening is required before administration.

Clinical Performance

- Approval is based on 19 Phase I, II, and III clinical trials involving more than 28,000 participants.
- The landmark Phase III TIDES trial included over 20,000 children and adolescents across eight dengue-endemic countries in Asia and Latin America.
- Demonstrated:
 - 80.2% efficacy against laboratory-confirmed dengue (12 months after the second dose).
 - 90.4% efficacy against dengue-related hospitalization (18 months after vaccination).
- Long-term follow-up studies have shown sustained protection for up to seven years, indicating durable immunity against severe disease.

Global Status

- Approved in 43 countries across Asia, Latin America, Europe, and other regions.
- WHO recommends its use in areas with high dengue transmission.
- Has received WHO prequalification, facilitating procurement by UN agencies and global immunization programmes.
- Included in the National Immunization Programme of Brazil and public vaccination programmes in Argentina, Colombia, and Indonesia.
- It is currently the only widely approved dengue vaccine that can be administered without

determining whether the recipient had a prior dengue infection.

About Dengue

What is Dengue?

Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral disease caused by the Dengue virus (DENV), a member of the Flavivirus genus. It is one of the fastest-growing vector-borne diseases globally and is endemic in more than 100 countries.

Causative Agent

- **Virus:** Dengue virus (Flavivirus).
- **Serotypes:** Four distinct serotypes—DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4.
- Infection with one serotype provides lifelong immunity only against that serotype, while subsequent infection with another serotype increases the risk of severe dengue.

Vector

- Primarily transmitted by the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.
- Also spread by *Aedes albopictus*.
- These mosquitoes are day-biting, with peak activity during early morning and late afternoon.
- They breed in clean, stagnant water found in artificial containers such as coolers, flower pots, discarded tyres, and water storage tanks.

Transmission

- Spread through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito.
- Not transmitted directly from person to person.
- Rare transmission may occur through blood transfusion, organ transplantation, or from mother to child during pregnancy.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear **4–10 days after infection** and may include:

- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache
- Pain behind the eyes
- Muscle and joint pain ("breakbone fever")
- Nausea and vomiting
- Skin rash
- Mild bleeding (nose or gums)

- Fatigue and weakness

Severe Dengue

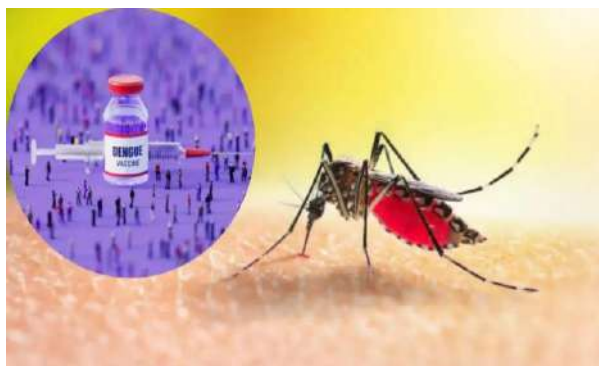
A small proportion of patients develop severe disease, including:

- **Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF):** Characterized by plasma leakage, bleeding manifestations, and low platelet count.
- **Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS):** Severe plasma leakage leading to circulatory failure and shock, which can be fatal without timely treatment.

Prevention

- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by preventing water stagnation.
- Use mosquito repellents, long-sleeved clothing, and insecticide-treated nets.
- Install window screens and maintain community sanitation.
- Vaccination with QDENGAR offers an additional preventive strategy, particularly in dengue-endemic regions.

All four dengue virus serotypes found co-circulating nationally, ICMR-VRDL study finds



Why in News?

A two-year surveillance study by the Indian Council of Medical Research–Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (ICMR-VRDL) Network has found that all four dengue virus serotypes (DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4) are co-circulating across India, indicating that the country is entering a hyperendemic phase. This raises concerns over a higher risk of severe dengue outbreaks

and poses challenges for the introduction and effectiveness of future dengue vaccines.

Key Highlights

- **Study duration:** Conducted over two years through nationwide surveillance.
- **Conducting body:** ICMR-Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) Network.
- **Key finding:** Simultaneous circulation of all four dengue virus serotypes across India.
- **Major concern:** Hyperendemicity increases the risk of severe dengue due to repeated infections and complicates vaccine deployment.
- **Note:** A **serotype** is a distinct variation of a microorganism identified by differences in its surface antigens.

What is Dengue?

- Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral disease caused by the dengue virus (DENV).
- It is transmitted primarily by the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, and to a lesser extent by *Aedes albopictus*.
- The virus has four distinct serotypes:
 - DENV-1
 - DENV-2
 - DENV-3
 - DENV-4
- Infection with one serotype provides lifelong immunity only against that serotype, while offering only temporary and partial protection against the other three.
- Subsequent infection with a different serotype significantly increases the risk of severe dengue.

What is Hyperendemicity?

- Hyperendemicity refers to the simultaneous and sustained circulation of multiple serotypes of the same pathogen within a geographical region.
- In dengue, it increases the probability of people being infected multiple times by different serotypes.
- This raises the risk of severe dengue, including Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) and Dengue

Shock Syndrome (DSS), largely due to Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE).

What is Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE)?

- ADE is an immunological phenomenon in which antibodies generated during a previous dengue infection fail to neutralize a different serotype during a subsequent infection.
- Instead, these antibodies facilitate the entry of the virus into immune cells, resulting in:
 - Higher viral replication,
 - Exaggerated immune response,
 - Increased risk of plasma leakage, bleeding, and shock.
- ADE is one of the major reasons why developing a safe and effective dengue vaccine remains scientifically challenging.

About the ICMR-VRDL Network

- Established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- Functions as a nationwide network of laboratories for the diagnosis, surveillance and research of viral diseases.
- Supports:

- Early detection of emerging and re-emerging viral infections,
- Outbreak investigation,
- Genome sequencing and laboratory confirmation,
- Public health surveillance and policy formulation.

- The network plays a critical role in strengthening India's preparedness against infectious disease outbreaks.

Why is the Study Significant?

- Confirms that India has entered a hyperendemic dengue transmission pattern.
- Highlights the growing need for:
 - Strengthened vector control programmes,
 - Continuous genomic surveillance,
 - Improved clinical preparedness for severe dengue cases,
 - Region-specific vaccine strategies considering circulating serotypes.
- Provides valuable evidence for planning future dengue vaccination programmes and public health interventions.

Security Issues

SAIL Supplies Defence Grade Steel for Indian Navy Warships



Why in the News?

The **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** supplied approximately **5,700 tonnes of indigenous defence-**

grade steel for three Indian Navy vessels—**INS Dunagiri**, **INS Agray**, and **INS Sanshodhak**—which were commissioned on **21 June 2026**. This achievement marks another significant milestone in India's efforts to strengthen **defence indigenisation** under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make in India** initiatives.

The successful supply of domestically produced naval steel reduces dependence on imports and highlights the growing capability of India's public sector in supporting advanced defence manufacturing.

Key Highlights

- **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** supplied **100% of the special steel requirement**, amounting to around **5,700 tonnes**, for the three naval platforms.

- The steel supplied included **DMR 249A grade hot-rolled sheets and plates**, specially designed for naval applications.
- Production was undertaken at three major SAIL plants:
 - **Bokaro Steel Plant**
 - **Bhilai Steel Plant**
 - **Rourkela Steel Plant**
- To meet the growing requirements of India's naval modernisation programme, SAIL has significantly expanded the production capacity of **DMR-grade steel plates**, particularly at the **Special Plate Plant (SPP), Rourkela**.
- The project demonstrates the increasing integration of India's steel industry with the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem.

Naval Platforms Supplied with SAIL Steel

INS Dunagiri

INS Dunagiri is a **stealth-guided missile frigate** designed with advanced stealth features to reduce radar, acoustic and infrared signatures. The ship is equipped for multi-dimensional warfare, including anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine operations.

INS Agray

INS Agray is an **Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC)** designed to detect, track and neutralise enemy submarines operating in shallow coastal waters. It also performs coastal surveillance, mine-laying and search-and-rescue missions.

INS Sanshodhak

INS Sanshodhak is a **Survey Vessel (Large)** built for hydrographic surveys, oceanographic research, nautical charting and maritime data collection. It enhances India's ability to support safe navigation and maritime domain awareness.

What is DMR 249A Steel?

DMR 249A (Defence Metallurgical Research 249A) is a **high-strength, low-alloy (HSLA) steel** specially developed for constructing Indian naval warships.

The steel has been developed through collaborative efforts involving Indian defence research organisations

and domestic steel manufacturers to meet the stringent operational requirements of modern naval platforms.

Key Features

- High tensile strength
- Excellent weldability
- High impact toughness
- Superior corrosion resistance in marine environments
- Improved resistance to shock and blast loads
- Enhanced survivability under combat conditions
- Long service life with reduced maintenance requirements

These properties make DMR 249A suitable for constructing warship hulls and critical structural components that must withstand harsh marine conditions and combat stress.

Other Major Naval Platforms Using SAIL Steel

SAIL's indigenous defence-grade steel has also been used in several important Indian Navy projects, including:

- INS Vikrant (India's first indigenous aircraft carrier)
- INS Nilgiri
- INS Himgiri
- INS Udaygiri
- INS Ajay
- INS Nistar
- INS Anjadip

The widespread use of indigenous steel across these platforms reflects India's growing self-sufficiency in naval shipbuilding.

Significance

Strengthening Defence Indigenisation

The indigenous production of specialised naval steel supports India's vision of achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing by reducing dependence on imported strategic materials.

Supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat

The initiative aligns with the Government of India's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** programme by promoting domestic manufacturing capabilities in critical sectors such as defence and heavy industry.

Reducing Import Dependence

Naval-grade steel was traditionally sourced from foreign suppliers. Indigenous production improves supply chain security, lowers procurement costs and ensures timely availability for strategic defence projects.

Boosting Indigenous Shipbuilding

The availability of advanced defence-grade steel enables Indian shipyards to design and construct sophisticated warships using domestically produced materials, strengthening the country's shipbuilding ecosystem.

Enhancing Maritime Security

Modern naval platforms built with indigenous high-performance steel improve the operational capability of the Indian Navy, supporting coastal defence, maritime surveillance and India's aspiration to maintain a strong **blue-water navy** capable of operating across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond.

Public Sector Contribution

The achievement highlights the successful collaboration between **SAIL**, India's public sector steel industry, and the defence manufacturing sector, demonstrating the strategic role of public enterprises in national security.

DRDO Successfully Tests Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket



Why in the News?

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted a flight test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR) at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha, on 8 July 2026.

The rocket was tested for a user-defined minimum strike range of 60 km. During the trial, it successfully performed all planned in-flight manoeuvres, followed the predicted trajectory and struck the designated target with high precision.

The successful trial is an important step in strengthening the Indian Army's indigenous long-range precision artillery capabilities.

Key Highlights of the Flight Test

The latest trial successfully validated the minimum operational strike range of 60 km for the Pinaka LRGR.

The rocket completed all planned in-flight manoeuvres and accurately impacted the designated target.

Its flight trajectory closely matched the predicted path, demonstrating the reliability of its guidance, navigation and flight-control systems.

The rocket was launched from an in-service Pinaka launcher, confirming its compatibility with the existing Pinaka weapon system.

This launcher compatibility is operationally important as different variants of Pinaka rockets can be deployed using the existing launcher infrastructure.

The successful test provides greater operational and tactical flexibility to the Indian Army, allowing precision engagement of targets at different ranges.

Development of Pinaka LRGR

The Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket has been designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune, a laboratory of DRDO.

It has been developed in association with the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Pune.

The Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad, and Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, have also contributed to the development of the advanced rocket system.

The flight trial was coordinated by the Integrated Test Range (ITR) and the Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE), Chandipur.

The participation of multiple DRDO laboratories reflects the complex technological requirements involved in developing long-range guided rockets, including

propulsion, energetic materials, navigation, guidance and flight control.

Previous LRGR Test

The maiden flight test of the **Pinaka LRGR-120** was successfully conducted at Chandipur on **29 December 2025**.

During that trial, the rocket demonstrated its **maximum range of 120 km** and completed the planned in-flight manoeuvres before striking the target with high precision.

Thus, the December 2025 test demonstrated the rocket's maximum-range capability, while the July 2026 trial focused on validating its **user-defined minimum range of 60 km**.

Together, these trials demonstrate the system's ability to engage targets across a wider operational range.

About Pinaka Rocket System

Pinaka is an **indigenously developed Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL)** system designed by DRDO primarily for the Indian Army.

The weapon system is named after **Pinaka, the bow of Lord Shiva**.

It is an all-weather artillery rocket system designed to deliver a **large volume of fire within a short period** against critical and time-sensitive enemy targets.

The system is mounted on a **high-mobility vehicle**, allowing rapid deployment and relocation in battlefield conditions.

A Pinaka launcher carries **12 rocket tubes** and can fire a salvo of 12 rockets in approximately **44 seconds**.

Its high rate of fire enables the Army to saturate a large target area before quickly changing its position to reduce vulnerability to enemy counter-battery attacks.

Major Components of the Pinaka System

The Pinaka weapon system is not limited to the rocket launcher alone. It consists of an integrated group of platforms and support systems.

Its major components include:

- Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher
- Command Post Vehicle
- Loader-cum-Replenishment Vehicle
- Replenishment Vehicle

- Meteorological and fire-control support
- Rocket ammunition and associated logistics systems

These components work together to provide rapid target engagement and sustained artillery operations.

Operational Roles of Pinaka

The Pinaka system is designed to perform several battlefield roles.

It can be used for **area suppression**, where concentrated rocket fire is used to restrict enemy movement and operations.

It is suitable for **counter-battery fire** against hostile artillery and rocket positions.

The system can target **enemy troop concentrations, logistics facilities and ammunition storage areas**.

It can also be used to neutralise **command-and-control centres and other critical military infrastructure**.

The development of guided variants has further transformed Pinaka from primarily an area-saturation weapon into a **precision-strike artillery system**.

Pinaka Variants

1. Pinaka Mk-I

The original Pinaka variant has a strike range of approximately **37 to 40 km**.

It was primarily developed for rapid area saturation and high-volume artillery fire.

2. Extended Range Pinaka

The extended-range variants improve upon the range of the original Pinaka rockets while retaining compatibility with the broader Pinaka weapon system.

These developments are intended to progressively increase the reach of India's rocket artillery.

3. Guided Pinaka

The Guided Pinaka incorporates an advanced **navigation, control and guidance system** to improve accuracy.

It provides precision-strike capability at ranges of around **75 km**, reducing dependence on unguided saturation fire for selected targets.

4. Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR-120)

The LRGR represents a major technological advancement in the Pinaka family.

It has demonstrated a **maximum range of 120 km**, while the latest July 2026 trial validated its user-defined minimum strike range of **60 km**.

The system combines extended range with high precision and is compatible with in-service Pinaka launchers.

Strategic Importance

The successful development of the Pinaka LRGR significantly enhances the Indian Army's **deep-strike artillery capability**.

A range of up to 120 km allows the Army to engage important enemy military targets located well beyond the immediate frontline.

Its precision-guided capability can improve target effectiveness while reducing the number of rockets required to neutralise selected high-value targets.

Compatibility with existing Pinaka launchers is another major advantage because it can enable the Army to introduce advanced rocket variants without creating an entirely separate launcher ecosystem.

The system also strengthens India's ability to develop and manufacture advanced artillery weapons domestically.

DRDO Successfully Flight Tests Indigenous Long-Range SAM 'Kusha'



Why in News?

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the indigenous Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) system 'Project Kusha' from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

Island, Odisha. The missile successfully intercepted a high-speed, high-altitude aerial target, marking a major milestone in India's quest for a self-reliant, long-range air defence capability.

Project Kusha

Project Kusha is an indigenously developed Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) system being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to provide India with a modern, layered air defence shield capable of neutralising a wide spectrum of aerial threats.

The system is designed to defend strategic military bases, cities, critical infrastructure, ports, airfields, and vital installations against:

- Fighter aircraft
- Stealth aircraft
- Cruise missiles
- Ballistic missiles (terminal phase)
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)
- Loitering munitions

Project Kusha is often regarded as India's indigenous alternative to advanced long-range air defence systems such as the Russian S-400 Triumf.

Key Highlights

- Indigenous Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) system developed by DRDO.
- Successfully intercepted a high-speed, high-altitude aerial target during its maiden flight test.
- Long-range variants are expected to engage targets at distances exceeding 200 km, with future versions reportedly aiming for ranges up to 350 km.
- Features indigenous missiles, advanced phased-array radars, command-and-control systems, and network-centric battle management.
- Designed to simultaneously detect, track, and engage multiple aerial threats.
- Will significantly reduce India's dependence on imported long-range air defence systems.
- Enhances India's capability to counter modern aerial threats, including stand-off weapons and saturation attacks.

Mission Sudarshan Chakra

Mission Sudarshan Chakra is India's proposed indigenous multi-layered national air defence architecture, intended to provide comprehensive protection against diverse airborne threats through multiple interception layers. Project Kusha will form the long-range defence layer, while several indigenous systems will provide medium-, short-, and very short-range protection.

Major Components

1. Project Kusha (LR-SAM)

- Long-range interception of aircraft, cruise missiles, and other aerial threats.
- Forms the outer defensive ring.

2. Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS)

A networked command-and-control architecture integrating multiple air defence assets for seamless threat detection and engagement.

3. QRSAM (Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile)

- Medium-range mobile air defence system.
- Protects mechanised forces and military formations from aircraft, helicopters, and UAVs.

4. VSHORADS (Very Short Range Air Defence System)

- Man-portable missile system.

- Designed to engage low-flying aircraft, helicopters, and drones at short ranges.

5. Directed Energy Weapons (DEW)

- Laser and high-power microwave-based systems.
- Intended to neutralise drones, swarm attacks, and low-cost aerial threats at minimal operating cost.

Strategic Significance

- Strengthens India's indigenous air defence ecosystem under Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Complements imported systems like the S-400 while reducing long-term dependence on foreign suppliers.
- Enhances protection of strategic assets, military bases, and critical infrastructure.
- Improves India's preparedness against evolving threats such as hypersonic weapons, cruise missiles, and drone swarms.
- Establishes a layered and network-centric national air defence architecture capable of responding to simultaneous multi-directional attacks.

Trivia

Index of Services Production (ISP)



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is set to launch the **Index of Services Production (ISP)** in **July 2026**, marking India's first official **monthly high-frequency indicator** for measuring short-term growth in the services sector. The first trial release is scheduled for **14 July 2026**, covering data for the financial year **2025–26** and **April 2026**.

The launch of ISP represents a major milestone in India's statistical system, as it fills a long-standing gap in measuring the performance of the country's largest economic sector on a monthly basis.

What is the Index of Services Production (ISP)?

The **Index of Services Production (ISP)** is a **monthly volume-based index** that measures changes in the **real output of the formal services sector** relative to a fixed base year.

It is the **services-sector counterpart of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, which tracks industrial output. While the IIP has long provided high-frequency information on manufacturing, mining and electricity, there has been no comparable monthly indicator for services despite the sector's dominant contribution to the Indian economy.

The ISP seeks to bridge this gap by providing timely information on the growth of key service industries.

Key Highlights

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
- **Base Year:** 2024–25
- **First Trial Release:** 14 July 2026
- **Coverage:** Data for 2025–26 and April 2026
- **Release Frequency:** Monthly
- **Time Lag:** Approximately 60 days
- **Methodology:** Fixed-weight Laspeyres Volume Index
- **Weighting:** Based on the **Gross Value Added (GVA)** of different service sectors.

Objectives of ISP

The Index of Services Production has been introduced to:

- Complement the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** by covering the services sector.
- Provide a reliable **high-frequency indicator** of service sector activity.
- Improve **economic forecasting** and **business cycle analysis**.
- Support **evidence-based policymaking** by providing timely economic data.
- Enable better monitoring of short-term trends in India's largest contributor to GDP.

Coverage of the Index

Sectors Included

The ISP will initially cover major formal service industries, including:

- Wholesale and retail trade
- Transport and logistics
- Banking and insurance
- Telecommunications
- Hotels and restaurants
- Real estate activities
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Arts, entertainment and recreation

Sectors to be Added Later

The following sectors will be incorporated after sufficient data become available through the **Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)**:

- Health services
- Education services

Sources of Data

The ISP will rely on multiple administrative and survey-based data sources.

Administrative Data

Used for sectors such as:

- Air transport
- Railways
- Banking
- Insurance

GST Data

GST **GSTR-1 outward supplies** will serve as the principal data source for most service industries, enabling regular monthly estimation.

ASISSE

The **Annual Survey of Incorporated Services Sector Enterprises (ASISSE)** will provide information for sectors such as health and education.

Why is the ISP Important?

The services sector has emerged as the backbone of the Indian economy.

- Since **2013–14**, services have contributed **more than 50% of India's Gross Value Added (GVA)**.
- The sector accounts for a substantial share of employment, exports, investment and tax revenues.
- Until now, policymakers lacked a comprehensive monthly indicator to assess its short-term performance.

The ISP will therefore:

- Provide timely information on economic activity.
- Help the Reserve Bank of India and the government assess economic momentum.
- Improve GDP forecasting.
- Enable faster policy responses during economic slowdowns or recoveries.
- Enhance transparency for businesses, investors and researchers.
- Bring India's statistical framework closer to international best practices followed by many advanced economies.

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- **Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen**
- **Governance and Services on Demand**
- **Digital Empowerment of Citizens**

Its objective is to ensure that every citizen can access government services electronically through reliable digital infrastructure, high-speed internet, and secure digital identity.

Nine Pillars of Digital India

The programme is implemented through nine interconnected pillars:

1. Broadband Highways
2. Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity
3. Public Internet Access Programme
4. e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology
5. e-Kranti: Electronic Delivery of Services
6. Information for All
7. Electronics Manufacturing
8. IT for Jobs
9. Early Harvest Programmes

These pillars collectively aim to improve digital connectivity, strengthen governance, promote electronics manufacturing, enhance digital literacy, and generate employment in the IT sector.

Major Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

Over the past decade, India has built a robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), often referred to as the **India Stack**, which has become a model for several countries.

1. Digital Identity

India's digital identity ecosystem is centred on:

- Aadhaar
- Aadhaar-enabled Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)
- e-KYC
- Aadhaar App

These platforms enable secure identity verification, faster welfare delivery, and paperless authentication.

2. Digital Payments

India has emerged as a global leader in digital payments through:

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
- BHIM App

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) ecosystem

UPI has revolutionised retail payments by enabling instant, interoperable, and low-cost digital transactions.

3. Digital Governance

Several digital platforms have simplified citizen-centric governance:

- DigiLocker
- UMANG
- Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)
- Government e-Marketplace (GeM)
- Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

These initiatives have reduced paperwork, increased transparency, and improved ease of doing business.

4. Digital Health

Healthcare delivery has been strengthened through:

- CoWIN
- eSanjeevani
- Online Registration System (ORS)
- eHospital
- eBloodBank
- Tele MANAS

These platforms support vaccination management, telemedicine, digital hospital services, and mental health counselling.

5. Digital Agriculture

Digital technologies are increasingly supporting farmers through:

- AgriStack
- National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)
- Kisan e-Mitra
- Kisan Sarathi

These initiatives facilitate better access to markets, advisory services, digital records, and agricultural information.

6. Digital Education

The education ecosystem has expanded through:

- DIKSHA
- SWAYAM
- SWAYAM Prabha
- PM e-Vidya
- APAAR ID

These platforms provide online learning resources, digital academic records, and accessible educational content across India.

Key Achievements

During the past 11 years, Digital India has achieved several notable milestones:

- India now accounts for nearly **49% of global real-time digital payment transactions**, driven primarily by UPI.
- The **digital economy contributes approximately 12–14% of India's GDP**, reflecting rapid digitalisation across sectors.
- **BharatNet** has connected around **97% of Gram Panchayats**, significantly improving rural broadband connectivity.
- **DigiLocker** has crossed **70 crore registered users**, enabling secure digital document storage and verification.
- **UPI transactions exceeded 24,000 crore transactions during FY 2025–26**, making it the world's largest real-time payment system.
- **ONDC** has expanded operations to over **1,000 cities**, promoting open digital commerce and reducing platform monopolies.
- **AgriStack** has generated more than **9 crore Farmer IDs**, supporting targeted agricultural service delivery.

Significance of Digital India

Strengthening Digital Public Infrastructure

India has developed one of the world's most comprehensive Digital Public Infrastructure ecosystems, integrating identity, payments, governance, health, education, and commerce into interoperable digital platforms.

Improving Ease of Living

Digital platforms have made public services faster, more transparent, and accessible, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices.

Financial Inclusion

The integration of **Aadhaar**, **UPI**, and **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** has expanded banking access, promoted

cashless transactions, and enabled direct transfer of welfare benefits to beneficiaries.

Transparent Governance

Digitisation has reduced leakages, minimised corruption, improved accountability, and enhanced the efficiency of government programmes.

Inclusive Service Delivery

Digital platforms have enabled wider access to healthcare, education, agriculture, social welfare, and citizen services, particularly benefiting rural and remote areas.

Boost to Innovation and Startup Ecosystem

The Digital India ecosystem has encouraged the growth of startups, fintech, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and digital entrepreneurship, making India one of the fastest-growing digital economies in the world.

Challenges Ahead

Despite remarkable progress, several challenges remain:

- Bridging the rural-urban digital divide.
- Improving digital literacy among vulnerable populations.
- Strengthening cybersecurity and data protection.
- Ensuring privacy while expanding digital governance.
- Enhancing internet quality and last-mile connectivity.
- Building trust in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Digital Public Infrastructure.

Way Forward

Going forward, the Digital India Programme will play a crucial role in achieving the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047** by expanding high-speed connectivity, strengthening Digital Public Infrastructure, promoting AI-enabled governance, enhancing cybersecurity, and ensuring that digital transformation remains inclusive, secure, and citizen-centric.

ICAR Foundation Day 2026



Why in News?

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) celebrated its 98th Foundation Day on 16 July 2026, showcasing its achievements in developing climate-resilient crop varieties, biofortified crops, livestock technologies, and digital innovations aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity, farmers' incomes, and food security.

Key Highlights

- **Established:** 16 July 1928, ICAR is India's premier organization for coordinating, guiding, and managing agricultural research, education, and extension.
- Functions under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
- During 2025–26, ICAR developed 386 improved varieties across 44 crops, of which:
 - 94% are climate-resilient, capable of withstanding drought, floods, heat, salinity, and other climatic stresses.
 - 29 varieties are biofortified, enriched with essential nutrients such as iron, zinc, and protein to address malnutrition.
- On its Foundation Day, ICAR released:
 - 43 improved crop varieties
 - 17 agricultural technologies
 - 14 technical publications

Major Technologies Released

- Climate-resilient and salinity/alkalinity-tolerant rice varieties for stress-prone regions.

- Export-oriented mango production technology to improve fruit quality and international market competitiveness.
- India's first indigenous African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine, a major breakthrough for the pig farming sector.
- Digital Swine Disease Atlas for surveillance and early disease management.
- Affordable cassava harvester designed for small and marginal farmers to reduce labour costs and improve efficiency.

Technology Commercialization & Collaboration

- 72 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed with 51 industry partners for commercialization of ICAR-developed technologies.
- 18 international MoUs signed with global institutions to strengthen agricultural research, innovation, and knowledge exchange.

Outreach and Impact

- ICAR technologies directly benefited nearly 1 crore farmers through field demonstrations, training programmes, and extension activities.
- More than 5 crore farmers were reached through television, radio, print media, digital platforms, and social media.
- The extensive network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) played a key role in transferring technologies from laboratories to farmers' fields.

Economic Impact (2025–26)

- Agriculture, horticulture, livestock, and fisheries together generated an additional economic value of about ₹1.70 lakh crore.
- Agricultural research alone contributed nearly ₹55,000 crore, highlighting the high returns from investment in agricultural research and innovation.

About ICAR

Particular	Details
Full Form	Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
Established	16 July 1928

Particular	Details
Headquarters	New Delhi
Parent Department	Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)
Parent Ministry	Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare
Autonomous Status	Autonomous organization under DARE

Functions of ICAR

ICAR is responsible for:

- Coordinating and promoting agricultural research across India.
- Managing the National Agricultural Research System (NARS).
- Overseeing agricultural education through State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), Deemed Universities, and ICAR institutes.
- Providing extension services through more than 700 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).

- Developing improved crop varieties, livestock breeds, fisheries technologies, and farm mechanization.
- Promoting climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices.

Major Contributions of ICAR

ICAR has played a transformative role in Indian agriculture through:

- Green Revolution, which helped India achieve food self-sufficiency.
- Development of high-yielding, disease-resistant, and climate-resilient crop varieties.
- Promotion of biofortified crops to improve nutritional security.
- Advances in livestock, dairy, poultry, fisheries, and horticulture research.
- Development of modern agricultural technologies, precision farming, and digital agriculture.
- Strengthening food and nutritional security, farmers' incomes, and sustainable agricultural development.

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