

JULY 2025



Comprehensive Coverage of

CURRENT AFFAIRS

ENTIRE CONTENT OF
JUNE 2025



- ✓ Polity and Governance
- ✓ International Relations
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Useful for IAS / PCS / HCS / HAS & other Exams.

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HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Ahilyabai Holkar's birth anniversary

Context

Ahilyabai Holkar's birth anniversary was recently celebrated, bringing renewed attention to her extraordinary legacy as one of India's most progressive and respected women rulers. Her life continues to inspire for the way she combined wisdom, courage, and compassion in leading the Holkar dynasty during a time of great political uncertainty.

Early Life and Path to Power

Ahilyabai Holkar was born in 1725 in a modest Dhangar family in present-day Maharashtra. Her destiny changed when she was married into the Holkar royal family of Malwa. After the tragic deaths of her husband Khande Rao, her father-in-law Malhar Rao, and later her son, Ahilyabai stepped into leadership—a rare and courageous move for a woman in 18th-century India. She didn't inherit power; she earned it through resilience and wisdom.

Governance with Compassion and Strength

From 1767 to 1795, Ahilyabai ruled the Malwa region with remarkable skill. While much of Central India was in turmoil, her administration stood out for its stability and justice. She appointed Tukoji Holkar to lead her army and took bold decisions to defend her territory. Despite being a widow, she never let social limitations stop her from leading her people with conviction.

Transforming Cities and Culture

Ahilyabai turned Indore into a growing trade centre and made Maheshwar, along the Narmada River, her capital. Under her patronage, Maheshwar became a hub of art, music, and weaving. The Maheshwari sarees we know today are part of her rich legacy. She supported artisans and brought prosperity to the region through inclusive policies.

Devotion Reflected in Architecture

A deeply spiritual leader, Ahilyabai built and restored temples across India—from Kashi to Somnath. She wasn't just building structures; she was reviving faith. She even devised clever ways to protect temples from destruction, like placing hidden sanctums beneath the ground.

Legacy

Ahilyabai Holkar is remembered not just as a queen, but as a just ruler, a cultural visionary, and a symbol of dignity in leadership. Her legacy lives on in the temples she built, the cities she nurtured, and the hearts of people she served.

Kheer Bhawani Festival

Context

The Kheer Bhawani festival is being celebrated on Jyeshtha Ashtami at the famous Kheer Bhawani temple in Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir.

About Kheer Bhawani Temple

- The temple was first built by Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1912.
- It was later improved and beautified by Maharaja Hari Singh.
- The temple is dedicated to Goddess Ragnya Devi, an incarnation of Goddess Durga.
- A key attraction is a hexagonal spring with sacred water in the temple's center.
- The temple and the festival are named after the sweet dish 'kheer', which is offered to the Goddess and distributed as prasad to devotees.

Pre-Harappan Settlements in Kachchh

Context

New archaeological findings by IIT Gandhinagar researchers show that humans settled in Kachchh thousands of years before the Harappan civilization.

Key Discoveries

Early settlers lived in mangrove-rich areas and relied on shellfish. Tools like scrapers and cutting stones indicate semi-permanent settlements.

Cultural Links

There were connections with regions like Las Bela and Makran in modern Pakistan and the Oman Peninsula, suggesting cultural exchange and regional development.

Dating Method

The team used Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) to date shell remains. Tree-ring data was used to calibrate carbon-14 levels for precise timelines.

Significance

This challenges the earlier belief that urbanization in Kachchh was purely a Harappan influence. It indicates independent local evolution.

Sant Kabir Das birth anniversary

Context

The Prime Minister paid tribute on Sant Kabir Das's birth anniversary on 11 June. Kabir's legacy of unity, equality, and inner truth resonates across communities today.

Early Life and Influences

Born in Kashi, Kabir's upbringing blends Hindu and Muslim traditions. Initiated by Ramananda, he studied diverse philosophies. His teachings draw from Upanishadic oneness, Sikh mysticism, and Bhakti simplicity.

Teachings

Kabir rejected caste and rituals. He celebrated a direct, inner devotion based on truth and moral living. His verses—Dohe—are simple yet profound, using earthy metaphors to express deep spirituality.

Legacy

Kabir panth preserves his Bijak; his hymns are found in the Sikh scripture Adi Granth. He inspired social reform, influenced Guru Nanak, and challenged social norms.

Conclusion

Sant Kabir Das's message of unity, compassion, and inner truth remains vital. It transcends religion and time, continuing to guide seekers toward justice and spiritual authenticity.

Servants of India Society Dispute

Context

A financial dispute has surfaced between Pune's Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics and the Servants of India Society. The controversy involves control over a joint account and alleged misuse of funds.

About the Servants of India Society

It was founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in June 1905. The Society aimed to build a band of selfless workers committed to national service. It started at Fergusson Hill in Pune with three associates: Natesh Appaji Dravid, Gopal Krishna Deodhar, and Anant Vinayak Patwardhan.

Objectives and Activities

Members pledged lives of renunciation and service. They worked to uplift rural, tribal, and underprivileged communities. The Society played a key role in promoting education, social reform, and unity during the freedom movement.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale's Role

Born in 1866, Gokhale was a liberal leader and social reformer. Inspired by Justice M G Ranade, he advocated gradual political progress and supported British-led modernisation of India.

He was a mentor to Mahatma Gandhi and played an active part in the Morley-Minto Reforms. Gokhale's speeches were scholarly and economically insightful. He died in 1915.

Gyan Post Launched

Context

The Department of Posts has launched 'Gyan Post', a new initiative for affordable delivery of educational and religious books.

What Is Gyan Post

It is available in all post offices. Rates begin at twenty rupees for packets up to three hundred grams and go up to one hundred rupees for packets up to five kilograms.

Objectives and Conditions

It aims to reduce the education divide by delivering low-cost printed materials to remote areas. Only printed books are allowed. No letters, journals, or handwritten materials are permitted. Delivery will be by surface routes to control costs.

Simhachalam Temple Undergoes Restoration

Context

Leaking modern roofing has led to the use of traditional materials like lime, jaggery, and Arabic gum for restoring the Simhachalam temple in Andhra Pradesh.

About the Temple

- Located in Visakhapatnam on a hill at 244 meters elevation.
- Dedicated to Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, a composite avatar of Vishnu.
- The idol is covered with sandal paste and revealed annually during Chandanotsavam.

Historical Timeline

- Chola, Velanadu, Eastern Ganga, and Vijayanagara rulers contributed to its development.
- 125 inscriptions dating back to 1098 CE make it a historical archive.

Architectural Features

- Built using dark granite in a blend of Dravidian and regional styles.
- Notable halls include the Mukhamandapam and Natyamandapam with rich carvings.
- A stone chariot and Kappa Stambham highlight the artistic grandeur of the site.

Nonia Rebellion Recognised as Early Grassroots Resistance

Context

Union Minister for Agriculture paid tribute to Buddhu Nonia, a freedom fighter from Bihar's Nonia community, at his centenary celebration.

About the Nonia Rebellion

- The rebellion occurred between 1778 and 1800 in Bihar, especially in Saran, Vaishali, and Purnia.
- The Nonias, traditional salt and saltpetre makers, revolted against British revenue policies and local zamindari exploitation.
- It was a significant grassroots movement with strong economic and cultural motivations.

About Buddhu Nonia

- Actively participated in the Salt Satyagraha movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Arrested while making salt and martyred after being thrown into a boiling salt cauldron.
- His legacy symbolizes courage, sacrifice, and resistance from marginalised communities.

Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya Temple

Context

Thousands of devotees participated in the annual Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya Temple in Assam.

About the Festival

- Held in June during the monsoon season.
- Dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya, a form of Parvati.
- Associated with the fertility of the earth and feminine energy.
- Ambubachi' means 'water flowing', symbolising Earth's menstruation.

Kamakhya Temple

- Located on Nilachal Hill in Guwahati.
- One of the 51 Shakti Peethas of India.
- Surrounded by shrines of the Ten Mahavidyas.
- Rebuilt in 1565 CE using remains of the 11th-12th-century temple.
- Architectural style is a blend of Nagara and Saracenic, known as the Nilachala Style.

Proposal for Lucknow's UNESCO Gastronomy City Status

Context

A proposal has been submitted to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre to recognize Lucknow as a Creative City of Gastronomy, highlighting its Awadhi cuisine heritage.

About UCCN

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network honours cities that use culture as a driver for sustainable development. Gastronomy is one of seven creative fields.

India's Presence

Jaipur, Srinagar, Varanasi, Chennai, Gwalior, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Kozhikode already feature in the network across various categories.

Implications for Lucknow

Recognition could boost heritage tourism, local culinary innovation, and sustainable urban growth. It would enhance global appreciation for Awadhi food traditions.

Conclusion

The nomination positions Lucknow's culinary legacy on a global platform, reinforcing the link between culture, development, and community pride.

Shipki-La Border Tourism Initiative in Himachal

Context

The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh has launched border-tourism activities at Shipki-La, a high-altitude pass on the India-China border in Kinnaur district.

About Shipki-La

At 3,930 metres, it lies on the ancient Silk Route. Historically, it served as a trading link between India and Tibet until 2020. The Sutlej River enters India through this pass.

Strategic and Cultural Significance

Shipki-La blends Himalayan landscapes with cultural heritage. It is also proposed as a route for the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra, contingent on central approval.

Tourism Potential

Opening tourism here promotes high-altitude adventure, border awareness, and mountain-community livelihoods. It also contributes to regional infrastructure development.

Conclusion

This initiative uses tourism to strengthen border communities, preserve cultural heritage, and support strategic integration of remote areas.

Discovery of 15th Century Lamp in Udupi Temple

Context

An antique ritual lamp was found at Anantapadmanabha Temple in Perduru, Udupi district.

Details of the Lamp

- Dated 1456 AD.
- Donated by Basavannaras Banga.
- Features rare Shaiva and Vaishnava carvings.
- First face: Shiva as Nataraja with Parvati, Ganapati, Bringi, Khadga Ravana.

- Second face: Brahma, Indra, Agni, Anantapadmanabha, Varuna in Samabhanga pose.
- Symbolises religious harmony and cultural artistry.

Ladakh's First Astro Tourism Festival

Context

The first Astro Tourism Festival was held in Leh, Ladakh.

Details

- Organised by the Tourism Department and Indian Institute of Astrophysics.
- Ladakh's clear skies and low light pollution make it ideal for stargazing.
- The festival included talks by scientists and telescope-based sky observations.
- It aims to promote tourism through astronomy.

Madhubani Painting

Context

India's Defence Minister gifted a Madhubani painting to China's Defence Minister during the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting.

About Madhubani Painting

- It is also called Mithila painting.
- It originated in the Mithila region of Bihar.
- Traditionally, it was painted by women using fingers, twigs, matchsticks, and brushes.
- Natural dyes and pigments are used, giving the artwork bright, earthy colours.
- It features two-dimensional images with no empty space left.
- Themes include Hindu gods, nature, weddings, and daily life.
- Earlier done on mud walls, now also on paper, cloth, and canvas.
- In 2007, it became the first product from Bihar to get a GI tag.

INDIAN SOCIETY

The tobacco epidemic is growing in India**Context**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized an event on 31 May 2024 to observe World No Tobacco Day. The event aimed to spread awareness about the growing threat of tobacco consumption in India.

Tobacco Menace in India

- India is the second-largest consumer of tobacco after China. As per 2016–2017 estimates, around 26 crore people in India use tobacco.
- According to a WHO study, tobacco use causes India to lose nearly 1 percent of its GDP every year due to disease and premature death.
- The health of more than 60 lakh workers in the tobacco industry is also at risk, as many suffer exposure-related diseases through skin contact with tobacco leaves.

Consequences of Tobacco Consumption

- **Health burden:** A 2021 study estimated that India lost more than ₹1.7 lakh crore in 2017–18 due to diseases and deaths caused by tobacco consumption.
- **Environmental degradation:** Tobacco is a highly erosive crop. It depletes soil nutrients rapidly, requiring heavy use of fertilizers, which further harms soil quality.
- **Economic burden:** Tobacco-related diseases lead to absenteeism, lower productivity, and early deaths in the workforce. This affects overall economic output. In addition, cleaning up tobacco-related waste costs the government nearly ₹6,367 crore every year.

Government Measures

- **Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):** India is a signatory to the WHO-led FCTC since 2005. It promotes global efforts to reduce demand and supply of tobacco through strategic policies.
- **COTPA, 2003:** The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003, has 33 legal sections. It regulates the advertisement, trade, production, and consumption of tobacco in India.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):** I WAS Launched in 2007. NTCP is designed to strengthen the enforcement of COTPA and FCTC. It also spreads awareness and supports quitting tobacco.
- **Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019:** This law bans the production, sale, distribution, storage, and advertising of e-cigarettes in India.
- **Tobacco taxation:** India follows global practices by imposing taxes on tobacco products. Higher taxes are considered one of the most effective tools to control consumption.

Challenges in Tobacco Control Measures in India

- **Inadequate penalties:** The penalty provisions under COTPA have not been revised since 2003. The fine remains capped at ₹5,000 for a first-time offence.
- **Non-compliance with packaging rules:** Smokeless tobacco products often do not follow the packaging standards prescribed under COTPA.

- **Indirect advertisements:** While direct tobacco ads are banned, there is legal ambiguity around surrogate advertising, allowing indirect promotion through other products like elaichi.
- **Ineffectiveness of NTCP:** A 2018 study found that tobacco use patterns remained unchanged in districts covered under NTCP compared to those not covered.
- **Tax evasion and illegal trade:** Tobacco companies often exploit low-tax regions and engage in smuggling, illicit production, and counterfeit trade to bypass regulations.
- **Affordability of tobacco:** Tobacco taxes have not increased in proportion to rising incomes, making tobacco products cheaper over time and increasing access.
- **Conflicts of interest:** The government continues to hold a 7.8 percent stake in ITC Ltd., India's largest tobacco firm, raising concerns about policy-level conflicts of interest.

Conclusion

The legal and policy framework comprising COTPA, PECA, and NTCP is strong, but enforcement remains weak. There is a need for stricter and more consistent implementation. Tobacco taxes must be raised in alignment with recommendations under FCTC, adjusted for inflation and economic growth. Timely and reliable data on tobacco use trends is essential to monitor consumption patterns and counter the evolving strategies of the tobacco industry.

UNICEF Report on Child Food Poverty

Context

UNICEF released the “Child Food Poverty: Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood” report. It highlights global and Indian challenges in ensuring healthy diets for young children.

What is Child Food Poverty?

It refers to a child's inability to access or consume a nutritious and diverse diet in the first five years of life. This period is critical for physical and mental development.

Key Global Findings

One in four children globally—about 181 million—suffer from severe child food poverty. The crisis is worsened by conflicts, climate change, and economic instability.

India's Situation

India is among 20 countries with the highest number of children in severe food poverty. While the gap between rich and poor households has narrowed, disparities by caste, gender, and region remain. Nearly 19.3% of children under five have experienced “zero-food days”.

Impacts of Malnutrition

It leads to stunting, wasting, cognitive delays, and increased risk of infections. In the long run, it reduces productivity, increases healthcare costs, and results in loss of human capital.

Recommendations

UNICEF calls for transforming food systems, enhancing nutrition services, supporting vulnerable families through social protection, and improving data monitoring.

India's Efforts

India has launched various programmes such as ICDS, Mid-Day Meals, Mission Poshan 2.0, NFSA, PMMVY, and food fortification to address these challenges.

Conclusion

The report stresses that ending child food poverty is essential for a healthy and productive future. Global and national efforts must focus on ensuring every child has access to nutritious food.

ULLAS Programme Declares Literacy Success in Mizoram & Goa

Context

Mizoram and Goa have declared themselves “fully literate” under the ULLAS (Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram) adult literacy initiative, aligning with NEP 2020.

About ULLAS

ULLAS is India's New India Literacy Programme. It targets adults aged 15 and above who missed formal education. It delivers functional literacy and life skills via volunteers, the DIKSHA platform, and the ULLAS app.

Achievements

Mizoram achieved 98.2 percent literacy; Goa reached 99.72 percent. Certifications motivate both learners and volunteers and promote lifelong learning.

Significance

This accomplishment under ULLAS demonstrates the effectiveness of community-driven literacy efforts. It supports social integration, digital inclusion, and economic empowerment for adult learners.

Conclusion

Mizoram and Goa's success provides a model for other states. Continued investment in volunteer networks, digital tools, and learner-friendly content will help India meet its adult literacy goals.

NAVYA Initiative for Adolescent Girls

Context

The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched NAVYA in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development.

About NAVYA

- **Full form:** Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls.

- A pilot project to skill girls aged 16–18 years, who have passed Class 10.
- Targets non-traditional job roles and aims for women empowerment.
- Implemented in 27 districts across 19 states, including Aspirational and North-East districts.
- Linked with PMKVY and PM Vishwakarma schemes.

e-Rakt Kosh and Rare Donor Registry Integration

Context

The Health Ministry is integrating the Rare Donor Registry with the e-Rakt Kosh portal.

About e-Rakt Kosh

- A national platform developed under NHM by C-DAC.
- Provides real-time data on blood banks and availability.
- Supports blood donation camp management and rare blood group tracking.

Rare Blood Groups

- Defined as blood groups occurring in fewer than 1 in 1,000 people.
- Examples: Rhnull, Bombay (Oh), Jr(a-).
- Importance lies in emergency transfusions and transplantation needs.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Removal Motion Against Justice Yashwant Varma

Context

The Union Government is planning to bring an motion against Justice Yashwant Varma of the Allahabad High Court in the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament. This decision comes after serious allegations against the judge and a detailed inquiry by a judicial committee.

Background of the Case

The controversy began when a fire broke out at Justice Varma's residence in Delhi in March 2024. During the inspection, a large amount of unaccounted cash was found in an outhouse. This led to the formation of an in-house inquiry committee by then Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna.

The three-member committee included:

- **Justice Sheel Nagu**, Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court
- **Justice G.S. Sandhawalia**, Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court
- **Justice Anu Sivaraman**, Karnataka High Court

This committee began its investigation on March 25 and submitted its report on May 4. It indicted Justice Varma, even though he denied any wrongdoing. He was later transferred to the Allahabad High Court. Despite being urged to resign, Justice Varma refused, prompting CJI Khanna to write to the President and Prime Minister, seeking his removal.

Government's Initiative

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has started speaking to political parties to build support. He termed the matter as non-political, calling for a joint stance across party lines. Meetings between Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister J.P. Nadda, and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar suggest that the motion may be introduced in the Rajya Sabha first.

According to government sources, the Union Law Minister will move the impeachment motion based on the committee's findings. Under constitutional provisions, if moved in Rajya Sabha, the motion must be supported by at least 50 MPs; in Lok Sabha, 100 MPs are required.

Procedure

Under Article 124(4) and 124(5) of the Constitution, a High Court or Supreme Court judge can only be removed by the President, after both Houses of Parliament pass an address by special majority — i.e., a majority of the total membership and at least two-thirds of members present and voting.

Usually, a new committee is formed when the motion is admitted in Parliament. But in this case, officials say it may not be necessary because a proper inquiry was already conducted under the in-house mechanism.

In Indian constitutional terminology:

- The term "impeachment" is *specifically and exclusively* used for the removal of the President under Article 61 of the Constitution.

- Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are not "impeached" but removed from office under Article 124(4) (for Supreme Court judges) and Article 217 read with Article 124(4) (for High Court judges).
- The removal procedure for judges involves a parliamentary motion, special majority, and Presidential assent — similar to the process for the President — which is why the term "impeachment" is commonly but incorrectly used in public discourse for judges.

Past Instances

India has rarely used removal process against judges. Notable examples include:

- **Justice V. Ramaswami** (1993): The motion failed in Lok Sabha.
- **Justice Soumitra Sen** (2011): Resigned after Rajya Sabha passed the motion.
- **Justice S.K. Gangele** and **Justice J.B. Pardiwala** (2015): Motions did not lead to removal.
- **Justice C.V. Nagarjuna Reddy** (2017): Faced motion in Rajya Sabha.
- **CJI Dipak Misra** (2018): Opposition attempted impeachment.
- **Justice P.D. Dinakaran** (2011): Resigned before the motion was initiated.

Conclusion

The proposed impeachment of Justice Varma is a serious step and follows a detailed judicial inquiry. If successful, it will be one of the few such instances in Indian judicial history. The government aims to handle the process with transparency and bipartisan consensus in the interest of judicial integrity.

DHRUVA Initiative

Context

The Department of Posts has launched a new digital address policy called DHRUVA (Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address) to build a nationwide digital address system.

What is DHRUVA?

DHRUVA is a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) project by the Department of Posts. Its aim is to assign a unique digital address to every household in India.

Main Objectives

- To treat address information as a core public infrastructure.
- To improve governance and public services by enabling accurate and efficient address sharing.

Key Components of DHRUVA

1. Digital Postal Index Number (DIGIPIN)

- It is a 10-character alphanumeric code.
- Each code maps to a 4×4 metre grid using latitude and longitude.
- It ensures each location has a unique and precise identity, avoiding any address confusion.

2. Digital Address Layer

- Built on top of DIGIPIN.
- It is user-friendly and based on user consent.
- Users can add personal labels like "Home", "Office", or "Shop".

- It also allows details like landmarks, floor numbers, and house names while keeping accurate location tagging.

Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

Context

The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS, also called **NaMo Bharat**, has started operations in its first phase. It is a major step forward in semi-high-speed rail connectivity in the NCR.

What is RRTS?

The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is a semi-high-speed rail network developed to improve travel between cities in the National Capital Region (NCR).

- It is managed by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC).
- NCRTC is a joint venture between the Central Government and the State Governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Key Features

- **Passenger Control Mode:** Train doors open only when passengers press a button, ensuring controlled boarding.
- **Speed:**
 - **Average speed:** 80 km/h
 - **Maximum speed:** 160 km/h

Significance

- Helps reduce road traffic by offering a faster rail option.
- Cuts travel time between Meerut and Delhi, benefiting daily commuters.
- Strengthens regional development by improving intercity connections and access.

BharatGen Launched

Context

The Union Minister of State for Science & Technology has launched BharatGen. It is a major step in India's AI development journey.

What is BharatGen?

- BharatGen is India's first government-supported multimodal Large Language Model (LLM).
- It supports 22 Indian languages and integrates text, speech, and images to provide AI solutions.
- It aims to build ethical, inclusive, and culturally relevant AI tools for India.

Development and Support

- It is developed under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems.
- The lead institution is IIT Bombay's TIH Foundation.
- It is backed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and involves top academic and expert partnerships.

Why is BharatGen Important?

- It can transform sectors like healthcare, education, agriculture, and governance.
- For example, it can enable telemedicine services in regional languages, helping doctors connect better with patients in rural areas.

What is a Multimodal Large Language Model (MLLM)?

- MLLMs are advanced AI models that can process different types of data — text, images, speech, or video.
- They combine the power of LLMs (like GPT or LLaMA-3) with multimodal inputs and outputs.
- This makes them ideal for real-world applications where multiple forms of data are involved.

C CARES Version 2.0

Context

The Ministry of Coal has launched C CARES Version 2.0, a digital platform to improve provident fund (PF) and pension disbursement for coal sector workers.

About C CARES Version 2.0

C CARES Version 2.0 is a web-based portal developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC). It connects coal workers, management, and the Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation (CMPFO) on a single digital platform. The portal allows real-time tracking of PF and pension claims, significantly reducing settlement time.

Key Benefits

The portal enhances transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the disbursement process. By enabling real-time claim tracking and quicker settlements, it ensures timely social security benefits for coal workers. The platform aligns with the vision of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' and promotes digital governance under the Digital India initiative.

About CMPFO (Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation)

CMPFO is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Coal. It was established in 1948 to administer PF and pension schemes for coal sector employees. Currently, CMPFO serves approximately 3.3 lakh provident fund subscribers and 6.3 lakh pensioners, playing a crucial role in ensuring financial security for coal workers.

Election Commission's Index Cards

Context

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has modernized the process of post-election data collection through a digital Index Card system.

What Are Index Cards?

These are non-statutory statistical reports that present election data such as candidate performance, vote shares, gender-based voting, and regional trends.

What Changed?

Earlier, this data was manually compiled at the constituency level. Now, it is generated digitally using election software tools, making the process faster and more accurate.

To ensure data transparency, aid researchers and journalists, and enhance accessibility of election-related information to all stakeholders.

S Mahendra Dev as New EAC-PM Chief

Context

- Economist S Mahendra Dev has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), replacing Suman Bery.
- He is known for his expertise in agriculture and rural economy. He has served as director of IGIDR, contributed to Economic and Political Weekly, and holds a PhD from Delhi School of Economics.

What is EAC-PM?

It is an independent body that advises the Prime Minister on economic and policy issues. It conducts analysis, prepares reports, and offers suggestions for economic growth and governance reforms.

Ayush Nivesh Saarthi Portal

Context

The government launched Ayush Nivesh Saarthi, a digital portal aimed at boosting investment in India's traditional medicine sector.

Purpose of the Portal

- The portal provides a one-stop platform for investors. It includes project details, policies, incentives, and real-time support.
- It promotes India as a global hub for AYUSH systems like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Yoga. It also aligns with India's growing wellness economy and medical tourism market.
- The portal helps attract foreign direct investment, supports entrepreneurship, and expands the reach of traditional healthcare systems globally.

ECINET App for Voter Turnout

Context

To address inconsistencies in voter turnout reporting, the Election Commission has launched ECINET, a tech-integrated app. The app replaces manual data sharing with a unified digital system. Polling officers input turnout data every two hours, which is instantly updated at the constituency level.

Why It Was Needed

- Previously, turnout data was shared via calls and SMS, often leading to delays. The app ensures real-time, accurate updates.
- Improves transparency and builds public trust in election data. It complements the official Form 17C record without replacing it.

Lokpal Adopts New Motto: Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption

Context

The Full Bench of India's Lokpal institution has adopted the motto "Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption."

About Lokpal

Established through the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, Lokpal is an anti-corruption ombudsman. It investigates complaints against public officials, including ministers and government officers.

Governance

Lokpal's chairperson is typically a retired Supreme Court judge. Appointment involves a committee including the Prime Minister, Chief Justice, Opposition leader, and an eminent jurist. Members serve a five-year term or until age 70.

Significance of Motto

The new motto signals Lokpal's commitment to strengthening public trust, ensuring transparency, and actively pursuing those who misuse public office.

Conclusion

By putting citizens first, Lokpal reaffirms its role in combating misconduct and deepening democratic accountability across governance structures.

Campaign Launched to Expand Tribal Welfare Delivery

Context

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched an outreach campaign covering over one lakh tribal villages across 500 districts, centered on two flagship schemes.

PM-JANMAN

- Launched in 2023 during Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.
- Aims for the integrated development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- Seeks to ensure housing, clean water, healthcare, education, telecom access, and livelihood support within three years.
- Includes both Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored components.

Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan

- Launched in October 2024 to strengthen the gains of PM-JANMAN.
- Involves 17 ministries and 25 interventions.
- Aims to transform tribal villages into vibrant centers of dignity and opportunity.
- Reflects the vision of inclusive governance reaching every tribal citizen.

Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas is observed on November 15 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda.

Representation of Women in Lok Sabha

Context

In the 2024 elections, 74 women were elected to the Lok Sabha, slightly lower than 78 in 2019.

Status of Women's Representation

The elected women make up 13.63% of the total strength of the Lok Sabha. In 1952, women comprised only 4.41% of the House. Representation peaked in 2019 at 14.36%. Globally, women make up around 26% of lawmakers.

Barriers to Participation

Challenges include low literacy, lack of political will, patriarchal norms, financial constraints, and gender discrimination. Many women face social barriers and security issues during campaigns.

Why Representation Matters

Women bring diverse perspectives to lawmaking, advocate for gender-sensitive policies, and serve as role models for others. Increased representation also promotes equality and inclusive governance.

Efforts to Bridge the Gap

The Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023) proposes reserving one-third of Lok Sabha and State Assembly seats for women. The National Commission for Women and NHRC are actively supporting reforms.

Demand for Bifurcation of States in India

Context

The completion of ten years since the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and the formation of Telangana has reignited discussions around demands for new states in India. The issue draws attention to regional aspirations, governance challenges, and constitutional provisions.

History of State Reorganisation

Before independence, India was a patchwork of princely states and provinces. These boundaries were drawn for administrative ease rather than cultural or linguistic unity. After independence, the demand for linguistic states grew stronger. The formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953, following the death of Potti Sriramulu after a hunger strike, became a turning point.

The States Reorganisation Commission was set up in 1953. Based on its recommendations, several states were reorganized in 1956 along linguistic lines. Later, states like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Nagaland were carved out. In 2000, three new states—Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Chhattisgarh—were formed. The latest reorganisation was the creation of Telangana in 2014 from Andhra Pradesh.

Constitutional Provisions

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution empowers Parliament to create new states, alter boundaries, or rename existing states. Such a bill can only be introduced with the prior recommendation of the President. The President must refer the bill to the legislature of the concerned state. However, the Centre is not bound by the state's opinion. Article 4 allows Parliament to enact such changes without it being considered a constitutional amendment.

Reasons for Bifurcation Demands

Many regions demand statehood due to perceived neglect and lack of representation. These include:

- Linguistic and cultural identity preservation.
- Regional economic imbalances.
- Unequal distribution of resources.
- Weak political representation in the existing state structure.
- Historical grievances and regional pride.

Challenges in Bifurcation

Dividing a state is a complex administrative and political process. It requires reallocation of assets, resources, and government institutions. It can lead to disputes over river water sharing, capital cities, job reservations, and revenue distribution. Emotional and cultural issues can also create friction among people of the original and new states.

Conclusion

While regional aspirations are valid, the Centre must ensure that such reorganisation promotes good governance and national unity. Any reorganisation must be preceded by detailed consultations, legal clarity, and equitable arrangements.

Demands for new states reflect both regional identity and developmental aspirations. India's constitutional flexibility allows such changes, but the process must be guided by national interest, public welfare, and administrative viability.

Supreme Court Mandates Self-Declaration by Advertising Agencies

Context

The Supreme Court of India has directed that all advertising agencies and advertisers must now submit a self-declaration certificate before releasing any advertisement across media platforms.

About the Mandate

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched a facility for this purpose. For TV and radio advertisements, the Broadcast Seva Portal will be used. For print and digital advertisements, the Press Council of India's portal will handle the process.

Purpose of the Certificate

The self-declaration certificate must confirm two things:

- The advertisement is not misleading.
- It complies with all regulatory guidelines.

Obligation on Advertisers

Advertisers must show proof that the certificate was uploaded. They must submit this proof to broadcasters, publishers, printers, or online platforms.

No advertisement can run on any platform without this certificate. This rule applies to all new advertisements from 18th June 2024.

Significance of the Measure

This directive is expected to enhance:

- Transparency in the advertising ecosystem.
- Accountability of brands and agencies.
- Consumer protection by limiting false or exaggerated claims.
- Proper enforcement of advertising laws and ethical norms.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

Several existing laws govern advertising in India:

- Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

- Press Council of India Act, 1978
- Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2006

In addition, a key role is played by:

- Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI): A self-regulatory body set up in 1985.
- ASCI's Code of Advertising Practice is followed for all ads visible or heard in India.

Also relevant is:

- Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA): Under the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- CCPA released guidelines in 2022 to prevent misleading and deceptive advertisements.

Conclusion

This move by the Supreme Court ensures responsible advertising in India. It prioritizes ethical standards, consumer awareness, and fairness in business communication.

Review of the Agnipath Scheme

Context

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has proposed a review of the Agnipath Scheme, raising debates around its effectiveness and future.

About the Agnipath Scheme

- The scheme was launched in 2022.
- It introduced short-term military recruitment under the name "Tour of Duty".
- Recruits are called 'Agniveers'.
- They serve for 4 years, after which only 25% are retained for full-term service of 15 years.
- Eligibility is restricted to those aged between 17.5 and 21 years.

Objectives of the Scheme

- To bring down the average age in the armed forces.
- To make the forces leaner and younger.
- To ensure a tech-savvy military force ready for modern warfare.
- To reduce the burden of pension and salary on the defence budget.

Global Comparisons

Many advanced countries use short-term recruitment models:

- **Israel:** 30 months for men and 20 for women.
- **USA and UK:** Offer contracts ranging from 2 to 8 years.

India's model is designed to be in line with these practices.

Technological Imperative

Modern wars require proficiency in cyber, space-based, and AI-powered warfare. A younger military workforce is expected to adapt faster to new technologies.

Budget Consideration

Defence pensions and salaries consume a large part of the defence budget. The Agnipath scheme aims to release more funds for modernization.

Employment Angle

- Agniveers receive skill training.
- They can transition to civilian jobs after their term.
- This creates a pool of trained, disciplined, and skilled youth in the economy.

Criticism and Concerns

- Short service duration is insufficient for technical roles, especially in the Air Force and Navy.
- Reduced sense of regimental belonging could affect unit morale and loyalty.
- Lack of employment guarantee post-service raises job security concerns.
- Training period of six months is too short for full readiness.

Conclusion

The Agnipath Scheme was introduced with modernisation goals in mind. However, criticism from military experts and political promises to review or repeal it have created uncertainty. The challenge now lies in balancing youthful dynamism with operational efficiency and soldier welfare.

Living Will and Passive Euthanasia

Context

Justice M S Sonak of the Bombay High Court's Goa Bench has become the first individual in Goa to officially register a "living will." This action has brought the concepts of living wills and passive euthanasia into public focus again.

What is a Living Will?

A living will is a legal document that allows a person to outline their wishes regarding medical treatment if they become incapacitated or unable to communicate in the future. It guides doctors and family members about the preferred course of action, especially in end-of-life situations.

Supreme Court's Legalisation

In 2018, the Supreme Court of India recognized the right to die with dignity. It legalized passive euthanasia, provided that the person had made a living will beforehand. The ruling ensured that terminally ill patients could refuse life-prolonging treatments like ventilators or feeding tubes.

What is Passive Euthanasia ?

Passive euthanasia involves the withdrawal of medical treatment with the deliberate intention of allowing a person to die naturally. This differs from active euthanasia, where death is directly induced by means such as a lethal injection. Active euthanasia remains illegal in India.

Implementation Challenges

While the Supreme Court legalized the process, its implementation has been slow. Most states lack the infrastructure or awareness to process living wills effectively. Goa is now leading by example in formalizing this right.

Significance of the Decision

This recognition gives individuals greater control over their own medical decisions. It reduces the emotional and financial burden on families forced to maintain life support without hope of recovery. It also protects patients from unwanted suffering and promotes ethical medical practices.

Conclusion

The formal registration of a living will in Goa is a significant step in upholding personal autonomy and the right to die with dignity. It sets a precedent for other states to follow and highlights the importance of legal and medical awareness in end-of-life care.

Nata Pratha: A Human Rights Concern

Context

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has expressed alarm over the ongoing practice of 'Nata Pratha' in certain parts of India, comparing it to modern-day prostitution.

What is Nata Pratha?

It is a traditional custom followed in some rural areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat. Under this practice, girls are sold by their families in the name of marriage. Such transactions are often done using stamp papers but lack any legal recognition. It leads to exploitation under the guise of socially accepted arrangements.

Social and Legal Implications

- It undermines the rights and dignity of girls and women.
- It has no legal basis or protection under Indian marriage laws.
- It facilitates gender-based violence and perpetuates discrimination.
- It threatens the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of minors.

Role of NHRC

The NHRC has highlighted the urgency of addressing this issue. It urges authorities to intervene and stop this exploitative practice. It also emphasizes the need for legal safeguards and community awareness.

About NHRC

The National Human Rights Commission was established in 1993. It is a statutory body under the Protection of Human Rights Act. Its role includes investigating human rights violations and promoting legal and constitutional protections.

Conclusion

'Nata Pratha' reflects deep-rooted societal challenges that conflict with constitutional values. Urgent reform, community education, and strict enforcement of child protection laws are necessary to abolish such harmful practices.

Supreme Court Ruling on Narco-Analysis Tests

Context

The Supreme Court of India reaffirmed that narco-analysis tests cannot be conducted on accused persons unless there is free and informed consent. The ruling protects fundamental rights under Articles 20(3) and 21.

What is Narco-Analysis?

Narco-tests involve injecting drugs (e.g., sodium pentothal) to sedate suspects and encourage confession as a "truth serum." Such tests have long been contested on legal and ethical grounds.

Judicial Standpoint

The Court held that involuntary narco-analysis violates the right against self-incrimination (Article 20(3)) and the right to life and personal liberty—including privacy (Article 21). It reiterated the 2010 Selvi v. Karnataka ruling, which mandates informed consent.

Significance

The judgment reinforces civil liberties in criminal investigations. It ensures that technology cannot override constitutional protections, and voluntary consent is a mandatory precondition.

Conclusion

The ruling marks a strong defense of individual rights in the face of invasive interrogation techniques. It safeguards human dignity and legal sanctity in criminal justice.

QS World University Rankings 2025

Context

The QS World University Rankings for 2025 have been released. The rankings evaluate higher education institutions globally based on various academic and research parameters.

Performance of Indian Institutions

- Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have continued to dominate national rankings. Seven out of the top ten Indian positions have gone to IITs.
- IIT Bombay saw a notable improvement, moving up from rank 149 in 2024 to 118 in 2025. Delhi University also showed significant progress, jumping from rank 407 to 328 globally.

Top Global Universities

Globally, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) retained its top position for the 13th year. Imperial College London rose to second place, moving ahead from sixth last year. Harvard University and the University of Oxford were jointly ranked third.

Ranking Criteria

QS uses a set of defined indicators to assess institutions. These include:

- Academic reputation
- Employer reputation
- Faculty-student ratio
- International student ratio
- Research impact
- Sustainability measures
- Employment outcomes after graduation

Significance for India

These rankings help Indian institutions benchmark their global standing. The improvements reflect the growing global visibility of Indian research and teaching. They also encourage more collaboration and foreign student intake.

Conclusion

India's improving performance in global education rankings is a positive trend. Continued investment in research, innovation, faculty development, and global partnerships can push Indian universities even higher in future rankings.

Indian Standard Time to Be Mandatory Under New Rules

Context

The government plans to mandate the use of Indian Standard Time across all legal and digital sectors under proposed Legal Metrology (IST) Rules.

Indian Standard Time

- Calculated from the 82°30'E meridian, passing through Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.
- IST is 5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of GMT.

About the Proposed Rules

- The new rules aim to unify timekeeping across sectors through atomic clock labs.
- Secure protocols like Network Time Protocol and Precision Time Protocol will be used.
- Applies to sectors including finance, telecom, electricity, and transport.

Importance

- Ensures synchronization across systems to reduce cybercrime and billing disputes.
- Moves toward the vision of 'One Nation, One Time'.
- Reduces reliance on foreign time references.

PGI 2.0 Report Highlights State-wise Educational Performance

Context

The Ministry of Education has released the Performance Grading Index 2.0 report for the years 2022–23 and 2023–24.

About PGI 2.0

- First introduced in 2017 and revamped in 2021.
- Assesses school education on six domains including learning outcomes, equity, and teacher training.
- Data sources include UDISE+, National Achievement Survey 2021, and PM-POSHAN.

Grading System

- Ten levels from 'Daksh' (top grade) to 'Akanshi-3' (lowest).
- Daksh includes districts scoring over 90 percent.

Key Findings

- Chandigarh scored the highest, followed by Punjab and Delhi.
- States like Kerala, Gujarat, and Odisha also performed well.
- Meghalaya scored the lowest, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Bihar.

UMEED Portal for Waqf Property Digitalisation

Context

The Ministry of Minority Affairs is pushing for full digitisation of Waqf properties through the UMEED portal within six months.

About the UMEED Portal

- UMEED stands for Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development.
- It is a centralised digital platform developed under the Waqf Act, 1995.

Key Features

- Geo-tagging of Waqf properties for location-based mapping.
- Real-time verification and public access to verified records.
- Online grievance redressal mechanism for accountability.
- Digital lease and usage tracking to enhance transparency.
- Integrated with GIS and e-Governance systems for efficient management.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Launching of International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed)

Context

China has launched a new international body called the International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed). The aim is to offer a platform for resolving global disputes through mediation rather than litigation or arbitration.

Launch and Participation

- The organisation was formally launched on May 30, 2025, in Hong Kong. At the time of its launch, 33 countries joined as founding members. Most of them are developing countries from regions where China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has strong influence.
- IOMed promotes peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue. It is based on principles like sovereign equality, non-interference in internal matters, and consensus-driven negotiations. It seeks to avoid confrontational processes associated with Western legal frameworks.

China's Strategic Goals

China is positioning IOMed as an alternative to Western-led institutions such as the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The platform supports China's broader Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative. These initiatives aim to promote multipolar diplomacy and civilizational dialogue.

India's Position

India has not joined IOMed. It remains cautious of China-led global institutions, especially those that may influence the legal and diplomatic balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Assistance to India

Context

The Asian Development Bank has pledged USD 10 billion over five years to support India's urban development and metro infrastructure.

Focus Areas

The funding will be used for expanding metro networks, improving urban mobility, and upgrading water and sanitation systems in tier-2 cities. Delhi, Bengaluru, and Nagpur are expected to benefit significantly from the metro investments.

About ADB

Established in 1966, ADB has 69 member countries, with its headquarters in Manila, Philippines. Japan and the United States hold the largest shares at 15.6% each. India holds 6.3%.

Significance

This funding supports India's goals of building sustainable cities and reducing carbon emissions through efficient public transport systems.

India-Japan Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism

Context

The 6th meeting of the India-Japan Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was recently held in New Delhi. This forum serves as a platform for both countries to enhance cooperation in combating terrorism and related threats in the Asian region.

Areas of Cooperation

Both countries reaffirmed the importance of strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation. Key methods included sharing intelligence, conducting joint training, building capacity, and cooperating through multilateral platforms like the United Nations, FATF, and the QUAD framework.

Challenges in Countering Terrorism

- **Technological Innovation by Terrorists:** Terrorist groups are using new tactics such as drones for smuggling weapons and launching cross-border attacks. This constant evolution creates a moving target for counter-terror agencies.
- **Cross-Border Threats:** Terrorism often spreads across national boundaries. No country can tackle it alone. Multilateral partnerships and intelligence sharing are necessary to prevent global spillovers.
- **Addressing Root Causes:** Social exclusion, poverty, inequality, and political marginalisation often push individuals towards radical ideologies. Only military solutions cannot solve the problem. Long-term strategies must address these underlying causes.
- **Balancing Security and Rights:** Governments face the challenge of ensuring safety without violating civil liberties. Surveillance, censorship, and preventive detention raise serious ethical and legal concerns.
- **Cyberterrorism:** Terrorists increasingly use the internet for spreading propaganda, recruiting youth, and planning attacks. Combating this requires coordinated action by governments, tech companies, and civil society.
- **Financing of Terrorism:** Terrorist groups often use informal money transfer systems like hawala and exploit loopholes in financial systems. Tracking these transactions is difficult and requires global financial intelligence cooperation.
- **Lone Wolf Attacks:** Homegrown terrorists or self-radicalised individuals often act without direct links to known groups. This makes them harder to identify and stop before they act.

Global Counter-Terrorism Measures

- **United Nations Framework:** The UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions to prevent terrorist financing, control the movement of foreign fighters, and tighten border security.
- **Financial Action Task Force (FATF):** FATF sets global standards to combat money laundering and terror financing. Countries are required to implement FATF recommendations to improve financial tracking.
- **Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF):** GCTF helps countries share experiences and build capacity to deal with terrorism effectively. It is a platform for policy exchange and cooperation.
- **Intelligence Sharing**
International collaboration in intelligence gathering and sharing plays a key role in identifying terror threats, tracking suspects, and preventing attacks.

India's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

- **Amendments to UAPA (2019):** India amended the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to allow the government to declare individuals, not just organisations, as terrorists. This widened the legal net.
- **Zero-Tolerance Policy:** India strongly advocates a zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism. It calls for collective global efforts without any justification or double standards.
- **Role of the National Investigation Agency (NIA):** NIA, established after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, is empowered to investigate terror cases across states without the need for special state-level approval.
- **Border Management Systems:** India has introduced a Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) to detect infiltration, illegal trade, and cross-border terror movements more efficiently.
- **India's Global Role:** At the UNSC, India proposed an 8-point action plan in 2021. It focused on stopping terror financing, ending double standards in dealing with terrorism, and reforming global counter-terrorism structures.

Conclusion

Terrorism remains one of the most complex global threats. Countering it requires a blend of strong security systems and inclusive governance. Addressing the socio-political roots of extremism is equally important.

India and Japan's enhanced cooperation reflects a shared understanding that terrorism can only be defeated through coordinated global efforts. Strengthening cybersecurity, intelligence sharing, and policy alignment are essential next steps in the fight against terrorism.

Paraguay-India Relations

Context

Paraguayan President Santiago is on a state visit to India to boost trade and cooperation.

Strategic Ties

Paraguay is part of MERCOSUR. India has a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with the trade bloc. Both countries are exploring increased investment and technology exchange. It is a landlocked country in South America, bordered by Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia. The Tropic of Capricorn runs through it.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Context

A new study found that over half of the people in Togo support leaving ECOWAS to join the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), reflecting a growing regional shift.

What is ECOWAS?

The Economic Community of West African States, or ECOWAS, was founded in 1975 with the signing of the Lagos Treaty. Its aim is to promote regional economic cooperation and integration among West African countries. The organisation is also known by the acronym CEDEAO in French and Portuguese. ECOWAS is based in Abuja, Nigeria.

Initial Members

Originally, ECOWAS had 15 members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Recent Developments

In January 2025, three military-led countries—Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso—officially exited the organisation. Their exit reduced the ECOWAS membership to 12.

Security Role

Beyond trade and economics, ECOWAS has played a role in conflict resolution through peacekeeping missions in the region, establishing itself as a key stabilising force.

Rival Bloc: Alliance of Sahel States (AES)

On 16 September 2023, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger came together to form a new alliance known as the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). This bloc presents itself as an alternative to ECOWAS, especially for countries with military regimes or those seeking more political autonomy.

Shangri-La Dialogue 2025

Context

India's Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, participated in the 22nd edition of the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore.

What is Shangri-La Dialogue?

It is Asia's premier security and defence summit, held annually since 2002. The event is hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) at the Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore.

Participants and Themes

The 2025 session saw the participation of defence ministers, military officials, and strategic experts from 40 countries. The summit focused on regional security challenges, especially in the Indo-Pacific.

India's Role

India's participation emphasized defence diplomacy, regional peace, and strategic partnerships. General Chauhan's engagements reinforced India's commitment to Indo-Pacific security and multilateral cooperation.

ICRISAT Agri Cooperation Centre

Context

ICRISAT, in collaboration with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), has launched the Centre of Excellence for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture (ISSCA) in Hyderabad.

Purpose and Objectives

The Centre aims to promote South-South Cooperation by sharing agricultural innovations and practices among developing nations.

Key Focus Areas

- Promoting low-cost, high-impact agricultural technologies
- Supporting relevant policy models and capacity-building for dryland areas
- Enabling peer learning among Global South countries

Digital Repository

The Centre features an online platform to host validated innovations and serve as a knowledge-sharing hub for agricultural practices.

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Context

The continuing crisis in the Middle East poses risks to the timely development of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

What is IMEC?

IMEC was announced during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. It is an infrastructure project that links India to Europe through the Middle East using rail, road, and shipping networks. India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and members of the European Union are key players in the corridor.

Significance

- The corridor is expected to improve maritime connectivity, reduce logistics costs by up to 30%, and cut transport time by about 40%.
- It also boosts India's influence in global trade and strengthens partnerships with West Asian and European nations.

India Elected to UN ECOSOC

Context

India has been elected to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2026–2028.

What is ECOSOC?

- It was established in 1945. ECOSOC is one of the UN's six principal organs. It is responsible for coordinating the UN's work on economic, social, and environmental policies. It also oversees the implementation of global development goals.
- ECOSOC has 54 member countries elected for overlapping three-year terms. It acts as the central forum for debating sustainable development, guiding policy, and coordinating the activities of UN agencies.

India's Role

India's presence on ECOSOC gives it a stronger voice in shaping global development agendas, particularly on issues like poverty reduction, education, and climate action.

International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)

Context

India has secured the presidency of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) for the 2025–2028 term.

What is IIAS?

IIAS is a global federation of institutions, national sections, and academic research centres working to advance public administration practices across nations.

India's Role

India has been a member since 1998, represented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. Winning the presidency signifies a stronger role for India in shaping administrative reforms on a global platform.

Key Engagements

Though not directly part of the United Nations, IIAS works closely with UN agencies and participates in bodies like the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and the UN Public Administration Network.

UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee

Context

India has expressed concern over Pakistan's appointment to a key UN counter-terrorism committee amidst rising terror threats.

About the Committee

Formed after the 9/11 attacks through UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001), this committee monitors nations' efforts to fight terrorism, including laws to prevent terror financing, safe havens, and incitement.

Expanded Role

Through Resolution 1624 (2005), the committee now also addresses incitement to terrorism and encourages intercultural dialogue.

India's Concern

India objects to Pakistan's role due to its historical links with cross-border terrorism, especially given recent incidents that threaten regional stability.

Joint Task Force on Investment Between India and Qatar

Context

India and Qatar recently held the first meeting of their Joint Task Force on Investment (JTFI). This meeting marks a step forward in strengthening economic ties and exploring new investment opportunities between the two nations.

Background and Economic Relationship

India and Qatar have a strong economic relationship built on mutual interests and development goals. In 2022-23, their bilateral trade reached nearly US\$ 18.77 billion. Of this, India exported goods worth US\$ 1.96 billion to Qatar, while imports from Qatar were about US\$ 16.8 billion. The trade balance continues to remain in Qatar's favour due to India's large import of energy products.

Key Areas of Trade and Energy Partnership

India is one of the top three export destinations for Qatar, alongside China and Japan. It is also one of the top three import sources for Qatar, following China and the United States. Qatar plays a vital role in India's energy security. It is the largest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India, meeting over 48% of India's total LNG needs. Qatar is also the largest supplier of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to India, accounting for 29% of total imports.

Significance of the Joint Task Force

The creation of the JTFI reflects a shared vision of inclusive development. It provides a formal platform to explore investments in key sectors like infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, and services. The initiative aims to promote private sector cooperation, address regulatory barriers, and increase two-way investments.

Conclusion

The Joint Task Force on Investment strengthens the foundation of India-Qatar relations. It paves the way

for deeper collaboration in strategic sectors and mutual economic growth. As both nations look ahead, the partnership is expected to yield long-term benefits for their economies and people.

Second Phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Context

The second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is expected to be announced during the visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to China. This move aims to expand the scope of bilateral infrastructure and investment projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

What is CPEC?

- CPEC is a 3,000-kilometre-long economic corridor that connects China's Xinjiang region to Pakistan's Gwadar Port in Balochistan.
- Launched in 2015, it is a flagship project under the BRI and is valued at over \$60 billion. It includes roads, energy pipelines, railways, and industrial parks.

Strategic and Economic Importance

For China, CPEC provides access to the Arabian Sea, reducing dependence on the South China Sea. It enhances China's trade routes and strengthens its geopolitical influence in South Asia and beyond. For Pakistan, it promises to boost infrastructure, generate jobs, and address energy shortages.

India's Concerns

India strongly opposes CPEC as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), which is considered a disputed territory. India views the project as a violation of its sovereignty. Repeated diplomatic objections have been raised by India at international forums.

Focus of Second Phase

The second phase is expected to shift from infrastructure to industrial cooperation. Emphasis may be laid on the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), agriculture, technology transfer, and tourism. It aims to attract more private investment and deepen China's involvement in Pakistan's economy.

Geopolitical Implications

CPEC deepens China's strategic footprint in South Asia. It also makes Pakistan more economically dependent on China. This has implications for regional stability, especially in the context of India-China and India-Pakistan relations.

Conclusion

The second phase of CPEC signals a further deepening of China-Pakistan ties. While it may benefit Pakistan's economy, it continues to be a major point of contention with India due to territorial violations and strategic imbalance.

11th BRICS Parliamentary Forum Held in Brasilia

Context

The 11th BRICS Parliamentary Forum took place in Brasilia, with broad agreement on AI ethics, global trade, security, and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Key Outcomes

Member nations agreed to promote responsible AI use, counter terrorism financing, share intelligence, and strengthen judicial cooperation. India was chosen to host the 12th Forum and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla received the chairmanship.

BRICS Overview

BRICS includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It has expanded to include six new members. The group meets annually to discuss political, economic, and cultural issues.

Conclusion

The forum deepened legislative collaboration within BRICS on technology, security, and economic policy. India's upcoming leadership role positions New Delhi at the centre of parliamentary diplomacy.

Vietnam Becomes a BRICS Partner Country

Context

Vietnam has officially joined BRICS as a partner country, becoming the tenth nation under this category.

About BRICS Partnership Framework

- The partner category was established at the 2024 BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia.
- Other BRICS partner countries include Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

About BRICS

- BRICS originally included Brazil, Russia, India, and China. South Africa joined in 2010.
- New full members include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.
- The grouping began with leader-level meetings in 2006 and formalized in the same year at the UNGA.

- BRICS functions under three main pillars: political-security, economic-financial, and cultural-people-to-people.

BRICS Institutions

- The New Development Bank funds public and private projects through various instruments including loans and equity.
- BRICS members hold annual summits and work collaboratively on global governance reform and development issues.

Hodeidah Port: Israel's First Naval Strike on Yemen

Context

Israel has carried out its first naval attack on Yemen's Hodeidah Port, targeting two main piers. This marks an escalation in regional maritime conflict.

Importance of Hodeidah Port

Situated on Yemen's Red Sea coast, Hodeidah is the country's largest cargo port and crucial for food, fuel, and humanitarian aid imports. It has historic significance, previously shelled during the Italo-Ottoman War (1911-12).

Implications

The strike further complicates supply chains for Yemen's aid-dependent population. It also increases maritime insecurity in the Red Sea and may draw international legal and diplomatic scrutiny.

Conclusion

The naval attack underscores how geopolitical tensions affect humanitarian lifelines. Securing the port and ensuring aid corridors remain critical to Yemen's stability.

Poson Poya Festival in Sri Lanka

Context

Sri Lanka celebrates Poson Poya, a sacred full-moon day commemorating Buddhism's arrival over 2,000 years ago via Arahata Mahinda's mission.

Historical Significance

The first Buddhist sermon by Mahinda to King Devanampiyatissa took place in Mihintale. The full-moon festival is marked by pilgrimages, meditation, and compassion-driven rituals in Anuradhapura and Mihintale.

Cultural and Ethical Message

Poson Poya celebrates non-violence (ahimsa) and inner peace. It reminds devotees of compassion, respect for life, and spiritual harmony. Observances include alms-giving, temple ceremonies, and lighting Buddha lamps.

Conclusion

Poson Poya is a celebration of faith, culture, and ethical living. It offers a timeless reminder of peace, tolerance, and universal values.

IALA Council Meets

Context

India, as Vice President of IALA, participated in the second session of the International Association for Marine Aids to Navigation Council in Nice, France.

About IALA

Founded in 1957, IALA sets global technical standards and recommendations for marine navigation aids and lighthouse authorities. It transitioned from NGO to IGO status in August 2024.

India's Role

As Vice President, India engages in policy formulation, safety guidelines, and standards for navigation systems. The discussion focused on maritime safety, ecological protection, and international cooperation.

Conclusion

India's leadership role in IALA underscores its strategic maritime priorities. It promotes safer shipping, marine conservation, and technological harmonisation at sea.

India Gets First Interpol Silver Notice

Context

India has achieved a milestone in international policing cooperation. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) secured the country's first-ever Silver Notice from Interpol.

What Is the Case About?

The notice is linked to the investigation of a visa scam at the French Embassy in New Delhi. The fraud involved illegal earnings routed to multiple countries.

What Is a Silver Notice?

Silver Notices are issued to trace proceeds of crime, especially assets parked abroad. This will help India track and recover the money involved in transnational frauds.

About Interpol

- **Established as the ICPC in 1923**; renamed INTERPOL in 1956.

- **Headquarters:** Lyon, France.
- **Membership:** 196 countries, including India as a founding member.
- **India's National Central Bureau:** The CBI.

BHARATPOL Initiative

CBI has launched BHARATPOL, a secure digital platform to coordinate with INTERPOL. It enables real-time sharing of criminal intelligence among Indian agencies and international partners.

India Abstains on Gaza Ceasefire Vote

Context

The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza. India abstained.

It was proposed by Spain. It passed with one hundred forty-nine votes in favour. The resolution called for humanitarian access, release of hostages, and a halt to military actions.

Key Provisions

It referenced UN Security Council Resolution 2735. It condemned starvation as a weapon, urged return of displaced persons, and called for an end to arbitrary detentions. It also asked the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on Israeli obligations.

India's Position

India has abstained from four such resolutions in three years. This is a departure from its earlier support in December 2024. India recognised Palestine in 1988 and supports a two-state solution ensuring security for both Palestine and Israel.

Strait of Hormuz

Context

Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz amid ongoing regional tensions, triggering global concern over energy security.

About the Strait

- The Strait connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- It lies between Iran and Oman and is a key transit route for global energy shipments.
- Major ports nearby include Bandar Abbas in Iran, Fujairah in the UAE, Sohar in Oman, and Ras Laffan in Qatar.

Significance

- About 20 percent of the world's oil passes through this strait.
- Nearly 83 percent of the oil transported is destined for Asia.

- It is the primary export route for energy-rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and the UAE.
- India's oil and LNG imports from West Asia heavily depend on this maritime passage.
- Any disruption would directly affect India's energy security and global energy prices.

Taiwan Strait Faces Rising Military Activity

Context

Taiwan detected 50 Chinese aircraft near its airspace following a UK naval vessel's transit through the Taiwan Strait.

About Taiwan Strait

- Separates mainland China (Fujian Province) from the island of Taiwan.
- Connects the East China Sea with the South China Sea.
- At its narrowest, the strait is about 180 kilometers wide.
- It is a critical shipping route and a major flashpoint in East Asia.

Geopolitical Concerns

China claims sovereignty over Taiwan and opposes foreign military activity in the strait.

Cook Islands in News Over China Ties

Context

New Zealand suspended aid to the Cook Islands due to concerns over its growing relationship with China.

About the Cook Islands

- A self-governing island country in free association with New Zealand.
- Citizens hold New Zealand citizenship.
- Comprises 15 islands formed by volcanic activity, spread across the South Pacific.
- Located northeast of New Zealand between American Samoa and French Polynesia.
- Administrative capital: Avarua on Rarotonga Island.

US Conducted Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Sites

Context

The United States conducted direct airstrikes on three Iranian nuclear sites—Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan—under Operation Midnight Hammer.

Details of the Strike

It is the first direct U.S. intervention against Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

The operation was coordinated with Israeli forces amid rising regional tensions.

Targeted Sites

- **Natanz:** Iran's main uranium enrichment facility.
- **Fordow:** Underground site, built under a mountain, used for secret enrichment.
- **Isfahan:** Key site in Iran's nuclear fuel production chain.

Other Sites Not Targeted

1. **Bushehr:** Commercial nuclear plant built by Russia.
2. **Arak:** Heavy water reactor reconfigured under JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)).
3. **Tehran Research Reactor:** Retrofitted for peaceful use.

About JCPOA

- The 2015 Iran nuclear deal aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear capacity in return for sanction relief.
- The U.S. withdrew from the deal in 2018.
- Iran's enrichment was capped at 3.67% with limits on uranium stockpiling and centrifuges.
- The IAEA had access for monitoring, but all provisions were disrupted post-withdrawal.

Iran Approved Closure of Strait of Hormuz

Context

Following the U.S. airstrikes, Iran's Parliament has approved a plan to block the Strait of Hormuz.

About the Strait of Hormuz

- It links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.
- It lies between Iran and Oman.
- It is the only sea route from the Persian Gulf to international waters.
- Over one-fifth of the world's oil and a major share of LNG passes through this choke point.

Implications of Closure

- Could severely impact oil supply and raise global energy costs.
- Saudi Arabia and UAE have partial overland pipeline alternatives.
- India imports 90% of its crude oil, with two million barrels per day crossing the strait.
- Disruption would affect India's inflation, fiscal space, and rupee stability.

Qatar's Involvement in Iran-US Conflict

Context

Iran attacked the al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar in response to U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear sites. Qatar condemned the strike and warned of retaliation.

About Qatar

- Capital: Doha.
- Located on the west coast of the Persian Gulf.
- Shares land border with Saudi Arabia and maritime borders with Bahrain and UAE.
- Its economy is based on petroleum and natural gas exports.
- Islam is the official religion, and Sharia is the base of legislation.
- Arabic is the official language; English is widely used.

India Slams OIC for Anti-India Remarks

Context

India rejected comments made at the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting as baseless and politically motivated.

India's Stand

- Criticised OIC for ignoring terrorism emanating from Pakistan.
- Accused OIC of disregarding global consensus on anti-terrorism.

About OIC

- Founded in 1969.
- Headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Has 57 Muslim-majority member states.
- Official languages: Arabic, English, French.
- India is not a member.



ECONOMY

Serious water storage crisis as major reservoirs**Context**

India is facing a serious water storage crisis as major reservoirs hold only 23% of their total storage capacity. This situation is unfolding amidst an intense heatwave and below-normal rainfall in various parts of the country.

Current Situation

- According to the Central Water Commission (CWC), data from 150 major reservoirs reveals alarming depletion. At least eight reservoirs across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttarakhand had zero storage. Four others, in AP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, had less than 10% storage.
- The southern region—comprising Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu—has been the most affected. Reservoirs in the northern, eastern, and central regions are also in distress, holding only 30%, 28%, and 29.1% of their respective capacities. Storage in the Ganga basin stood at just 31.99%.

Causes of Decline

The primary reason for the decline is last year's below-average monsoon rainfall. Reduced rain led to limited water accumulation and greater dependence on reservoir water for post-monsoon needs. The El Niño phenomenon also contributed by disrupting regular rainfall patterns, leading to extended dry spells and even droughts in parts of Asia.

Impact on People and Agriculture

Water scarcity affects irrigation, drinking water supply, domestic needs, transportation, and hydropower generation. The shortfall threatens summer crop yields and poses serious socio-economic risks, particularly in rural areas reliant on agriculture.

Government Initiatives

Water resource development is largely state-led, but the central government offers financial and technical support. Initiatives include:

- Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater (2020)
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain *campaign*

These aim to promote sustainable water management and recharge groundwater reserves.

Way Forward

With forecasts of an above-normal monsoon, farmers remain cautiously optimistic. However, long-term solutions must focus on creating adequate water storage and ensuring efficient, region-specific management strategies.

MSC Irina at Vizhinjam Seaport

Context

- MSC Irina, the world's largest container vessel, docked for the first time at Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala.
- The Vizhinjam International Seaport is India's first dedicated transshipment port, developed under a Public-Private Partnership by the Kerala government.

Key Features

- Designed for container and multipurpose cargo
- Has a natural depth of 24 meters, allowing large ships without dredging
- Located near Colombo Port in Sri Lanka, which handles 70% of India-bound cargo

Strategic Significance

Vizhinjam aims to reduce India's reliance on foreign transshipment hubs like Colombo and boost India's role in global shipping logistics.

India's Stainless Steel Industry

Context

At the Global Stainless Steel Expo 2025, experts called for a national policy to boost India's stainless steel industry. Stainless steel is corrosion-resistant, strong, and used in construction, cookware, medical equipment, and more.

Current Status

India consumed around 4.8 million tonnes of stainless steel in FY 2024-25, marking an 8% rise from the previous year. Consumption has grown by 84% in five years.

Challenges

- Despite being the world's third-largest producer, India imports nearly 30% of its requirement. Domestic capacity is 7.85 million tonnes but only 60% is used.
- A focused policy can enhance production, cut imports, promote innovation, and boost exports.

Chenab and Anji Rail Bridges

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chenab and Anji rail bridges, marking major infrastructure milestones in Jammu and Kashmir.

Chenab Rail Bridge

This bridge is the world's highest railway arch bridge, standing 359 meters above the Chenab River. It spans 1,315 meters and is made of steel. It is designed to withstand strong winds and earthquakes. It significantly reduces travel time between Katra and Srinagar.

Anji Rail Bridge

Located in Reasi district, this is India's first cable-stayed railway bridge. It spans 473 meters over the Anji River, a tributary of the Chenab. It is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project and is vital for trade, connectivity, and defence logistics in the Kashmir region.

Indian Toy Industry and new export opportunities

Context

A delegation from the Toy Association of India visited the UAE to promote Indian-made toys and explore new export opportunities.

Growth and Potential

India's toy exports increased by 60% from \$203 million in 2018-19 to \$325 million in 2022-23. Imports dropped by 57% during the same period. The industry is expected to reach \$3 billion by 2028.

Advantages

India has access to affordable raw materials like polyester and plastics. It also benefits from low labour costs. 100% FDI is allowed in the toy sector.

Challenges

Indian toy brands have low global visibility. The industry is fragmented, with many small players facing difficulties in scaling up. Competing with global brands and meeting strict regulatory standards are ongoing issues.

Government Support

The government has increased import duties, launched toy clusters, and implemented a quality control order to enforce BIS standards. States offer incentives for manufacturers.

Conclusion

India's free trade agreements with the UAE and Middle East provide opportunities for duty-free exports. A stronger industry body and coordinated promotion can enhance global competitiveness.

Reforms in Clearing Corporations in India

Context

SEBI has formed a new committee, led by former RBI Deputy Governor Usha Thorat, to review the structure and ownership of clearing corporations.

Need for Reform

Clearing corporations are key players in stock market operations. They settle transactions and manage risks. However, their current ownership is dominated by stock exchanges, raising concerns about neutrality and financial independence.

Key Focus Areas

The committee will explore new ownership models and broader investor eligibility. The aim is to align with international practices where clearing corporations have diversified and independent governance.

Current Regulations

The framework is governed by the Securities Contracts (Regulation) (Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations) Regulations, 2018. It ensures independence and risk management, which SEBI now seeks to strengthen further.

Conclusion

This review marks an important shift towards making India's securities market infrastructure more robust, neutral, and globally aligned.

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2022-23)

Context

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the 2022-23 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES), offering insight into spending patterns across India.

Key Findings – Food Expenditure

Rural households spent nearly 46 percent of food expenditure on consumables. Haryana families spent highest share on milk and milk products (41.7 percent), while Kerala households topped spending on egg, meat, and fish (23.5 percent).

Urban food expenditure share was around 39 percent; Rajasthan spent 33.2 percent on milk products, closely followed by Haryana.

Key Findings – Non-Food Spending

Non-food spending now exceeds 50 percent of total household expenditure. The largest share went to conveyance, followed by durable goods, entertainment, healthcare, fuel, and miscellaneous services.

Implications

These patterns reflect rising transport costs, growing access to consumer durables, and changing lifestyle preferences. They also indicate shifts in rural-urban living standards and cost structures.

Conclusion

The HCES highlights evolving consumption behaviours. Understanding these trends aids policymakers in designing targeted welfare and infrastructure programmes.

CROPIC: India's New AI-Based Crop Survey

Context

The Ministry of Agriculture is launching CROPIC, a technology-driven initiative to collect real-time crop data.

What Is CROPIC?

CROPIC stands for Collection of Real-Time Observations and Photos of Crops. It will use field photos and AI to monitor crop health and losses.

Key Features

- Farmers upload geo-tagged images using a mobile app.
- App determines crop type, stage, and damage level.
- Dashboard allows real-time monitoring by officials.

Implementation Plan

The program will cover Kharif 2025 and Rabi 2025-26. It will support better claim assessments under PM Fasal Bima Yojana.

NIIF Governing Council's Sixth Meeting

Context

The Union Finance Minister chaired the sixth meeting of the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIF) Governing Council in New Delhi.

About NIIF

Established in 2015, NIIF channels long-term capital from sovereign and institutional investors into infrastructure and strategic sectors. The Government of India owns 49 percent; the rest comes from co-investors.

Role of the Governing Council

The Council steers investment strategy, fund performance, and partnerships. It meets periodically to assess capital mobilisation, project pipelines, and sectoral alignment.

Significance

NIIF mobilises large funds for infrastructure, supports economic growth, and aligns with government priorities. It exemplifies how sovereign-linked platforms can attract global capital for development.

Conclusion

The sixth NIIF meeting underscores India's commitment to infrastructure expansion through innovative financing models and structured governance.

Ejiao Demand Drives Up Donkey Prices in Pakistan

Context

Demand for donkey skins in China—used to produce ejiao (donkey gelatin)—has surged, causing local prices in Pakistan to spike sharply.

What is Ejiao?

Ejiao is made by concentrating and stewing donkey skin. In traditional Chinese medicine, it is credited with immune-boosting and anti-anemia properties.

Market Dynamics

China's demand has led to an export-driven donkey skin trade. In Pakistan, local donkey populations have declined as prices rise, affecting rural livelihoods dependent on these animals.

Implications

The trend raises animal welfare concerns and food-security issues in rural Pakistan. It also highlights the global impact of traditional medicine markets on vulnerable species and communities.

Conclusion

The ejiao-driven donkey skin trade illustrates how cross-border demand can create unintended ecological and social disruptions. Sustainable regulation and alternative livelihoods are needed.

FSDC Meeting Strengthens Financial Oversight

Context

The Finance Minister presided over the 29th meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).

About FSDC

Established in December 2010, the FSDC is a non-statutory apex body that coordinates financial regulators. It includes heads of RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA, among others.

Mandate and Priorities

The council oversees financial stability, inter-regulatory coordination, sector development, and oversight of large financial entities. It also promotes financial literacy and inclusion.

Conclusion

The 29th meeting reaffirms India's multi-regulator coordination framework. It ensures that stability and supervision remain central as the financial ecosystem evolves.

Hortoki–Sairang Railway Line Approved

Context

The Commission of Railway Safety has approved the final leg of the Bairabi–Sairang railway project in Mizoram. This marks the completion of the country's first rail link to its state capital of Aizawl.

Project Features

The 33.86-km segment includes 32 tunnels and 35 major bridges through hilly terrain. It connects Bairabi railhead to Sairang, approximately 20 km from Aizawl.

Strategic Aim

The project furthers Act-East Policy objectives, enhancing connectivity, economic integration, and accessibility in India's northeast. It also improves freight and passenger mobility.

Conclusion

Approval of Hortoki–Sairang is a milestone in northeast rail connectivity. It will spur regional development and integration while overcoming challenging geography.

RBI Conducts Second Bond Buyback of FY26

Context

The Reserve Bank of India conducted a buyback of government bonds, marking the second such move this fiscal year.

What Is a Bond Buyback?

It is a process where the RBI repurchases government securities before maturity. This is done to inject durable liquidity into the economy.

Why It Matters

Buybacks help the government manage its debt portfolio and control liquidity without altering interest rates.

Rubber Board Appointments Cleared to Fill Vacancies

Context

The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has approved long-pending appointments in the Rubber Board to strengthen its functioning.

About the Rubber Board

- Established under the Rubber Act of 1947.
- Operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Headquartered in Kottayam, Kerala.
- Comprises 28 members representing different stakeholders of the rubber sector.

Functions

- Promotes development through research, training, and extension services.
- Supports marketing initiatives and labor welfare schemes.
- Maintains rubber-related statistics and market intelligence.

Tea Exports Under Strain Amid West Asian Unrest

Context

India's growing tea exports are under pressure due to rising tensions between Israel and Iran, especially in the West Asian market.

Current Export Scenario

Tea exports rose by nearly ten percent in 2024. India now ranks second in global tea exports. Black tea forms ninety-six percent of total exports.

Key Markets

Major buyers include Iraq, UAE, Russia, and the UK. Iraq alone accounts for twenty percent of Indian tea exports.

Growing Regions and Varieties

India's famous tea regions include Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri. Tea needs 20–30°C temperatures, 150–300 cm rainfall, and loamy soils.

About Tea Board of India

Formed in 1954, the Board regulates the tea industry. It has thirty-two members and operates from Kolkata.

Oil Palm Farming Grows Rapidly in Telangana

Context

Farmers in Telangana are increasingly turning to oil palm cultivation due to its high returns and versatility.

About the Crop

Oil palm yields palm oil from the fruit and kernel oil from the seed. Both oils are used in cooking, cosmetics, and even biofuels.

Climate and Soil Requirements

The crop thrives in humid climates with 2500–4000 mm annual rainfall. It prefers well-drained, deep loamy soil with organic content.

India's Role

India introduced oil palm in 1886. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Kerala are major cultivators today. The crop is seen as a key driver of rural income and edible oil self-reliance.

Totapuri Mango Dispute Highlights Interstate Tensions

Context

Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are locked in a dispute over the movement of Totapuri mangoes. Totapuri is known for its parrot-like tip and high pulp yield. Grown widely in South India, it is key to the pulp industry.

Nature of the Conflict

Andhra Pradesh's ban on mango inflow from Karnataka has hurt farmers. Karnataka growers depend on AP's pulp factories, especially in border areas.

Legal and Federal Concerns

Article 301 ensures free trade within India. Article 304 allows restrictions only under specific legal and procedural conditions. AP's unilateral action challenges this constitutional guarantee.

Push for Fisheries Growth Under PM Matsya Yojana

Context

The Centre has urged stakeholders to enhance implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana during the 2025 inland fisheries meet.

About the Scheme

Launched in 2020, it runs until 2025. It focuses on productivity, infrastructure, value chains, and welfare of fishers.

Structure of the Scheme

It includes both Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored components. Activities are divided into beneficiary and non-beneficiary categories.

Significance

It aims to modernize fisheries, boost exports, ensure traceability, and build resilience across the value chain.

Cash Plus Model Boosts Early Breastfeeding in Rajasthan

Context

Rajasthan has recorded a 49 percent increase in early breastfeeding, attributed to its innovative Cash Plus Model. This is the first model in India to combine Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) with Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC).

About the Cash Plus Model

- It complements the existing Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), which supports women during their first pregnancy.
- The Cash Plus model extends support to second-time mothers, addressing a significant policy gap.
- The strategy integrates cash transfers with behaviour change initiatives like home visits, nutrition education, and digital campaigns.
- Initially launched in 2020 across five tribal districts, the scheme expanded statewide in 2022.
- The model is backed by an annual budget of ₹210 crore, targeting nearly 3.5 lakh second-time pregnant women each year.

Flipkart Secures NBFC License from RBI

Context

Flipkart has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), marking a significant milestone for e-commerce in India.

About NBFCs

- NBFCs provide financial services like loans and credit but cannot accept demand deposits.
- They operate under the RBI Act, 1934.
- NBFCs are not part of the payments system and cannot issue cheques.

Significance for Flipkart

- It becomes the first major Indian e-commerce company to hold an NBFC license.
- The move allows Flipkart to offer EMI-based purchases and personal loans directly to customers.
- This reduces dependence on third-party lenders, streamlining its digital finance ecosystem.

India's Trade Deficit Narrows in May 2025

Context

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry reported a 30 percent drop in India's trade deficit in May 2025, reducing it to 6.6 billion dollars.

Key Trade Figures

- Total exports grew 2.8 percent to 71.1 billion dollars.
- Services exports rose 9.4 percent, reaching 32.4 billion dollars.
- Merchandise exports declined 2.2 percent due to reduced oil prices.
- Non-petroleum exports showed a 5.1 percent increase.
- Imports fell 1.7 percent overall, but non-petroleum imports rose 10 percent.
- Services imports registered a modest 1.5 percent growth.

Understanding Trade Deficit

- A trade deficit occurs when a country imports more than it exports.
- It can apply separately to goods, services, or both combined.

CCI Purchases 100 Lakh Bales of Cotton Under MSP

Context

The Cotton Corporation of India has bought nearly 100 lakh bales of cotton under the MSP scheme in the current season.

About MSP

- The Minimum Support Price is the government's guaranteed rate for procuring crops.
- It is set by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs based on CACP recommendations.
- Factors considered include input cost, market trends, and consumer impact.

Cotton in India

- India accounts for 24 percent of global cotton output.
- Grows all four species including American, Egyptian, and Asian cotton.
- Major producing zones include Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh.
- India is the second-largest cotton producer and consumer globally.
- Cotton imports rose 133 percent in May 2025 due to cheaper international prices.

About CCI

- A public sector company under the Ministry of Textiles, established in 1970.
- Engages in MSP operations and commercial procurement to support farmers and the textile sector.

NICDC Accelerates Industrial Nodes in Andhra Pradesh

Context

The Commerce Minister reviewed progress of industrial nodes being developed by NICDC across Andhra Pradesh under various corridor schemes.

About NICDC

- A central agency developing next-generation smart industrial cities.
- Focuses on manufacturing growth, job creation, and urban innovation.
- Provides multimodal connectivity and modern infrastructure.

Key Corridors

- Delhi–Mumbai
- Amritsar–Kolkata
- Chennai–Bengaluru
- East Coast Economic
- Bengaluru–Mumbai

Andhra Pradesh's Unique Status

- The only Indian state to host industrial nodes under three separate corridors, enhancing its manufacturing and export potential.

Turmeric Farming Emerges as Wild-Animal Deterrent

Context

Farmers in Munnar, Kerala, are adopting turmeric cultivation to protect fields from wild animal attacks.

About Turmeric

- Belongs to the ginger family and is a perennial herb.
- Known as the Golden Spice due to its value and versatility.
- Used in medicine, cosmetics, cuisine, and dyes.

Production Highlights

- India contributes over 70 percent of global turmeric output.
- Key states include Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Karnataka.
- It thrives in tropical climates with 20 to 35 degrees Celsius and high humidity.

National Turmeric Board

- Set up in 2025 to promote cultivation, exports, and research.
- Headquartered in Nizamabad, Telangana.
- Supports farmers, logistics, branding, and global trade expansion.

FASTag Annual Pass Introduced for Hassle-Free Travel

Context

The Ministry of Road Transport has introduced an annual FASTag-based pass to simplify toll payments.

About the Pass

- Priced at ₹3,000 and valid from August 15 for one year or 200 trips.
- One toll plaza crossing counts as one trip.
- Reduces congestion and speeds up highway travel.

About FASTag

- An electronic toll system managed by NPCI and NHAI.
- Uses RFID technology to deduct toll automatically.
- Enhances efficiency and transparency in toll collection.

IFFCO's First Overseas Nano Fertiliser Plant in Brazil

Context

IFFCO is setting up a nano fertiliser plant in Brazil with a 4.5 million litre annual capacity.

About Nano Fertilisers

- Contain nutrients in nano-size for efficient absorption.
- Part of precision agriculture and promote sustainable farming.
- IFFCO launched Nano Urea in India in 2021.
- Aims to reduce conventional urea usage and improve productivity.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV)**Context**

Construction has begun on the first Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessel (NGOPV) for the Indian Coast Guard, marking a significant step in strengthening India's maritime security infrastructure. The NGOPVs are being developed to address the emerging challenges of maritime surveillance and coastal defense. These vessels will play a crucial role in patrolling, search and rescue, anti-smuggling, and maritime law enforcement operations.

Key features of the NGOPVs include:

- Advanced machinery and equipment tailored for multi-role operations in India's maritime zones.
- Powered by two diesel engines, the vessels can achieve a maximum continuous speed of 23 knots.
- They have an impressive endurance range of 5,000 nautical miles, enhancing their long-distance operational capabilities.
- The ships will be equipped with integral twin-engine helicopter facilities, including staging areas for heavy helicopters, to enhance aerial reconnaissance and rapid response.

Development Timeline and Contract

The contract for six NGOPVs was signed by the Ministry of Defence with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in December 2023 at a total cost of ₹1,614.89 crore. The first vessel is expected to be delivered by May 2027, with subsequent vessels to follow.

Conclusion

The induction of NGOPVs represents a strategic investment in India's coastal defense and maritime dominance. These modern patrol vessels will enhance the Indian Coast Guard's ability to protect national interests, secure the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and respond swiftly to maritime threats.

Fibre-Optic Drones in Warfare**Context**

Russia has deployed fibre-optic guided First-Person-View (FPV) drones in Ukraine since spring 2024.

- Unlike traditional drones, these use ultra-thin glass cables for navigation instead of radio waves. This makes them immune to jamming or interception.
- They provide more secure communication, extended battery life, and accurate control. These drones are especially useful in dense urban or forest environments.

Nanozyme Innovation by IISc

Context

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have created a metal-based nanozyme to prevent abnormal blood clotting in diseases such as pulmonary thromboembolism and COVID-19-related thrombosis.

Understanding Blood Clotting

Clotting, or haemostasis, is the body's natural response to injury. Platelets and proteins work together to form clots. However, in diseases like COVID-19, excess reactive oxygen species (ROS) can overactivate platelets, leading to dangerous clots.

What are Nanozymes?

Nanozymes are synthetic materials that mimic natural enzymes. IISc developed redox-active vanadium pentoxide (V_2O_5) nanozymes that regulate ROS and help control platelet activation.

Impact

This innovation could help manage blood-clot-related complications more effectively, especially in cases of viral infections or cardiac issues.

Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD)

Context

A government-appointed expert committee has recommended dropping the mandatory requirement for installing FGD units in all coal-based thermal power plants.

What is FGD?

Flue Gas Desulphurisation is a technology used to remove sulphur dioxide (SO_2) from the emissions of coal-fired power plants. The process involves passing flue gases through a limestone slurry, which converts SO_2 into gypsum.

Policy History

FGD installation was made mandatory by a 2015 notification from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), with phased deadlines extended till 2029.

Reasons for Review

- SO_2 levels in ambient air in India are already low ($10-20 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
- Indian coal has low sulphur content
- Tall stacks and climate conditions naturally disperse SO_2
- FGD units are costly and water-intensive

Current Recommendation

Based on these findings, the committee suggests that FGD mandates should be relaxed, particularly for regions where SO_2 levels are not a concern.

SHUKR Gene in Plants

Context

A recent study published in *Nature Plants* has revealed the role of a gene called SHUKR in the reproductive process of flowering plants.

What is the SHUKR Gene?

The SHUKR gene plays a key role in pollen development in the plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*. It is active in the flower's sporophyte cells and is essential for producing viable pollen grains.

Scientific Findings

When the SHUKR gene is absent or non-functional, the plant fails to generate mature and fertile pollen. The gene influences a set of other genes known as F-box genes. These genes regulate the removal of proteins that have already performed their functions, making room for the production of new proteins necessary for pollen development.

Importance

Understanding the SHUKR gene helps in decoding plant reproduction, which could benefit crop breeding and agricultural productivity.

SHOX Gene and Height Differences

What is the SHOX Gene?

The SHOX gene is located in the pseudoautosomal region of both X and Y chromosomes. It plays a key role in bone growth, especially in the arms and legs.

Research Findings

A new study has linked the gene to the average five-inch height gap between men and women. Men have both an active X and Y chromosome copy, while one X chromosome in women is mostly inactive. This gives men a slightly higher SHOX gene dosage.

Conclusion

The difference in gene dosage accounts for about 25% of the average height gap. The rest is largely due to hormonal and environmental factors.

Coking Coal and Critical Minerals from Mongolia

Context

India is actively looking to diversify its sources of essential raw materials by engaging with Mongolia for the supply of coking coal and critical minerals like copper and rare earth elements.

- This move is part of a broader strategy to reduce dependence on a few countries, especially in light of growing concerns over supply chain disruptions.
- Joint working groups have been formed with the Mongolian side, but transportation remains a key challenge. India is reluctant to route mineral evacuation through China and is therefore exploring alternative corridors via Russia.
- Critical minerals are vital for technologies like electric vehicles, solar panels, semiconductors, and even defense equipment. India has identified 30 such minerals as essential for its economic and strategic interests.
- At the same time, India is part of global partnerships like the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) to secure stable supply chains. This effort also aligns with India's clean energy goals and its net-zero emission target for 2070.

Biopharmaceutical Alliance

Context

The Biopharmaceutical Alliance was launched at the Bio International Convention 2024 in San Diego, United States. It brings together countries to ensure stable and secure drug supply chains.

Purpose and Background

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed critical gaps in global pharmaceutical supply chains. India, South Korea, the US, Japan, and the European Union initiated this alliance to jointly address such shortages.

Key Objectives

The alliance aims to coordinate bio policies, harmonize regulations, and support R&D. It also focuses on mapping and diversifying pharmaceutical raw material sources to reduce dependency on a few nations.

India's Role

India's National Biopharma Mission is central to this effort. It aims to build competitive drug development capabilities and improve national health outcomes. This mission supports affordable and advanced product innovation.

Conclusion

The Biopharmaceutical Alliance represents a proactive step towards global healthcare resilience. For India, it opens doors to collaborations and better preparedness against future disruptions in medicine supplies.

Nanoparticles from Water Droplets

Context

Researchers at IIT Madras have discovered a method to create nanoparticles from common minerals using only water microdroplets.

What Are Nanoparticles?

Nanoparticles are ultra-small particles, typically between 1–100 nanometers. Their properties differ significantly from larger particles, making them useful in medicine, materials, and energy sectors.

Application Areas

These particles are used for drug delivery, gene therapy, disease detection, and purification in biomedical research. They are also crucial in producing fluorescent markers and targeting disease-causing organisms.

Breakthrough Technique

This research shows that even simple, natural processes like water droplets can produce nanoparticles. It opens new possibilities for low-cost, eco-friendly production of advanced materials.

Conclusion

This discovery not only highlights India's scientific innovation but also contributes to global progress in green nanotechnology.

First Human Death from H5N2 Bird Flu Confirmed

Context

The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed the first known human death caused by the H5N2 strain of bird flu in Mexico. This marks a significant development in global health surveillance.

What is Avian Influenza?

- Avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, is a viral infection that primarily affects birds but can sometimes spread to humans.
- It belongs to the influenza A virus group and includes subtypes such as H5N1, H7N9, and the newly reported H5N2.

Details of the Case

- The victim was a 59-year-old man from Mexico. He developed symptoms such as fever, nausea, and shortness of breath before succumbing to the disease.
- Though the source of infection is still under investigation, this is the first reported case of human fatality from the H5N2 subtype.

Zoonotic Nature and Risk

Bird flu is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can transfer from animals to humans. It usually spreads through direct contact with infected birds, their droppings, or contaminated environments. Human-to-human transmission remains rare but is a major public health concern if mutations occur.

Symptoms in Humans

Infections in humans can result in mild respiratory illness or severe complications such as pneumonia, acute respiratory distress, multi-organ failure, and death. Early symptoms include fever, sore throat, cough, and muscle pain.

Prevention Measures

- Avoid direct contact with live or dead birds.
- Cook poultry products thoroughly.
- Follow hygiene and sanitation protocols in poultry markets.
- Strengthen surveillance systems to detect outbreaks early.

Conclusion

The H5N2-related death is a reminder of the need for continuous global vigilance against zoonotic diseases. Health authorities worldwide must increase monitoring, improve public awareness, and ensure rapid containment to prevent a potential health crisis.

Army Tested Rudrastra: India's VTOL Strike Drone

Context

India's defence capabilities received a boost as the Army tested the indigenous Rudrastra drone successfully.

About Rudrastra

It is a hybrid vertical takeoff drone built by Solar Aerospace and Defence Ltd. It can fly long distances after taking off like a helicopter.

Features and Range

It can hit targets over fifty kilometres away. With a total range of one hundred seventy kilometres, it is ideal for deep strikes.

Strategic Importance

The drone offers precision strike capability without risking soldier lives. It adds depth to India's border surveillance and counter-insurgency toolkit.

NASA-ISRO SAR Satellite Arrives for Launch

Context

The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar mission has arrived at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre ahead of its scheduled July launch.

What is SAR

- A radar-based system that emits energy pulses and measures their return after hitting Earth's surface.

- Unlike optical systems, SAR works in all weather and light conditions.

Applications

- Mapping forests, glaciers, landslides, and oil spills.
- Monitoring coastal changes and natural disasters.
- Assessing biomass, groundwater, and ecosystem changes.

About NISAR

- A joint mission between NASA and ISRO in Low Earth Orbit.
- Will scan the entire globe every 12 days.
- Equipped with dual-frequency L and S band radars using Sweep SAR technique.

INS Arnala to Boost India's Shallow Water Defence

Context

The Indian Navy is set to commission INS Arnala, its first Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft.

About INS Arnala

- First in a class of 16 such vessels.
- Designed by GRSE and L&T with over 80 percent indigenous components.
- Named after the historic Arnala Fort off Maharashtra's coast.

Specifications and Capabilities

- Length: 77.6 meters, displacement: 1,490 tonnes.
- Powered by diesel engine-waterjet propulsion.
- Role: Submarine tracking, low-intensity operations, search-rescue missions.
- Also has mine-laying capability and advanced surveillance systems.

Symposium on Monoclonal Antibody Therapeutics

Context

THSTI hosted a national symposium on the "Discovery and Development of Monoclonal Antibody (mAb) Therapeutics" to strengthen India's biopharma innovation ecosystem.

About mAbs

Monoclonal antibodies are lab-engineered proteins that precisely target disease markers. They are identical replicas from a single B-cell and play key roles in therapy and diagnostics.

Applications and Impact

mAbs are used in treating infections like COVID-19, preventing transplant rejection, and in disease detection assays. The symposium fostered collaborations in clinical development, manufacturing, and regulatory pathways.

Conclusion

The event reinforces India's strategy to build advanced bio-therapeutic capabilities. It bolsters translational research and sets the stage for India's emergence as a global mAb hub.

KATRIN Experiment Sharpens Neutrino Mass Limits

Context

The Karlsruhe Tritium Neutrino Experiment (KATRIN) has published new limits on neutrino mass based on data from 2019–2021 runs, involving over 36 million electron events.

Key Finding

KATRIN determined that the combined mass of all three known neutrino types does not exceed 8.8×10^{-7} times the mass of an electron.

Scientific Impact

Neutrinos were previously believed massless. Measuring their mass helps refine the Standard Model and explore physics beyond it. KATRIN's data-driven results avoid model-dependent assumptions, boosting confidence in the findings.

Conclusion

These precise mass limits represent a major milestone in particle physics. They bring us closer to understanding neutrino properties and their cosmic role.

India-Norway Cooperation

Context

Norwegian Ambassador to India has projected exponential growth in bilateral ties over the next 10 years. The statement reinforces long-standing cooperation and outlines future areas of collaboration.

Framework of Relationship

India and Norway share close political and institutional ties. They collaborate strongly in the Blue Economy, encompassing maritime and marine sectors. Recently, a comprehensive trade agreement with the entire EFTA bloc was signed, eliminating tariffs on almost all Norwegian exports to India.

Trade Dynamics

In 2022, total merchandise trade between India and EFTA countries reached over USD 6.1 billion. India mainly imported organic chemicals from Norway, while exporting machinery and pharmaceuticals in return.

Forward Outlook

The partnership aims to deepen in maritime technology, sustainable fisheries, renewable energy, and marine research. Joint projects in climate mitigation, Arctic-India partnerships, and skill development are also expected.

Conclusion

The next decade is likely to witness further expansion of India-Norway ties, driven by complimentary strengths in technology, sustainability, and a shared vision for stable growth.

SPArc Therapy Successfully Used in Rare Cancer Treatment

Context

A hospital in the United States has successfully applied Step-and-Shoot Spot-Scanning Proton Arc Therapy (SPArc) for the treatment of a rare cancer called Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma.

About the Disease

- It is a slow-growing but invasive cancer often affecting salivary glands and other soft tissue areas.
- Known for spreading to nerves, the disease is difficult to manage and often recurs.

About the SPArc Therapy

- The therapy uses advanced proton beams to deliver precise radiation while sparing vital organs.
- It adjusts dose layers dynamically with the help of machine learning, even compensating for body changes like weight loss.
- It has shown better protection of the brainstem, optical nerves, and spinal cord compared to traditional SFO-IMPT therapy.

Significance

SPArc is promising for treating tumours in anatomically complex areas. However, the high cost and technical precision required limit its widespread adoption.

TRISHNA Mission: Indo-French Thermal Imaging Satellite

Context

ISRO and CNES (France) have revealed details of TRISHNA, the Thermal Infrared Imaging Satellite for Natural Resource Assessment mission. It aims to monitor Earth's surface temperature, energy flows, and water stress.

Mission Goals: TRISHNA will measure surface temperature and emissivity with high resolution and frequent revisit times. It will track evapotranspiration, water dynamics in coastal and inland waters, and assess crop and urban heat stress.

Applications

The mission will support drought monitoring, urban heat island mapping, glacier and snowmelt observations, volcanic anomaly detection, and climate change assessments involving aerosols and moisture.

Strategic Importance

It addresses critical water and food security challenges across India and supports climate adaptation. It will also benefit global scientific communities with open data on energy-water dynamics.

Conclusion

TRISHNA is a vital step for ISRO in earth observation, deepening India-France space partnership and strengthening ecosystem management through precision temperature and moisture mapping.

Amoeba Diagnostic Kits by Kerala's Public Health Lab

Context

Kerala's State Public Health Laboratory has developed molecular assays to detect five species of free-living amoebae known to cause life-threatening amoebic meningoencephalitis.

About Free-Living Amoebae (FLA)

FLA are microscopic protozoa found in water and soil. Some species can infect the brain when contaminated water enters nasal passages. The resulting condition, amoebic meningoencephalitis, is often fatal without early detection.

Diagnostic Advances

The new kits use molecular methods to quickly and accurately detect five dangerous amoeba species. This improves diagnostic turnaround and helps guide timely treatment.

Importance for Public Health

Early detection is crucial. The availability of these kits strengthens Kerala's ability to diagnose and manage rare but deadly infections. It also boosts state and national surveillance capacity.

Conclusion

Kerala's innovation in FLA diagnostics sets a benchmark in public health laboratories. It enhances preparedness for rare but severe infections and paves the way for broader adoption.

Heeng Tissue-Culture Unit by CSIR-IHBT

Context

CSIR's Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology has set up a tissue-culture facility to mass-propagate heeng (asafoetida), a spice revered in Indian kitchens and Ayurveda.

About Heeng

Heeng thrives in cold, arid regions of Iran and Afghanistan. It prefers sandy soil and minimal moisture. The plant matures over about five years, with its oleo-gum resin forming 40–64 percent of its dry weight.

Indian Cultivation Breakthrough

India began domestic cultivation in Lahaul Valley in 2020. In May 2025, the first flowering and seed-setting occurred in Palampur. The tissue-culture unit now enables large-scale planting, aiming to reduce imports and boost local farming.

Benefits

Cultivation lowers dependence on foreign supplies, promotes Himalayan livelihoods, and preserves a spice with deep cultural and medicinal roots.

Conclusion

The CSIR-IHBT initiative brings India closer to self-reliance in heeng production. It also exemplifies science-driven solutions for agro-biodiversity conservation.

India Recognized as Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility

Context

The ICAR-NIHSAD in Bhopal has been designated as a Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility (RHF) for one year by WOA and FAO.

About Rinderpest

- A highly contagious viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals.
- It caused up to 90 percent mortality and was eradicated in 2011.

Significance of RHF Status

- India joins five other nations with RHF designation: USA, UK, France, Japan, and Ethiopia.
- RHF safely store virus samples and prevent potential re-emergence.
- This recognition boosts India's status in global veterinary biosafety.

About WOA

- An intergovernmental body founded in 1924.
- Coordinates global efforts on animal disease control and biosecurity.

Israel Deploys Barak Magen System to Intercept UAVs

Context

The Israeli Navy has used the Barak Magen defence system to intercept eight Iranian drones, showcasing a new layer of naval air defence.

About Barak Magen

- Naval variant of the Barak MX family, developed by Israel Aerospace Industries.
- Uses vertical launchers and interceptors across multiple ranges: MRAD, LRAD, and ER.
- Integrated with advanced radar systems.

Strategic Importance

- Complements land-based systems like Iron Dome and Arrow.
- Protects against UAVs, cruise missiles, and ballistic threats.
- Enhances maritime defence as threats evolve in complexity.

INS Nilgiri Joined Eastern Fleet

Context

INS Nilgiri, India's first Project 17A stealth frigate, joined the Eastern Naval Command's Sunrise Fleet at Visakhapatnam.

About INS Nilgiri

- Built by MDL Mumbai and GRSE Kolkata.
- Part of Project 17A, a follow-on to the Shivalik class.
- Equipped with improved stealth, advanced sensors, and weapon systems.
- Designed for anti-submarine, anti-surface, and anti-air warfare.
- Capable of operating in blue-water missions and countering both conventional and asymmetric threats.

Other Ships in Project 17A

Includes Himgiri, Taragiri, Udaygiri, Dunagiri, Vindhyagiri — all in different construction stages.

INS Tamal: India's Last Imported Warship

Context

INS Tamal, a new stealth frigate, is set to be commissioned in Kaliningrad, Russia.

About INS Tamal

- Second ship of the Tushil class, evolved from Talwar and Teg classes.
- Final warship to be built abroad before full indigenisation.
- Features 26% indigenous components, including BrahMos missile systems.
- Enhanced stealth and greater operational stability.
- Part of a total of 10 ships across four similar classes with advanced weaponry and tracking.

GBU-57 MOP: The US's Deepest Bunker-Buster Weapon

Context

The U.S. used the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator in airstrikes on Iran's Fordow nuclear facility.

About GBU-57 MOP

- Developed by Boeing.
- Largest non-nuclear bomb in U.S. inventory.
- Designed for targeting deep underground nuclear bunkers.
- Weighs about 30,000 pounds, including 5,300 pounds of explosives.
- Can penetrate over 200 feet of reinforced concrete before detonation.
- Made with high-performance steel to withstand extreme impact.

Strategic Significance

- Fordow lies under 300 feet of mountain.
- No other country has a non-nuclear bomb with similar penetration capability.

AI RAM Initiative: India-Specific AI Policy Framework

Context

UNESCO, IndiaAI Mission, and Ikigai Law held the final stakeholder consultation on AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM). It is designed to support ethical and responsible AI adoption in India.

About the Initiative

The AI RAM outlines how to evaluate strengths, risks, and policies in AI across sectors. It serves as a diagnostic tool for governments, helping build regulatory and institutional capacities.

Alignment with IndiaAI

This links directly to IndiaAI Mission, which has secured over ₹10,000 crore. The initiative prioritizes "Safe and Trusted AI" through ethical frameworks, self-assessment tools, and capacity building for stakeholders.

Conclusion

The AI RAM initiative charts a path towards intelligent, accountable AI governance. It reinforces India's commitment to leadership in ethics-based AI innovation.

Gwada Negative: World's Rarest Blood Type

Context

France identified a new blood group named EMM-negative, nicknamed Gwada Negative.

Details

- Only one person in the world (from Guadeloupe) has this blood group.
- It lacks the EMM antigen, considered a high-incidence antigen.
- Officially classified as ISBT042 by the International Society of Blood Transfusion.
- Becomes the 48th recognised blood group system.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC)

Context

Lt. Gen. Dinesh Singh Rana has assumed charge as the 18th Commander-in-Chief of the ANC.

About ANC

Set up in 2001, the ANC is India's first and only integrated theatre command. It combines assets from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

Strategic Importance

Located in Port Blair, the command plays a key role in securing the Indian Ocean Region. It supports maritime surveillance, coastal security, and humanitarian missions in Southeast Asia.

Kuki-Zo Groups Agree to Close Camps Near Meitei Areas

Context

An agreement was reached between Kuki-Zo groups and the Ministry of Home Affairs to shut down seven camps located near Meitei areas in Manipur.

About Kuki-Zo Communities

- A tribal group spread across Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam, and also found in Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- Linguistically part of the Tibeto-Burman family.
- Traditionally engaged in jhum cultivation and known for clan-based social systems.
- Practice Christianity and preserve cultural institutions like Sawm and Lawm.

Background of the Conflict

- In May 2023, violence erupted between Kuki-Zo and Meitei groups.
- Earlier demand: Creation of Kuki Territorial Council.
- Post-violence demand: Separate Union Territory with its own Assembly.

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Finance to support developing countries**Context**

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), developed countries mobilised over 115.9 billion USD in climate finance to support developing countries in 2022. This exceeded the earlier annual target of 100 billion USD.

Definition and Components

- Climate finance refers to financial support aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change impacts. It includes grants, concessional loans, green bonds, and resources mobilised through carbon trading and taxes.
- Adaptation focuses on minimising the adverse impacts of climate change. Mitigation aims to reduce the intensity of future climate-related risks by lowering emissions.

Importance of Climate Finance

- Developing countries face serious financial constraints in meeting their climate targets. These nations are often burdened with debt and multiple development challenges. Climate finance enables them to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and long-term strategies.
- Large-scale investments are necessary to transition to low-carbon economies and build resilience. Without adequate financial support, climate action in many developing regions remains slow and insufficient.

Global Developments and Targets

- The UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement have stressed the need for developed countries to financially assist the developing world. The Green Climate Fund, created in 2010, serves as a key delivery mechanism. The current target of mobilising 100 billion USD annually was extended to 2025.
- A new post-2025 goal, called the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), is being negotiated. This goal seeks to meet the rising needs of developing nations, estimated at 1 to 2.4 trillion USD annually.

India's Position

India has proposed that developed countries should provide 1 trillion USD annually for ten years. India suggests clear annual targets and alignment with NDC cycles. Climate finance remains a cornerstone of effective global climate action. It must be predictable, adequate, and equitable to address the needs of vulnerable nations.

King Cobra Conservation Plan Proposed in Madhya Pradesh

Context

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has proposed reintroducing king cobras and conducting a snake census to control snakebite-related deaths.

About King Cobras

- World's longest venomous snake, reaching up to 15 feet.
- Found across South and Southeast Asia.
- In India, seen in Western Ghats, Northeast, Andaman and Nicobar, and Odisha.
- Absent from central Indian dry forests, including Madhya Pradesh.

Unique Traits

- The only snake known to build nests for its eggs.
- Breeds poorly in captivity, posing conservation challenges.

Scientific Findings

Recent studies suggest four distinct king cobra lineages, including a Western Ghats endemic lineage and a widespread mainland Asian lineage.

Study on the Carrying Capacity of the Western Ghats

Context

Karnataka's Minister of Forest, Ecology, and Environment has initiated a study on the carrying capacity of the Western Ghats. This move follows landslips and environmental stress in regions like Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu during the recent pre-monsoon rains.

What is Carrying Capacity?

Carrying capacity refers to the maximum population size or level of activity that a region can sustain over time without environmental degradation. When this capacity is exceeded, ecosystems face irreversible damage due to deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, and habitat loss.

Significance of the Western Ghats

- The Western Ghats are older than the Himalayas and play a crucial geomorphic, ecological, and climatic role.
- They strongly influence monsoon patterns and act as a climate regulator for peninsular India.
- They are classified as one of the world's eight 'hottest hotspots' of biodiversity.
- The mountain range stretches through Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

- Formed as block mountains, they slope towards the Arabian Sea and are home to exceptionally high endemism.
- Over 325 globally threatened species of flora and fauna exist here, making it a vital ecological zone.

Conservation Efforts

The Kasturirangan Committee was established to recommend sustainable strategies for conserving the Western Ghats.

- It proposed that 37% of the Western Ghats area be designated as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) to restrict unsustainable development.
- The focus was on balancing development with conservation, ensuring local livelihoods while protecting biodiversity.

Conclusion

The current move to assess carrying capacity is timely and crucial. It will help guide sustainable development, prevent further ecological damage, and reinforce long-term conservation of one of India's most sensitive and significant natural heritage regions.

Birch Glacier

Context

A large portion of the Birch Glacier recently broke off and crashed into a valley, partially damaging the village of Blatten.

- It is a mountain glacier located in the Lötschental Valley of Valais, in northern Switzerland.
- The glacier lies close to the alpine village of Blatten, a region known for its beautiful glacial scenery.

Impact of Iron Aerosol on Ocean

Context

New research has shown that iron aerosols, mainly from industrial pollution in East Asia, significantly impact marine ecosystems.

Key Findings

- In spring, strong westerly winds carry iron particles across the North Pacific Ocean.
- Around 39% of the iron in surface waters during this time comes from human activity.
- The extra iron promotes phytoplankton blooms, especially north of the Transition Zone Chlorophyll Front (TZCF) — the boundary between nutrient-rich and poor waters.

Environmental Effects

- These blooms increase nitrate usage, quickly leading to nitrogen shortages.
- This causes faster nutrient depletion and widens nutrient-poor zones, harming marine life.

- Climate change worsens this by reducing vertical mixing of nutrients due to ocean warming and stratification.

What are Planktons?

- **Plankton** are tiny drifting organisms found in oceans and freshwater.
 - **Phytoplankton:** Microscopic plants that make oxygen through photosynthesis and support the aquatic food chain.
 - **Zooplankton:** Tiny animals or larvae that eat phytoplankton.

What is a Plankton Bloom?

- A plankton bloom is a rapid increase in plankton populations, often triggered by nutrient influx, and can drastically affect aquatic ecosystems.

Two New Ramsar Sites in Rajasthan

Context

On World Environment Day 2025, two wetlands in Rajasthan—Menar and Khichan—were added to the list of Ramsar Sites, bringing India's total to 91.

What are Wetlands?

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, either permanently or seasonally. They include marshes, ponds, and lakes, and support a wide range of biodiversity.

About Ramsar Convention

Signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, it promotes conservation of wetlands. India became a member in 1982.

New Additions

- Menar Wetland, Udaipur: Comprises three ponds and agricultural fields that flood during monsoons. Hosts species like vultures and flying foxes.
- Khichan Wetland, Jodhpur: Part of the Thar Desert ecosystem, it attracts over 22,000 demoiselle cranes each winter.

Nagi and Nakti Wetlands Recognised as Ramsar Sites

Context

The Nagi and Nakti Bird Sanctuaries in Bihar have been declared wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. This recognition highlights their ecological value and global relevance.

About the Wetlands

These wetlands are located in the Jamui district of Bihar. They were originally created for irrigation through dam construction. Over time, they transformed into biodiversity-rich habitats. The Nagi Bird Sanctuary was formed after the damming of the Nagi River, and the Nakti Wetland followed a similar path.

Ecological Importance

These are important wintering habitats for migratory birds. Each winter, over 20,000 birds gather here. Species like the red-crested pochard and bar-headed geese flock in large numbers. The wetlands support more than 75 bird species, 33 types of fish, and 12 aquatic plants. Endangered species like the Indian elephant and vulnerable native catfish also find refuge here.

Ramsar Convention Overview

The Ramsar Convention, signed in 1971, is an international treaty for conserving wetlands. It encourages wise use and protection of wetland ecosystems. India is now joint third in the number of Ramsar sites, with 82 recognized wetlands, matching China and only behind the UK and Mexico.

Conclusion

Recognition of Nagi and Nakti as Ramsar sites enhances their protection. It also strengthens India's commitment to conserving biodiversity and wetland ecosystems. This step supports sustainable development and ecological resilience in the region.

Exposomics

Context

Exposomics is emerging as a key area in health research to understand how lifelong environmental exposures affect human health.

What is Exposomics?

It is the study of all environmental exposures (air, food, chemicals, radiation) that a person experiences from conception to death, and how these exposures influence disease. Exposomics uses sensors, biomonitoring, and AI-based data analysis to track and interpret health risks.

Why It Matters for India

India bears 25% of the global burden of environmental diseases. Conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and kidney issues are linked to pollutants.

Impact

It complements genomics and can shape future public health policies by focusing on prevention and lifestyle factors.

Aravalli Green Wall Project

Context

The government launched the Aravalli Green Wall Project to fight land degradation and desertification.

Project Details

- The initiative aims to create a 5-kilometre-wide green belt along the 700-kilometre-long Aravalli Range, covering states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi.

- The project focuses on afforestation, water harvesting, and planting native species. It also involves local communities in greening efforts.

Environmental Significance

It supports India's international environmental commitments and helps restore degraded ecosystems while protecting biodiversity in the Aravalli range.

EnviStats India 2025

Context

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released EnviStats India 2025, a detailed report on the country's environmental statistics.

What is EnviStats?

It is an annual publication launched in 2018, prepared by the National Statistics Office using the UN's Framework for Environment Statistics.

Key Highlights

- Average annual temperature increased from 25.05°C in 2001 to 25.74°C in 2024
- Inland fish production rose from 61.36 lakh tonnes (2013-14) to 139.07 lakh tonnes (2023-24)
- Environment Sustainability sector had the highest expenditure in 2021-22
- India hosts over 20,000 marine species

Purpose

The report helps policymakers and researchers assess environmental progress and guides decisions on sustainability and resource use.

Discovery of Wasp Species 'Losgna Occidentalis'

Context

A new species of parasitic wasp, *Losgna occidentalis*, has been discovered near Chandigarh. It highlights India's rich and understudied insect biodiversity.

About the Genus

Losgna belongs to the ichneumonid family of parasitic wasps. These wasps lay eggs inside other arthropods, making them natural biological pest controllers. The genus had not been recorded in India since 1965.

Ecological Role

These wasps help manage crop pests naturally, reducing the need for pesticides. Their discovery underscores the ecological importance of conserving insect diversity.

Conclusion

The identification of *Losgna occidentalis* sheds light on India's unexplored entomological heritage. It also strengthens the case for ongoing biodiversity surveys and ecosystem protection.

Heat Dome Effect and India's Vulnerability

Context

Recent studies reveal that 76 percent of India's population faces high to very high risk from extreme heat due to the Heat Dome effect, where high-pressure systems trap hot air over regions.

What Happens in a Heat Dome?

Stagnant air becomes increasingly hot. The effect can last for days or weeks, triggering severe heatwaves, health crises, and strain on utilities.

Causes of Heat Domes

Climate change intensifies high-pressure systems. Jet stream disruptions allow these domes to linger. Urbanisation amplifies temperature through concrete and reduced vegetation.

Government Response

India has adopted a National Action Plan on Climate Change, Heat Action Plans in cities like Ahmedabad, and early warning systems via IMD. These combine meteorological alerts with public outreach and infrastructure resilience.

Conclusion

Addressing heat dome risks requires climate action, urban planning, health preparedness, and community awareness. It remains a pressing challenge for Indian cities and citizens.

Climate-Resilient Farm Ponds in Rajasthan

Context

In Kukas village, Amber block (Rajasthan), climate-resilient farm ponds have been built to capture 10 crore litres of monsoon run-off. This ensures water security for agriculture.

Design and Construction

These ponds are plastic-lined and about 10 feet deep. They occupy 5 percent of each farmer's land and are surrounded by fences. They capture runoff and recharge groundwater.

Significance

The initiative aligns with Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Atal Bhujal Yojana, and the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture. It supports SDG 6 (Clean Water) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) and aids the government's goal of doubling farmers' incomes.

Conclusion

Farm ponds offer a micro-level climate-resilient solution. They bolster irrigation, reduce crop risk, sustain livelihoods, and strengthen local water cycles.

Project Cheetah

Context

The National Tiger Conservation Authority and scientists defended Project Cheetah against criticism, calling objections ideologically biased. The project reintroduced cheetahs to India after their local extinction.

Background

Project Cheetah launched on 17 September 2022. Eight Namibian cheetahs and twelve from South Africa were released in Kuno National Park. The project is the first intercontinental large-carnivore reintroduction globally.

Key Developments

Several cheetahs have adapted well, showing natural hunting and territorial behaviour. Cubs have been born in India after 75 years—three on 3 January 2024 and more thereafter. One six-month-old cub from January remains healthy.

Community Role

Over 350 “Cheetah Mitras” (local volunteers) help raise awareness and prevent conflict. The project provides local jobs and links conservation to community well-being.

Conclusion

Project Cheetah represents a landmark in wildlife restoration. It showcases science-led translocation efforts and highlights the need for community engagement and habitat readiness.

Eco-Sensitive Zone Conflict at Gangotri

Context

A municipal waste incinerator at Gangotri, inside the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone (BESZ), has sparked criticism from environmental activists due to potential ecological harm.

Understanding ESZs

Eco-Sensitive Zones are areas around protected parks and sanctuaries, designated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. They regulate activities to preserve fragile ecosystems. ESZs usually extend up to 10 km; in some cases, beyond.

Conflict

The waste incinerator falls within a notified BESZ, where commercial incineration is considered a prohibited, high-risk activity. Ecologists argue it threatens water quality, wildlife, and legal norms.

Legal Reference

In June 2022, the Supreme Court mandated at least 1 km ESZ buffer around all protected forests. The Gangotri incident highlights tensions between development needs and environmental safeguards.

Conclusion

This case highlights the need for strict adherence to ESZ norms. It calls for sustainable waste management aligned with ecological values and community participation.

Emperor Penguins at Risk from Melting Ice

Context

Accelerated sea ice melting in Antarctica is threatening the natural habitat of Emperor Penguins, the largest of all penguin species.

About Emperor Penguins

- Found in about 54 colonies across Antarctica.
- Known for surviving temperatures as low as -50°C .
- Adapted to extreme polar conditions.

Threats from Climate Change

Loss of stable sea ice reduces breeding grounds. Early ice melt and warming oceans are affecting their reproductive success.

IUCN Status

Classified as Near Threatened due to climate-related impacts on their ecosystem.

Do You Know?

Penguins are flightless aquatic birds. *World Penguin Day* is observed on April 25 each year.

New Jumping Spider Species

Context

A new species of jumping spider, *Spartaeus karigiri*, has been discovered in southern India.

About Jumping Spiders

- Belong to the Salticidae family, with over 5,000 known species.
- Noted for their large eyes, sharp vision, and active daytime hunting.
- Do not spin webs for prey but use silk for anchoring and shelter.

Details of the New Discovery

- Found in rocky crevices in Karnataka's Karigiri region and parts of Tamil Nadu.
- First time the genera *Spartaeus* and *Sonoita* have been recorded in India.
- Previously found only in Southeast Asia and Africa.

Scientific Significance

- Raises India's known Spartaeinae count to 15 species across 10 genera.
- Also clarified a taxonomic confusion by identifying *Marpissa gangasagarensis* as *Phaeacius fimbriatus*.

AviList Brings Global Unity to Bird Taxonomy

Context

AviList, the world's first unified bird species checklist, has been launched. It brings consistency to global avian data.

About AviList

Developed by the Working Group on Avian Checklists, it is backed by the International Ornithologists' Union. It replaces previous lists like IOC and Clements.

What Makes It Unique

It uses genetic data, calls, morphology, and ecology. It is downloadable and open to all users. It helps scientists, birders, and policymakers track species status accurately.

Why It Matters

It aids in tracking endangered birds and planning conservation. It also strengthens international cooperation and improves data accuracy in treaties and research.

India Marks 50 Years of Crocodile Conservation

Context

The Crocodile Conservation Programme, launched in 1975, completes 50 years of scientific habitat and species protection in India.

Origins of the Programme

- Initiated with FAO support in Odisha after a 1974 survey showed dwindling crocodile numbers.
- Three species were targeted: saltwater crocodiles in Bhitarkanika, gharials in Satkosia, and muggars in Similipal.

India's Crocodile Species

- Gharial
- Saltwater crocodile
- Mugger crocodile

Conservation Achievements

- Over 2,500 saltwater crocodiles now in the wild, mostly in Odisha.
- Mugger population stands at 8,000 to 10,000.
- India holds 80 percent of the global wild gharial population.

Gharial Species Conservation Programme Launched

Context

The Environment Minister launched the Gharial Conservation Programme by releasing hatchlings into the Gerua River in Katarniaghat Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh.

About Gharials

- Gharials are critically endangered crocodilians with long, narrow snouts.
- Males have a bulbous growth on their nose called 'ghara'.
- They feed only on fish and are not a threat to humans.

Habitat and Distribution

It is found in river systems like Chambal, Ken, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, and Ghaghara. It requires deep, clean, fast-flowing rivers with sandy banks.

Conservation Efforts

- Listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Included in Project Crocodile (1975) supported by UNDP and FAO.
- Protected in areas like Chambal Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary.

Sariska Tiger Reserve's Boundary Rationalisation Proposal

Context

The government may revise the critical tiger habitat boundary of Sariska Tiger Reserve, potentially reopening closed mines.

About Sariska Tiger Reserve

- Located in Alwar district, Rajasthan.
- Originally a hunting ground of Alwar royals.
- Declared a wildlife reserve in 1955.
- Became India's 11th Tiger Reserve in 1978.
- Designated as a National Park in 1982.

Current Issue

Over 50 mines were closed due to being within 1 km of the reserve boundary. The new proposal may move mining zones outside the prohibited area by excluding degraded lands.

Enhanced Rock Weathering (ERW) for Climate Mitigation

Context

Enhanced Rock Weathering (ERW) is drawing attention from investors. It is being seen both as a method to capture carbon and as a new green business model.

What is ERW?

ERW is a climate solution based on speeding up natural rock weathering. It uses finely crushed volcanic rocks like basalt. These are spread over farmland. When rainwater mixes with the crushed rock, a chemical reaction takes place. This reaction captures carbon dioxide from the air and locks it in the soil as stable compounds like bicarbonates and limestone.

This process is natural but usually very slow. ERW speeds it up significantly. Along with capturing CO₂, it helps improve soil quality. It can also reduce soil acidity and may lead to better crop yields.

Key Features

- Crushed basalt is used for faster weathering.
- CO₂ is captured from the air and stored in the ground.
- It benefits agriculture by improving soil health.

Concerns

- Crushing and handling rocks may release toxic heavy metals.
- Carbon capture potential might be overestimated.
- This can lead to inflated carbon credits and misleading climate claims.

Conclusion

ERW is promising as a natural and scalable climate solution. But it needs strict monitoring and accurate carbon accounting. Environmental and health safety should also be addressed before wide-scale use.

ANURAG BACHAN'S

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Mayday Call by Air India Pilot Raises Alarm

Context

An Air India flight en route to London recently triggered a Mayday call to Air Traffic Control due to an emergency situation.

What Is a Mayday Call?

Derived from the French “m’aider” meaning “help me,” it is the highest emergency signal in aviation and maritime communications.

Historical Background

Introduced by radio officer Frederick Stanley Mockford in the 1920s. Officially adopted in 1927, it is now a standard distress protocol.

How It Works

To activate response protocols, the caller must repeat “Mayday” three times. It signals that immediate rescue or intervention is required.

India Ranks High in ICAO Air Safety Assessment

Context

India has received high scores in the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) audit of air safety and operational standards.

Key Highlights

- India's effective implementation score rose to 85.65 percent in 2022 from 69.95 percent in 2018.
- The country scored 94.02 percent in operations and 97.06 percent in airworthiness.
- These are significantly higher than scores achieved by the US and China in their recent audits.

About ICAO

- A UN agency that develops civil aviation standards.
- Conducts Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) to assess safety enforcement.
- Covers areas like legislation, licensing, operations, accident investigation, and aerodromes.

FAA's Category 1 Status

- In 2023, India retained Category 1 status under the FAA's International Aviation Safety Assessment.
- This allows Indian airlines to operate freely in the US and enter code-share agreements with American carriers.

Three Disaster Management Tech Platforms Launched

Context

The Union Home Minister launched three digital platforms to enhance national disaster preparedness and response.

Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER)

- Provides real-time satellite data and updates to disaster response agencies.
- Helps in fast decision-making and efficient coordination.

National Database for Emergency Management Lite 2.0 (NDEM Lite)

- Lightweight and accessible for use in remote areas.
- Enables seamless data sharing across response agencies.

Flood Hazard Zonation Atlas of Assam

- Scientifically maps flood-prone zones using satellite data.
- Supports planning for resilient agriculture and disaster prevention.

Subarnarekha River Flood in Odisha

Context

A flash flood in the Subarnarekha River affected over 50,000 people in Balasore district, Odisha.

About Subarnarekha River

- Originates near Nagri village in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
- Flows through Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha.
- Empties into the Bay of Bengal near Talsari.
- Key towns: Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Ghatshila, Baleshwar.
- Important tributaries: Kharkai, Roro, Kanchi, and others.
- Hundru Falls is a major waterfall on this river near Ranchi.

MISCELLANEOUS

Parliament's PAC Criticises CGHS Functioning**Context**

The PAC criticised the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) for outdated procurement and poor service delivery.

About CGHS

- Launched in 1954.
- Covers central government employees, pensioners, and their dependents.

About Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

- Formed in 1921.
- Has 22 members (15 Lok Sabha, 7 Rajya Sabha).
- Examines CAG reports and audits government spending.
- Members are elected annually; no ministers allowed.

EPFO Increases Auto-Claim Limit to Rs 5 Lakh**Context**

EPFO raised its auto-advance claim limit from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh.

About EPFO

- A statutory body under the Ministry of Labour.
- Manages provident fund, pension, and insurance schemes.
- Formed under the EPF and MP Act, 1952.
- Aims to ensure financial security and encourage employee savings.

Candida Tropicalis Shows Resistance to Antifungals**Context**

Candida tropicalis has developed chromosome-level drug resistance.

About the Fungal Pathogen

- Causes invasive infections, mostly in India.
- High mortality rate of up to 60%.
- Shows resistance to azoles like fluconazole and voriconazole.
- Resistance is driven by chromosomal alterations.

Novo Nordisk Launches Wegovy in India

Context

Novo Nordisk launched Wegovy, a weight loss injection, in the Indian market.

About Wegovy

- Contains semaglutide, a GLP-1 analogue.
- Regulates blood sugar and reduces appetite.
- Approved for people with morbid obesity (BMI \geq 40).
- Monthly cost is around ₹17,345.

Prime Minister Chairs 48th PRAGATI Meeting

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 48th PRAGATI meeting to review infrastructure projects.

About PRAGATI

- Full form: Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
- Launched in 2015.
- A digital platform for integrated governance.
- It enables coordination between Centre and States.
- Focuses on resolving grievances and tracking critical projects.

Progress and Impact

- It has improved decision-making and accelerated infrastructure development.
- It supports social schemes and promotes federal collaboration.

India and Vietnam Hold 13th Political Consultation

Context

India and Vietnam conducted their 13th Political Consultation and 10th Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi.

Key Outcomes

- Reviewed progress under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- Discussed defence, trade, maritime security, education, and culture.
- Appreciated Vietnam's support against terrorism.
- Vietnam thanked India for displaying Lord Buddha's relics.

Historical Relations

- Founded during the freedom struggles of both nations.
- Established full diplomatic ties in 1972.
- "Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People" adopted in 2020.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

- Bilateral trade reached around \$14.8 billion in 2023–24.
- India exports engineering, pharma, and agriculture products.
- Vietnam exports electronics, coffee, tea, and textiles.

Defence Cooperation

- **Key agreements:** 2009 MoU, 2015 Joint Vision, and 2022 Joint Defence Vision.
- India gifted INS Kirpan and may supply BrahMos missiles.
- **Joint exercises:** VINBAX, PASSEX, port calls, and maritime security initiatives.

Trigeminal Neuralgia Gains Awareness

Context

Cases of Trigeminal Neuralgia are increasing, with delayed diagnosis posing health risks.

About the Condition

- Affects the trigeminal nerve on the face.
- Also called tic douloureux or “suicide disease” due to intense pain.
- Pain occurs on one side of the face and can be sudden and severe.

Causes

Compression by a blood vessel, multiple sclerosis, tumours, or nerve trauma.

Treatment

- **Medicines:** Anticonvulsants like carbamazepine.
- **Surgery:** Microvascular decompression.
- **Minimally invasive:** Gamma knife and radiofrequency ablation.

Agroforestry for Resilient Rainfed Landscapes

Context

A national workshop was held in Delhi to promote agroforestry.

What is Agroforestry?

- Combines trees with crops or livestock.
- Improves ecological sustainability, climate resilience, and rural incomes.
- Trees provide food, fodder, fuel, and soil enrichment.

Status in India

- Covers 28.42 million hectares (8.65% of India’s area).
- Helps reduce wood imports and enhance carbon capture.

Initiatives

- GROW report and portal by NITI Aayog.
- Agroforestry Suitability Index guides planning.
- India introduced the first National Agroforestry Policy in 2014.

Global and National Goals

Aligns with UN SDGs, Paris Agreement, Green India Mission, and Doubling Farmers' Income.

First Quantum Computing Valley in India

Context

India's first Quantum Computing Valley will be established in Amaravati by 2026.

About the Project

- Aims to employ lakhs of professionals.
- Supports quantum research, technology, and industry.
- Open to collaboration across states and institutions.

National Quantum Mission (NQM)

- Approved in 2023 for the period 2023–2031.
- Develops quantum computers with up to 1000 qubits.
- Applies to communication, healthcare, finance, space, and security.

Significance

Supports national campaigns like Digital India, Make in India, and SDGs.
Positions India as a global leader in quantum technologies.

South Asia Unit of International Potato Centre in India

Context

India approved a South Asia centre of the International Potato Center (CIP) in Agra.

Details

- Will benefit farmers in UP, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- Will serve the broader South Asia region.

Objectives

- Improve food security, nutrition, and farmer income.
- Focus on potato and sweet potato yield, storage, and value-addition.

Background

- China hosts the East Asia regional CIP centre since 2016.
- India is the world's second-largest potato producer after China.
- Top Indian states: Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar.

Flash Floods in Wayanad, Kerala

Context

Punnappuzha river flash floods and landslides caused panic in Wayanad district.

What are Flash Floods?

- Localized floods with a short time between rainfall and flooding.
- Develop rapidly and are difficult to forecast.

Major Causes

- Heavy rainfall in short periods
- Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)
- Cloudbursts, tropical cyclones
- Encroachments and steep terrain
- Climate change intensifies such events.

Prime Ministers Museum and Library (PMML)

Context

PM Modi chaired the 47th Annual General Meeting of PMML Society.

About PMML

- Located at Teen Murti Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Former residence of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Originally called Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, renamed in 2021.
- Established in 1964 after Nehru's death.

Objectives

- Preserve legacies of all Indian Prime Ministers.
- Support research in modern Indian history.

Architecture

Designed by British architect Robert Tor Russell in 1929–30.

Traditional Kolhapuri Chappals in Global Spotlight

Context

Italian fashion brand Prada has sparked controversy in India by marketing sandals resembling traditional Kolhapuri chappals at a price of over ₹1.2 lakh.

About Kolhapuri Chappals

- Handcrafted leather footwear rooted in Maharashtra.

- Historically used since the 12th century.
- Received Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2019.
- Artisans use 'kala mitti' (black sticky clay) to layer soles.
- Decorations include metal stampings of birds, elephants, and geometric designs.
- Colors range from natural brown to dyed mustard and tan.

Bonalu Festival Begins in Telangana

Context

Bonalu, Telangana's state festival, began with the first puja at Jagadambika Ammavaru temple in Golconda Fort.

About Bonalu

- A Hindu festival to worship Goddess Mahakali.
- Originated in the 19th century after a plague in Hyderabad.
- Bonam, meaning 'meal', is offered as gratitude.
- Celebrated during Ashada month (June–July).
- Declared Telangana's state festival in 2014.

Key Rituals

- Women carry decorated pots of rice, jaggery, and milk.
- Metlu Puja: Steps of temples are anointed with turmeric and vermilion.
- Main celebrations begin at Golconda Fort and continue at key temples in Secunderabad and Old Hyderabad.

First Rath Yatra at Digha's Jagannath Temple

Context

The Jagannath Temple in Digha, West Bengal, is holding its first Rath Yatra with participation from international devotees.

About the Temple

- Dedicated to Lord Jagannath, inaugurated in April 2025.
- Located in Purba Medinipur district, West Bengal.
- Inspired by Puri's Jagannath Temple architecture.

Architecture and Materials

- Built in Kalingan style with a 65-meter-high shikhara.
- Sandstone sourced from Bansi Paharpur hills of Rajasthan.
- Flooring made from imported Vietnamese marble.

75 Years of Parliamentary Estimates Committee

Context

A national conference is being held to mark the 75th anniversary of the Estimates Committee in Parliament.

About the Estimates Committee

- Formed in 1950, based on John Mathai's recommendation.
- Comprises 30 Lok Sabha members.
- Chairperson appointed by the Speaker.
- Ministers are not allowed as members.
- Tenure is one year.

Functions

- Examines how public funds are used.
- Suggests improvements and alternate policies.
- Ensures estimates align with stated government policies.
- Recommends improved presentation of estimates to Parliament.

Cancer Drugs Fail Quality Test Globally

Context

A global investigation exposed that some commonly used cancer drugs failed quality tests after being exported to over 100 countries.

Key Drugs Identified

Cisplatin, oxaliplatin, cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, methotrexate, leucovorin. These are widely used in chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy Explained

- Targets rapidly dividing cancer cells.
- Often used in combinations.
- Carries severe side effects including kidney damage, heart risks, and immune suppression.

Jiyo Parsi Scheme for Community Revival

Context

The Ministry of Minority Affairs conducted biometric verification for Jiyo Parsi beneficiaries in Mumbai.

About the Scheme

- Launched in 2013-14.

- Implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- Aims to stop demographic decline of the Parsi community.

Key Features

- Medical assistance for fertility treatments.
- Monthly support for couples and elderly Parsis.
- Advocacy for early marriage and family support.

Population Facts

- Parsi population declined from 69,601 (2001) to 57,264 (2011).
- Maharashtra has the largest Parsi population followed by Gujarat.

Ten Years of AMRUT Mission

Context

India celebrates 10 years of AMRUT, which began in 2015 to improve urban infrastructure.

About AMRUT

- Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Initially covered 500 cities, now expanded under AMRUT 2.0.
- Focus: Water supply, sewerage, mobility, green spaces.

Key Initiatives

- 'Jal Hi AMRIT': Reuse of treated water.
- 'Drink from Tap' initiative.
- SCADA system for real-time monitoring of water supply.

Operation Deep Manifest: Curbing Grey Trade Routes

Context

India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized over 1,100 metric tonnes of Pakistani-origin goods rerouted via Dubai.

About the Operation

- Conducted post-terror attack in Pahalgam.
- Aims to counter economic leakage through third-party rerouting.

Why It Matters

- India imposed a full ban on imports from Pakistan.
- Grey routing violates trade restrictions and enables indirect trade.

'Adamyia' Joins Indian Coast Guard Fleet

Context

The Indian Coast Guard inducted 'Adamyia', its first Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) under a new series at Goa Shipyard.

About Adamyia

- First Indian Coast Guard ship to have Controllable Pitch Propellers.
- Features indigenously developed gearboxes.

Armament and Technology

- Equipped with 30mm CRN-91 gun, remote-controlled 12.7mm guns.
- Uses Integrated Bridge and Platform Management Systems.

Significance

- Boosts India's maritime law enforcement.
- Aligns with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- Enhances India's EEZ and coastal security.

Bihar's Mobile App-Based Voting

Context

Bihar has become the first Indian state to allow voting through a mobile app in municipal and by-elections.

Details

- The app is named E-SECBHR. It is Android-based.
- It helps those unable to visit polling booths, such as senior citizens and pregnant women.
- Six Nagar Panchayats and 36 municipal bodies are part of this pilot.
- Only two voters can use one mobile number.
- Voter ID is used for verification.
- Facial recognition and blockchain ensure safety and transparency.
- The system prevents tampering and secures vote integrity.

U.S. Bill on Foreign Remittances

Context

The U.S. Senate has revised the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and reduced tax on foreign remittances to 1%.

Details

- The earlier proposal was to tax all remittances at 5%.
- Now, only cash-based remittances are taxed at 1%.

- Digital transfers via bank or cards are exempted.

Impact on India

- India received \$135.46 billion in remittances in FY25.
- The U.S. is a key source of these funds.
- Taxation could have reduced inflow and hurt India's forex reserves and current account.

GPS Interference and Aviation Safety

Context

Recent GPS disruptions affected flights and ships, raising safety concerns.

What is GPS Interference?

- **Jamming:** Blocks GPS signals with radio noise.
- **Spoofing:** Sends fake GPS signals, showing wrong locations.

Risks

- Aircraft and ships may lose direction.
- Increases risk of accidents.
- Spoofing incidents have increased in conflict zones.

Countermeasures

- Use of INS, VOR, DME systems as backup.
- Pilots get training to spot spoofing.
- Ships shift to manual navigation.
- Multi-system GNSS (GLONASS, Galileo, BeiDou) are being used.
- India uses its indigenous NavIC for navigation, which is reliable in conflict zones.

National Turmeric Board Launched

Context

The National Turmeric Board was inaugurated in Nizamabad, Telangana.

About the Board

- Set up in 2025 under the Ministry of Commerce.

- Aims to improve turmeric farming, research, and global trade.
- Focuses on increasing yields and market access.
- Also promotes the medicinal value of turmeric.

About Turmeric

- Known as 'Golden Spice', part of the ginger family.
- India is the top producer and exporter.
- Major producing states: Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, etc.
- Needs 20-35°C temperature and 1500+ mm rainfall.
- Grows best in sandy or clayey loam soils.

Synthetic Human Genome Project (SynHG)

Context

UK scientists have started the Synthetic Human Genome Project (SynHG).

About SynHG

- Aims to build synthetic DNA instead of reading it.
- Duration: 5 years.
- Will help in disease modelling, gene therapy, and future organ creation.

Significance

- Allows testing of genetic treatments.
- Supports advanced biomedical research.
- Lays groundwork for bioengineered organs.

Related Project

- Human Genome Project (1990–2003) decoded 92% of human DNA.
- SynHG is the next step, from reading to building DNA.

Secondary Pollutants and PM2.5 Pollution

Context

Ammonium sulphate, a secondary pollutant, contributes to one-third of India's PM2.5 levels.

Primary vs Secondary Pollutants

- **Primary:** Emitted directly (e.g., carbon monoxide, NO_x).
- **Secondary:** Formed in the atmosphere (e.g., ozone, haze).

Secondary Pollutants

- Harder to control due to complex formation processes.
- They create smog and health hazards.

PM2.5

- Fine particles smaller than 2.5 microns.
- Come from combustion and industrial activity.
- Major source of urban air pollution.

GAMES AND SPORTS

South Africa Won ICC World Test Championship 2023–2025

Context

South Africa won the ICC World Test Championship by defeating Australia at Lord's, ending its 27-year wait for an ICC trophy.

About the WTC

- It is a two-year league-format Test tournament managed by the ICC.
- Nine full ICC member nations compete.
- The final is a one-off Test at a neutral venue.

Points System

- Win: 12 points
- Draw: 4 points
- Tie: 6 points
- Rankings are based on percentage points to ensure fairness across series lengths.

Previous Winners

- **2019–2021:** New Zealand beat India
- **2021–2023:** Australia beat India
- **2023–2025:** South Africa beat Australia

AWARDS and Honours

Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion 2024

Context

The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) has been honoured with the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for the year 2024. This prestigious recognition is awarded by the World Health Organization (WHO).

About the Award

The Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion was established by WHO in 2019. It aims to recognise individuals, institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations that have made outstanding contributions to health promotion at various levels. The award celebrates initiatives that strengthen public health awareness and well-being through effective strategies and services.

Significance of the Recognition

NIMHANS has emerged as a pioneer in the field of mental health and neuroscience. This award highlights India's growing global recognition in promoting mental health services and education.

India's Progress in Mental Health

India has taken significant steps in expanding access to mental healthcare:

- Mental Health Units are now functional in most districts, supported under the National Health Mission.
- The launch of Tele-MANAS, India's national tele-mental health helpline, on October 10, 2022, marked a major milestone.
- Tele-MANAS has successfully handled over 10 lakh calls, reflecting the increasing outreach and awareness around mental health support.

Conclusion

The award to NIMHANS reflects India's commitment to prioritising mental health as part of its broader public health strategy. It also serves as an inspiration to continue strengthening institutional frameworks and making mental health services more accessible and inclusive.

Sahitya Akademi Announces Yuva and Bal Puraskar 2024

Context

Sahitya Akademi has released the list of awardees for its 2024 Yuva Puraskar and Bal Puraskar.

About the Akademi

- National Academy of Letters, established in 1954.
- Functions as an autonomous body under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- Promotes literature in 24 Indian languages including English.

Award Details

- Yuva Puraskar: For young writers.
- Bal Puraskar: For children's literature.
- Winners receive a copper plaque and ₹50,000 cash prize.

India Post Payments Bank Receives Digital Payments Award

Context

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has received the Digital Payments Award 2024–25 from the Ministry of Finance for its outstanding contribution to digital banking and financial inclusion.

About IPPB

- IPPB is a 100% Government of India-owned payments bank under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications.
- It was launched in 2018 to provide accessible, affordable, and trustworthy banking to all, especially in rural and underbanked regions.
- IPPB uses India's wide postal network of 1.65 lakh post offices and 3 lakh postal workers.
- It delivers doorstep banking using biometric smartphones, leveraging the India Stack.
- It promotes paperless and cashless transactions as part of the Digital India vision.

Achievements

IPPB ranked 1st among all payments banks in the Financial Year 2024–25 Performance Index. It received a special mention award for its performance in 2023–24. It is now seen as a major player in India's digital financial ecosystem.

Bloomberg Philanthropies Tobacco Control Awards 2025

Context

Winners of the 2025 Bloomberg Tobacco Control Awards were announced at the World Conference on Tobacco Control in Dublin.

Key Points

- Honours governments and NGOs from India, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Philippines, and Ukraine.
- Recognises implementation of proven anti-tobacco policies.
- A new \$20 million Accelerator Fund was launched for low- and middle-income countries.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

- It operates in over 700 cities and 150 countries.
- Focus areas: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, Public Health.

PERSONS IN THE NEWS

Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee Remembered on His Death Anniversary

Context

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, on his death anniversary.

Contributions and Leadership

- He became the youngest Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, where he promoted Indian languages and modern education.
- Started with the Congress Party, later joined the Hindu Mahasabha, advocating complete independence.
- Served as Finance Minister of Bengal and actively participated in famine relief.
- Post-1947, he served as India's Industry Minister, establishing industrial foundations.
- In 1951, he founded the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, precursor to the BJP.
- He strongly opposed Article 370 and advocated full integration of Jammu and Kashmir.

Legacy

- He died in 1953 while detained in Kashmir.
- Remembered as a visionary statesman, powerful orator, and advocate of national unity.

PLACES/LOCATIONS IN THE NEWS

Mount Denali

Context

Indian mountaineer Sheikh Hasan Khan from Kerala has been stranded at 17,000 feet on Mount Denali in Alaska due to a snowstorm while attempting the Seven Summits Challenge.

About Mount Denali

- Denali is the highest peak in North America.
- It is also known as Mount McKinley.
- It is located in south-central Alaska, part of the Alaska Range.
- The name "Denali" comes from the Koyukon language spoken in the region.

Significance

- The climb honors Operation Sindoor of the Indian Army.
- Mount Denali is known for severe weather and technical difficulty, making rescues complex and dangerous.

DAYS IN THE NEWS

Telangana Formation Day

- Telangana was officially formed on June 2, 2014, following the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.
- Hyderabad was designated as the joint capital for 10 years. Andhra Pradesh is now moving its administrative functions to Amaravati.
- Article 3 of the Constitution empowers Parliament to create new states and alter state boundaries or names.

World Accreditation Day (2025)

Context

On June 9, 2025, Quality Council of India (QCI) marked World Accreditation Day. The theme was "Accreditation: Empowering SMEs".

Initiatives Launched

QCI revamped the NABL portal to improve digital access for MSMEs. The "Gunvatta Samarpan" initiative encourages public commitment to quality standards.

About QCI

Established in 1997, the QCI governs the National Accreditation Structure. It oversees NABL (testing labs) and NABCB (certification bodies). Its mission is to foster quality in health, education, and industry sectors.

Conclusion

WAD 2025 showcased India's push toward quality assurance, particularly for small businesses. It underscores the link between accreditation and global competitiveness.

International Day Against Unilateral Coercive Measures

Context

The UN General Assembly has designated December 4 as the International Day Against Unilateral Coercive Measures starting from 2025.

About the Resolution

- Adopted with 116 votes in favour, 51 against, and 6 abstentions.
- Urges member states to avoid economic, financial, or trade measures that violate international law.
- Emphasizes adherence to the UN Charter and multilateralism.

Understanding UCMs

- UCMs are sanctions imposed without UN Security Council approval.
- They often restrict access to essential goods, finance, and technology.
- Seen as violations of sovereignty and unfair international practice.

World Sickle Cell Day 2025

Context

World Sickle Cell Awareness Day was observed on June 19, 2025, with the theme 'Global Action, Local Impact: Empowering Communities for Effective Self-Advocacy'.

About Sickle Cell Disease

- It is a genetic disorder caused by a mutation in the haemoglobin gene.
- Red blood cells become sickle-shaped, stiff, and sticky, reducing oxygen delivery and causing severe health complications.
- It leads to anemia, pain crises, delayed growth, jaundice, and frequent infections.

Treatment and Innovations

- Management includes pain relief, antibiotics, blood transfusions, and hydroxyurea.
- Bone marrow transplants can cure the disease but are costly and risky.
- Recent gene-editing therapies like Casgevy and Lyfgenia offer new treatment hopes and began clinical use in 2024.

India's Efforts

The National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission, launched in 2023, aims to eradicate the disease by 2047.

International Day of Yoga 2025 Celebrated at Iconic Sites

Context

The 11th International Day of Yoga was celebrated on June 21, 2025, with sessions at 81 centrally protected monuments coordinated by the ASI and Ministry of Ayush.

- The UN declared June 21 as International Day of Yoga in 2014 after a proposal by India. June 21 marks the summer solstice, the longest day of the year.

Theme for 2025

'Yoga for One Earth, One Health' focuses on sustainability and wellness.

Key Locations

Sessions were held at UNESCO World Heritage Sites including Hampi, Sanchi, Konark, Elephanta Caves, and Rani Ki Vav.

PM Yoga Awards 2025

Two National and two International awards were presented for contributions to yoga. Winners received ₹25 lakh, a certificate, and a trophy.

19th Statistics Day

Context

MoSPI celebrated the 19th National Statistics Day in honour of P.C. Mahalanobis.

About P.C. Mahalanobis

- He is called the Father of Modern Statistics in India.
- He founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI).
- Known for the Mahalanobis Distance, used in data analysis.
- He played a major role in economic planning in post-independence India.

World Environment Day 2025

Context

World Environment Day 2025, celebrated on June 5, is hosted by the Republic of Korea, with the theme “Beat Plastic Pollution.”

- This year’s focus is on raising awareness about the global plastic crisis and promoting sustainable solutions. With plastic production surpassing 430 million tonnes annually, urgent action is needed.
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) leads this initiative, encouraging governments, industries, and individuals to reduce plastic use and support eco-friendly alternatives.
- South Korea’s innovation in recycling and plastic bans sets an example. The day serves as a global call to protect nature, health, and future generations.

DEFENCE EXERCISES / OPERATIONS

India–EUNAVFOR Naval Exercise

Context

The Indian Navy will participate in a joint exercise with the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR).

Exercise Details

The Spanish Navy ship ESPS Reina Sofia and the Italian Navy ship ITS Antonio Marceglia will join Indian vessels in the Gulf of Aden. The drills will focus on counter-piracy, maritime surveillance, and protecting shipping lanes.

The maiden joint naval exercise between India and EUNAVFOR was conducted in 2021.

Significance

It reflects growing cooperation between India and the EU in safeguarding maritime trade and combating illegal activities at sea.

Exercise 'Khaan Quest'

Context

An Indian Army contingent has deployed to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to join Exercise Khaan Quest—an annual multinational peacekeeping exercise under UN Chapter VII.

About the Exercise

Khaan Quest began in 2003 as a bilateral Indo-Mongolian initiative. Since 2006, it has evolved into a multinational peacekeeping training platform involving tactical coordination, joint operations, and interoperability.

Objectives

The exercise enhances military readiness for peace support, builds shared tactics and techniques, and strengthens cooperation among diverse defence forces.

Conclusion

India's participation in Khaan Quest underscores its commitment to UN peacekeeping and global security collaboration. It also advances operative coordination and cultural exchange.

Exercise Shakti-2025

Context

India and France will conduct the 8th edition of Exercise Shakti at La Cavalerie, France.

What Is Exercise Shakti?

It is a biennial joint military drill aimed at improving inter-operability in sub-conventional warfare under the UN Chapter VII mandate.

Past Editions

The 7th edition was hosted by India in Meghalaya in 2024.

Complementary Exercises with France

- **VARUNA** – Naval cooperation.
- **GARUDA** – Air force collaboration.

Objective

To strengthen multi-domain joint operations capacity and deepen defence ties between the two nations.

UPSC MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

1. Ahilyabai Holkar was a rare example of visionary and inclusive governance in 18th-century India. Examine the leadership qualities and administrative reforms of Ahilyabai Holkar that make her a unique figure in Indian history.
2. Sant Kabir Das's teachings transcended sectarian boundaries and challenged ritualism. Discuss the key philosophical tenets of Kabir's teachings and their relevance to social reform movements in medieval India.
3. Kabir's poetry reflects the core of the Bhakti movement – a direct path to the divine, free from orthodoxy. How did Kabir's teachings contribute to the rise of Bhakti literature and challenge caste and religious barriers? Illustrate with examples.
4. The Servants of India Society marked a shift towards constructive nationalism and social reform. Critically evaluate the role of the Servants of India Society in India's national awakening, with special reference to Gopal Krishna Gokhale's contributions.
5. The Nonia rebellion is an early example of caste-based resistance against colonial exploitation. Examine the socio-economic context of the Nonia rebellion and assess its significance in the larger narrative of India's freedom struggle.
6. Temple architecture is not just a symbol of devotion but a living testimony of India's regional history and aesthetics. Describe the architectural and cultural significance of the Simhachalam Temple. How does its recent restoration reflect heritage conservation challenges in India?
7. Recent findings challenge the long-held notion that urbanism in Kachchh began only with the Harappans. Analyze the significance of recent archaeological discoveries in Kachchh in understanding the evolution of early human settlements in the Indian subcontinent.
8. The Ambubachi Mela challenges patriarchal narratives and celebrates feminine power in Indian religious traditions. Discuss the cultural and symbolic significance of the Ambubachi Mela and its connection to the worship of the divine feminine in India.
9. Folk art like Madhubani is a reflection of community, culture, and continuity. Trace the evolution of Madhubani painting from a domestic tradition to a globally recognized art form. Highlight the role of GI tagging in cultural preservation.
10. Cuisine can act as a bridge between cultural heritage and economic growth. Discuss the significance of proposing Lucknow as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy. What does this indicate about the growing global recognition of India's culinary heritage?
11. Tourism in border regions can enhance strategic awareness while preserving cultural landscapes. Evaluate the potential and challenges of initiatives like the Shipki La border tourism project in promoting inclusive development and strategic integration.

12. Astro-tourism can blend scientific curiosity with sustainable tourism in ecologically sensitive regions. Assess the importance of Ladakh's Astro-Tourism Festival in promoting science outreach, local economy, and environmental awareness.
13. Artistic artifacts reflect not just aesthetics but also inter-sect harmony and regional craftsmanship. Discuss the significance of the 15th-century ritual lamp discovered in Udupi in understanding religious syncretism and temple traditions.
14. The Kheer Bhawani Festival is a symbol of spiritual resilience and cultural continuity in Kashmir. Examine the historical and cultural significance of the Kheer Bhawani Temple and its role in preserving the Kashmiri Pandit heritage.

INDIAN SOCIETY

1. Tobacco consumption in India is not just a health hazard but a social and economic burden. Discuss the multidimensional impact of tobacco use in India. Evaluate the effectiveness of current laws and suggest measures for stricter control.
2. Child food poverty is a hidden crisis with long-term socio-economic consequences. Examine the challenges of child food poverty in India as highlighted by the recent UNICEF report. What steps has India taken, and what more needs to be done to ensure food security for children?
3. Literacy is not just an educational milestone, but a social and economic enabler. Evaluate the significance of the ULLAS Programme in achieving adult literacy in India. What are the key challenges in ensuring inclusive and lifelong learning?
4. Empowering adolescent girls through skill development can break intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality. Critically analyse the NAVYA initiative in addressing gender gaps in non-traditional employment. How can such programmes transform the socio-economic landscape for young women in India?
5. India's health infrastructure must be inclusive of rare medical needs. Discuss the significance of integrating rare blood donor registries with national health portals like e-Rakt Kosh. How can technology-driven platforms improve emergency health responses?
6. Analyze the social, environmental, and economic impacts of tobacco consumption in India. What structural challenges hinder effective tobacco control policies?
7. Despite a robust legal framework, India continues to face rising tobacco use. Critically examine the gaps in implementation and enforcement of tobacco control measures.
8. What are the root causes of child food poverty in India? Discuss its interlinkages with caste, gender, and regional disparities. Suggest measures to ensure equitable nutrition for all children.
9. Evaluate the performance of India's food and nutrition schemes such as ICDS, Poshan 2.0, and Mid-Day Meals in addressing malnutrition and food poverty among children.

10. Discuss how adult literacy programmes like ULLAS contribute to social empowerment and inclusive development. In what ways can digital platforms enhance their outreach and impact?
11. India has achieved near-total literacy in some states. Identify the key enablers behind this success and suggest how these can be replicated in educationally backward regions.
12. Skilling adolescent girls for non-traditional job roles can redefine gender norms in India. Examine the NAVYA programme in this context and its potential for women-led development.
13. Despite increased focus on women's skill development, challenges such as dropouts, family resistance, and lack of mobility persist. Suggest a roadmap for improving female participation in vocational education.
14. Integration of health data platforms like e-Rakt Kosh with rare blood donor registries is a step towards responsive governance. Discuss the importance of such digital systems for inclusive public health services.
15. In emergencies like rare blood group needs or disasters, digital health platforms can be life-saving. Examine the challenges in making such platforms universally accessible and trusted.
16. Social inequities in India manifest through food, education, and health outcomes. Analyze how recent initiatives such as ULLAS, NAVYA, and Poshan Abhiyan attempt to bridge these gaps.
17. Programs aimed at behavioural change such as tobacco control or child nutrition awareness face deeper cultural and structural barriers. Discuss how community participation and social campaigns can overcome these challenges.

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Discuss the constitutional provisions and procedures related to the impeachment of judges in India. In light of past and present cases, evaluate the challenges of ensuring judicial accountability while preserving judicial independence.
2. The DHRUVA project aims to digitise India's address system. Critically assess how such digital public infrastructure initiatives can improve governance, public service delivery, and citizen inclusion.
3. With platforms like C CARES 2.0 and ECINET, India is transforming welfare and electoral transparency through technology. Analyze the opportunities and limitations of technology-led governance in ensuring real-time accountability.
4. How can digital innovations like Index Cards and ECINET help enhance electoral transparency and participation in India? Examine their potential role in addressing systemic gaps in election data management.
5. Despite growing awareness and legal provisions, women's representation in legislatures remains low. Analyze the structural and societal factors behind this trend. How far will the Women's Reservation Bill address these challenges?

6. Critically examine the role of centrally sponsored schemes like PM-JANMAN and the Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan in bridging tribal development gaps. Suggest ways to improve coordination among various ministries for tribal welfare.
7. Demands for new states in India often reflect deeper issues of governance, identity, and underdevelopment. Discuss the constitutional and political dimensions of state reorganisation with examples.
8. The Supreme Court's mandate on self-declaration for advertisements marks a shift in regulatory accountability. Analyze its significance for consumer protection, ethical business practices, and freedom of expression.
9. The Agnipath scheme reflects a shift in India's defence recruitment policy. Critically evaluate the scheme in terms of youth employment, military readiness, and long-term strategic goals.
10. The recognition of 'living wills' and passive euthanasia in India strengthens personal autonomy in end-of-life decisions. Discuss the legal, ethical, and administrative challenges in implementing this right.
11. The persistence of practices like 'Nata Pratha' highlights the gap between law and societal norms. Analyze how cultural practices rooted in tradition can clash with constitutional rights. What role can institutions like NHRC play?
12. In light of recent rulings on narco-analysis, discuss the constitutional protections against self-incrimination and the balance between investigation needs and civil liberties in criminal law.
13. Initiatives like BharatGen show India's move towards language-inclusive and culturally relevant AI tools. Discuss the role of indigenous AI models in governance, public service delivery, and digital inclusion.
14. The digitisation of Waqf properties under the UMEED portal marks a new phase in minority welfare governance. Evaluate how digital platforms can improve transparency, reduce corruption, and empower minority communities.
15. The motto "Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption" adopted by Lokpal reflects its role as an anti-corruption ombudsman. Critically assess the effectiveness of Lokpal in India's institutional architecture of accountability.
16. The PGI 2.0 reflects a shift toward data-driven education policy in India. Examine its role in identifying regional gaps in school education and ensuring performance-linked interventions.
17. India's progress in QS World Rankings highlights its rising academic presence. Evaluate the factors contributing to this rise and suggest reforms to sustain and enhance the global standing of Indian universities.
18. With the proposal to mandate Indian Standard Time across sectors, analyze the significance of time synchronization in digital governance, financial systems, and cybersecurity.

19. Discuss the significance of Article 124(4) in the context of the proposed impeachment motion against a High Court judge. How does India's procedure for judicial removal safeguard independence while ensuring accountability?
20. The rare use of impeachment provisions in India points to both judicial restraint and systemic complexity. Examine the pros and cons of India's current framework for judicial accountability.
21. Evaluate the potential of DHRUVA as a foundational digital address system. How can such infrastructure support schemes like housing, taxation, disaster response, and emergency delivery?
22. The success of BharatGen reflects India's push for indigenous AI infrastructure. Discuss the role of culturally rooted digital tools in promoting inclusive and ethical e-governance.
23. With the digitisation of electoral tools like Index Cards and ECINET, transparency in elections has improved. However, concerns over digital reliability persist. Discuss.
24. Real-time data platforms like PGI 2.0 and ECINET show India's shift to data-driven governance. Evaluate the ethical, technical, and administrative implications of such digital models.
25. The decline in women's representation in the Lok Sabha in 2024 reveals systemic barriers to gender equality. Examine the structural reforms required to ensure fair political representation of women in India.
26. Despite legal reforms, patriarchal customs like Nata Pratha persist in parts of India. Discuss the interplay of tradition, gender, and state responsibility in eliminating such practices.
27. PM-JANMAN and Dharti Aaba Gram Abhiyan reflect a shift toward tribal-centric governance. Critically assess their design and how they address historical neglect of PVTGs.
28. Effective tribal outreach requires convergence among multiple ministries. Discuss the challenges of coordination in delivering last-mile governance to tribal communities.
29. The Supreme Court's directive on advertising self-declaration is a milestone in regulatory reform. Analyze its significance in promoting ethical governance and consumer welfare.
30. How do bodies like ASCI, CCPA, and Press Council of India work together to regulate advertisements? Discuss their roles and the impact of the Supreme Court's recent judgment.
31. The Agnipath Scheme represents a major shift in defence recruitment policy. Critically analyse whether short-term military service aligns with India's long-term strategic and human capital needs.
32. What are the possible social and economic consequences of a premature discharge system like Agnipath on trained youth in the absence of post-service absorption frameworks?
33. Living wills and passive euthanasia are now legally recognized in India. Discuss the ethical, legal, and administrative challenges in mainstreaming end-of-life medical rights.

34. What is the constitutional basis for passive euthanasia in India? Discuss how this aligns with the principles of dignity, autonomy, and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.
35. Narco-analysis tests pose serious ethical and legal dilemmas. In light of the Supreme Court's recent stand, evaluate the balance between investigative efficiency and fundamental rights.
36. The use of coercive technologies in criminal investigations must align with the constitutional mandate. Analyze with reference to Article 20(3) and Article 21.
37. The QS World Rankings 2025 show improvements in India's academic visibility. Critically examine how Indian universities can rise further through governance reforms and internationalisation.
38. Global university rankings are increasingly including sustainability and employability indicators. Evaluate India's higher education governance framework in this context.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The formation of the International Organisation for Mediation indicates a shift toward multipolar institutional frameworks. Critically assess its implications for India's legal diplomacy.
2. The creation of IOMed reflects a shift in global dispute resolution away from Western-dominated mechanisms. Critically examine the strategic and diplomatic implications of such alternative institutions led by emerging powers like China.
3. India's election to ECOSOC and presidency of IAS signal its rising influence in global governance. Discuss the role of soft power and multilateral engagement in advancing India's global stature.
4. India's participation and leadership in UN ECOSOC strengthens its voice on global development. Discuss how such platforms can help India promote its priorities in climate, health, and poverty alleviation.
5. Strengthening counter-terror cooperation through bilateral and multilateral platforms is key to regional security. Evaluate the India-Japan Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in this context.
6. Despite India's global initiatives on counter-terrorism, its concerns over Pakistan's role in UN bodies remain unresolved. Discuss the challenges India faces in internationalising its anti-terror agenda.
7. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor represents a new paradigm in strategic infrastructure. Examine its potential in countering China's BRI and enhancing India's trade influence.
8. India's economic diplomacy with Qatar through the Joint Task Force on Investment reflects a new model of strategic energy and infrastructure cooperation. Analyze.
9. The expansion of CPEC's second phase poses fresh geopolitical challenges for India. Critically examine the project's implications on regional sovereignty, connectivity, and strategic balance.

10. China's growing presence in regional institutions and economic corridors reflects a shift toward a China-centric world order. Discuss India's strategic options to safeguard its interests.
11. The expansion of BRICS and creation of a partner category indicates a restructuring of global multipolarity. Evaluate the potential and limits of BRICS in reshaping global governance.
12. With the rise of South-South cooperation platforms like ISSCA, discuss India's role in knowledge sharing, agricultural diplomacy, and development partnerships.
13. Control over maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz and Taiwan Strait has become central to energy security and geopolitics. Analyze how India's interests are impacted by recent tensions in these regions.
14. India's role in IALA and initiatives in marine navigation reflect its commitment to safe and sustainable maritime governance. Evaluate India's maritime diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.
15. India's repeated abstentions on Gaza ceasefire resolutions highlight the complexities of balancing strategic autonomy and moral diplomacy. Examine the principles behind India's evolving stance on the Israel-Palestine issue.
16. The naval strike on Hodeidah Port and the threat to close the Strait of Hormuz expose the vulnerability of humanitarian and energy supply chains. Discuss how India should recalibrate its West Asia policy.
17. The rise in regional instability due to Iran-US tensions and retaliatory strikes in Qatar highlight new vulnerabilities. Analyze how India's strategic energy interests are being shaped by Gulf geopolitics.
18. India's outreach to Latin America through Paraguay and MERCOSUR aligns with its larger South-South cooperation goals. Examine the scope for expanding India's presence in South America.
19. With developments like Cook Islands' pivot to China and New Zealand's reaction, how should India readjust its Pacific outreach strategy in line with Indo-Pacific objectives?
20. The BRICS Parliamentary Forum and India's leadership role underscore the rising importance of parliamentary diplomacy. Evaluate how this can contribute to India's foreign policy engagement.
21. India's increasing leadership in global administrative bodies like IIAS reflects its expertise in public administration reforms. How can such roles help shape international standards of governance?
22. India's presidency of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences offers scope for soft power projection. Discuss how administrative diplomacy complements foreign policy.
23. South-South Cooperation through agriculture and technology offers sustainable models of development. Evaluate India's leadership role through initiatives like ISSCA.

24. The BRICS+ expansion reflects a growing appetite for reforming global governance. Critically examine its strategic utility for India.
25. India's engagement with BRICS+ partner nations like Vietnam enhances strategic depth. Analyze how such partnerships help balance China's influence.
26. The BRICS Parliamentary Forum is emerging as a channel of legislative diplomacy. Discuss its relevance in shaping multilateral consensus beyond executive action.
27. India's participation in the Shangri-La Dialogue underscores its role in Indo-Pacific security. Evaluate the strategic importance of such forums in maritime diplomacy.
28. The increasing militarisation of the Taiwan Strait threatens regional stability. Analyze its implications for India's Act East policy and Indo-Pacific vision.
29. India's role in IALA reflects its growing influence in maritime governance. Discuss the significance of global standards in marine safety and navigation.
30. India-Japan cooperation on counter-terrorism reflects a shared threat perception. Examine the role of technology and multilateral platforms in enhancing such collaboration.
31. India's concerns over Pakistan's appointment to UN counter-terrorism bodies highlight deeper challenges. Discuss the limits of global counter-terrorism architecture in dealing with state-sponsored terrorism.
32. Cyberterrorism and lone-wolf attacks represent new-age threats. How should India recalibrate its counter-terrorism strategy in coordination with like-minded partners?
33. The second phase of CPEC deepens India's strategic concerns. Analyze how such developments influence India's approach to regional connectivity and sovereignty.
34. The Strait of Hormuz is central to India's energy security. In light of recent tensions, suggest measures to diversify and secure India's strategic reserves.
35. India's abstentions on Gaza ceasefire resolutions reflect a shift from moral diplomacy to realpolitik. Critically examine this evolution in foreign policy.
36. India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is a strategic alternative to BRI. Evaluate its long-term potential and geopolitical hurdles.
37. India-Qatar economic engagement through JTFI reflects pragmatic energy diplomacy. How can India expand this model to other Gulf nations?
38. India's trade ties with Latin America through MERCOSUR and Paraguay are growing. Discuss the untapped potential of this region for India's South-South strategy.
39. The rise of Alliance of Sahel States as a counter to ECOWAS signals a changing regional order. Discuss the implications for India's engagement with Africa.

40. India's growing leadership in global administrative bodies enhances its soft power. How can this be used to promote democratic governance norms internationally?
41. Festivals like Posa Poya in Sri Lanka highlight civilisational diplomacy. Discuss how India can strengthen regional bonds through cultural linkages.
42. The use of Silver Notices by Interpol reflects evolving international crime cooperation. Evaluate India's efforts in tracking transnational financial crimes.
43. India's BharatPol initiative and digital policing models could redefine INTERPOL cooperation. Discuss the scope and challenges in implementing these reforms.
44. Growing threats to humanitarian corridors in regions like Yemen highlight the intersection of geopolitics and aid. How should India balance humanitarianism with strategic interests?

ECONOMY

1. Discuss the implications of the recent water storage crisis in India's major reservoirs on agricultural sustainability and rural livelihoods. What long-term structural reforms are necessary to tackle such recurring water stress?
2. Vizhinjam International Seaport is expected to boost India's maritime self-reliance. Examine its strategic and economic significance in the context of India's transshipment dependency.
3. Despite being the third-largest producer of stainless steel, India remains import-dependent. Critically examine the challenges and policy interventions required to strengthen this sector.
4. The Chenab and Anji bridges are engineering marvels with strategic importance. Evaluate their contribution to regional connectivity and national security.
5. India's toy sector is witnessing rapid growth in exports. What are the key challenges hampering global competitiveness, and how can policy support create a strong value chain?
6. Examine the need for reforms in the ownership and governance structure of clearing corporations in India. How can such reforms ensure neutrality and financial stability?
7. The recent HCES report reveals shifting patterns in household consumption. Analyse how these trends reflect changing rural-urban lifestyles and their policy implications.
8. The launch of CROPIC reflects a shift towards tech-enabled crop monitoring. Discuss how AI and real-time data can enhance risk assessment and insurance efficacy in Indian agriculture.
9. The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) plays a key role in mobilising capital for infrastructure. Evaluate its functioning and potential in addressing India's investment gaps.
10. The growing demand for ejiao has affected livestock populations in South Asia. Critically analyse the intersection of trade, traditional medicine, and animal welfare.

11. The FSDC ensures regulatory synergy among financial institutions. In light of evolving market risks, assess the effectiveness and limitations of this institutional framework.
12. The Bairabi–Sairang railway project exemplifies infrastructure-led integration in Northeast India. Discuss its economic and strategic importance under the Act East Policy.
13. Explain the rationale behind the RBI's bond buyback operations. How do such measures support liquidity without impacting monetary policy signals?
14. Evaluate the role of the Rubber Board in enhancing productivity and ensuring sustainable development in India's rubber sector.
15. Examine how geopolitical tensions in West Asia are affecting India's tea exports. What measures can be taken to diversify export destinations and ensure sectoral stability?
16. With rising edible oil imports, oil palm cultivation is being promoted. Discuss its economic potential and ecological concerns in the Indian context.
17. The Totapuri mango dispute reveals tensions in interstate commerce. Analyse the constitutional provisions governing trade within India and suggest ways to strengthen cooperative federalism.
18. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana aims to modernise fisheries and enhance exports. Critically evaluate its implementation and role in achieving Blue Economy targets.
19. Rajasthan's Cash Plus Model integrates financial incentives with behavioural outreach. How can such hybrid approaches improve maternal and child health outcomes?
20. Flipkart becoming an NBFC marks a shift in India's e-commerce-fintech convergence. Discuss the benefits and risks of such developments in the financial ecosystem.
21. India's trade deficit narrowed in May 2025 despite weak oil prices. Analyse the contribution of service exports and the challenges facing merchandise trade.
22. The CCI's large-scale MSP procurement of cotton reflects policy intervention. Examine how MSP supports cotton farmers and the implications of rising imports on domestic producers.
23. NICDC-led industrial corridors are reshaping India's manufacturing geography. Evaluate their role in promoting inclusive development, with a focus on Andhra Pradesh.
24. Farmers in Kerala have adopted turmeric to deter wild animals. Discuss the significance of crop choice in rural risk mitigation and commercial sustainability.
25. The annual FASTag pass aims to streamline toll collection. Assess how digital mobility tools are transforming road transport efficiency in India.
26. Nano fertilisers represent a shift towards precision agriculture. Discuss their role in improving farm yields while ensuring ecological sustainability.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Construction of Next-Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs) marks a key step in enhancing coastal defence. Discuss the significance of NGOPVs in addressing India's maritime security challenges and their role in a multi-role naval strategy.
2. Fibre-optic guided FPV drones mark a shift in modern warfare technology. Examine their advantages over traditional drones and assess their implications for defence strategies in urban and electronic warfare environments.
3. The innovation of metal-based nanozymes by IISc offers promise in thrombosis management. Explain the mechanism by which nanozymes regulate platelet activity and evaluate their potential in tackling COVID-19-related and cardiac complications.
4. Despite being water-intensive, Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) was mandated to limit SO₂ emissions. Critically evaluate the rationale behind the recent expert recommendation to relax this requirement, considering air quality data and environmental trade-offs.
5. Understanding the SHUKR gene can significantly benefit plant reproductive studies. Discuss the importance of SHUKR gene in pollen formation and its broader implications for crop breeding and food security.
6. Research has shown that the SHOX gene contributes significantly to height differences between men and women. Analyze the biological and genetic mechanisms underlying this difference and discuss its scientific and medical implications.
7. India's initiative to source coking coal and critical minerals from Mongolia reflects strategic resource diversification. Analyze the challenges and opportunities in such bilateral cooperation, especially considering regional geopolitics and transportation logistics.
8. The formation of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance indicates a global shift in drug supply security. Discuss the alliance's objectives and examine India's strategic role in ensuring pharmaceutical resilience and innovation.
9. The discovery of nanoparticles using water microdroplets at IIT Madras opens new avenues in green nanotechnology. Explain the process and its significance in cost-effective, eco-friendly material production for biomedical applications.
10. The first reported human death from H5N2 bird flu signals a growing zoonotic threat. Examine the public health implications of such outbreaks and suggest strategies for surveillance, prevention, and containment.
11. The successful testing of Rudrastra, a VTOL strike drone, represents progress in indigenous defence. Assess its strategic importance for border security and how such drones redefine India's unmanned warfare capabilities.

12. NISAR, a joint ISRO-NASA mission, will significantly advance Earth observation. Explain the role of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) in natural disaster monitoring and evaluate NISAR's contribution to climate and environmental management.
13. INS Arnala adds a new layer to India's shallow-water defence strategy. Examine the need for such Anti-Submarine Warfare vessels and their role in enhancing coastal surveillance and maritime operations.
14. India's focus on monoclonal antibody therapeutics was highlighted in the recent THSTI symposium. Evaluate the potential of monoclonal antibodies in transforming disease treatment and the challenges in their domestic development.
15. KATRIN experiment has helped refine the upper limit of neutrino mass. Discuss the relevance of this finding in the context of the Standard Model of particle physics and its implications for cosmology.
16. India-Norway relations are deepening through cooperation in blue economy and EFTA trade. Analyze how this collaboration supports India's maritime technology goals and climate commitments.
17. Step-and-Shoot Proton Arc Therapy (SPArc) was used successfully for a rare cancer. Examine how this technology improves radiation precision and the challenges in making such treatments widely accessible.
18. The TRISHNA satellite aims to assess thermal changes and water stress. Evaluate its utility in agricultural planning and climate adaptation, especially in managing India's water-energy-food nexus.
19. Kerala's diagnostic kits for free-living amoebae enhance rare disease detection. Discuss the significance of early detection in tackling fatal infections and the broader impact on India's public health preparedness.
20. The heeng tissue culture unit by CSIR IHBT advances self-reliance in spice production. Assess its importance in agro-biodiversity conservation and the socio-economic impact on Himalayan farming communities.
21. India's designation as a Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility strengthens its veterinary biosafety role. Discuss the significance of such facilities in global disease surveillance and animal health diplomacy.
22. Israel's deployment of Barak Magen system demonstrates evolving naval air defence. Analyze how such systems enhance multi-layered security in maritime theatres and their strategic value in regional conflicts.
23. INS Nilgiri joins India's Eastern Fleet under Project 17A. Examine how stealth frigates contribute to India's blue-water naval capabilities and balance emerging maritime threats in the Indo-Pacific.

24. INS Tamal, India's last imported warship, symbolizes the shift toward indigenisation. Discuss the strategic rationale for full domestic defence production and the benefits and challenges of localisation.
25. The US deployment of GBU-57 MOP highlights advancements in bunker-buster capabilities. Assess the implications of such weapons for strategic stability and their role in deterrence doctrines.
26. AI RAM initiative is central to India's ethical AI governance framework. Critically analyze its role in ensuring responsible AI deployment across sectors and enhancing institutional readiness.
27. Discovery of the Gwada Negative blood group challenges existing transfusion frameworks. Explain the implications of such ultra-rare blood types for medical science and emergency healthcare systems.

INTERNAL SECURITY

1. The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is India's only integrated theatre command. Examine the strategic significance of ANC in enhancing India's maritime security and regional influence in the Indo-Pacific.
2. The recent agreement between Kuki-Zo groups and the Ministry of Home Affairs to close camps near Meitei areas marks a critical development in conflict resolution. Analyze the ethnic roots of the Manipur violence and suggest measures to restore peace and ensure inclusive governance.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Climate finance has emerged as a cornerstone of global climate action. Critically examine the importance of climate finance in enabling developing countries to meet their climate goals. Discuss India's position and expectations in ongoing global negotiations.
2. The proposal to reintroduce king cobras in Madhya Pradesh reflects a shift in conservation strategies. Analyze the ecological and scientific considerations involved in such species restoration efforts. What are the challenges associated with conserving king cobras?
3. The Western Ghats face severe ecological pressure from unsustainable development. Examine the significance of assessing the carrying capacity of such biodiversity hotspots. How can it contribute to long-term ecological and livelihood security?
4. The recent collapse of a large portion of the Birch Glacier highlights the vulnerabilities posed by climate change in mountainous regions. Analyze the risks associated with glacier retreat and its implications for downstream populations and ecosystems.
5. Iron aerosol pollution from East Asia is now shown to affect marine ecosystems across the Pacific. Discuss the environmental implications of iron-induced plankton blooms. How do such processes affect global nutrient cycles and marine biodiversity?

6. India has added new wetlands in Rajasthan to the Ramsar list. Evaluate the ecological importance of wetlands in arid regions. How does Ramsar recognition strengthen local conservation and community-based stewardship?
7. The recognition of Nagi and Nakti as Ramsar Sites underscores their ecological and migratory importance. Examine the conservation benefits of such designations. How do artificial wetlands evolve into rich biodiversity habitats?
8. Exposomics is emerging as a vital tool in public health. Discuss how exposomics complements genomics in understanding disease patterns. Why is this approach particularly significant for environmental health management in India?
9. The Aravalli Green Wall Project is an ambitious plan to combat land degradation. Analyze the ecological and community-level impacts of such landscape-scale afforestation projects. What challenges might arise in its implementation?
10. EnviStats India 2025 offers critical data on environmental changes. Examine how environmental statistics support evidence-based policymaking. What are the major trends highlighted in the latest report, and what do they indicate?
11. The discovery of the parasitic wasp species *Loggna occidentalis* points to India's rich but understudied insect biodiversity. Discuss the ecological importance of parasitic wasps. Why is ongoing biodiversity documentation important for environmental conservation?
12. Recent studies show that a large part of India's population is vulnerable to extreme heat due to the Heat Dome effect. Analyze the causes and consequences of heat domes. What adaptive strategies should India adopt to mitigate such risks?
13. Climate-resilient farm ponds are being adopted in semi-arid regions like Rajasthan. Evaluate their effectiveness in ensuring agricultural sustainability. How do such micro-level interventions support national climate and water goals?
14. Project Cheetah has become a landmark effort in wildlife translocation. Critically examine the ecological and community aspects of the cheetah reintroduction programme. What lessons does it offer for large-scale species recovery initiatives?
15. The installation of a waste incinerator inside the Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone has triggered ecological concerns. Discuss the legal and environmental issues involved. How can development projects be reconciled with ecological preservation in sensitive zones?
16. Melting sea ice in Antarctica poses a severe threat to emperor penguins. Examine the impact of climate change on polar biodiversity. What global efforts are needed to protect such vulnerable species?
17. The discovery of *Spartaeus karigiri* has expanded the known spider diversity in India. Analyze the significance of such taxonomic discoveries. What role does arachnid biodiversity play in ecological balance?

18. AviList is a new unified global bird checklist. Discuss its importance for avian conservation and international cooperation. How can standardised taxonomies help improve policy and scientific efforts globally?
19. India marks 50 years of crocodile conservation with significant success. Trace the historical development and achievements of the Crocodile Conservation Programme. What does this model teach about long-term species management?
20. The Gharial Conservation Programme focuses on reviving critically endangered riverine crocodilians. Analyze the habitat requirements and threats to gharials. How effective have conservation strategies been for their recovery?
21. Rationalisation of tiger reserve boundaries, like at Sariska, raises complex questions about conservation and development. Evaluate the implications of such boundary shifts. Should degraded lands be excluded from protected areas?
22. Enhanced Rock Weathering (ERW) is gaining attention as a natural carbon capture method. Explain the science behind ERW and its potential for climate mitigation. What concerns should be addressed before adopting it widely?

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. The recent Mayday call by an Air India pilot has highlighted the critical importance of aviation emergency protocols. Explain the significance of the Mayday call system in modern aviation safety. How does India's aviation framework ensure preparedness for such emergencies?
2. India's improved performance in the ICAO air safety audit reflects growing international confidence. Analyze the factors that contributed to this achievement. What implications does this hold for India's civil aviation sector and global aviation diplomacy?
3. The launch of new digital disaster management platforms marks a step forward in strengthening India's emergency response. Evaluate the utility of ICR-ER, NDEM Lite 2.0, and the Flood Hazard Zonation Atlas of Assam in building climate resilience and disaster preparedness.
4. The Subarnarekha River flood in Odisha displaced over 50,000 people. Examine the hydrological and geographical factors behind the vulnerability of eastern Indian river systems to flash floods. What measures are needed to build flood-resilient communities in such regions?

MISCELLANEOUS

1. The Public Accounts Committee recently raised concerns about the Central Government Health Scheme. Discuss the significance of parliamentary committees in ensuring accountability and transparency in welfare service delivery.
2. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation recently enhanced its auto-claim limit. Discuss the significance of this move in ensuring financial security and responsiveness in social security systems.

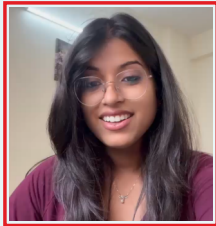
3. The emergence of drug-resistant strains of *Candida tropicalis* poses serious public health challenges. Examine the causes and implications of rising antimicrobial resistance in fungal pathogens in India.
4. The launch of Wegovy by Novo Nordisk in India highlights the growing medicalisation of lifestyle disorders. Critically evaluate the health, ethical, and economic implications of weight-loss pharmaceuticals.
5. PRAGATI has emerged as an important governance tool for timely implementation. Analyze how digital platforms like PRAGATI contribute to cooperative federalism and policy monitoring in India.
6. India and Vietnam recently held their 13th Political Consultation and Strategic Dialogue. Examine the strategic dimensions of India-Vietnam relations with a focus on defence, maritime, and regional cooperation.
7. Trigeminal Neuralgia is increasingly being reported in India. Explain its symptoms, causes, and treatment options. What does its rising incidence indicate about India's public health preparedness?
8. Agroforestry is being promoted as a sustainable solution for rainfed landscapes. Discuss its role in climate resilience, ecological sustainability, and farmer livelihoods in India.
9. India's first Quantum Computing Valley is being developed in Andhra Pradesh. Analyze how quantum computing can transform sectors like healthcare, security, and finance. Highlight the challenges of scaling quantum technology.
10. The International Potato Center's new South Asia unit in Agra aims to improve regional food security. Discuss the potential of crop-specific R&D centres in addressing food and nutrition challenges in India.
11. Recent flash floods in Kerala's Wayanad district underscore the challenges of climate-induced disasters. Analyze the causes and consequences of flash floods. Suggest a robust disaster risk reduction framework for high-rainfall zones.
12. The Prime Ministers Museum and Library serves as a repository of modern Indian political history. Assess its role in promoting inclusive political memory and fostering civic education.
13. The global attention on Kolhapuri chappals due to a luxury fashion controversy has reignited debates on cultural appropriation. Discuss the importance of Geographical Indications in protecting traditional knowledge and rural livelihoods.
14. The Bonalu festival reflects Telangana's unique cultural identity. Discuss the socio-cultural significance of such regional festivals in strengthening local traditions and community resilience.
15. The first Rath Yatra at Digha's Jagannath Temple showcases expanding religious tourism. Examine the economic, architectural, and cultural implications of building new pilgrimage hubs in India.

16. The Estimates Committee of Parliament has completed 75 years. Discuss its role in enhancing budgetary control and improving governance through fiscal scrutiny and policy suggestions.
17. A global report highlighted failures in the quality of exported cancer drugs. Analyze the regulatory, ethical, and public health challenges of ensuring pharmaceutical quality in India's global drug supply chain.
18. The Jiyo Parsi scheme seeks to reverse the demographic decline of the Parsi community. Discuss the relevance of targeted affirmative programmes in addressing cultural preservation and demographic concerns.
19. AMRUT completed a decade in 2025. Evaluate the key achievements and challenges of the AMRUT Mission in transforming urban infrastructure and services in Indian cities.
20. Operation Deep Manifest was launched to counter grey trade routes post-terrorist attacks. Examine the economic and strategic implications of grey channel trade and India's response mechanisms.
21. The induction of 'Adamyia' into the Indian Coast Guard reflects advancements in indigenous defence technology. Discuss the strategic and economic significance of modernising India's maritime defence fleet.
22. Bihar's pilot of mobile-based voting marks a digital shift in electoral practices. Analyze the opportunities and challenges of app-based voting in enhancing electoral inclusion and integrity.
23. The US decision to reduce tax on foreign remittances could impact India's external account. Discuss the significance of remittance flows for the Indian economy and the implications of global regulatory shifts.
24. Increasing GPS interference incidents have raised alarms for aviation safety. Explain the nature of GPS spoofing and jamming. What technological and regulatory measures are needed to secure critical navigation systems?
25. The launch of the National Turmeric Board aims to boost turmeric exports. Analyze the role of commodity-specific boards in promoting value chains, exports, and farmers' welfare.
26. The Synthetic Human Genome Project represents a leap in bioengineering. Examine the ethical, scientific, and policy challenges associated with synthetic biology and gene editing research.
27. Secondary pollutants like ammonium sulphate contribute significantly to PM2.5 levels. Explain the formation of secondary pollutants and their impact on air quality management in urban India.

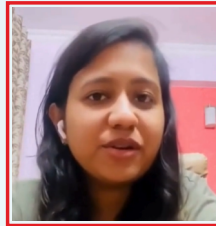


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