

CurrentTap

April 2026 – 1st to 30th

Comprehensive **Current Affairs Magazine** Covering

GA

ESI

FINANCE



Dear Students,

We understand that while reading the magazine, it can sometimes feel overwhelming to decide what to focus on first. To make your preparation smoother and more strategic, we've introduced three support features — designed to work together with your preparation style.

FAQ Document – To Help You Understand Better

- It makes student understand the relevance of the document for the respective examination by making student understand the Weightage, Timeline, Date of Uploading with respect to the document.
- Click here to read the FAQ document.
 - [RBI](#)
 - [NABARD](#)

YouTube Videos – To Help You Reinforce Concepts

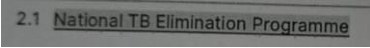
- We have covered some of the most important news articles from the document in a simplified format
- We have added a **YouTube icon (📺) with embedded link** along with the titles of news which are covered in the YouTube lectures.

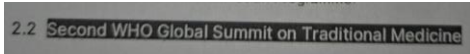
Colour Coding – To Help You Prioritise

- We have introduced **two dedicated colour codes** to help you quickly **identify high-priority content**.
- **Colour Code Classification:**
 - **Relevant for Phase I (Light Blue Color) Example – 2.1**
National TB Elimination Programme

- Relevant for Phase I and II (**Maroon Color**) – **2.3 Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine**

After taking a printout the news will look as follows:

Phase I (It will appear light in color) - 

Phase I and II (It will appear dark in color) - 

- **Important Note:**

- The **colour codes** have been applied **only** to those news items that carry **high exam priority**, based on analysis of previous year question trends and expected relevance.
- Students are **strongly advised** to go through the **entire magazine** for **comprehensive coverage**.
- However, if you are short on time and wish to focus only on high-priority topics, you may use these colour codes as a quick reference guide.

Warm regards,

Team EduTap

Contents

 FAQ Document – To Help You Understand Better	2
 YouTube Videos – To Help You Reinforce Concepts.....	2
 Colour Coding – To Help You Prioritise	2
1. GA IN NEWS.....	10
PIB IN NEWS	10
FIRST IN NEWS	10
GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES	11
SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES.....	11
MOUs AND AGREEMENTS	12
BANKING AND FINANCE.....	12
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	13
DEFENCE EXERCISES/ INITIATIVES/ TECHNOLOGY	14
PERSONS IN NEWS	16
PLACES IN NEWS.....	16
BOOKS AND AUTHORS.....	16
DAYS IN NEWS.....	16
MISCELLANEOUS	17
OTHER NEWS.....	18
FIRST IN NEWS	18
MOUs AND AGREEMENTS	30
BANKING AND FINANCE.....	31
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	31
DEFENCE EXERCISES/ INITIATIVES/ TECHNOLOGY	33
SPORTS	34
AWARDS	35
APPOINTMENT	38
PERSONS IN NEWS	39
BOOKS AND AUTHORS.....	42
PLACES IN NEWS.....	42
DAYS IN NEWS.....	42
MISCELLANEOUS	44
2. GA + ESI.....	46

PIB IN NEWS	46
SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – HEALTH	46
2.1 10th National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity	46
SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – EDUCATION	47
2.2 Computational Thinking and AI Curriculum for Classes 3–8	47
2.3 Career Cards for Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	48
2.4 SARAL AI	49
2.5 Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme	49
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	50
2.6 Prakriti 2026	50
2.7 NPC Appointed as Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA)	51
2.8 India SDG Dashboard	53
2.9 “Bhavasagara” National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna	53
2.10 90 th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife	54
2.11 National Biodiversity Authority	55
2.12 Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025	56
2.13 One time relief for Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) in SEZ	57
2.14 India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)	58
2.15 9th India International Water Week (IIWW-2026)	59
2.16 Shekha Jheel declared India’s 99th Ramsar site	60
2.17 India adds record 6.1 GW wind capacity in 2025–26	60
2.18 Launch of the Climate Resilience Analytics and Visualization Intelligence System (CRAVIS)	61
EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA	61
2.19 MoUs signed between Labour Ministry with Porter and Gigin Technologies	61
SOCIAL JUSTICE	63
2.20 BHASHINI for Seva / Sanchalan" program	63
2.21 National Mental Health Programme	64
2.22 Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Campaigns	65
2.23 Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026	66
2.24 National Youth Policy (NYP) 2026	66
2.25 Skills Outcomes Fund (SOF)	67
2.26 100 Entities onboarded for Aadhaar-Based Offline Verification	68

2.27	National Chintan Shivir on Social Justice and Empowerment.....	68
2.28	IPPB launches dedicated Savings Account for Self Help Groups (SHGs)	68
GENDER ISSUES		69
2.29	SHe-Box and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013	69
Why in News		69
2.30	Womaniya Initiative	70
2.31	Women Reservation Bill (106th Amendment).....	71
2.32	Launch of e-SafeHER	72
2.33	Nari Shakti Vandan Run	73
GLOBALIZATION		73
2.34	India Hosts 1 st BRICS Youth Coordination Meeting 2026	73
2.35	3rd India–Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment (DTI)	74
2.36	India, S Korea set \$50 bn trade target.....	75
REGIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS.....		76
2.37	First BRICS Health Working Group (HWG) Meeting 2026	76
EXPORT-IMPORT POLICY		77
2.38	India's Plan for USD 2 Trillion Export Target by 2030-31.....	77
MEASUREMENT OF GROWTH.....		79
2.39	Draft Uniform Guidelines for Compilation of Gross State Value Addition (GSVA).....	79
2.40	Field operations for the Census 2027 Phase I begins	79
2.41	India's Seafood Exports hit record ₹72,325 crore in FY 2025–26	80
2.42	Cabinet approves Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI).....	81
2.43	India's March Industrial Output (IIP) slows to 4.1%	82
2.44	MoSPI releases Approach Paper for Index of Service Production (ISP)	83
INFLATION		83
2.45	Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) for March 2026	83
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA		84
2.46	Special Economic Zones (SEZs)	84
2.47	Udyam Registration Portal.....	85
2.48	Government e Marketplace (GeM).....	86
2.49	PNB-GeM Partnership.....	86
2.50	Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS).....	87
2.51	Vibhor Jain appointed CEO and MD of ONDC	87

INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM	88
2.52 Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti Assumes Charge as Chairperson of NCBC	88
2.53 National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)	89
2.54 Reconstitution of NITI Aayog	90
REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATIONS	90
2.55 Panel Discussion on World Trade Organization Ruling on Transnational Subsidies	90
2.56 India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (IN–NZ FTA)	90
INDIAN MONEY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS: LINKAGES WITH THE ECONOMY	91
2.57 Export Obligation Discharge Certificates (EODC)	91
URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION	92
2.58 Launch of Operational Guidelines for the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)	92
SERVICE SECTOR IN INDIA	92
2.59 Karmayogi Sadhana Saptah	92
OTHER NEWS	93
SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – HEALTH	93
2.60 RDAI Forms Panel to Review Private Health Insurance Facets	93
2.61 G7 One Health Summit	94
SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – EDUCATION	95
2.62 NCERT Granted Deemed-to-be-University Status	95
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	96
2.63 India's Record Wind Energy Achievement in FY 2025–26	96
2.64 CMS COP15: Expansion of Protected Migratory Species	97
2.65 MSCI EM index	97
2.66 COP33 climate summit	98
2.67 US imposes 123% Anti-Dumping Duty on Indian Solar Imports	98
2.68 IFC plans to scale up India investments to \$10 billion annually by 2030	99
SOCIAL JUSTICE	100
2.69 Uttarakhand Tops National Rankings in New Criminal Law Rollout	100
2.70 SAMPANN	101
2.71 Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launches E-PRAAPTI portal	101
GENDER ISSUES	102
2.72 "TrueCyberSakhi" Digital Safety Initiative	102
2.73 Asia's first UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development	103

GLOBALIZATION	104
2.74 India Elected to UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Subsidiary Bodies	104
2.75 World Bank Funding for Amaravati Capital Phase-I	105
GLOBALIZATION	106
2.76 India-US Trade Facilitation Portal.....	106
REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATIONS	106
2.77 India approved withdrawal of ₹3,000 crore to Maldives	106
2.78 India Submits 2031–35 Climate Targets to United Nations (UN)	107
MEASUREMENT OF GROWTH	108
2.79 India's Composite PMI Rises to 58.3 in April 2026	108
MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY	108
2.80 CAPEX	108
2.81 India's largest trading partner in 2025-26	109
EXPORT-IMPORT POLICY	109
2.82 E commerce cap	109
INDIAN MONEY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS: LINKAGES WITH THE ECONOMY	110
2.83 Indian Rupee Hits Historic Low of 93.72 Against US Dollar	110
2.84 Lok Sabha Passes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025	110
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS	111
2.85 Census 2027 Helpline 1855 launched	111
SERVICE SECTOR IN INDIA	111
2.86 E-Way Bill Generation Hits Record 140.6 Million	111
3. GA + FINANCE	112
PIB IN NEWS	112
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MARKET	112
3.1 Antariksh Venture Capital Fund.....	112
3.2 Indian Natural Gas Derivative Contracts	113
3.3 Verified App Label Initiative	113
3.4 Securities and Exchange Board of India extends IPO clearance deadline.....	114
3.5 SEBI Launches Three New IT platforms	114
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR.....	115
3.6 Domestic Systemically Important Insurers.....	115
3.7 Kar Saathi	115

3.8	The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026	116
3.9	Banking Connect Platform	117
3.10	Unified Lending Interface	117
3.11	The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025	118
OTHER NEWS		120
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MARKET		120
3.12	10 years of UPI	120
3.13	Social Impact Fund	121
3.14	SEBI's amendment to Alternative Investment Fund Regulations	121
RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN FINANCIAL MARKET		121
3.15	PPFAS Asset Management gets approval to sponsor Pension Funds	121
3.16	MoU between DoT and SEBI	122
3.17	SEBI's New Variable Net Worth Framework for Stockbrokers	122
3.18	JPMorgan downgrades Indian equities to 'Neutral'	123
3.19	India Sells 30-Year Green Bond at 6 bps Greenium, Highest in 3 Years	123
3.20	SEBI amends 'Fit and Proper' framework for Market Intermediaries	123
3.21	SEBI Allows Net Settlement for FPI Trades; Deadline Set for December 2026	124
3.22	SEBI Operationalises PaRRVA to Enhance Transparency and Investor Protection	125
3.23	SEBI Introduces Fast-Track Mechanism for AIF Scheme Launches	126
3.24	SEBI Launches 3 IT Platforms to Strengthen Regulation & Cybersecurity	127
3.25	SEBI Proposes Easing Rules on Handling Unpaid Client Securities	128
3.26	NSE Revises FCFE Norms for SME Listings on NSE Emerge	129
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR		130
3.27	MobiKwik Receives NBFC Licence from RBI	130
3.28	Shriram Finance subsidiary gets RBI nod for Primary Dealer business	131
3.29	Credit Growth Continues to Outpace Deposit Growth in FY26	131
3.30	Bank Borrowings to Dominate NBFC Funding Mix in FY27: CRISIL	132
3.31	EPFO Introduces Form 121 for TDS Exemption on EPF Withdrawals	133
FINTECH		134
3.32	Paytm Introduces Biometric UPI Authentication & Cardless ATM Withdrawals	134
3.33	NBBL onboards Postal Life Insurance on Bharat Connect	135

1. GA IN NEWS

PIB IN NEWS

FIRST IN NEWS

S.No	News	Key Facts
1.	Khelo India Tribal Games	- India's first national multi-sport event for tribal athletes. - Hosted in Chhattisgarh across Raipur, Jagdalpur and Surguja. - Organized under Khelo India Scheme. - Official Mascot: <i>Morveer</i>, Derived from the Chhattisgarhi words 'Mor'(our own) and 'Veer'(bravery). - Karnataka emerged as the overall champion with 23 gold, 8 silver and 7 bronze medals. - Odisha finished second with 21 gold, 15 silver and 21 bronze medals. - Jharkhand secured the third position with 16 gold, 8 silver and 11 bronze medals. - Manikanta L. from Karnataka emerged as the most decorated athlete by winning a total of 9 medals in swimming (8 gold and 1 silver).
2.	bob SAMVAD	- Launched by Bank of Baroda. - An industry-first AI-powered multilingual conversational platform. - Enables real-time communication between bank staff and customers at branch counters using speech-to-speech and text-to-speech technology. - The platform supports 22 Indian languages.
3.	Production and Dispatch in Captive and Commercial Mines for FY 2025-26	- Production and dispatch from captive/commercial blocks crossed 200 MT for the first time. - Coal production from captive and commercial mines reached 210.46 MT, registering a robust year-on-year growth of 10.22% over 190.95 MT in the previous fiscal. - Dispatches also witnessed a strong uptick, touching 204.61 MT and marking a 7.35% increase compared to 190.42 MT in FY 2024-25.
4.	First mining company in India to surpass the 50 MT annual production mark	- Milestone achieved by NMDC, India's largest iron ore producer. - Achieved a historic landmark with the production of 53 MT of iron ore in FY26.
5.	First CCRAS Institute to Achieve ISO 15189:2022 Accreditation in Biochemistry & Haematology	- Clinical Laboratory at the Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Bengaluru, has been awarded the accreditation for both Biochemistry and Haematology—becoming the first institute under the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) to achieve this distinction. - Awarded by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).

6.	FIRST EDITION OF NAVAL COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE-2026 	- Held in New Delhi. To be held biannually.
7.	Sindhi Bhasha Diwas (April 10)	The updated version of the Constitution of India in Sindhi language, both in Devanagari Script (First edition) and Persian Script (Second edition).
8.	India's First Intra-City Drone Delivery Trials	- Conducted in Bengaluru, Karnataka. - Conducted by Federal Express Corporation (FedEx) and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras). - Conducted under the research framework of the FedEx SMART Centre at IIT Madras.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

S.No	Initiative	Key Facts
1.	Arogya Van 	- Initiative of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Aim: to transform vacant land parcels along National Highways into thematic medicinal tree plantations, integrating ecological restoration with public awareness of India's traditional botanical heritage. Target: Planting medicinal trees across 17 identified land parcels. Coverage: 11 states, including Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

S.No	Summit/Conference	Key Outcomes
1.	Outcomes Finance Alliance (OFA) Summit 2026	- Venue: Cape Town, South Africa. - A leading global platform that brings together governments, philanthropies, investors, multilaterals, intermediaries, and delivery partners to advance the role of outcomes-based approaches in development finance.
2.	Bharat Tribes Fest 2026	- Venue: New Delhi. - Organized by Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) along with Ministry of Tribal Affairs. - A massive showcase of tribal excellence with stalls representing Van DhanVikasKendras (VDVKs) and master artisans from across India. Key Highlights Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched "RISA: Timeless Tribal" - A Premium National Brand for tribal textiles, embroidery, and handicrafts.

		○ Implementing Agency: TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India). ○ Mission: To transform traditional tribal crafts into aspirational, global luxury products while ensuring fair profits return directly to the artisans. ○ Brand Name inspired by the Risa, a traditional handwoven stole from Tripura. • Bharat Tribes Business Conclave 2026 was organized. ○ Phase I: covers 10 clusters including weaves, embroidery, and crafts across states.
3.	International Conference on "Spacecraft Mission Operations: SMOPS- 2026"	• Venue: Bengaluru, Karnataka. • Organizers: Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Astronautical Society of India (ASI) and International Academy of Astronautics (IAA). • Theme: "Innovative Operations for Smart and Sustainable Space Mission Management – Next Generation".
4.	India Pharma 2026	• Venue: New Delhi. • Organized by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) in collaboration with FICCI and the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance. • Theme: "Discover in India: Leapfrogging Life-Sciences Innovation".
5.	2026 World Border Security Congress 	• Venue: Vienna, Austria About World Border Security Congress • Established in 2012. • A premier international platform that brings together senior government officials, security experts, and industry leaders to deliberate on emerging challenges, technological innovations, and best practices in border management, while fostering international cooperation.

MOUs AND AGREEMENTS

S.No	Signing Entities	Key Facts
1.	Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) & Mappls App	• Objective: To enable the display of authorised Aadhaar centres on their Mappls App.

BANKING AND FINANCE

S.No	Program/Initiative	Key Facts
1.	MyLIC and Super Sales Saathi	• Launched by LIC.

- **MyLIC app** brings together policy servicing, claims support, payments, documentation, and customer engagement into a single, intuitive 360-degree digital experience.
- **Super Sales Saathi** is a **specialized tool for LIC agents and intermediaries to streamline the sales and onboarding process.**
- Both the above mobile Apps are delivered through **LIC's DIVE (Digital Innovation & Value Enhancement)** digital transformation platform.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Technology in News	Key Facts
1.	SPADEX-2 and SPADEX-3	• Upcoming advanced orbital docking experiments by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). • Follow the success of the initial SpaDeX (Space Docking Experiment) mission launched in 2024, which made India the fourth nation to master autonomous space docking after USA, Russia, and China. • SPADEX-2: Designed to replicate docking in a highly elliptical orbit, a precursor for the Chandrayaan-4 lunar sample return mission, where a lander must dock with an orbiter to return samples to Earth. • SPADEX-3: Focuses on docking in a circular orbit between two pressurized modules using Bharatiya Docking System (BDS). a precursor for the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS), testing the docking interfaces and procedures needed to assemble and operate India's planned space station.
2.	Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)	• The indigenously designed and built PFBR at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu successfully attained its first criticality, marking the initiation of a sustained nuclear chain reaction. • A 500 MWe (MegaWatt electrical) reactor built by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI) at the Kalpakkam Nuclear Complex. • With this achievement, India has officially entered the second stage of its three-stage nuclear power programme. • Once fully operational, India will become only the second country in the world after Russia to operate a commercial fast breeder reactor. About India's three-stage nuclear power programme • First conceived by Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the architect of India's nuclear programme. • Stage 1: Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs): Natural uranium is used as fuel in PHWRs to generate power. The spent fuel from these reactors produces plutonium, which becomes the primary input for the next stage. • Stage 2: The plutonium obtained from Stage 1 is used as fuel in Fast Breeder Reactors, which generate more fuel than they consume. • Stage 3: Thorium-Based Reactors: This stage will harness India's vast thorium reserves at scale, using the Uranium-233 bred in Stage 2 as fuel.

3.	YUva Vigyani KAryakram (YUVIKA)/ Young Scientist Programme	- Launched by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 2019. Annual two-week residential program, designed to "catch them young" by sparking interest in space science and technology among school students. Target Audience: students who have completed Class 9. Objective: To encourage students to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
4.	India's space economy	India's space economy is projected to grow to approximately \$44 billion by 2033 (~8% of the global space economy) and \$100 billion by 2040 (~10% of the global space economy). Initiatives by the Government of India for the Growth of Space Sector Indian Space Policy 2023: Designed to institutionalise private sector participation in the Indian space domain. Liberalised Foreign Direct Investment policy governing space sector. 1000 Crores Venture Capital Fund. 500 Crores Technology Adoption Fund (TAF) for the development and commercialization of space technology.
5.	India's Space Vision for 2047	Includes establishing Bharatiya Antariksh Station and Indian Moon landing by 2040. Other Projects approved: - Gaganyaan follow-on mission & 1st module of BAS. - Chandrayaan-4 /Lunar Sample Return Mission. - Chandrayaan-5 / LuPex Mission - Next generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) - Venus Orbiter Mission
6.	Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA)	- The Alliance has expanded to include 85 members. Spearheads India's journey toward becoming a global leader in 6G technology by 2030 - An industry-led body, facilitated by the government, providing a collaborative platform to technology stakeholders including public/private companies, academia, research institutions, and standard development organizations. Seven working groups under the alliance: different domains of 6G like Spectrum, Technology, Applications, Green and Sustainability and use cases.

DEFENCE EXERCISES/ INITIATIVES/ TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Exercise/Technology	Key Facts
1.	INS Taragiri	Fourth ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) stealth frigates. - Built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. - Formally commissioned into the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

2.	INS Sudarshini	• Indian Navy's sail training ship. • Arrived at the historic port city of Sète in France as part of the ongoing landmark transoceanic expedition Lokayan-26. • Also participated in '<i>Escale à Sète</i>', one of the most celebrated gatherings in Europe of traditional tall ships and seafaring communities. About Lokayan-26 • A 10-month, transoceanic sail training expedition by the Indian Navy. • Led by INS Sudarshini. • Showcases India's prominence in global maritime activities and Indian Navy's commitment to professional training and excellence in ocean sailing expedition.
3.	Ran Samwad 2026	• National Tri-Service seminar; Held in Bengaluru, Karnataka. • Theme: "Multi-Domain Operations (MDO): An Imperative for Addressing Conventional and Irregular Threats". Conceptualised by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan.
4.	INS Sunayna	• An Offshore Patrol Vessel of the Indian Navy, • Designated as Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR, from the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. • Objective: To strengthen regional maritime cooperation and security, reflecting India's vision of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions). • The ship set sail with a multinational crew comprising personnel from India and 16 Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs). About IOS SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) • An initiative by the Indian Navy. • Reflects India's vision for regional maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean. • Involve deployment of Indian naval ships to partner nations. • Aims to enhance maritime security and interoperability.
5.	Exercise Cyclone – IV	• India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise. • Held in Anshas, Egypt.
6.	Exercise DUSTLIK-7th edition	• India-Uzbekistan joint military Exercise. • Venue: Namangam, Uzbekistan. • A yearly event conducted alternatively in India and Uzbekistan. • 2025 Edition held in Aundh (Pune).
7.	IN-SLN DIVEX 2026- Fourth Edition	• Bilateral diving exercise between India & Sri Lanka. • Held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. • INS Nireekshak represented India at the exercise.

PERSONS IN NEWS

S.No	Person in News	Key Facts
1.	Mahatma Jyotiba Phule	- The Government of India has commenced the nationwide Commemoration of the 200th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule through a two-year-long celebration starting from 11 April 2026 to 11 April 2028. - He is a revolutionary Indian social activist, thinker, and writer from Maharashtra. - Widely revered as the "Father of the Indian Social Revolution". Pioneer of Women's Education: In 1848, he and his wife, Savitribai Phule, opened India's first school for girls in Pune at Bhidewada. In 1873, he established the Satyashodhak Samaj to advocate for social justice, equal rights, and human dignity for lower-caste individuals and peasants.

PLACES IN NEWS

S.No	Place in News	Key Facts
1.	Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project (PHEP-II)	- A run-of-the-river facility on the Punatsangchhu River in Bhutan. - Developed through a bilateral agreement with India. - India and Bhutan signed the Protocol to the Agreement for the PHEP-II export tariff, formalising the financial terms for surplus power sold to India.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

S.No	Book Title	Key Facts
1.	'Tides of Time: India's History through Murals in Parliament'	Author: Sudha Murty, noted writer, philanthropist, and Rajya Sabha MP .

DAYS IN NEWS

S.No	Day in News	Key Facts
1.	8th Foundation Day of National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) (April 1)	- An autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. - Serves as the central nodal agency for managing Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS).

2.	63rd National Maritime Day (April 5)	Theme: "Maritime India – Empowering Progress". - Commemorates the maiden voyage of the SS Loyalty, the first Indian-owned merchant vessel, which sailed from Mumbai to London in 1919.
3.	World Homoeopathy Day 2026 (April 10)	- Theme: "Homoeopathy for Sustainable Health". - Commemorates the birth anniversary of Dr. Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy.
4.	25th Foundation Day of National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) (April 10) 	--
5.	18th Civil Services Day (April 21)	Theme: "Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile".
6.	Earth Day 2026 (April 22) 	Theme: "Our Power, Our Planet".
7.	56th Foundation Day of Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO) (April 25)	- Observed as Sankalp Diwas. - HUDCO is India's leading techno-financing Navratna CPSE under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. - HUDCO was established in 1970.

MISCELLANEOUS

S.No	News	Key Facts										
1.	Rare Earth Reserves in India	India holds world’s third largest rare earth resources (USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries, January, 2025).										
		<table><tr><th>Mineral</th><th>States</th></tr><tr><td>Monazite (Beach & Red Sands)</td><td>Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat</td></tr><tr><td>Monazite (Inland Alluvium)</td><td>Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu</td></tr><tr><td>Rare Earth Oxides (Hard Rock)</td><td>Ambadungar area, Chhota Udepur district, Gujarat and Bhatikhera and Dantala area, Balotra district, Rajasthan.</td></tr><tr><td>Xenotime (Riverine Deposits)</td><td>Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand</td></tr></table>	Mineral	States	Monazite (Beach & Red Sands)	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat	Monazite (Inland Alluvium)	Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu	Rare Earth Oxides (Hard Rock)	Ambadungar area, Chhota Udepur district, Gujarat and Bhatikhera and Dantala area, Balotra district, Rajasthan.	Xenotime (Riverine Deposits)	Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand
		Mineral	States									
		Monazite (Beach & Red Sands)	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat									
		Monazite (Inland Alluvium)	Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu									
		Rare Earth Oxides (Hard Rock)	Ambadungar area, Chhota Udepur district, Gujarat and Bhatikhera and Dantala area, Balotra district, Rajasthan.									
Xenotime (Riverine Deposits)	Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand											

2.	Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026	Officially designates Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh.
3.	IndiaSkills National Competition 2025–26	- Organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and supported by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). Odisha topped the medal tally with 57 medals (15 Gold, 12 Silver, 14 Bronze, and 16 Medallions for Excellence). Tamil Nadu and Karnataka came 2nd and 3rd respectively.
4.	Cargo Handled by Major Indian ports during FY 2025–26	- The Major Ports under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways have collectively handled 915.17 million tonnes (MT) of cargo during FY 2025–26, surpassing the annual target of 904 MT. - Marked a 7.06% year-on-year growth. Top 3 volume handlers: Deendayal Port Authority, Paradip Port Authority and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) respectively.
5.	Delhi–Dehradun Economic Corridor	- Inaugurated recently. - It features Asia's longest elevated wildlife corridor—a 12 km stretch through the Rajaji National Park in Uttarakhand designed to allow safe animal movement.

OTHER NEWS

FIRST IN NEWS

S.No	News	Key Facts
1.	OpenAI's first Managing Director for the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region	- Name: Kiran Mani - He recently served as the CEO – Digital at JioStar.
2.	First woman Municipal Commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)	- Name: Ashwini Bhide. - Known widely as the "Metro Woman of Mumbai". - Succeeds Bhushan Gagrani. - She is credited with driving the execution of the Mumbai's first underground metro corridor, the Aqua Line (Metro Line 3). - BMC in Maharashtra is India's richest and one of the oldest civic bodies.
3.	First pace bowler and only the second player overall to reach 200 wickets in the Indian Premier League	- Milestone achieved by Bhuvneshwar Kumar (RCB). - Achieved the milestone by taking the wicket of Ayush Mhatre (CSK). - The first person to reach the milestone of 200 wickets in IPL history was the leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal in 2024. - As of April 2026, Chahal and Bhuvneshwar Kumar are the only two bowlers in the history of the tournament to have crossed the 200-wicket threshold.

4.	<u>First-ever brand ambassador for Jindal Stainless</u>	Name: Ranveer Singh.
5.	<u>First Indian woman to reach Mount Everest Base Camp (EBC) on a bicycle</u>	- Name: Divya Singh. - She is from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. Additional Information The first woman in the world to reach Everest Base Camp (EBC) on a bicycle is Tammam Bil Khoo from Bangladesh.
6.	<u>Indian Army's first comprehensive Technology Roadmap for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Loitering Munitions</u>	The roadmap lists 30 distinct types of UAS and loitering munitions, translating into nearly 80 variants tailored for different terrains and roles.
7.	<u>Mission MITRA (Mapping of Interoperable Traits and Response Assessment)</u>	- Launched as a part of Gaganyaan mission. - A first- team behavioral study designed by ISRO and the India Air Force's (IAF) Institute of Aerospace Medicine. India's first large-scale analog space mission designed to test the mental and physical endurance of astronauts. - Held in Leh, Ladakh. - Analyzes how astronauts (Gaganyatris) and ground control teams interact and make decisions under operational stress. About Gaganyaan India's flagship human spaceflight programme. - Aimed at sending a crew of three into a 400-km Low Earth Orbit (LEO) for a three-day mission and returning them safely to Earth via a splashdown in Indian waters. - Four Indian Air Force pilots have been selected and trained for the mission: Prashant Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap and Shubhanshu Shukla.
8.	<u>World's first dedicated freight-only Shinkansen service</u>	- Launched in Japan by East Japan Railway Company - The train is a repurposed E3 series passenger bullet train.
9.	<u>India's first hydrogen train</u>	- Successfully completed its oscillation trial runs in Jind, Haryana. - Often referred to as the "Namo Green Rail." - Part of the "Hydrogen for Heritage" initiative, which aims to modernize rail travel with zero-emission technology. - Designed and manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai. - A dedicated green hydrogen production plant has been established at Jind - The pilot service will operate on the Jind-Sonapat section of the Northern Railway in Haryana.

		India will join an elite global league of countries including Germany, Sweden, Japan and China – that operate hydrogen-powered trains.
10.	1st National Indoor Athletics Championships 2026	- Held at the Kalinga Athletics Indoor Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Men's 60m: Gurindervir Singh clocked 6.60s to break the 8-year-old record of 6.67s. Men's 800m: Mohammed Afsal set a new national record of 1:47.86, becoming the first Indian to hold the "Double Crown" (both indoor and outdoor national records) in the 800m.
11.	Prahar Light Machine Guns (LMGs)	Indian Army received 2,000 'Prahar' LMGs from Adani Defence and Aerospace. - Produced by PLR Systems, a joint venture between Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) and the Adani Group. - Part of a larger contract for 41,000 units signed in 2024 to replace the Indian Army's ageing 5.56mm INSAS LMGs. Adani Group became the first private company in India to manufacture small arms and ammunition. Prahar LMG is known as Negev NG7 in Israel. - Manufactured in India under the 'Make in India' programme.
12.	India's first integrated quantum technology park	- Name: Amaravati Quantum Valley. - Currently under development in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. - Aligns with National Quantum Mission.
13.	First asset management company to be headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat	- Name: Lakshya Asset Management Company (Lakshya AMC). Wealth First Portfolio Managers Limited received final approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), to launch its mutual fund business. - The new business will operate through a subsidiary called Lakshya Asset Management Company (Lakshya AMC).
14.	First crewed mission of NASA's Artemis program	- Name: Artemis II. Closest human approach to the Moon in over 50 years. - First time humans had traveled to the vicinity of the Moon since the Apollo 17 mission in 1972. - Successfully carried four astronauts on a ten-day journey around the Moon and back to Earth and validated deep-space life support systems. - A "textbook" test flight for the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and the Orion spacecraft. SLS rocket launched from Kennedy Space Center, Florida. The Orion spacecraft, named Integrity by the crew, entered a highly elliptical High Earth Orbit (HEO). - The Orion spacecraft is built by Lockheed Martin

		- Completed a historic flyby of the Moon and are returning to Earth. - The Orion spacecraft reached a maximum distance of 252,756 miles (406,771 km) from Earth, it is the farthest distance traveled by humans from Earth - The mission broke the Apollo 13 record of 248,655 miles set in 1970. Crew: Reid Wiseman (Commander) from NASA, Oldest person to travel to the Moon's vicinity. Victor Glover (Pilot) from NASA; the first person of color to travel to the vicinity of the Moon. Christina Koch (Mission Specialist) from NASA; the first woman to travel around the Moon. Jeremy Hansen (Mission Specialist) from Canadian Space Agency; the first Canadian to leave earth's orbit and travel to the Moon. - During the historic lunar flyby, the crew proposed naming two previously unnamed craters "Integrity" and "Carroll". Amit Kshatriya, an Indian-American scientist, was a central figure behind the successful completion of mission. As Nasa's Associate Administrator, Kshatriya serves as the highest-ranking civil servant at NASA and as a senior advisor to Administrator Jared Isaacman. Additional Information - During the 1968 Apollo 8 mission, Jim Lovell named the lunar peak Mount Marilyn after his wife to use as a navigational landmark for the first crewed journey to the Moon. Artemis program is NASA's ongoing campaign to re-establish a human presence on the Moon for the first time since 1972. China's plan to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030 is officially referred to as the manned lunar landing phase of the broader Chinese Lunar Exploration Program (CLEP), or the Chang'e Project.
15.	First openly queer person to serve in India's national legislature	- Name: Menaka Guruswamy. - Took her oath as the Member of Parliament (MP) for West Bengal (Rajya Sabha). - A renowned constitutional expert and Senior Advocate, she was a lead lawyer in the landmark 2018 Supreme Court case that led to the decriminalization of Section 377.

16.	World's first "10 giga" nation	- UAE officially became the world's first "10 giga" nation by launching the first commercial Upper 6GHz (U6GHz) internet network. - Announced at the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2026.
17.	First Indian FMCG company to surpass the ₹1 trillion turnover milestone 	Milestone achieved by Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the umbrella body for the Amul brand.
18.	World's first global university for wildlife and veterinary sciences	- Launched by Vantara in Jamnagar, Gujarat. - Vantara was founded by Anant Ambani, Executive Director of Reliance Industries.
19.	India's first artificial intelligence-driven tool to strengthen investigation and prosecution in narcotics cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act) 	- Name: 'NARIT AI' (Narcotics Analysis & RAG-based Investigation Tool). - Launched by Gujarat Police. - Developed by the Western Railway Police (Vadodara division) in collaboration with a Mumbai-based AI startup.
20.	First-ever Mumbai Climate Week (MCW)	- Held in Mumbai, Maharashtra. First citizen-led climate platform of its kind in India and the Global South, aiming to shift global climate dialogue from negotiation to real-world execution Organizers: Project Mumbai in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).
21.	India's first quantum reference facility	- Name: Amaravati Quantum Reference Facilities (AQRF). - Launched in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. - The initiative aims to build India's first sovereign hardware ecosystem. - Part of the broader Quantum Valley project in Amaravati. - The Amaravati Quantum Valley is backed by IBM, Tata Consultancy Services, and Larsen & Toubro.
22.	Asia's first 3D-printed Mars radiation shield	- Developed and tested by Ahmedabad-based space architecture firm AAKA Space Studio and deep-tech startup MiCoB. - At the core of this advancement lies the concept of In-Situ Resource Utilisation (ISRU), which focusses on using materials already present on celestial bodies.

23.	The first large language model from the newly formed Meta Superintelligence Labs (MSL)	- Name: Muse Spark. - Muse Spark is the first model in a new internal series called Avocado. - The superintelligence team was formed to help Meta catch up in the AI race. - Superintelligence refers to AI systems that could outthink humans.
24.	Asian Boxing Elite Boxing Championships 2026 Venue: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. 	Kazakhstan topped the medal table based on gold count (13 medals including 6 gold). India recorded the highest overall total with 16 medals (5 Gold, 3 Silver, and 8 Bronze) and finished second in the medal table. The Indian women's team finished first in their gender category with 10 medals (4 Gold, 2 Silver, 4 Bronze). Key Milestones Vishvanath Suresh (men's 50-kilogram category): Clinched India's first Asian title in men's boxing in five years by defeating Japan's Daichi Iwai.
25.	First gold medal for Qatar ever won at the Senior Asian Championships in any wrestling style (Greco-Roman or Freestyle)	- Milestone achieved by Shahin Badaghimofrad, - He secured gold in the Greco-Roman 82 kg category. - The event was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
26.	Celeste in-orbit demonstration mission	European Space Agency's (ESA) first initiative to bring satellite navigation into Low Earth Orbit (LEO). ESA launched the first two satellites (IOD-1 and IOD-2) of the mission from New Zealand. - Celeste is an in-orbit demonstration (IOD) mission. - It aims to test a complementary LEO layer for Europe's Galileo navigation system. - The long-term goal is to develop a fully operational PNT (Positioning, Navigation, Timing) constellation by 2030.
27.	First-ever life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda in the United States	Installed at Westlake Square in Seattle. Swami Vivekananda had delivered his historic address at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893.
28.	Sikkim's first border village community radio station	- Name: Sikkim Sundari (88.4 FM). - Launched by Indian Army's Trishakti Corps.
29.	First Indian woman to win the FIDE Women's	- Name: R Vaishali. - Defeated Kateryna Lagno (Russia). - Event held in Cyprus.

	Candidates Tournament (Chess)	- By winning the Candidates, she has earned the right to challenge reigning champion Ju Wenjun of China for the Women's World Chess Championship title later in 2026. - She is only the second Indian woman ever to qualify for a classical World Championship match, following Koneru Humpy.
30.	First water utility in India to receive the ISO 50001:2018 certification for its energy management systems	- Milestone achieved by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). - Certified by Bureau Veritas.
31.	Inaugural Boulders Classic (Golf) Venue: Hyderabad	Winner: Shubhankar Sharma.
32.	India's first comprehensive mobile banking application designed specifically for feature phone users	- Name: BoB World Lite. - Launched by Bank of Baroda (BoB) and Reliance Jio. - Launched on JioPhone Prima 4G device.
33.	The first state cricket association in India to introduce a structured player contract model for domestic cricketers	- Milestone achieved by Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA). - Specifically designed to provide financial stability to domestic cricketers who do not have IPL or national team contracts.
34.	9th Indian Ocean Conference 2026	- Held in Mauritius. - Organized by the India Foundation in collaboration with the Government of Mauritius and the Ministry of External Affairs of India. - Theme: "Collective Stewardship for Indian Ocean Governance". - This marked the first time the event was hosted in an African country.
35.	First-ever Chief Minister from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Bihar	- Name: Samrat Choudhary. - Succeeded Nitish Kumar.
36.	First Nominated Member of Rajya Sabha to serve as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha	Harivansh Narayan Singh was re-elected unopposed as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for a historic third consecutive term. - He was recently nominated to the Rajya Sabha by President Droupadi Murmu following the retirement of former Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi.
37.		Additional Information Article 89(2) of the Indian Constitution mandates that the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) must choose a member to be the Deputy Chairman as soon as the office becomes vacant. - Holds office for a term of six years.

38.	Indian Army's first blue-water sailing expedition	- Name: Samudra Sahas. - Launched by the Regiment of Artillery. - Launched from Marve in Mumbai as part of the bicentenary celebrations of the Regiment of Artillery. - The expedition was conducted along the Konkan coast four legs from Mumbai to Vijaydurg, Goa. first time an Artillery unit has undertaken a blue-water (long-distance ocean) mission.
39.	Mundial do Queijo do Brasil (World Cheese Awards)	India participated in the event for the first time. - Held in São Paulo, Brazil. India won a total of four medals (one Super Gold, two Golds, and one Silver medal). Super Gold Winner: Mumbai-based Eleftheria Cheese for its 'Gulmarg' cheese, a creamy Brie-style variety made from cow's milk. Gold Medal (Mumbai): Eleftheria Cheese also earned a Gold medal for its Brunost, a Norwegian-style brown whey cheese. Gold Medal (Ladakh): Nordic Farm from Ladakh for its 'Yak Churpi-Soft,' highlighting the potential of Himalayan yak milk on the global stage. Silver Medal: Awarded to Eleftheria Cheese for its 'Kaali Miri' (Black Pepper) cheese, a Belper Knolle-style creation.
40.	2026 Badminton Asia Championships Venue: Ningbo, China	Men's Singles Ayush Shetty created history as he became the first Indian to win silver and only the first finalist in 61 years in men's singles. Dinesh Khanna, was the last Indian to reach the final and win the gold in 1965. Shi Yuqi (China) won the Gold Medal. Women's Singles South Korea's An Se-young won her maiden women's singles title. - She became the first female singles player to complete the "career sweep" of major titles, including the Olympic Games, World Championships, World Tour Finals, All England Open, Asian Games, and the Asian Championships.
41.	2026 Monte-Carlo Masters (Tennis) Venue: Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France	Jannik Sinner (Italy) defeated Carlos Alcaraz (Spain), securing his first title at the event and reclaiming the world No. 1 ranking. Jannik Sinner's fourth straight Masters 1000 crown. Jannik Sinner became just the second player to win the 'Sunshine Double' and Monte Carlo in the same season -- a feat previously achieved only by Novak Djokovic. Jannik Sinner joins Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal as only the third player to win four successive ATP 1000 titles.
42.	61st edition of Femina Miss India	Hosted by Odisha for the first time at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar. Theme: "Daughters of This Soil". Winner: Sadhvi Sail. First person from Goa to win the title.

		• 1st Runner-up: Rajnandini Pawar (Maharashtra). • 2nd Runner-up: Sree Advaita (Union Territories Combined). “Vishwa Sutra – Weaves of India for the World” • An exclusive handloom collection unveiled during the grand finale. • Initiative of Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology. • Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, has collaborated with the Femina Miss India platform for the first time to showcase the richness and diversity of Indian handlooms on a global stage. • It features 30 distinct handloom weaves, each representing a different Indian state • The collection celebrates the artistry of Indian weavers and highlights the sustainability and cultural depth of the handloom sector.
		Additional Information • The first winner of the Miss India pageant was Esther Victoria Abraham from Kolkata in 1947.
43.	2026 Laureus World Sports Awards	• Laureus World Sportsman of the Year: Carlos Alcaraz (Tennis). ◦ Awarded for his world No. 1 ranking and multi-surface Grand Slam dominance. • Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year: Aryna Sabalenka (Tennis). ◦ Awarded for her successful defense of the Australian Open and rise to No. 1. • Both of them have won the award for the first time in their careers. For the first time in nearly a decade, both the premier individual Laureus awards were won by professional tennis players.
		Additional Information • Sachin Tendulkar won the Laureus Sporting Moment 2000–2020 Award. • He became the first Indian sportsperson to win a Laureus World Sports Award. • Laureus World Sports Awards are known as the “Oscars of Sport.”
44.	India's first platinum group metals extraction plant	• Set up by Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) at Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT), Bhubaneswar in Odisha. • Set up in collaboration with South Africa's mineral-technology institution Mintek. Aimed at building India's first integrated ecosystem for beneficiation (the treatment of raw materials), smelting, and refining of PGMs.(Platinum Group Metals).
		Additional Information • The Baula-Nausahi in Keonjhar, Odisha has the only proven PGM deposits in India.

45.	India's first alkaline battery unit	Set up by Eveready Industries in Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir.
46.	India's First Centre of Excellence on Plant Cell Fermentation	- Name: Herbalife-IIT Madras Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Plant Cell Fermentation Technology - To be set up Herbalife India and IIT Madras at IIT Madras Research Park. - An MoU was signed between two parties in this regard.
47.	India's first Petroglyph Conservation Park	- To be set up at Sindhu Ghat in Leh, Ladakh. - A dedicated conservation space for centuries-old rock carvings (petroglyphs) from Ladakh.
48.	ROSA (Rosalind Franklin Support and Augmentation) project	- A NASA-led initiative approved to provide critical hardware and services for the European Space Agency's (ESA) Rosalind Franklin Mars rover mission. - ESA leads the mission and provides spacecraft, lander, rover, and operations. - Launch is scheduled for late 2028. - It will be the first Mars rover to search for life beneath the surface. SpaceX Falcon Heavy selected as the launch vehicle.
49.	India's first co-branded LED-powered credit card	- Name: CheQ AU Credit Card. - Created through a partnership between the credit management platform CheQ and AU Small Finance Bank.
50.	World Para Athletics (WPA) 2027- 13th edition	- Venue: Olympic City Main Stadium, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. - To be hosted for the first time in Uzbekistan and Central Asia. - The fifth time the event is hosted in Asia, following Doha 2015, Dubai 2019, Kobe 2024 and New Delhi 2025. Additional Information India hosted the World Para Athletics Championships for the first time in 2025. Brazil topped the medals table in the 2025 edition held in New Delhi.
51.	World's first industrial-scale EASyMelt (electrically-assisted syngas smelter) technology	To be implemented by Tata Steel and the SMS Group (Germany) through definitive agreements at the Jamshedpur Works in Jharkhand .
52.	2026 Goldman Environmental Prize	Awarded for the first time to an all-women cohort. Six recipients were honoured for their grassroots leadership in fighting climate change, protecting biodiversity, and defending indigenous land rights. Recipients: Iroro Tanshi (Nigeria), Borim Kim (South Korea), Sarah Finch (United Kingdom), Theonila Roka Matbob (Papua New Guinea), Alannah Acaq Hurley (United States) and Yuvelis Morales Blanco (Colombia).

		About the Award - Established in 1989 by Richard and Rhoda Goldman. - Known as the “Green Nobel Prize” for environmental activism. - Each winner receives \$200,000 prize money. - Awarded annually to one environmental hero from each of the world’s six inhabited continental regions.
53.	India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex	- To be set up at Pachpadra in Balotra district, Rajasthan. - Operated by HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Limited (HRRLL), a partnership between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL, 74%) and the Government of Rajasthan (26%).
54.	India's first privately developed orbital rocket	- Name: Vikram-1. - Developed by Hyderabad based Skyroot Aerospace. Can carry up to 350 kg to low Earth orbit (LEO) or 260 kg to a sun-synchronous orbit (SSO). - Uses a four-stage propulsion system (Kalam-1200, Kalam-250, Kalam-100 and cluster of four Raman engines). - Vikram-1 follows the successful suborbital flight of the Vikram-S rocket in 2022 (Mission Prarambh), which was the first-ever private rocket launch from India.
55.	First batter to score 800 boundaries in IPL 	Milestone achieved by Virat Kohli (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) against Gujarat Titans. - Virat Kohli now has 807 boundaries to his name in 274 IPL matches, the most by any batter in the tournament's history. - Virat Kohli also became only the third batter to smash 300 sixes in IPL history, after Chris Gayle (357 sixes) and Rohit Sharma (310 sixes).
56.	First Indian cricketer to cross the 150-run mark in an IPL innings	- Milestone achieved by KL Rahul (Delhi Capitals) against Punjab Kings. - He also became the first player to score multiple hundreds for 3 franchises. - He scored 152 runs* off 67 balls. Highest Individual Scores (IPL): He now sits behind only Chris Gayle (175*) and Brendon McCullum (158*) on the all-time list. Rahul's 6th ton draws him level with Chris Gayle (6) for the third-most centuries in IPL history, trailing only Virat Kohli (8) and Jos Buttler (7). - Rahul has also set a new record for Delhi Capitals, registering the highest individual score for the franchise in IPL history. - He became the only the second Indian batter to score 150+ in Men's T20 cricket, after Tilak Varma's 151 for Hyderabad against Meghalaya in the 2024/25 season.
57.	First player to reach 9,000 runs in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 	Milestone achieved by Virat Kohli against Delhi Capitals.

58.	First Indian state to launch a Marine Spatial Plan	- Name: Odisha. - The initiative was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Odisha Government and the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR). - First phase of this sustainable ocean planning initiative—conducted in collaboration with Norway—was piloted in the Union Territories of Puducherry and Lakshadweep. Odisha is the first full state to implement it under Phase II.
59.	India's first water-neutral railway depot	- Name: Kankaria Coaching Depot in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. - It falls under the Western Railway zone.
60.	First formal step towards unifying Olympic and Paralympic shooting under a single global body	- The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) have signed an agreement to transfer governance of shooting Para sport from the IPC to the ISSF. - At present, the sport is managed by World Shooting Para Sport under the IPC. Additional Information - ISSF headquarters: Munich, Germany. - IPC headquarters: Bonn, Germany.
61.	India's first integrated lithium-ion battery and rare earth magnet recycling plant	Established by Rocklink India at Sikandrabad, Bulandshahar district in Uttar Pradesh.
62.	International Day of Women in Industry (IDWI) 2026 – First Edition	- Observed on 21 April 2026. - Proclaimed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). - Theme: Celebrating Women's Leadership in Industrial Development - April 21st marks the anniversary of the entry into force of UNIDO's first Gender Policy in 2009. Global Observance held at UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna, Austria.
63.	Europe's first fully integrated lithium project	- Name: Keliber Project. - Launched in Finland at the Kokkola Industrial Park. - Operated by Keliber Oy, owned by the South African mining group Sibanye-Stillwater & Finnish Minerals Group.
64.	India's First transgender umpire	- Name: Rithika Sri. - She is from Salem, Tamil Nadu.
65.	First Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Delhi Metro International Limited (DMIL)	Name: Sanjay Jamuar.

66.	<u>India's first commercial anode material production unit</u>	Setup by Himadri Speciality Chemical Ltd at Mahistikry in Hooghly district, West Bengal.
67.	<u>India's first scheduled seaplane services</u>	- To be provided by SkyHop Aviation in Lakshadweep archipelago. - DGCA has granted Air Operator Certificate (AOC) in this regard.

MOUs AND AGREEMENTS

S.No	Signing Entities	Key Facts
1.	<u>Government of Meghalaya & Starlink India</u>	Objective: To pilot satellite-based high-speed internet in its most remote and geographically challenging regions. - Meghalaya is the third Indian state to formally partner with Starlink, following similar agreements in Maharashtra and Gujarat
2.	<u>NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) & Dhruva Space</u>	Objective: to collaborate on space-grade solar panels.
3.	<u>Chandigarh University & Microsoft</u>	Objective: To establish a Microsoft Skill Center in AI, with Microsoft certifications in AI, ML, Cloud Computing and emerging technologies.
4.	<u>Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) with A consortium of Japanese banks</u>	- IRFC signed a loan agreement to raise an External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) of JPY-equivalent USD 400 million. Lenders: A consortium of Japanese banks, specifically Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) and MUFG Bank, through their GIFT City branches.
5.	<u>GE Aerospace & Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)</u>	Objective: To co-produce F414 jet engines in India for future combat aircraft.
6.	<u>Razorpay & OpenAI</u>	Objective: To integrate instant payment capabilities directly into AI-built applications. - This collaboration allows developers using OpenAI's Codex platform to embed payment checkout flows into their apps within minutes by simply describing their requirements through prompts.
7.	<u>Sigma Advanced Systems and Rolls Royce</u>	Hyderabad-based Sigma Advanced Systems secured a landmark ₹3,800 crore (£300 million) contract from Rolls-Royce. - This seven-year agreement positions the Indian firm as a key global partner for manufacturing and supplying high-precision, safety-critical aerospace components

BANKING AND FINANCE

S.No	Program/Initiative	Key Facts
1.	Kreditbee becomes a Unicorn	- Bengaluru-based digital lender KreditBee has become a unicorn after raising \$280 million in its Series E funding round. - The funding round has taken KreditBee's valuation to \$1.5 billion. - KreditBee is the third startup to become a unicorn in 2026. - Earlier in 2026, Neysa and Juspay had also entered the unicorn club. - A unicorn is a privately held startup company valued at over \$1 billion. - The term was coined in 2013 by venture capitalist Aileen Lee to represent the statistical rarity of such successful ventures.
2.	Promise4Wealth	- A next-generation Unit Linked Individual Savings Life Insurance Plan (ULIP). - Launched by Canara HSBC Life Insurance. - Designed to provide long-term wealth creation through market-linked returns while offering flexible life cover options.
3.	Paytm becomes a majority Indian-owned and controlled company	One 97 Communications Ltd, operator of Paytm, became a majority Indian-owned and controlled company. Domestic investors' stake in Paytm rose to 50.3 %.
4.	FIFA World Cup 2026 Pixel Credit Card	- Launched by Visa and HDFC Bank. Additional Information - The FIFA World Cup 2026 is scheduled to be held across the United States, Canada, and Mexico and will feature an expanded 48-team format, making it the largest edition of the tournament to date

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Technology in News	Key Facts
1.	MAI-Transcribe-1, MAI-Voice-1, and MAI-Image-2	Three new first-party AI models of Microsoft.
2.	BA.3.2 (Cicada)	- A new COVID-19 variant spreading rapidly in the U.S. - A sub-lineage of the Omicron variant (emerged in 2021). - First identified in 2024 in Africa.
3.	Gemma 4	Google DeepMind's open-source AI model family. - Designed to run across a wide range of devices

4.	Project Glasswing	- Launched by Anthropic. - The initiative aims to address the potential misuse of AI coding capabilities. - It follows the preview release of Anthropic's new LLM, Claude Mythos. - Project Glasswing will use Claude Mythos for defensive cybersecurity purposes. - Key partners include AWS, Apple, Microsoft, Broadcom, Cisco, CrowdStrike, Google, JPMorgan Chase, Linux Foundation, Nvidia, and Palo Alto Networks.
5.	Personal Intelligence feature	Google launched the Personal Intelligence feature for Gemini users in India. - The feature enables Gemini to connect data from apps like Gmail and Google Photos. - It helps users get answers to personal, context-based queries.
6.	Pax Silica framework	India and the United States have significantly strengthened their technological partnership under the Pax Silica framework. About Pax Silica - A United States-led international strategic alliance. - Aimed at securing global supply chains for the technologies foundational to the Artificial Intelligence (AI) era—specifically semiconductors and critical minerals. Founding Members (Dec 2025): United States, Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. - Recent Entrants: United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and India (February 2026).
7.	GeForce NOW	- Initiative of Nvidia. Now available in India. - A cloud-based gaming platform that lets users play PC games by streaming them from remote servers rather than running them directly on their own devices.
8.	Fission Surface Power (FSP) project	NASA is officially targeting 2030 to deploy a small nuclear reactor on the lunar surface as part of its Fission Surface Power (FSP) project. Aim: To provide continuous power for the Artemis program's lunar base by establishing a 100-kilowatt class fission system on the South Pole by 2030. - This move is viewed as a response to China's plans to build a lunar nuclear plant by 2035.
9.	Abhay chatbot	- An AI-powered tool to combat the rising threat of digital arrests. - Launched by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). - The chatbot's main purpose is to help citizens verify the authenticity of notices purportedly issued by the CBI.

10.	Google Cloud India AI Hub	- Being developed in Tharluwada, Adavivaram, and Rambilli regions of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. - A total commitment of approximately \$15 billion to be invested over five years (2026–2030). The hub will comprise three large-scale data centre campuses with a combined capacity of 1 Gigawatt (GW). - Being developed in partnership with Adani ConneX and Airtel Nxtra. - It will be managed by Google's subsidiary Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Infra. One of the largest single foreign direct investment projects in India. Google's largest investment in India to date. - The hub is intended to transform Visakhapatnam into India's "AI Capital". Additional Information Google established its first office in India in Hyderabad (Telangana) in 2007.
-----	---	---

DEFENCE EXERCISES/ INITIATIVES/ TECHNOLOGY

S.No	Exercise/Technology	Key Facts
1.	India's defence exports in 2025–26	- Touched an all-time high of ₹38,424 crore in the financial year 2025–26, marking a sharp increase of ₹14,802 crore (62.66%) over the previous fiscal's figure of ₹23,622 crore. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) led the growth with a massive 151% increase, contributing ₹21,071 crore (54.84%). - The private sector contributed ₹17,353 crore (45.16%), a 14% rise from the previous year.
2.	INS Aridhaman	India's third indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). - Officially commissioned into the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam. Additional Information - The first and second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) in India are INS Arihant and INS Arighaat.
3.	Prajna	An indigenously developed, AI-enabled satellite imaging system. - Developed by DRDO's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR). - Delivered to Ministry of Home Affairs. - It is designed to monitor sensitive regions with high precision, providing critical data for counter-terrorism operations and border surveillance using advanced artificial intelligence.
4.	Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap	Signed between India and Germany. - Aimed at deepening strategic ties through co-development and co-production of military equipment.

SPORTS

S.No	Sport Event and Venue	Key Facts
1.	2026 Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship standings	- Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli currently leads the 2026 Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship standings after winning the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka International Racing Course. - Antonelli has become the youngest driver in history to lead the championship standings.
2.	World Archery Para Series Venue: Bangkok, Thailand	India topped with 16 medals (7 Gold, 5 Silver, & 4 Bronze). The Republic of Korea ranked second with 7 medals Indonesia & Thailand ranked third with 6 medals each.
3.	NN Marathon Rotterdam, Netherlands	Long-distance runner Sawan Barwal made history by breaking India's longest-standing athletics record. New Record Time: 2:11:58. - He surpassed the legendary Shivnath Singh's record of 2:12:00, which had stood untouched since 1978 (nearly 48 years).
4.	FIFA Women's Development Programme (Commercial Strategy 2026)	India was selected by FIFA as one of 12 nations for participating in the programme. - This initiative aims to professionalise women's football in India by strengthening the commercial and structural framework of the sport.
5.	International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup 2026 Venue: Cairo, Egypt	India topped the medal tally, securing a total of 16 medals (5 gold, 6 silver, and 5 bronze). AIN (Individual Neutral Athletes) from Russia and Belarus secured 2nd place and France came 3rd. Gold Medal Winners for India Shiva Narwal: Men's 10m Air Pistol. Prachi Gaikwad: Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions. Vanshika Chaudhary: Women's 10m Air Pistol. Vanshika Chaudhary & Chirag Sharma: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team. Shambhavi Kshirsagar & Divyanshu Dewangan: 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team.
6.	ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol 2026 Venue: Granada, Spain	China topped the medal tally with 13 medals including eight gold medals. Germany took the second spot. India won one gold medal and came third in the event. - India's Gold medal was won by the pair of Palak Gulia and Mukesh Nelavalli in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event. - This gold-medal-winning performance also set a new World Record and Junior World Record with a score of 487.7, surpassing the

		previous record set by Uzbekistan's Nigina Saidkulova and Mukhammad Kamalov.
7.	2026 South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship- 8th edition	- To be held in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Fatorda Stadium) in Margao, Goa. India previously hosted the event once in 2016.
8.	FIDE joins IWGA	- The International Chess Federation (FIDE) officially joined the International World Games Association (IWGA) during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. - FIDE became the 40th international sports federation to join the IWGA. Additional Information - FIDE headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland - The IWGA is a non-profit organization recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that oversees The World Games. IWGA is located in Lausanne, Switzerland.
9.	All India Football Federation (AIFF) Elite Youth League	Punjab FC defended their title in the 2025–26 season by defeating Zinc Football Academy in the final.
10.	2026 Asian Wrestling Championships Venue: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	Iran topped the overall medal table with 18 medals including 6 gold. India finished in 5th place with a total of 17 medals (2 Gold, 7 silver and 8 Bronze). Gold Medallists for India Sujeet Kalkal (65kg Freestyle): Became the first Indian since Bajrang Punia in 2019 to win gold in this category at the Asian Championships. Abhimanyou Mandwal (70kg Freestyle): Secured gold with a victory over Uzbekistan's Begijon Kuldashev.
11.	Highest successful run chase in T20 history 	- Milestone achieved by Punjab Kings (PBKS). Punjab Kings chased down 265/4 in just 18.5 overs against the Delhi Capitals (DC). Punjab Kings broke their own previous record of 262/2, which they set against the Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024.

AWARDS

S.No	Award/Milestone	Key Facts
1.	2026 Skytrax World Airport Awards	Singapore's Changi Airport has topped the list of world's best airports for the fourteenth time since 2000. Indian airports among world's top 100 Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, Delhi: Retained its title as the Best Airport in India & South Asia for the eighth consecutive year and rose to 28th globally.

		○ Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru: took the 41st spot, and was also recognised as the 'Best Regional Airport in India & South Asia' for third consecutive year. ○ Manohar International Airport, Goa: Ranked 64th. ○ Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai: 66th spot.
2.	35th Saraswati Samman (2025)	• Awarded to Bengali author Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay. • Awarded for his Bengali novel "Hara Parbati Katha." About the Award • Instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991. • Awarded annually to outstanding literary work written in any Indian language by an Indian citizen and published during the last 10 years. • Cash Prize: ₹15 lakh.
3.	Chetak Screen Awards 2026	• Dhurandar won a record 14 awards. Key Winners • Best Film: Homebound (Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan). • Best Actor (Male): Ranveer Singh (Dhurandar). • Best Actor (Female): Yami Gautam Dhar (Haq).
4.	Deen Dayal Upadhyay and Nanaji Deshmukh Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025	• Three institutions from Tripura have been recognized for excellence in grassroots governance. • Sepahijala District Panchayat: Ranked 1st in the Best District Panchayat category. • Kanchanbari Gram Panchayat (Unakoti District): Ranked 1st in the Healthy Panchayat category. • Baikunthapur Gram Panchayat (West Tripura District): Ranked 3rd in the Women-Friendly Panchayat category.
5.	2025 Asian Squash Federation (ASF) Awards	• Junior Girls' Player of the Year (Hassan Musa Award): Anahat Singh. ○ His honors follow a standout season that included winning his maiden Indian Open title and securing India's first-ever World Cup mixed team gold. • Men's Player of the Year (Dato Alex Lee Award): Abhay Singh. ○ His honors follow a standout season that included winning his maiden Indian Open title and securing India's first-ever World Cup mixed team gold. • India also won the ASF Men's Team Award.
6.	Hockey India Annual Awards 2025- Eight Edition	• Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year 2025: Navneet Kaur (Women) & Hardik Singh (Men). ○ Hardik Singh secured his third consecutive title. • Lifetime Achievement Award (Major Dhyhan Chand Award): Zafar Iqbal.
7.	Wisden Cricketers' Almanack- Leading Cricketers in the World 2025	• Mitchell Starc (Australia, Men's Leading Cricketer): Dominated the year with 55 Test wickets. • Deepti Sharma (India, Women's Leading Cricketer): The architect of India's first-ever Women's ODI World Cup victory on home soil 2025.

8.	Machhli National Award	- Awarded to Anita Chaudhary, a forest guard posted at Rajasthan's Shergarh sanctuary. - Awarded by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature. Recognizes her outstanding contribution to wildlife rescue and conservation.
9.	2026 Person of the Year by the Harvard South Asian Association 	- Awarded to Bollywood Actress Sayani Gupta. - The award recognizes her impactful storytelling and her efforts in shaping authentic South Asian representation on global platforms.
10.	"Global Green Icon" title	- Awarded to Joginipally Santosh Kumar, the founder of the Green India Challenge. - Presented at the World Climate Leaders Conclave at the House of Lords in the British Parliament, London. Award recognizes his efforts in leading massive afforestation projects.
11.	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) National Award	- Awarded to N. Alim Yusuf, a researcher at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences (MBGIPS), Kozhikode, Kerala. - Awarded for developing an AI-powered mobile application called NeophytelD. - The app is designed to identify and map nearly 100 invasive plant species recorded in Kerala.
12.	9th Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Award	Dr Ch. Srinivasa Rao, the Director and Vice-Chancellor of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI) was conferred the prestigious award for the 2024–25 period. - This year's award is particularly notable as it coincides with the birth centenary of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, the architect of India's Green Revolution. - Dr Rao was recognised for his pioneering research in Climate-Resilient Agriculture (CRA) and sustainable dryland farming, helping farmers adapt to extreme weather events like droughts and heatwaves. About the Award - Instituted in 2004–05 by the Retired ICAR Employees Association (RICAREA) and Nuziveedu Seeds. Recognises outstanding agricultural scientists for their lifetime achievements and transformative impact on the country's food security. - The award includes a cash prize of ₹2 lakh.
13.	4th Gender Equality Mobilisation (GEM) Award	- Awarded to Guntur Municipal Corporation (GMC) in Andhra Pradesh. - Awarded by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at the International Day of Women in Industry 2026. - Awarded for GMC's initiative combining women's empowerment with environmental sustainability.

APPOINTMENT

S.No	Person in News	Key Facts
1.	Ravindra Jadeja	Appointed as the primary Brand Ambassador of City Union Bank.
2.	Matt Brittin	- Appointed as the new Director- General of BBC; replaces Tim Davie. - Matt Brittin is the former President of Google for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA).
3.	Vir Vikram Yadav	- Appointed as the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). - Succeeds Faiz Ahmed Kidwai.
4.	William Walsh	- Appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo). - Predecessor: Pieter Elbers. William Walsh is presently serving as the Director General of International Air Transport Association (IATA).
5.	Min Aung Hlaing	Elected as the President of Myanmar.
6.	Uchral Nyam-Osor	Elected as the Prime Minister of Mongolia.
7.	Blanka Vlašić	- Appointed as the International Event Ambassador for the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2026. - She is a legendary Croatian high jumper and double Olympic medallist.
8.	To Lam	Elected as the President of Vietnam.
9.	Carlos Alcaraz	Infosys has appointed him as the Global Brand Ambassador. Carlos Alcaraz is a seven-time Grand Slam Champion. - Under this partnership, Alcaraz and his team will use Infosys Topaz—an AI-first platform—to co-develop advanced match analytics and personalised performance applications.
10.	Vinay Tonse	Assumed charge as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Yes Bank.
11.	Dr. Jim Walker	- He is a veteran economist. - Recently appointed as the Global Economic Advisor of Equirus Securities. - Also serves as the Chief Economist of Aletheia Capital.
12.	U. B. Pravin Rao	- Appointed as the new Chairperson of Nasscom Foundation. - The Nasscom Foundation is the social arm of the IT industry body NASSCOM, focusing on using technology for social good and digital inclusion across India.
13.	Ismail Omar Guelleh	Reelected as the President of Djibouti for a sixth term.

		He has been in power since 1999, making him one of the longest-serving leaders in Africa.
14.	Péter Magyar	Prime Minister-designate of Hungary.
15.	Rumen Radev	The Prime Minister-designate of Bulgaria.
16.	Anant Swarup	- Appointed as the Secretary General of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). About FICCI India's largest and oldest apex business organisation. - Founded in 1927.
17.	Nizar Amidi	Elected as the President of Iraq .
18.	Kompella Venkata (KV) Ramana Murty	Appointed as a Whole-Time Member (WTM) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for a three-year term. About SEBI Board - Currently comprises a chairman, four whole-time members, and four part-time members, who are representatives from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Reserve Bank of India. Present Chairman: Tuhin Kanta Pandey.
19.	John Ternus	- Apple officially announced that John Ternus will succeed Tim Cook as the company's next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). - Before being named CEO, he served as the Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering. Tim Cook will transition to the role of Executive Chairman of Apple's board.
20.	Parminder Singh	- Appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of their newly formed Artificial Intelligence joint venture, REIL (Reliance-Enterprise Intelligence Limited). Additional Information - REIL, a 70:30 joint venture between Reliance Intelligence Ltd and Facebook Overseas Inc., was set up to deliver sovereign, scalable AI to businesses in India and overseas.
21.	Debadatta Chand	His tenure as MD and CEO of Bank of Baroda has been extended for three years .
22.	Rajneesh Karnatak	His tenure as MD and CEO of Bank of India has been extended for three years .

PERSONS IN NEWS

S.No	Person in News	Key Facts
------	----------------	-----------

1.	Atanu Chakraborty	- Resigned as the Part-time Chairman and Independent Director of HDFC Bank. - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved Keki Mistry to serve as the interim Part-time Chairman.
2.	Deep Jariwala	- A prominent Indian-origin materials scientist and engineer. - Appointed to the prestigious UT-ORNL Governor's Chair for Quantum Devices, a joint role between the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL).
3.	Bodhana Sivanandan 	- An Indian-origin chess prodigy. - Became England's top-rated female player.
4.	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar	- India celebrated the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar recently. - He served as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and is known as the "Father of the Indian Constitution". - A jurist, he was also the first Union Law minister of independent India.
5.	General Upendra Dwivedi	- Inducted into the International Hall of Fame of the US Army War College in Pennsylvania, USA. General Dwivedi, a Distinguished Fellow of the college, becomes the third Indian Army Chief to receive this accolade, following in the footsteps of General V.K. Singh and General Bikram Singh.
6.	Vaibhav Sooryavanshi	- Became the youngest batter to reach 500 IPL runs during a match against Lucknow Super Giants. - At 15 years and 26 days old he smashed the previous age record held by Prithvi Shaw (19 years, 164 days). Fastest to 500 IPL Runs (Balls Faced): Reached the milestone in just 227 balls, breaking Glenn Maxwell's record of 260 balls. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi plays for Rajasthan Royals in IPL. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi also scored the third fastest hundred in the history of IPL. - Achieved the milestone in 36 balls. - Sooryavanshi holds both the second and third-fastest centuries in IPL. Chris Gayle holds the record for the fastest century in IPL (30 balls).
7.	PV Sindhu 	Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu officially assumed her role as a full voting member of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Council. - This transition occurred following her election as the Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission for the 2026–2029 term.

OBITUARIES

8.	C. D. Gopinath	- India's oldest Test cricketer. - At the time of his passing, he was the second oldest Test cricketer in the world, following Australia's Neil Harvey (97) - Best known for his role in the landmark 1952 victory against England (India's first ever test victory) in Chennai. - He contributed a century in Tamil Nadu's first Ranji Trophy win - After his demise, Chandrakant Patankar became India's oldest surviving Test cricketer.
9.	Asha Bhosle	One of India's most legendary playback singers. - Named the most recorded artist in music history by Guinness World Records in 2011. Major Awards Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2000): Received India's highest honor in cinema. Padma Vibhushan (2008): Honoured with India's second-highest civilian award. National Film Awards: Won twice for Umrao Jaan (1981) and Ijaazat (1987). Filmfare Awards: Won 7 times. BBC Lifetime Achievement (2002).
10.	Jim Whittaker	Legendary American mountaineer and business leader. The first American to summit Mount Everest
11.	Mark Mobius	American-born German investor and author. - Regarded as the "Godfather of Emerging Markets".
12.	Raghu Rai	- A legendary photojournalist known for chronicling modern India's soul for over six decades. First Indian photographer nominated to the prestigious Magnum Photos agency in 1977. - Honoured with the Asia Arts Vanguard Award by the Asia Society. - Internationally acclaimed for his raw and powerful documentation of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy. - Widely recognized as the "father of Indian photography" and "father of Indian photojournalism". - Awarded with Padma Shri in 1971.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

S.No	Book Title	Key Facts
1.	A Road Well Travelled	Autobiography of Former Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director R.K. Raghavan.
2.	The Curious and the Classified: Unearthing Military Myths and Mysteries	- Authored by Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane. - It explores untold stories, quirky traditions, and folklore within the Indian armed forces. - This release follows a controversy surrounding his unpublished memoir, 'Four Stars of Destiny'.

PLACES IN NEWS

S.No	Place in News	Key Facts
1.	Lipulekh Pass	- Location: Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. India and China are scheduled to resume border trade via the Lipulekh Pass in June 2026, ending a six-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and border tensions. - The decision follows a high-level diplomatic agreement reached to reopen three Himalayan trade routes: Lipulekh (Uttarakhand), Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh), and Nathu La (Sikkim).
2.	Mundra Port, Kutch district, Gujarat	- Officially became India's largest automotive export hub. - Set a new national record by shipping 6,008 cars in a single vessel, the M/V Grand Aurora. - This shipment is the highest number of cars ever loaded onto a single Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) vessel at any Indian port.
3.	Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, Chhattisgarh	After being considered locally extinct for decades, Blackbucks have officially returned to Chhattisgarh, specifically within the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary.
4.	Vikram Sodhi Centre of Excellence for AI-Enabled Geological and Mining Systems	Set up at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur.

DAYS IN NEWS

S.No	Day in News	Key Facts
1.	International Day of Zero Waste (March 30)	Theme: Food Waste.

2.	World Autism Awareness Day 2026 (April 2)	Theme: "Autism and Humanity – Every Life Has Value".
3.	World Health Day 2026 (April 7)	Theme: "Together for health. Stand with science."
4.	National Safe Motherhood Day 2026 (April 11) 	- Theme: 'Equity in Maternal Healthcare: Leaving No Mother Behind'. - India was the first country in the world to officially declare a National Safe Motherhood Day. - The day marks the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi. - First established in 2003 by the White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI).
5.	World Parkinson's Day (April 11)	Theme: 'Bridge the Care Gap'.
6.	International Day of Human Space Flight (April 12)	- Celebrated to commemorate Yuri Gagarin's historic first human space flight in 1961. Additional Information - Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to circle the Earth aboard the Vostok 1. - Neil Armstrong: the first human to step onto the Moon through Apollo 11. - In 1963, Valentina Tereshkova travelled into space aboard Vostok 6, becoming the first woman to do so. - John Glenn became first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. - In 1983, Sally Ride became the first American woman to travel into space, flying aboard Challenger STS-7. - Guion Bluford made history in 1983 as the first African American in space during the Challenger STS-8 mission. - Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian to travel to space in 1984 aboard Soyuz T-11.
7.	World Heritage Day 2026 (April 18) 	- Theme: "Emergency Response for Living Heritage in Contexts of Conflicts and Disasters". - The day was proposed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1982 and approved by UNESCO in 1983.
8.	World Quantum Day 2026 (April 14)	Theme: "Shaping the Quantum Workforce."
9.	World Art Day 2026 (April 15)	- Theme: "A Garden of Expression: Cultivating Community Through Art". - The day honors the birthday of Leonardo da Vinci, chosen as a symbol of world peace, freedom of expression, and multiculturalism
10.	World Voice Day 2026 (April 16)	Theme: "Caring for Our Voices!".

11.	World Liver Day 2026 (April 19)	Theme: "Solid Habits, Strong Liver."
12.	World Creativity and Innovation Day (April 21)	Theme: "Harnessing Creativity for Global Progress".
13.	107th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13)	The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on April 13, 1919, and remains one of the most tragic turning points in India's struggle for independence.
14.	World Hemophilia Day (April 17)	Theme: "Diagnosis: First Step to Care".
15.	World Book and Copyright Day (April 23)	Rabat, Morocco designated as the 2026 World Book Capital. World Book Capital 2025: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 26 world book capitals announced so far since the first World Book capital 2001 (Madrid, Spain).
16.	World Malaria Day 2026 (April 25)	Theme: "Driven to End Malaria: Now We Can. Now We Must."
17.	World Veterinary Day 2026 (April 25)	Theme: Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health".
18.	World Intellectual Property Day 2026 (April 26)	Theme: IP and Sports: Ready, Set, Innovate.
19.	International Design Day (April 27)	- Theme: "the spaces in between". - The day commemorates the founding of the International Council of Design on the 27th of April, 1963.
20.	International Jazz Day 2026 (April 30)	- Theme: "Music Moves the Goals". - Host: Chicago, USA. - Marked by 84 Creative Cities of Music around the world. Additional Information Three Indian cities featured on the UNESCO Creative Cities of Music list- Varanasi, Chennai and Gwalior.E

MISCELLANEOUS

S.No	News	Key Facts
1.	Argentina withdraws from World Health Organization	Argentina has formally withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO). United States was the first country to withdrew from the WHO in January 2026.

2.	Jones Act (Merchant Marine Act of 1920)	- A landmark United States federal law that regulates domestic maritime commerce. - It mandates that all goods transported by water between U.S. ports be carried on ships that are built, owned, and flagged in the U.S. and crewed by U.S. citizens. - The President of the United States issued a 60-day waiver of the act in response to the economic shocks caused by the ongoing 2026 Iran-United States War.
3.	Highest-value work of modern Indian art ever sold at auction	- Name: "Yashoda and Krishna". - Painted by 19th-century artist Raja Ravi Varma. - Fetches a record-breaking ₹167.2 crore (approximately \$17.9 million) at Saffronart's Spring Live Auction in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
4.	India's largest-ever export of electric buses	Switch Mobility, the electric vehicle arm of Ashok Leyland (Hinduja Group), completed India's largest-ever export of electric buses by delivering 100 units to the Government of Mauritius. - The buses are built on Switch's EiV12 platform.
5.	Official state languages of Meghalaya	The Meghalaya cabinet announced the indigenous Khasi and Garo languages as the official languages of the state, in addition to English.
6.	World's largest cement producer outside China	- Name: UltraTech Cement (Aditya Birla Group). UltraTech Cement surpassed a total installed capacity of 200 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).
7.	Amazon- Globalstar Deal	Amazon announced an agreement to acquire American satellite operator Globalstar for approximately \$11.6 billion. - The move significantly intensifies its competition with Elon Musk's Starlink by acquiring critical radio frequency licenses for direct-to-device connectivity.
8.	India classified as "extremely high doping risk" country by World Athletics	Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) moved India from Category B to Category A. India has consistently ranked among the top two nations globally for Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) between 2022 and 2025. India has surpassed Kenya to become the nation with the highest number of suspended track and field athletes globally, with 148 individuals currently serving bans.
9.	Panel of Vice-Chairpersons of Rajya Sabha	- The Rajya Sabha reconstituted its Panel of Vice-Chairpersons, nominating six members to preside over the House when both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman are absent. - Unlike the Deputy Chairman, who holds a standing constitutional office, members of the vice-chairperson panel do not occupy a permanent position and preside on a rotational basis as required.

10.	Sun Pharmaceutical Industries to acquire Organon & Co.	• Sun Pharmaceutical Industries announced a definitive agreement to acquire US-based Organon & Co. in an all-cash deal valued at \$11.75 billion. • This landmark transaction is the largest-ever overseas acquisition by an Indian pharmaceutical company.
-----	--	---

2. GA + ESI

PIB IN NEWS

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – HEALTH

2.1 10th National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity

Why in News:

- **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) J.P. Nadda** inaugurated the 10th National Summit in **Haryana**.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Launch of Swasth Bharat Portal**
 - An integrated one-stop digital interface that brings multiple national health programmes onto a single platform to reduce administrative burdens on frontline workers.
- **Launch of JANANI Portal (Journey of Antenatal, Natal and Neonatal Integrated Care)**
 - A robust digital platform serving as a "single source of truth" for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCH) data.
- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK 2.0)**
 - Updated guidelines expanding the **"4Ds" approach (Defects at Birth, Diseases, Deficiencies, Developmental Delays)** to include childhood Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) Milestone**
 - National Statistical Office (NSO) 80th round findings cited, showing **zero median out-of-pocket expenditure for outpatient care in public health facilities**.

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – EDUCATION

2.2 Computational Thinking and AI Curriculum for Classes 3–8

Why in News

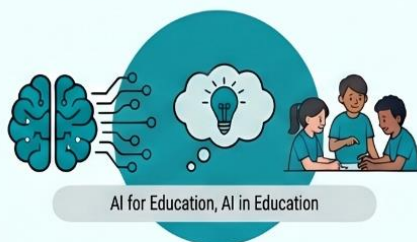
- Recently, the Ministry of Education launched a new curriculum on **Computational Thinking (CT)** and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** for Classes 3 to 8.
- It was developed by a panel constituted in October 2025, chaired by **Dr. Karthik Raman (IIT Madras)** and is aligned with **NEP 2020 Vision and National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023**, aimed at making India a global leader in emerging domains like AI by integrating them into school education.

Computational Thinking (CT)

CT is a **structured problem-solving approach** that involves breaking down complex challenges into smaller, logical steps that a human or a machine can follow.

It involves **Decomposition** (breaking problems down), **Pattern Recognition**,

CBSE: Building AI-Ready Learners (Classes III-VIII)



AI for Education, AI in Education



THE RELEVANCE OF CT AND AI



Intellectual Backbone of Innovation

Computational thinking serves as the cognitive framework required to understand and eventually create AI-driven solutions.



Beyond Coding: Cognitive Development

The curriculum fosters essential human capacities such as logical thinking, systematic problem-solving, and pattern recognition.



Holistic & Interdisciplinary Growth

By connecting Mathematics, Science, and Humanities, the curriculum helps students see that knowledge is interconnected rather than compartmentalized.



Future-Ready Digital Citizenship

Early exposure ensures students can use data effectively and apply technology ethically in the modern world of work.



MAPPING TO NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS (NEP/NCF)



NEP 2020 Vision Realized

Integrates AI and Machine Learning into schools to fulfill the goal of making India a global leader in emerging domains.



NCF-SE 2023 Alignment

Learning standards—including Goals, Competencies, and Outcomes—are derived directly from the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023.



Phased Implementation Strategy

Following NCF recommendations, CT is introduced first as a critical basis for learning AI in higher classes.



PEDAGOGY (How it is Taught)



Playful and Experiential Learning

Education is driven by "fun" math games, puzzles, and hands-on exercises using specialized worksheets.



Problem-Solving Focus

Students are taught to break large, complex problems into smaller, manageable parts and interpret visual data like charts.



Collaborative Environment

Peer discussions and group tasks are prioritized to encourage students to solve problems collectively.



ASSESSMENT METHODS



Shift from Rote to Competency

MEMORIZATION : Applying knowledge

Evaluation moves away from memorization toward continuous methods that assess a student's ability to apply knowledge.



Qualitative Progress Tracking

Teachers use Observation Journals to track creative thinking and progress over time.



Interactive Assessment Tools

Evaluation includes written tests featuring CT puzzles and interactive group activities.



ROLLOUT DETAILS

Target Grades: Classes III to VIII

Implementation Session: 2026-2027

Core Focus Area: Computational Thinking (CT) as a foundation for AI

Key Support Material: Structured modules and comprehensive teacher handbooks

2.3 Career Cards for Children with Special Needs (CwSN)

Why in News

- Ministry of Education (MOE) launched career cards under National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to promote inclusive career guidance for CwSN.
 - The initiative **empowers students with disabilities** with equal career exploration opportunities as their peers.
 - Aims to **identify disabilities early** and upgrade school infrastructures through **better assessments** and **specialized staff**.
- Supports **NEP 2020's skilling vision** by promoting the goal that every student completing **Class XII by 2030** should possess at least **one job-ready skill**.



DID YOU KNOW

Students with **benchmark disabilities (40% or more disability)** have the legal right to **free education up to 18 years of age** and **5% reservation** in government higher

Key features

- Around **150 career cards** from the earlier **500 card guidance book** have been modified for CwSN, including **Braille versions** for **visually impaired students**.
- Provides simplified and easy-to-understand information on **job roles, educational qualifications** and **career pathways**.

- Integrated with **NCERT training modules** to help teachers guide **students with special needs** and provide **career counselling**
- Developed collaboratively by the **MOE, DoPWD, NCERT, UNICEF India**, and **Pratham Education Foundation**.

2.4 SARAL AI

SARAL AI

Developed by:
Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

AIM/OBJECTIVE: CORE MISSION



- To connect science with society by presenting research outcomes in simple, easy-to-understand formats

FEATURES:

- CONTENT CREATION TOOLS**


Podcasts


Short Videos


Posters


Business Briefs


Presentations


Social Media Content

AIM/OBJECTIVE: LANGUAGE REACH

18

দুই তম
বাংলা ব্যং
নক্স থোং

- Developed to disseminate scientific knowledge in 18 Indian Languages

KEY STAKEHOLDERS


Citizens


Researchers


The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

Why in News

- ANRF is developing AI-based platform '**SARAL AI**' to convert complex technology and research work into simple language social media content.

Other Initiatives Launched by ANRF

- MAHA Programme:** ANRF has launched "**Mission for Advancement in High Impact Areas (MAHA)**" to accelerate research from early technology readiness stages with national relevance.
- ANRF is introducing a dedicated MAHA program on "**Leapfrog Demonstrators for Societal Innovation**" focusing on challenges like pollution, climate resilience, and sustainable agriculture.
- The **ANRF PMECRG Lightning Talk Series** has been launched to provide a platform for researchers to share their work in concise formats.

2.5 Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme

Why in News:

ABOUT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020



LAUNCH YEAR: 2020

(REPLACED THE 34-YEAR-OLD NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION, 1986)

MINISTRY: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



AIM/OBJECTIVE: TO TRANSFORM INDIA INTO A GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE SUPERPOWER BY MAKING SCHOOL AND COLLEGE EDUCATION MORE HOLISTIC, FLEXIBLE, AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY

1. NEW CURRICULAR STRUCTURE

5+3+3+4 MODEL

Foundational (5 years, play/activity-based)

Preparatory (3 years, interactive/play)

Middle (3 years, experiential learning)

Secondary (4 years, multidisciplinary studies, with 2 years Grade 9-10 and 11-12)



2. UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Target to achieve 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030

3. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



Special emphasis on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and Children with Special Needs (CwSN)

4. VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION



Integration of vocational education from Class 6 onwards, including internships

5. SKILLING TARGET



At least 50% of learners shall have exposure to vocational education by 2025

6. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION



Preference for the mother tongue/local language/regional language up to at least Grade 5

7. ASSESSMENT REFORM



Shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment; introduction of PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)

8. TEACHER EDUCATION



Introduction of a 4-year integrated B.Ed. as the minimum degree qualification for teaching by 2030

- **Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** interacted with participants from **five states** (Chhattisgarh, New Delhi, MP, Rajasthan, and Goa) who completed their visit to Northeast India.

Key Highlights:

- **Flagship Youth Initiative**
 - **Launched by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)** to foster emotional integration and youth-to-youth engagement.
- **Implementation Agency**
 - The programme is executed by the North Eastern Council (NEC) under **the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'**.
- **Scope and Participation**
 - **Envisages participation from 28 States and UTs**, with 530 students across 15 batches completing visits in FY 2025–26.
- **Immersive Exposure Format**
 - Consists of 14-day visits including academic sessions, heritage tours, interactions with security forces (Assam Rifles/Air Force), and local community stays.
- **Role of Youth Ambassadors**
 - Students are encouraged to act as "Ambassadors of the North Eastern Region" to promote its culture and diversity in their home states.
- **Educational Connectivity**
 - **Involves collaboration with 11 Universities** across the Northeast, such as IIT Guwahati, Assam University, and Tezpur University.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

2.6 Prakriti 2026

Why in News

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Power & Housing and Urban Affairs** inaugurated the international conference **Prakriti 2026** and launched the **Indian Carbon Market (ICM) Portal** in New Delhi to accelerate India's transition to a low-carbon economy.
- **ICM portal acts as a centralized digital platform** designed to administer and operationalize India's national carbon trading framework.

Prakriti 2026

Organized by: Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Power and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

- **Theme:** “Unlocking Carbon Finance for NDC Implementation through Global Partnerships and Digital Pathways.”
- **Aim:** To provide a high-level platform for experts to deliberate on the evolving dynamics of carbon markets.
- To mobilize finance and leverage digital innovation for India’s green growth.
- To reinforce India's climate commitments and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Features:

- Covers compliance frameworks, Carbon Border policies, and empowering MSMEs and farmers.
- Focus on **Digital MRV** (Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification) technologies to ensure emission reductions are verifiable and credible.
- Operates under the broader **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) 2023**.
- Renewable energy expansion, energy efficiency, and high-integrity carbon credits.

2.7 NPC Appointed as Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA)

Why in news

- Recently, the **National Productivity Council (NPC)** signed a landmark agreement with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** to act as the **Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA)**, operationalizing the newly notified **Environment Audit Rules, 2025**.
- NPC is mandated to develop **digital systems** for managing audit processes and maintaining a **publicly accessible online register** of all certified and registered auditors.
- The NPC will now oversee environmental compliance across major Indian legislations such as:

Legislation / Act	Year	Core Focus & Audit Verification Areas
1. Environment (Protection) Act	1986	Umbrella Framework: Provides the overarching legal basis for the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, and the EADA's authority.
2. Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act	1974	Water Compliance: Verifies wastewater discharge standards and regulatory approvals like CTE (Consent to Establish) and CTO (Consent to Operate).
3. Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act	1981	Air Compliance: Monitors industrial emissions, adherence to air quality standards, and the functioning of pollution control equipment.
4. Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam	1980	Forest Conservation: Regulates diversion of forest land and audits compliance with clearance conditions (e.g., compensatory afforestation).
5. Wildlife (Protection) Act	1972	Wildlife & Habitat: Ensures activities do not infringe upon protected areas (National Parks, Sanctuaries) or eco-sensitive zones.

ENVIRONMENT AUDIT DESIGNATED AGENCY (EADA)

UNIFIED OVERSIGHT & STANDARDIZED ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING IN INDIA

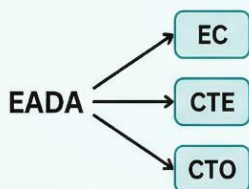
THE FOUNDATION

WHAT IS EADA?



Central regulatory authority (currently National Productivity Council) under Environment Audit Rules, 2025.

Manages third-party framework to verify industrial compliance.



VERIFIED APPROVALS

MANDATORY APPROVALS VERIFIED



Environmental Clearance (EC): Mandatory risk-assessment *before* starting high-impact impact projects.



Consent to Establish (CTE): Initial regulatory permission *before* setting up an industrial plant.



Consent to Operate (CTO): Final operational clearance granted *after* setup, verifying systems before production begins.

CORE FUNCTIONS (I)

COMPLIANCE & AUDITORS



Compliance Verification: Audits industries to ensure strict adherence to their granted EC, CTE, CTO conditions.



Certify & License Auditors: Conducts National Certification Exam (NCE) to qualify and register Certified (CEA) / Registered (REA) Environmental Auditors.



Registry Management: Maintains official public registry of certified/registered auditors.

CORE FUNCTIONS (II)

PROCESS & OVERSIGHT



Transparent Assignment: Uses EADA Portal to randomly allocate auditors to industrial units, preventing relationship-based auditing biases.



Oversight & Discipline: Monitors audit quality, maintains registry, and executes disciplinary actions for professional misconduct.



Capacity Building: Standardizes nationwide environmental auditing practices through structured training programs.

Environment Audit Rules, 2025

- **Launch Year:** 2025
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEF&CC**).
- **Aim:** To institutionalize standardized environmental auditing practices, enhance reporting accuracy, and ensure transparent industrial compliance with environmental laws.
- **Features:**
 - **Auditor Hierarchy:** Establishes criteria for two levels of professional **Certified Environmental Auditors (CEA)** and **Registered Environmental Auditors (REA)**.
 - **Standardization:** Specifies uniform guidelines, procedures, and standards for conducting environmental audits across the country.
 - **Accountability:** Introduces strict reporting requirements and timelines for industries to submit their environmental audits to competent authorities.

About National Productivity Council (NPC)

- **Ministry:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
- **Implementing Agency:** Designated as the **Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA)**.

- **Aim:** To act as the nodal body for the overall management of the environmental audit framework and auditor capacity building.

Features:

- Responsible for developing eligibility criteria, conducting certification examinations, and handling the renewal, suspension, or cancellation of auditor registrations.
- Mandated to monitor the performance of Registered Environmental Auditors and issue necessary directions or disciplinary actions.
- Facilitates professional development through training programmes, workshops, seminars, and online courses.
- Leverages a pan-India presence through **13 offices** (including New Delhi HQ) to implement the audit framework at a population scale.

2.8 India SDG Dashboard

Why in News

- Recently, the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** highlighted the role of the **India SDG Dashboard** as a centralized platform for monitoring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

SDG Dashboard

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**).
- **Partnering Agency:** United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (**UNRCO**).
- **Aim:** To serve as a centralized data platform for monitoring SDG indicators and to act as an evidence-based guide for strategic planning and policymaking.

Features:

- The dashboard is aligned with the **National Indicator Framework (NIF)**, which is the backbone of SDG monitoring in India.
- It provides a variety of social and environmental statistics in a single location.
- It enables tracking of India's progress toward the 17 Global Goals through localized data points.
- Specifically designed for policymakers, stakeholders, analysts, and researchers for conducting sectoral research studies.

2.9 **"Bhavasagara" National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna**

Why in News

- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) officially designated the **"Bhavasagara" Referral Centre** at CMLRE, Kochi, as a **National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna**, under **Section 39** of the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, making it a critical national facility for deep-sea biological heritage.

India's Biological Diversity Act 2002: A Legal Framework for Conservation

THE LEGISLATIVE JOURNEY (1992-2004)



1992: UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

India signs the CBD, recognizing sovereign rights over biological resources and establishing the foundation for future national legislation.



1999: National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)

A civil society-led committee recommends a comprehensive strategy, leading to the drafting of the formal Biodiversity Bill.



2000-2002: Drafting and Parliamentary Approval

Following the 2000 draft, the Bill received Lok Sabha approval on December 2, 2002, and Rajya Sabha approval on December 11, 2002.



2003: Formal Enactment

The Act was officially enacted on February 5, 2003, after receiving Presidential assent.



2004: Implementation Rules

Specific legal rules were established to provide a clear framework for the practical application and enforcement of the Act.

CORE OBJECTIVES OF THE BDA 2002



Conservation & Sustainable Use

The Act mandates the active conservation of biological diversity and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources to ensure long-term availability.

Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing

Ensures that benefits arising from biological materials and associated knowledge are shared fairly with local communities.



Protection of Traditional Knowledge

Legal safeguards are established to protect the rights of local communities and their traditional biological expertise.

Access Regulation

The Act regulates how both foreign and national entities can access Indian biological resources to prevent exploitation.



KEY FEATURES AND ENFORCEMENT

NBA Approval for Resource Access

Any person or company, particularly foreign entities, must seek prior approval from the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) before accessing biological resources.



Mandatory Benefit Sharing

The law mandates a fair exchange between resource users and the local communities providing those resources.



People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs)

Local bodies are tasked with documenting species and traditional knowledge in PBRs to ensure local ownership of biodiversity data.



Traditional Rights Safeguards

Local people, farmers, and artisans retain their traditional rights to use biological materials for their livelihoods.



PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE



Criminal Offenses and Imprisonment

Violations of the Act are treated as criminal offenses and can result in up to five years of imprisonment.



Financial Penalties

Fines for violations can reach 10 lakhs or more, depending on the extent of the environmental or resource damage.

2.10 90th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife

Why in News

- The **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change** chaired the **90th meeting** of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife in Dehradun to deliberate on critical policy issues including forest fire management and species recovery.
 - A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** and **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N)** to strengthen the use of geospatial technologies, remote sensing, and AI/ML-based tools in forest fire management and wildlife conservation.
 - The committee also recommended a comprehensive conservation action plan for the **Wild Water Buffalo**.

National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

- Established Under:** Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is a Statutory Body.**
- Chaired by the Prime Minister** (Note: The *Standing Committee* is chaired by the Union Environment Minister).
- Aim:** To advise the Central Government on framing policies and measures for the conservation of wildlife and forests. To review all wildlife-related matters and approve projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.

Features:

- **Role of Standing Committee:** It exercises powers delegated to it by the NBWL and considers various sectoral proposals that impact protected areas.
- **Focus Areas (90th Meeting): Grasslands & Rangelands:** Emphasized their role in carbon sequestration, dryland resilience, and Land Degradation Neutrality.
 - **Pastoral Communities:** Discussed the socio-economic dependency of nomadic communities on Protected Areas, seeking a balance between conservation and traditional practices.
 - **Decision Support Systems:** Leveraging advanced technology for real-time monitoring of forest ecosystems.
 - **The NBWL serves as the apex body in India for all wildlife-related clearances.**

2.11 National Biodiversity Authority

Why in News

The National Biodiversity Authority, in consultation with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, notified two additional institutions as designated repositories under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

- **Newly Designated Institutions:**
 - Referral Centre Bhavasagara at the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), Kochi.
 - Agharkar Research Institute, Pune (specifically for its MACS Collection of Microorganisms and National Fungal Culture Collection).
- With these additions, the **total number of designated national repositories** under the Act has increased to **20** (from the previous 18).

National Biodiversity Authority

- The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) is a statutory, autonomous body established in 2003 by the Indian government to implement the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- **Headquartered in Chennai, Tamil Nadu**, the NBA regulates access to biological resources, advises the government, and ensures fair sharing of benefits from their use, protecting India's biodiversity from misappropriation.
- **Core Functions (Facilitative, Regulatory, Advisory):**
 - **Regulatory:** Approves requests for access to biological resources or intellectual property rights (IPR) related to Indian biological resources by non-residents or entities.
 - **Advisory:** Advises the central government on matters related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.
 - **Facilitative:** Promotes conservation and sets guidelines for access and benefit sharing (ABS).

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

- **Implementing Agency:** National Biodiversity Authority (NBA).
- **Aim/Objective:**
 - To promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources.
 - To ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of biological resources.
 - To support the effective implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) provisions.

2.12 Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025

Why in News

The Union Minister of State for Science & Technology provided a written reply in the Lok Sabha regarding the provisions and implementation of the recently approved nuclear energy legislation.

Key Highlights

- The existing safety framework is confirmed to be **technology-neutral and institution-neutral**, making it applicable to both public and private entities.
- The Regulatory Board is mandated to submit recommendations for the notification of nuclear accidents to the government within **15 days** of the occurrence.
- The legislation establishes a graded liability regime for nuclear damage ranging from **₹1 billion to ₹3,000 billion**, depending on the plant type.
- If **compensation exceeds the operator's limit**, the **Central Government's liability** is capped at **SDR 300 million**.

SHANTI Act, 2025

Launch Year: 2025 (Presidential approval received in December).

Aim/Objective:

- To promote and develop nuclear energy and ionizing radiation and to ensure safe and secure use for nuclear power generation and non-energy applications.

Features:

- **Activities:** Setting up nuclear plants and the production, use, and disposal of nuclear energy.
- **Key Stakeholders:** Private sector participants (allowed for the first time), Central Government, and the Regulatory Board.
- **Specific Guidelines:** **Private participation** is subject to **mandatory licensing** from the central government and safety clearance from the Regulatory Board.
- **Governing Body Structure:** Modeled in accordance with the international liability regime.
- Compensation is based on the principles of **prompt payment** and **strict, non-fault liability** on the part of the operator.

2.13 One time relief for Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) in SEZ

Why in News

News 1

- Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has introduced one-time relief for Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) to support eligible manufacturing units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) affected by global trade disruptions.

News 2

- In April 2026, the government notified a SEZ at Dholera, Gujarat, for setting up India's first semiconductor fabrication plant by Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd.



DID YOU KNOW

DTA means the whole of India, including territorial waters and the continental shelf, excluding the areas of SEZs.

Criteria for eligible manufacturing units

- Only units that commenced production on or before March 31, 2025, can apply for these benefits.
 - Units involved in agriculture, petroleum, and gems & jewellery sectors are not eligible to protect domestic industries.
- Manufactured goods must have at least 20% value addition over the raw materials used.
 - For example: If raw materials worth ₹100 are used, the final manufactured product must have a minimum value of ₹120 to meet the criteria.
- A unit can sell only up to 30% of its highest yearly export value (FOB) from any of the last three financial years.
 - For example: If a unit exported ₹80 crore in 2022, ₹100cr in 2023, and ₹90cr in 2024, it can sell only ₹30cr in DTA because ₹100 crore is the highest export value.
- Timeline for new concessional rates: **Effective from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027**

CUSTOMS DUTIES RELIEF SCHEME FOR SEZ UNITS

PRESENT CUSTOMS DUTIES
(including BCD, AIDC, Health Cess)

CONCESSIONAL RATE
for eligible SEZ units under
the relief window

7.5%	→	6.5%
10%	→	9%
12.5%, 15%	→	10%
20%	→	12.5%
Between 20% and 30%	→	15%
Between 30% and 40%	→	20%

KEY TERM

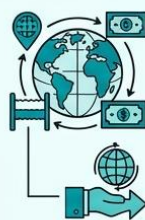
Free on board

Free on board (FOB) is the export value of goods excluding international freight and insurance at the Indian port.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZs)

A FRAMEWORK FOR EXPORT PROMOTION

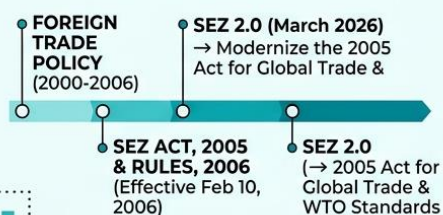
WHAT IS AN SEZ?



- DESIGNATED DUTY-FREE AREA (Under Ministry of Commerce & Industry)
- TREATED AS FOREIGN TERRITORY FOR TRADE
- PROMOTES EXPORTS

- Formerly known as EPZs (Export Processing Zones)

EVOLUTION OF SEZs



KEY BENEFITS

NO LICENSE REQUIRED FOR IMPORT



INCOME TAX EXEMPTIONS

Section 10AA (Export Income)

FIRST 5 YEARS

100% EXEMPTION



NEXT 5 YEARS

50% EXEMPTION



Section 80-IAB

FOLLOWING 5 YEARS

100% EXEMPTION



FOLLOWING 5 YEARS

50% EXEMPTION ON REINVESTED EXPORT PROFIT



KEY FACTS



WORLD'S FIRST EPZ: ICELAND, 1959



ASIA'S FIRST EPZ: KANDLA, GUJARAT 1965



INDIA'S LARGEST SEZ: MUNDRA, GUJARAT



HIGHEST NO. OF SEZs BY STATE: TAMIL NADU (58), KARNATAKA (50)

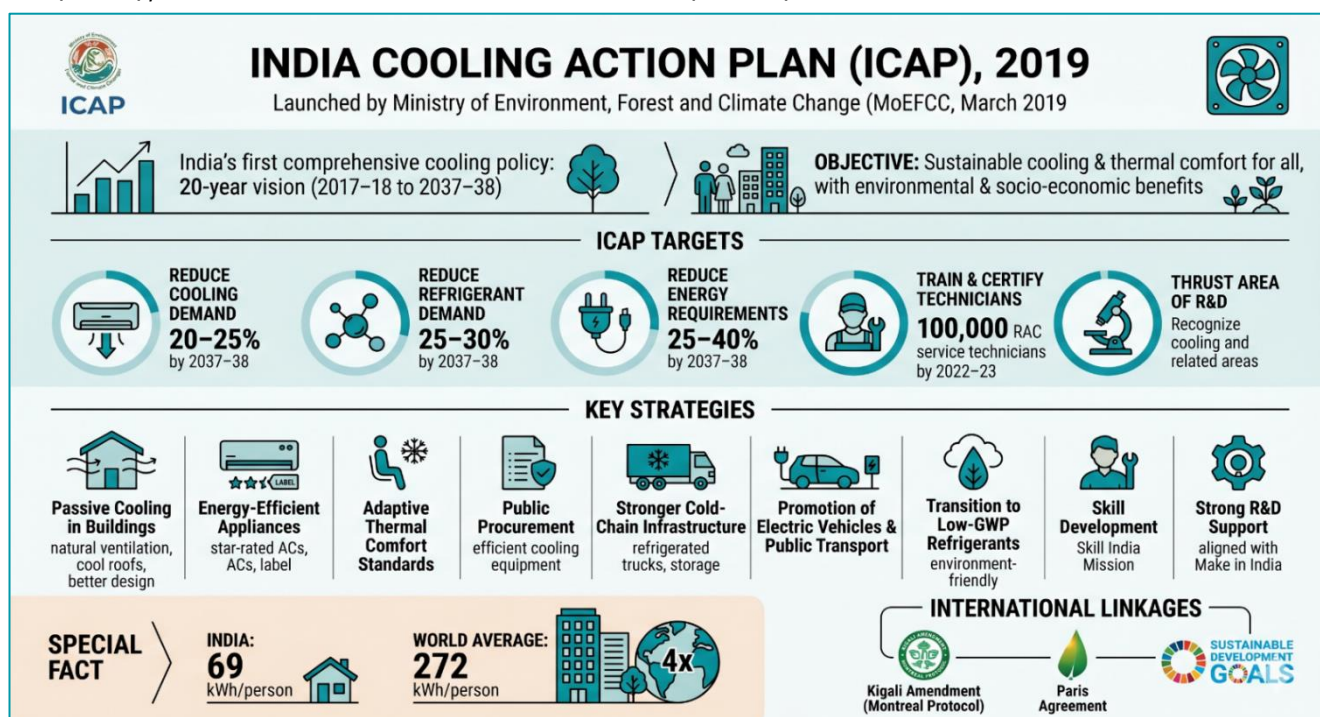


OPERATIONAL SEZs IN INDIA: 368 (AS OF FEB 26, 2026)

2.14 India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)

Why in News:

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced that the **India Cooling Action Plan** has already been implemented in over 250 cities across the country.
 - The announcement was made at the **Global Heat and Cooling Forum** held in New Delhi.
 - Organized with participation from the Department of Science & Technology (DST), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)



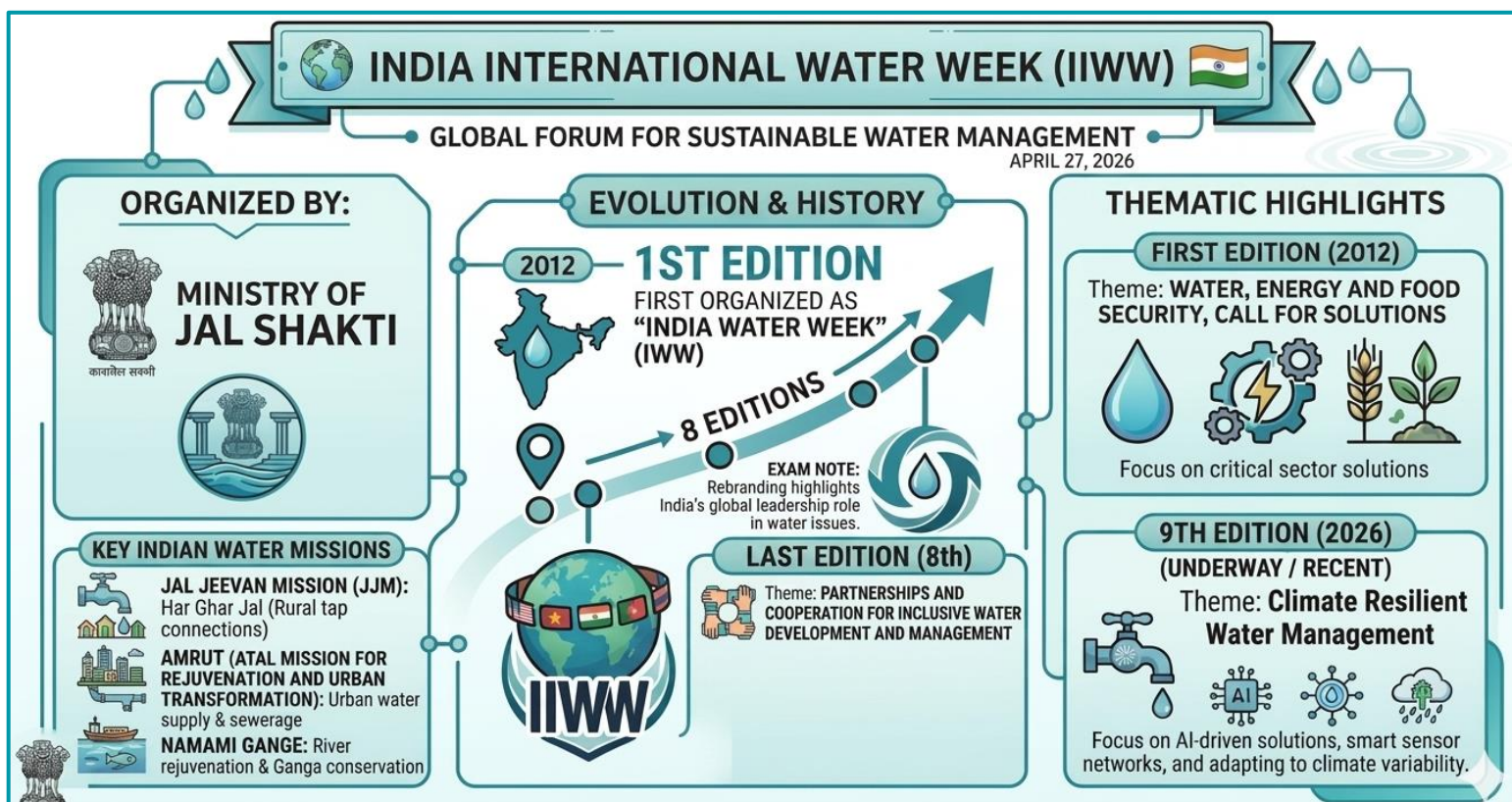
2.15 9th India International Water Week (IIWW-2026)

Why in News:

- Union Jal Shakti Minister **Shri C. R. Patil** launched **IIWW-2026**
 - Event will be held from September 22-26, 2026, at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**
 - Expects to feature **11 partner countries**

Key highlights

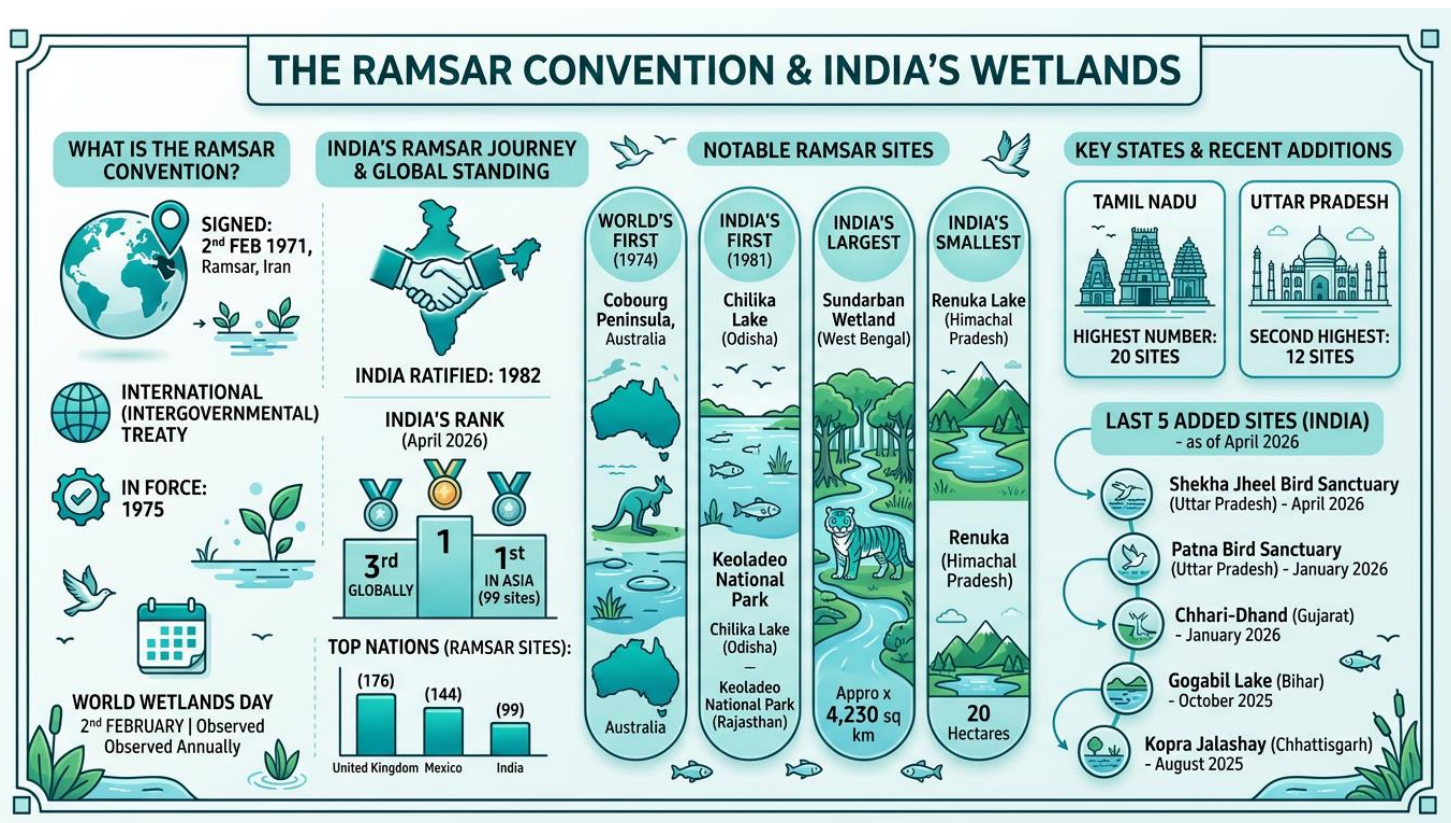
- Theme: Climate Resilient Water Management**
 - 7 Sub-themes:
 - Inclusive and Equitable Water Governance
 - Collaboration for Optimal Use of Water Resources
 - Technology and Community for Water Security
 - Water in Climate Related Risk
 - Innovative Financing Model for Water Infrastructure & Modernization
 - Sustainable Water Resource Management
 - Water for People and Planet
- Strategic focus (5R): Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, Recover, and Redefine**
- WASH (Water, Sanitization and Hygiene)-2026**
 - On the sidelines of IIWW-2026, the **Second International WASH Conference-2026** will be held from September 22-24, 2026, in Delhi
 - Aims to catalyze action toward **Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6)—Clean Water and Sanitation for All**



2.16 Shekha Jheel declared India's 99th Ramsar site

Why in News:

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change **Shri Bhupender Yadav** declared **Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary (Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh)** designated as a Ramsar site.
 - India's total Ramsar sites rise to 99; Uttar Pradesh's tally reaches 12



2.17 India adds record 6.1 GW wind capacity in 2025-26

Why in News:

- India recorded historic **addition of 6.1 GW wind energy capacity in 2025-26**

Key Highlights

- India currently ranks fourth globally in wind energy
- India will achieve 100 GW wind capacity by 2030 and 156 GW by 2036, contributing significantly to the net-zero target by 2070
- Nearly 45% of wind power generation occurs during peak demand hours, making it a vital complement to solar energy

Net Zero emissions by 2070

- Announced a **net zero by 2070 target at COP26 in GLASSGOW in 2021**
- Panchamrit Action plan**
 - All targets except the final net-zero goal are set for the year 2030:
 - Reach 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity
 - Meet 50% of total energy requirements from renewable energy sources
 - Reduce total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes between 2021 to 2030

- Reduce the carbon intensity of the economy by 45% (relative to 2005 levels)
 - Achieve the ultimate target of Net Zero emissions by 2070
- By late 2025, **India had already surpassed 51% of its total power capacity** from non-fossil fuel sources, reaching over 256 GW

2.18 Launch of the Climate Resilience Analytics and Visualization Intelligence System (CRAVIS)

Why in News:

- **Union Minister of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) Shri Piyush Goyal** addressed the 'Advancing Resilience with Climate Change' dialogue in New Delhi.
 - Launched a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered climate intelligence platform.

Key Highlights:

- **Renewable Energy Milestone**
 - **India achieved its renewable energy goals eight years ahead of the scheduled timeline**, with 260 Gigawatts (GW) of capacity already established.
- **Clean Energy Targets**
 - The government has **set an ambitious target to reach a total of 500 Gigawatts (GW)** of clean energy capacity by the year 2030.
- **Global Economic Engagements**
 - India is currently engaging with 12 countries and regions, including Canada, Brazil, and Israel, to establish significant trade and economic partnerships.
- **Energy Efficiency Success**
 - The country completed the **fastest global transition to energy-efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting within a period of three years.**
- **Launch of CRAVIS**
 - **Launched the Climate Resilience Analytics and Visualisation Intelligence System (CRAVIS)**, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered platform **developed by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)** to provide district-level **analysis across 279** climate indicators.

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA

2.19 MoUs signed between Labour Ministry with Porter and Gigin Technologies

KEY TERM

Gig Economy

Why in News

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment signed MoUs with Porter and Gigin technologies **to boost gig economy** employment by integrating them with the **National Career Service (NCS)** portal.
- **Gig economy** refers to a labour market based on **short-term, flexible**, and task-based work arrangements
- As per economic survey 2025-26, gig workers currently represent over **2%** of India's total workforce



- The primary goal is to **bridge the gap between jobseekers** and the growing **logistics and tech-driven gig sectors**.

Key Highlights

- Use of **AI-based verification** to ensure **authentic job listings** and reduce fraud
- Focus on **short-term soft skills training** aligned with industry needs
- NCS portal integrated with **e-Migrate, Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), and My Bharat**
 - **e-Migrate** ensures safe overseas migration of Indian workers, **SIDH** provides a unified platform for skilling and jobs, and **MY Bharat** promotes youth engagement and leadership.
- This enables single-window access to multi-sector jobs and overseas employment opportunities

National Career Service (NCS) portal

- Launched on **July 20, 2015**.
- Ministry - Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- It is a central hub for **integrating India's gig economy into a formal and transparent employment ecosystem**
- Integration with initiatives like **DigiSaksham** (Microsoft) and **Career Skills Training** (TCS iON) to offer free soft skills and digital training
- Recent Partnerships - NCS has partnered with major platforms like **Amazon India, Swiggy, Zomato, Zepto, and Flipkart**

SOCIAL JUSTICE

2.20 **BHASHINI for Seva / Sanchalan" program**

Why in News

- Recently, **the Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** and the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enable multilingual accessibility in pension services through the "BHASHINI for Seva / Sanchalan" program.
- The integration is designed to **overcome linguistic barriers for first-time savers and individuals currently outside formal retirement planning**, thereby strengthening financial inclusion.
- The initiative aims to provide access across all **22 languages** recognized under the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India**.

BHASHINI

- **Launch Year:** July 2022
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- **Implementing Agency:** Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Digital India Corporation (DIC).

- **Aim/Objective:** To **bridge literacy and language divides** by enabling seamless multilingual access to digital services and empowering citizens to access digital initiatives in their own language.
- **Features:**
 - **Framework:** Operates as India's National Language Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).
 - **Associated Program:** Launched under the **National Language Translation Mission**.
 - **Crowdsourcing Initiative:** Includes **Bhasha Daan**, a platform for citizens to contribute to building multilingual datasets.
 - **Function:** Supports translation and voice-based interactions to help government and public sector initiatives reach a wider audience.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (DPI): G20 Definition.

As defined by the G20, DPI refers to a set of shared digital systems that are secure and interoperable, built on open standards to deliver **equitable access to public and private services** at a **societal scale**.

I. DIGITAL IDENTITY



AUTHENTICATION & VERIFICATION

Securely proves who you are
Eg: AADHAR

II. PAYMENTS SYSTEMS



II. PAYMENTS SYSTEMS

Seamless, immediate transactions
Eg: UPI

III. DATA EXCHANGE



III. DATA EXCHANGE

Consent-based secure data sharing
Eg: BHASHINI

EQUITABLE ACCESS & SOCIETAL SCALE DELIVERY

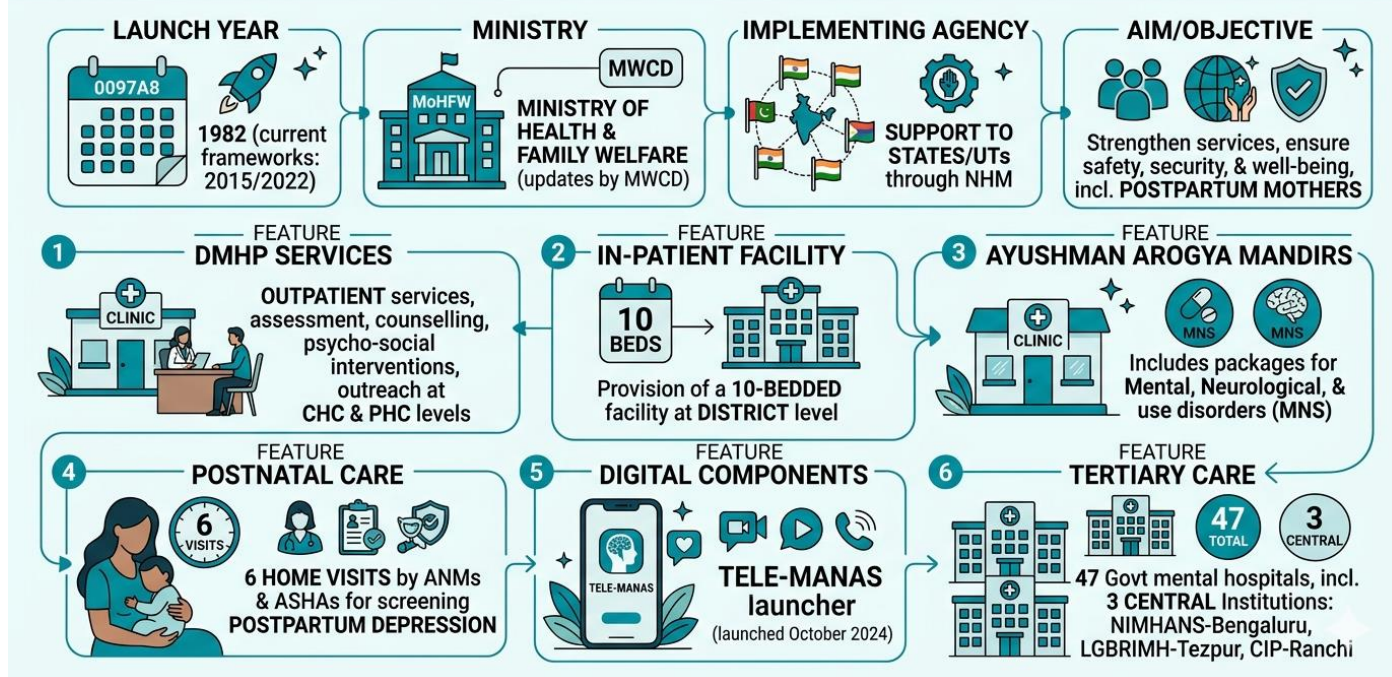


2.21 National Mental Health Programme

Why in News

- The **Minister of State for Women and Child Development** recently informed the Rajya Sabha about the government's measures to strengthen mental health services, specifically highlighting support for postpartum mothers under the **National Mental Health Programme**.

ABOUT NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME (NMHP)



2.22 Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Campaigns

Why in News

- The Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions provided a written update in the Lok Sabha in April regarding the progress and implementation of the **Nationwide Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Campaigns**.

Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Campaigns

- Launch Year:** 2022.
- Aim/Objective:** To resolve difficulties faced by elderly, super senior, and differently-abled pensioners in submitting Life Certificates and to ensure "Ease of Living."
- Features:**
 - Timeline:** Campaigns are held annually from 1st to 30th November.
 - Specific Timeline for Seniors:** Pensioners above 80 years of age are permitted to submit their DLCs in the month of October as well.
 - Technology:** Implementation of the Face Authentication Technique, which allows DLC generation to use only a smartphone.
 - Coverage:** DLC camps are organized at various locations in identified districts, cities, and towns.
 - Special Services:** Provision for doorstep services for aged, sick, incapacitated, and Divyang pensioners; Mega Camps are organized in areas with high pensioner concentration.
 - Awareness:** Outreach meetings and training sessions for stakeholders are conducted during the pre-campaign phase.
 - Beneficiaries:** Elderly, super senior (above 80 years), and differently abled (Divyang) pensioners.

2.23 Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026

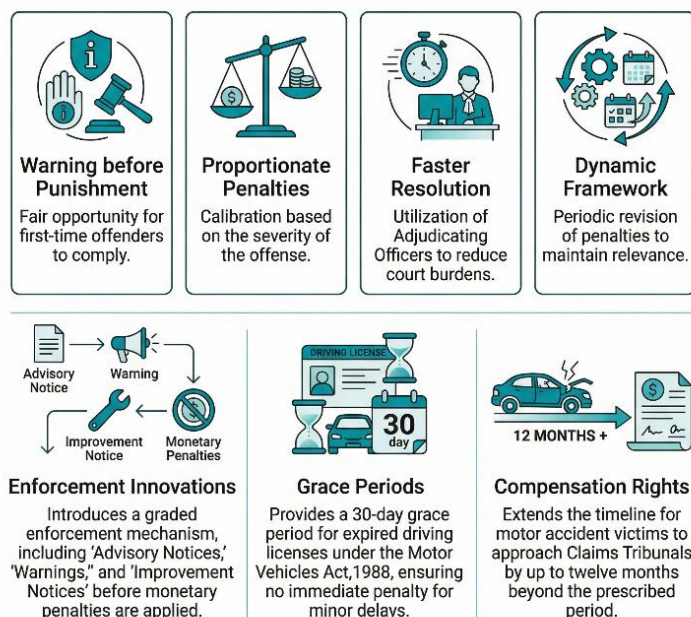
Why in News

- Recently, the **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026**, was passed by Parliament, to further decriminalize minor offences, amend 80 laws administered by 23 Ministries, and replace jail terms with civil penalties to boost ease of doing business, compliance, and governance.

Aim

- To foster a regulatory environment based on trust between the government, citizens, and businesses.
- To reduce the legal and compliance burden on individuals and commercial entities by ensuring proportionate regulation.
- To create a more conducive ecosystem for business operations by removing the fear of imprisonment for minor technical lapses.

PILLARS OF REFORM



Decriminalising Governance: Key Features of the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026

CORE LEGISLATIVE SHIFTS



- Decriminalising Minor Offences:** Replaces imprisonment with civil penalties for minor violations (e.g., Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940).
- Removal of Imprisonment Terms:** Acts like Indian Succession Act (1925) and Electricity Act (2003) amended to remove jail terms, replacing them strictly with increased fines.
- Omission of Outdated Laws:** Eliminates unnecessary offences like raising false fire alarms (Delhi Police Act, 1978) or failing to report births/deaths under specific municipal acts.

GRADED ENFORCEMENT & ADJUDICATION



- The "Warning First" Approach:** Mandates an advisory for the first offence and a warning for the second before civil penalties are applied (e.g., Apprentices Act, 1961).
- Improvement Notices:** First-time violators get time to correct issues before facing penalties (e.g., Legal Metrology Act, 2009 regarding non-standard weights).
- Specialized Adjudication:** Appoints Adjudicating Officers for inquiries and Appellate Authorities for appeals, moving minor cases out of overburdened courts.

FINANCIAL & SPECIFIC REFORMS



- Periodic Penalty Revision:** Fines and penalties automatically increase by 10% of the minimum amount every three years to maintain deterrent value.
- Delhi Municipal Reforms:** Simplifies property tax by separating buildings and vacant land, creates a Hardship and Anomaly Committee, removes advertisement tax.



STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE



- Economic & Business Ease:** Reduces fear of imprisonment for technical violations, creating a more predictable, investor-friendly environment.
- Administrative Efficiency:** Enables faster resolution of cases and reduces judicial backlog by shifting minor offences to adjudicating officers.
- Trust-Based Governance:** Promotes a shift toward encouraging compliance through guidance rather than immediate strict punishment.

2.24 National Youth Policy (NYP) 2026

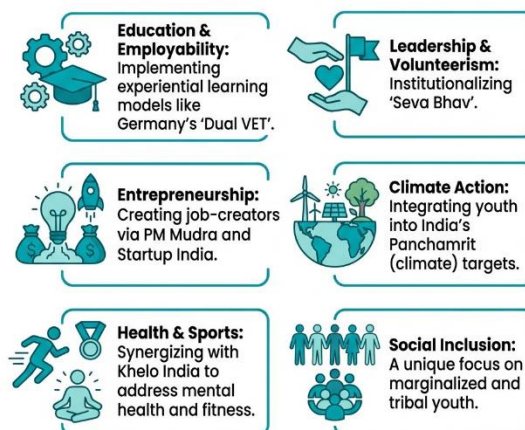
Why in News

- The Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports discussed the **National Youth Policy (NYP) 2026** in the Rajya Sabha, marking a shift toward an outcome-driven framework to harness India's peak demographic window.

National Youth Policy (NYP) 2026

- Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Implementing Agency:** **Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)** platform (an autonomous phygital body).
- Aim:** To transform youth from passive beneficiaries into active "green agents" and stakeholders in governance and to bridge the 30-40% skill gap identified in the *India Skills Report 2024*.
- Monitoring:** Directly integrated with **NITI Aayog's** Output-Outcome Framework and the **India Youth Development Index (YDI)**.

CORE PILLARS OF NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY



2.25 Skills Outcomes Fund (SOF)

Why in News

- Recently, the Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship initiated a campaign to build the **Skills Outcomes Fund (SOF)**, a global-scale initiative aimed at unlocking **aspirational livelihoods for youth from low-income backgrounds**.
- This initiative **aligns with high-growth, future-oriented** sectors including **Green Jobs, IT-ITeS, BFSI, Healthcare, Logistics, and Electronics**.

Skills Outcomes Fund (SOF)

- Ministry:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (**MSDE**).
- Aim:** To **mobilize public and private capital** to scale outcomes-based financing, linking skilling investments directly to verified employment results.

Features:

- Blended Finance Model:** Supplements government funding from MSDE with private sector, philanthropic, and CSR capital.
- Outcomes-Based Financing (OBF):** A **"Pay-for-Success"** model where **payments are triggered only after independent verification** of job placement and retention.
- Employer-Led Approach:** A demand-driven model that ensures training is relevant to the actual needs of the industry.
- Institutionalization:** Aims to move OBF from a "pilot" phase (like the Skill Impact Bond) to a core institutionalized strategy for India's human capital.

- **Collaboration:** Anchored in partnership with organizations like the **British Asian Trust** and **The Blended Finance Company**, involving major CSR players (GAIL, JSW Foundation, NSE Foundation, etc.).

2.26 100 Entities onboarded for Aadhaar-Based Offline Verification

Why in News:

- UIDAI onboarded 100 entities as Offline Verification Seeking Entities (OVSEs) within three months of rollout.
 - Promotes secure, consent-based and paperless Aadhaar verification.

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

- **Established on 28 January 2009**, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**
- Became statutory body in 2016
- **Nandan Nilekani** was appointed as the first Chairman
- First Aadhaar number was generated and issued to a resident of **Nandurbar, Maharashtra** in 2010

2.27 National Chintan Shivir on Social Justice and Empowerment

Why in News:

- **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** organized a three-day National Chintan Shivir in Chandigarh.
 - The event centered on **the theme “Antyodaya ka Sankalp, Amrit Kaal ka Pratibimb – Viksit Bharat@2047”** to strengthen social justice delivery across States and UTs.
- Launched the upgraded **Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA 2.0) App** during the National Chintan Shivir in Chandigarh.

Key Highlights:

- **Launch of Digital Governance Platforms**
 - Introduced the Single Access Mechanism for All Verticals of Empowerment & Social Harmony (**SAMAVESH**) Portal, Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (**NMBA 2.0**), **SETU**, and Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (**SMILE**) Apps to streamline scholarship access and rehabilitation services.
- **Strategic Capacity Building**
 - Signed MoU between **the National Institute of Social Defense (NISD)** to expand research and training.

2.28 IPPB launches dedicated Savings Account for Self Help Groups (SHGs)

Why in News:

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** introduced a specialized **SHG Savings Account** to empower women-led groups and deepen financial inclusion in rural India.

- The initiative leverages the vast postal network to bring formal banking to the doorstep of "underbanked" communities.

Key Features:

- **Affordability and Accessibility**
 - Features a zero-balance model with no minimum initial deposit or Monthly Average Balance (MAB) requirements.
- **Transaction and Service Charges**
 - Offers nil charges for cash deposits, withdrawals, account closures, and QR card issuance to ensure cost-effective banking.
- **Deposit and Interest Limits**
 - Allows a maximum balance of ₹2,00,000 with interest paid out on a quarterly basis as per applicable savings rates.
- **Doorstep On-boarding**
 - Utilizes the digital infrastructure and the network of Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) for assisted digital on-boarding.
- **Strategic Policy Linkage**
 - Aligns with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) of the MoRD and various programs supported by NABARD.
- **Information Transparency**
 - Provides one free physical account statement per month to help SHGs maintain their financial records easily.

GENDER ISSUES

2.29 SHe-Box and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

Why in News

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has provided a comprehensive update on the onboarding progress and digital integration of the **SHe-Box portal under the PoSH Act, 2013**

SHe-Box

- **Launch Year:** August 2024 (Portal).
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).
- **Implementing Agency:** State Governments and Union Territory Administrations (for grassroots mechanisms).
- **Aim/Objective:** To serve as a digital governance initiative for the effective implementation of the PoSH Act, 2013, and to streamline the redressal mechanism for sexual harassment at workplaces.
- **Features:**

- **Inclusion:** Integrated into the **Mission Shakti** mobile application (available on Android and iOS).
- **Multilingual Support:** Accessible in **23 languages** for inclusive reach.
- **Repository:** Hosts a comprehensive collection of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, including FAQs, handbooks, and training manuals.
- **Coverage:** Covers public and private sectors, including remote and informal workplaces.

2.30 Womaniya Initiative

Why in News

- Recently, the Government highlighted the progress of the **Womaniya Initiative**, noting that it has significantly surpassed national procurement targets for women-led enterprises on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Government e Marketplace (GeM)

- **Launch Year:** 2016
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Managed by:** GeM SPV, a Section 8 non-profit company.
- **Legal Mandate:** Procurement through GeM is authorized and made **mandatory for government entities** under **Rule 149** of the **General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017**.

Core Features:

- **Three Pillars:** Built on the foundation of **Inclusion, Usability, and Efficiency**.
- **Technological Edge:** Utilizes **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Machine Learning (ML)** for catalogue validation, anomaly detection (e.g., collusive bidding), and Bid Health Scores.
- **End-to-End Solution:** Provides a unified portal for the procurement of common-use goods and services, ranging from office stationery to specialized human resource services.

ABOUT WOMANIYA INITIATIVE



LAUNCH YEAR:
2019



MINISTRY:
**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE
& INDUSTRY**



IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:
**GOVERNMENT
E-MARKETPLACE (GEM)**

AIM/OBJECTIVE



**TO DEVELOP A
GENDER-INCLUSIVE
PUBLIC
PROCUREMENT
PORTAL BY ENABLING
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS
AND SHGs TO SELL
PRODUCTS DIRECTLY TO
GOVERNMENT BUYERS,
THEREBY REDUCING
DEPENDENCE ON
INTERMEDIARIES.**

DEDICATED INTERFACE



DEDICATED INTERFACE

Provides
specialized digital
storefront on GeM
for products like
handicrafts,
handloom, etc.

INTEGRATION WITH SWAYATT



INTEGRATION WITH SWAYATT

Operates under the
broader SWAYATT
initiative to
promote inclusive
procurement

FEATURES

PRODUCT CATEGORIES



Uses Udyam
verification for
seamless
registration,
supported by
online and offline
training
workshops

STANDARDIZED CATALOGUING



Employs uniform
templates and
technical
specifications to
ensure fair
comparison and
discoverability

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT



Facilitates
end-to-end digital
procurement
including bidding,
invoicing, and
time-bound
payments

CAPACITY BUILDING



Conducts
vernacular
training and
buyer-seller
meets across
various states to
enhance seller
readiness

2.31 Women Reservation Bill (106th Amendment)

Why in News

- Union Cabinet has approved a draft amendment bill to operationalize the **Women's Reservation Act, also called Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**, aiming for a **33% reservation** in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies by the 2029 elections.
 - However, bill did not pass due to shortage of 2/3rd of votes.

KEY FACT

In **1996**, the **first Women's Reservation Bill** was sent to a Select Committee headed by **Geeta Mukherjee**, recommending reservation to OBC women.

Key provisions

- Expansion of Lok Sabha seats from current **543 to a maximum of 850 with 815 seats allocated to states and 35 seats for UTs with legislatures**, specifically Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, and Puducherry.
- Within the 33% women's reservation framework, **one-third of the seats are reserved for SC and ST women**.



DID YOU KNOW

- There are **no seats** specifically reserved for women in **the Rajya Sabha** and members enter through either indirect election by MLAs or direct nomination by the President.
- Total seats in Rajya Sabha is 245** (233

- Delimitation will be based **on the 2011 census** as 2027 census could have delayed the rollout. Similar **delimitation exercise** for **state legislative assemblies** will be done where reservations will be allocated on a **pro-rata** (in proportion) basis.
- Seats reserved for women will be **rotated after each delimitation** to ensure that a single seat isn't locked for a specific category forever, allowing different leaders to emerge from various regions.
- The reservation is set **for an initial period of 15 years**, after which Parliament can decide whether to continue it or not.

KEY TERM

Delimitation

- Delimitation is the **process of redrawing** the boundaries and adjusting the number of electoral constituencies **based on population changes**.
- **In India**, Delimitation Commissions have been constituted **4 times** – in **1952, 1963, 1973, and 2002**

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: KEY GLOBAL & INDIAN INITIATIVES

GLOBAL CONTEXT



FALLS UNDER UN SDG 5:
GENDER EQUALITY

- Achieve Gender Equality & Empower All Women & Girls



GLOBAL GENDER GAP
INDEX
(by WEF, 2025)

INDIA RANK:
131st / 148
148 COUNTRIES

GLOBAL INDICES



GLOBAL GENDER GAP
INDEX
(by WEF, 2025)

INDIA RANK:
131st / 148
COUNTRIES



GENDER INEQUALITY
INDEX
(by UNDP, 2023-24)

INDIA RANK:
108 / 193
193 COUNTRIES

ACTS PASSED BY INDIA

NARI SHAKTI VANDAN ADHINIYAM
(Women's Reservation Act), 2023



33% SEATS RESERVATION
(in Lok Sabha & Assemblies)

73rd & 74th CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT ACTS (1992)

33%
SEATS RESERVED
IN PANCHAYATS &
URBAN LOCAL
BODIES



MATERNITY BENEFIT
(AMENDMENT) ACT, 2017



PAID MATERNITY
LEAVE FOR
26 WEEKS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF
WOMEN AT WORKPLACE
(PoSH) ACT, 2013



MISSION SHAKTI
UMBRELLA SCHEME
INTEGRATED SERVICES &
INTERLOCKING SERVICES



2.32 Launch of e-SafeHER

Why in News

- **C-DAC Hyderabad**, under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and **Reliance Foundation** launched **e-SafeHER** programme
 - To **promote cyber security awareness** among rural women
 - To support **safe digital participation**.

Key Features

- C-DAC develops training content under the **Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)** programme, while Reliance Foundation ensures last-mile delivery through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) using a community-based approach
- It uses multilingual, audio-visual and blended learning methods to improve accessibility and engagement across rural areas.



DID YOU KNOW

YASHODA AI is India's first national **AI literacy movement for women**, launched by the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** in 2025 to promote digital safety and awareness against emerging threats like **deepfakes** and **online**

- It targets **one million women (Cyber Sakhis)** by 2029, beginning with **initial rollout in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha**.

2.33 Nari Shakti Vandan Run

Why in News:

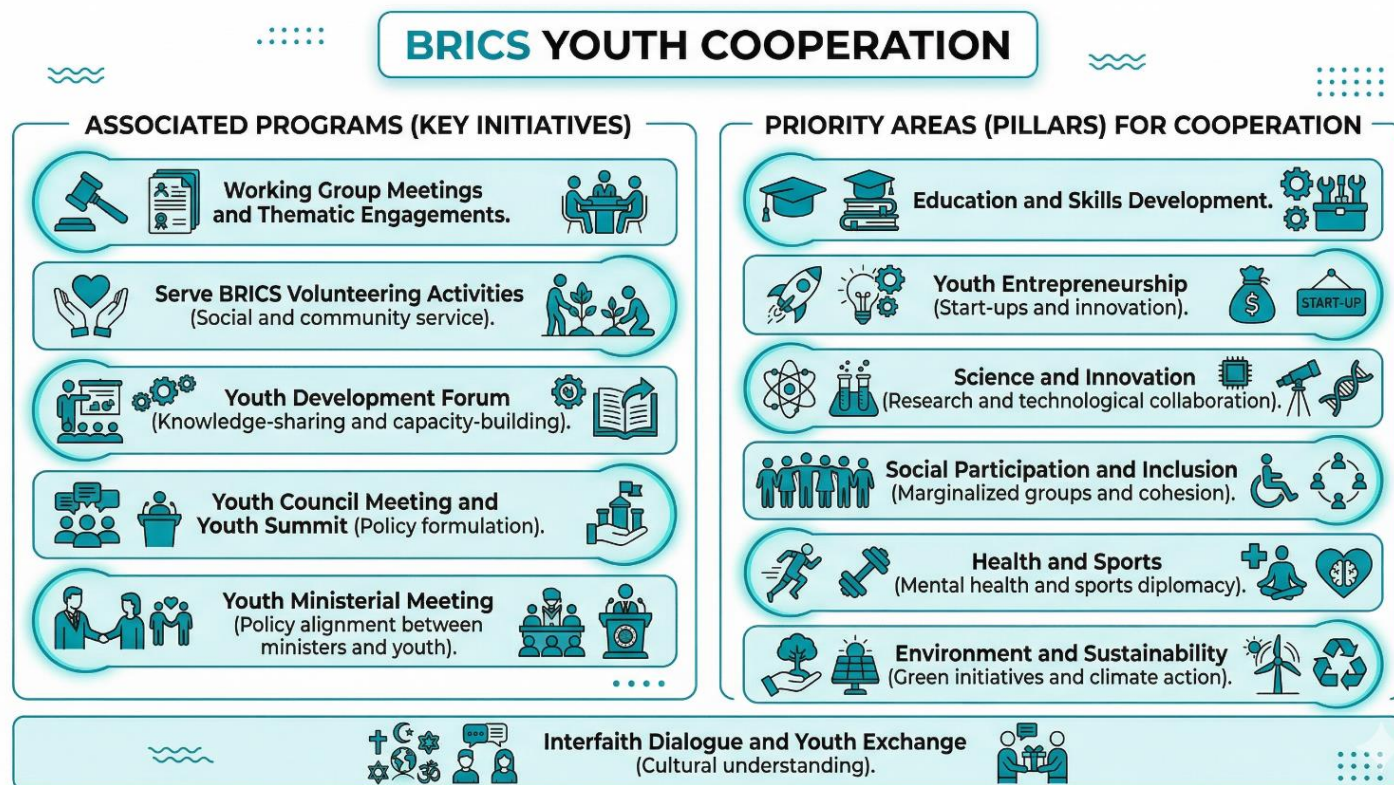
- **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** organized **“Nari Shakti Vandan Run”** on 17–18 April 2026.
 - Linked to special Parliament session discussing women’s representation and delimitation.
- **Theme:** #NariShaktiVandan / Nari Shakti for Viksit Bharat
- **7 Cities Covered**
 - Delhi, Cuttack, Patna, Mumbai, Indore, Bengaluru, Jaipur.
- **Participation Channels**
 - MY Bharat
 - National Service Scheme (NSS)
 - Sports Authority of India (SAI)

GLOBALIZATION

2.34 India Hosts 1st BRICS Youth Coordination Meeting 2026

Why in News

- India formally commenced youth engagements under its 2026 BRICS Chairship by hosting the inaugural BRICS Youth Coordination Meeting virtually.
- India presented a structured roadmap for the **BRICS Youth Track 2026**, featuring several high-level engagements.



BRICS Youth Coordination Meeting 2026

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- **Implementing Agency:** Department of Youth Affairs.
- **Aim:**
 - To strengthen youth cooperation and promote collaboration among BRICS nations.
 - To create a platform for young leaders to contribute to inclusive and sustainable development, innovation, and global dialogue.
 - To align member nations on common thematic priorities for India's Chairship.
- **Theme:** "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

2.35 3rd India–Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment (DTI)

Why in News:

- India and Norway held the 3rd Session of DTI in New Delhi.
 - First session after enforcement of India–EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in October 2025.

Key Discussions:

- **Investment Commitment**
 - EFTA to promote **US\$ 100 billion investment** in India over 15 years and facilitate **1 million direct jobs**.
- **Bilateral Trade Growth**
 - India's exports to Norway increased from **US\$ 270 million (2014) to 439 million (2025)** (~5% average annual growth).
- **Services Trade**
 - India's services exports to Norway stood at **US\$ 876 million (2024)**.
- **Duty-Free Market Access**
 - TEPA provides duty-free access in Norway for Indian agricultural and allied products like rice, marine products, honey, floriculture.
 - Sectoral cooperation in energy (oil & gas, renewables, green hydrogen), maritime, pharma & biotech, MSMEs, tourism, skill development.
- **Institutional Mechanism**
 - Establishment of an **EFTA Desk** under **Invest India** to support EFTA businesses.
- **Next Steps**
 - **Quarterly consultations**; next DTI session in Norway (2028)

INDIA'S RECENT FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS: FOCUS ON EFTA TEPA & GLOBAL DEALS

THE INDIA-EFTA TRADE & ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (TEPA)

PARTIES INVOLVED



UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT: INVESTMENT COMMITMENT



FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND GLOBAL FTA WITH BINDING INVESTMENT & JOB COMMITMENTS

TRADE IN GOODS

INDIA'S OFFER

92.2% tariff lines duty-free access
Covering 99.6% EFTA exports



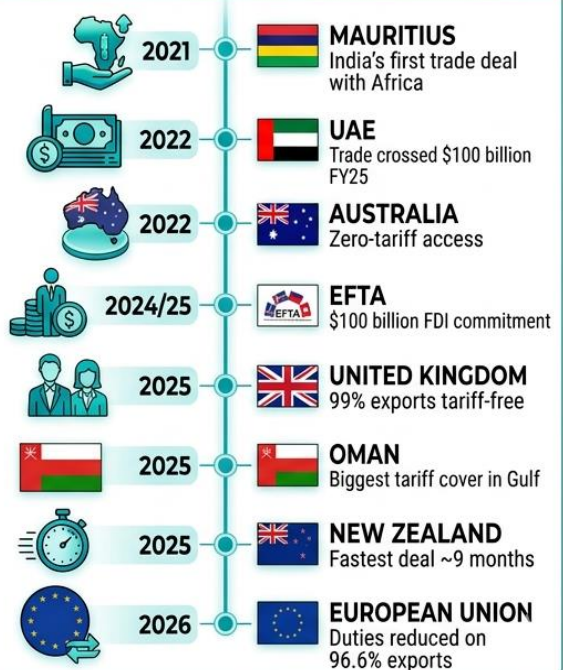
EFTA'S OFFER

92.7% tariff lines duty-free access
Covering 99.6% India's exports



EXCLUSIONS (India Protects Domestic Sectors): Dairy, Soya, Coal, Most Agricultural products

INDIA'S FTAs SINCE 2021 (TOTAL: 8 DEALS)



2.36 India, S Korea set \$50 bn trade target

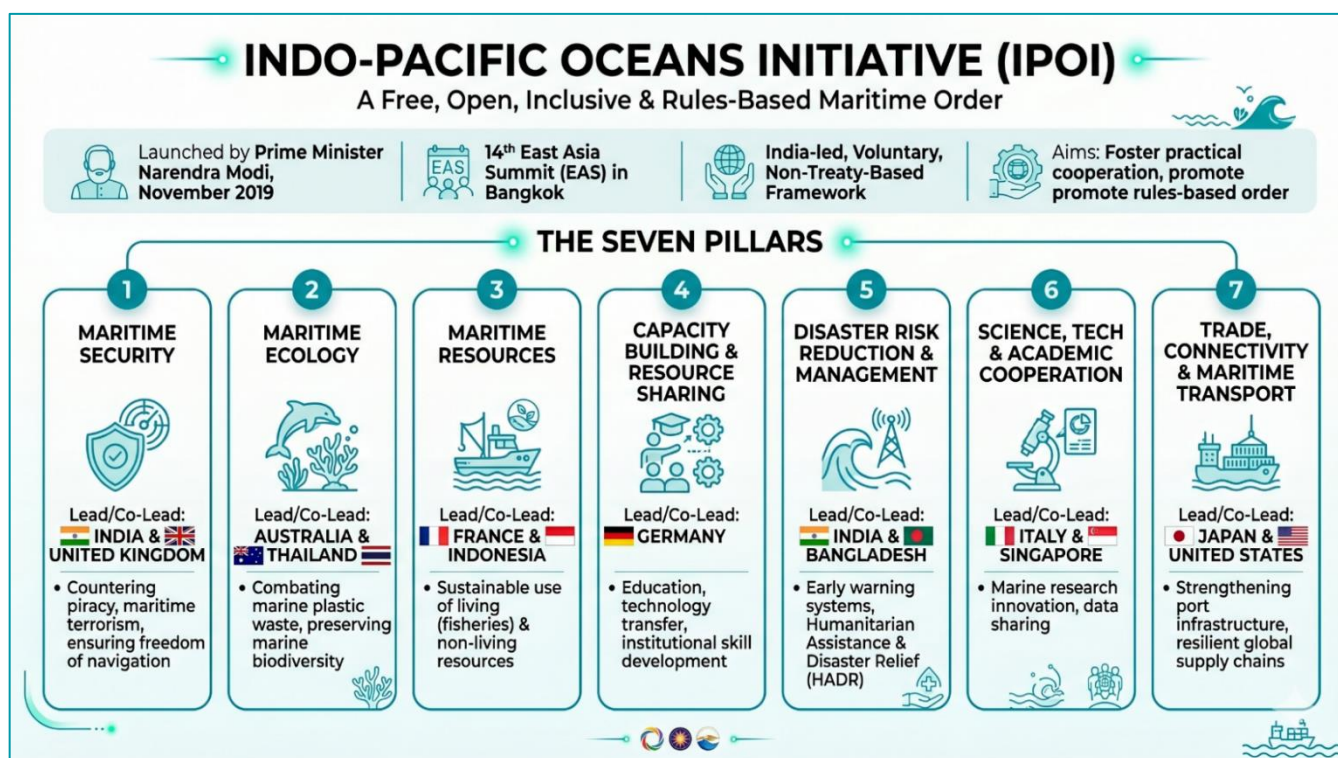
Why in News:

- President of S Korea **Lee Jae Myung**, accompanied by **First Lady Kim Hea Kyung**, paid three day Visit to India
 - Declared **2028-29 as Year of India-S Korea Friendship**
 - Committed to nearly double bilateral trade **to \$50 billion by 2030**.
 - Key focus on **Shipbuilding cooperation** of the bilateral partnership

Key Highlights:

- Trade Agreement Upgrade**
 - Decided to fast-track upgrade of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) **signed in 2010**
 - Current trade: ~\$27 billion (India imports ~\$18.5 billion)**
- Strategic and Security Cooperation**
 - Welcomed S Korea joining the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**
- Industrial & Trade Cooperation**
 - Adoption of Comprehensive Framework on Shipbuilding, Shipping & Maritime Logistics.
 - Welcomed the opening of the **Korea Marine Equipment Association office in Mumbai** to support the maritime industry.

- **JSW Steel's subsidiary Saffron Resources to become 50:50 JV with Posco Group for ₹508.8 crore.**
 - **Greenfield 6 MTPA integrated steel plant planned in Keonjhar district, Odisha**
- **Digital and Technology Cooperation**
 - **NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** and the **Korea Financial Telecommunications and Clearings Institute (KFTC)** have signed an MOU to integrate India's UPI with South Korean payment systems
- **Defense Industry Innovation**
 - Decided to launch '**Korea-India Defence Accelerator**' (**KIND-X**) platform to connect defence startups, businesses and universities.
- **Climate and Sustainability**
 - S Korea joined **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**



REGIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

2.37 First BRICS Health Working Group (HWG) Meeting 2026

Why in News

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** hosted the first BRICS HWG 2026 in New Delhi under India's BRICS Chairmanship

Key Highlights

- Discussions emphasized a **people-centric, humanity-first approach** to global health.

- HWG identified nine priority areas, **including two new pillars introduced by India:**

- **7 Existing Priorities:**

- BRICS TB Research Network** to eliminate Tuberculosis
- Collaboration among BRICS Medical Products Regulatory Authorities** to ensure equitable access to vaccines and medicines
- BRICS Integrated Early Warning System** for prevention and response to mass infectious diseases
- Digital Health Architecture for continuum of care**, including specialized healthcare in remote areas
- Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM)** to promote evidence-based traditional medicine
- Fight against diseases driven by social determinants of health**
- BRICS Network of National Public Health Institutes** to strengthen fair access to health technologies as shared goals.



DID YOU KNOW

BRICS HWG is a specialized platform under the BRICS framework to coordinate on public health challenges

- **2 New pillars proposed by India:**

- BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyles** to address risk factors like unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco, and alcohol
- Promotion of mental health and wellness** to strengthen mental health services

UNDERSTANDING BRICS: ORIGINS, EVOLUTION & INDIA'S PRESIDENCY 2026

What is BRICS?

Major **emerging economies** for economic cooperation, development, and global governance.

Three pillars

- 1. Political and Security concerns**
- 2. Economic and financial partnership**
- 3. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges**

• **2001** - BRIC coined by Jim O'Neill

• **2006** - Formed

• **2009** - First formal summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia



Membership Evolution

Original Members (5)

- Brazil
- Russia
- India
- China
- South Africa

New Members (5)

- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Iran
- UAE (2024)
- Indonesia (2025)

Membership Note (As of April 2026):
Saudi Arabia has been invited but not formally finalized membership.

Total 10 Partner Countries (joined June 2025)

- Belarus
- Bolivia
- Cuba
- Kazakhstan
- Malaysia
- Nigeria
- Thailand
- Uganda
- Uzbekistan
- Vietnam

BRICS TRIOKA

- Brazil (2025)
- India (2026)
- China (2027)

India's 2026 Chairmanship

4th Chairmanship
(2012, 2016, 2021)

Theme:
"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"

Energy Track:
सर्वेषां ऊर्जम्
(Energy for All)



Source: Provided BRICS Information | Landscape Version (16:9)

EXPORT-IMPORT POLICY

2.38 India's Plan for USD 2 Trillion Export Target by 2030-31

Why in News:

- **Union Minister Piyush Goyal chaired a high-level review of the roadmap to achieve USD 2 Trillion in total exports by 2030–31.**
 - The meeting assessed the implementation of the flagship ‘Export Promotion Mission’ (EPM) focused on MSMEs and agricultural sectors.

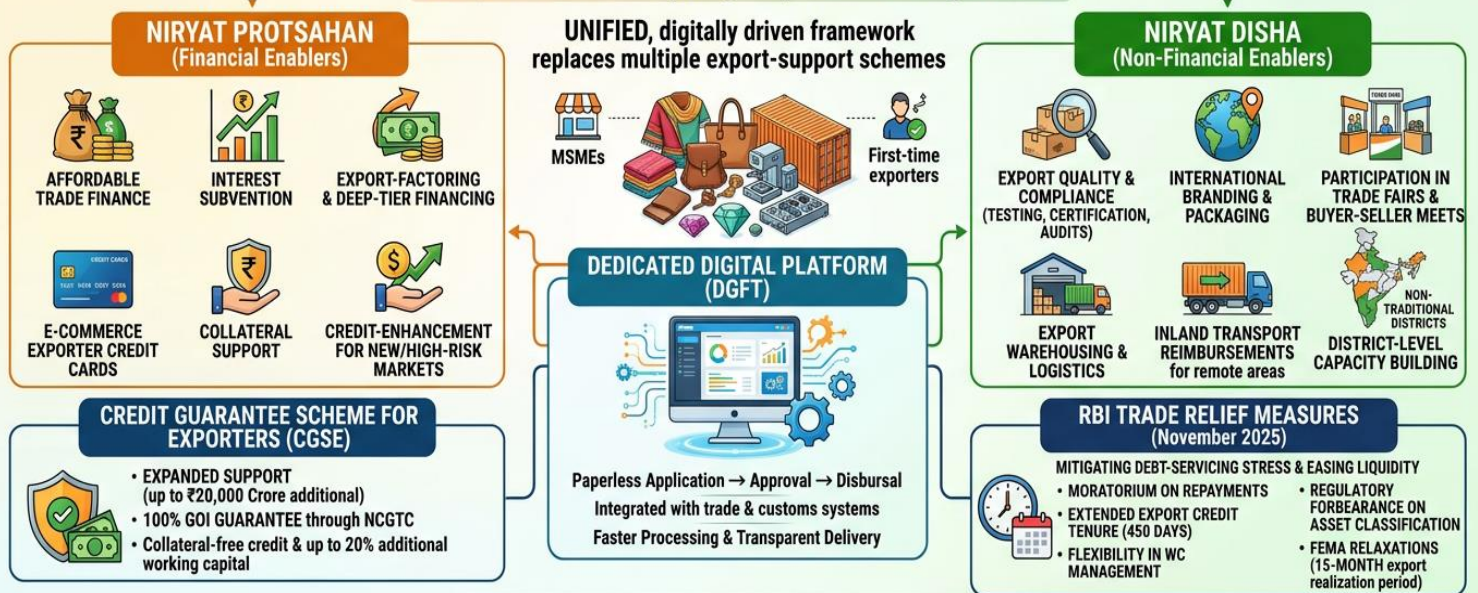
Key Features:

- **Export Composition Targets**
 - Aiming for **USD 1 Trillion in merchandise exports and USD 1 Trillion in services exports by the year 2030–31.**
- **Export Monitoring Framework**
 - Breakdown of national targets into sector-specific actions for Engineering, Textiles, Electronics, Pharma, Chemicals, and Services.
- **Three Pillars of Implementation**
 - Based on defined timelines with Nodal Joint Secretaries, inter-departmental coordination, and an IT-enabled progress monitoring platform.
- **Geopolitical Relief Measures**
 - Implementation of a ‘**Relief Scheme**’ under EPM specifically for exporters affected by the ongoing West Asia crisis.
- **Logistics and Brand Visibility**
 - Focus on developing overseas warehousing and strengthening ‘Brand India’ as an overarching umbrella for global promotion.

EXPORT PROMOTION MISSION: A UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING INDIA'S EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS

Posted On: 06 DEC 2025 | PIB Delhi

₹25,060 Crore Outlay | Digitally Driven through DGFT



EXPECTED OUTCOMES & MACROECONOMIC LINKAGES



BOOST MSME GROWTH



CREATE EMPLOYMENT



RAISE EXPORT READINESS



ENHANCE INDIA'S GLOBAL POSITION



PROMOTE ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT



CONTRIBUTE TO VIKSIT BHARAT @ 2047

MEASUREMENT OF GROWTH

2.39 Draft Uniform Guidelines for Compilation of Gross State Value Addition (GSVA)

Why in News

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has introduced the Draft Uniform Guidelines for Compilation of Gross State Value Addition (GSVA) to standardize regional economic estimation practices.

Key Highlights

- **Base Year Revision:** The base year of National Accounts has been revised to **2022–23** to better reflect the current economic structure and align with international standards.
- **Sub-Committee on Regional Accounts:** A committee has been constituted under the **Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS)** to review concepts and methodologies for State and District Domestic Product.

2.40 Field operations for the Census 2027 Phase I begins

Why in News

- Phase I of Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO), under phase I of Census 2027 began from April 16, 2026, in **8 States/UTs**, with **Self-Enumeration (SE)** introduced.
 - Includes Andaman & Nicobar, Goa, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, Sikkim + NDMC & Delhi Cantonment.



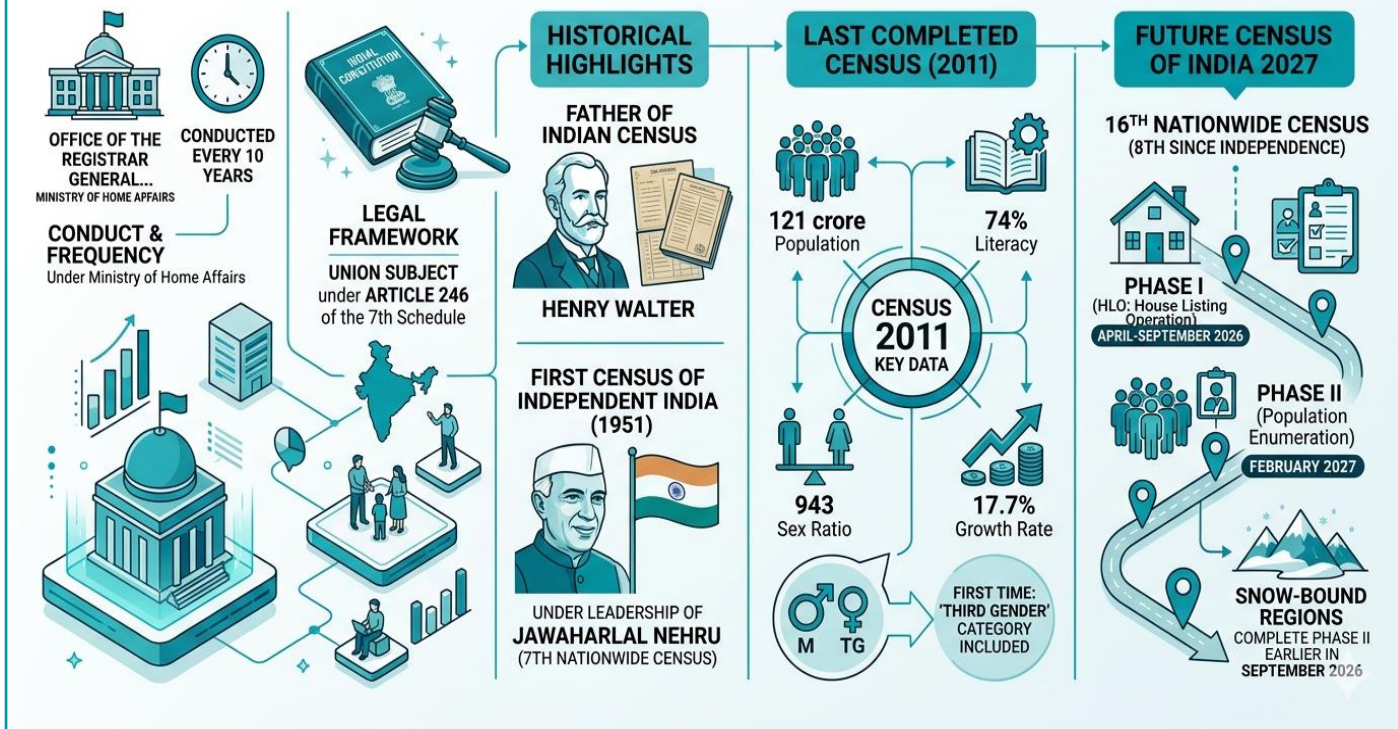
DID YOU KNOW

SE, introduced for the **first time in Census**, is a digital facility that allows households to submit their Census details online **before physical verification** by enumerators.

Key Highlights

- Data collection covers **33 notified questions** on housing conditions, amenities, and assets
- Census adopts a **hybrid model**, combining **digital self-enumeration** with **house-to-house verification** to ensure **accurate data collection**
- Exercise is being conducted in a **phased manner across States/UTs**, with a **15-day self-enumeration period** followed by **30-day field operations**.
 - Residents completing SE are issued a **Self-Enumeration ID (SE ID)**, used for **verification during enumerator visits**
- SE to shortly commence in other States like Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal, Bihar, Haryana, Chandigarh, MP, Chhattisgarh in next phase of rollout
- All data collected **under the Census Act, 1948**, remains strictly confidential

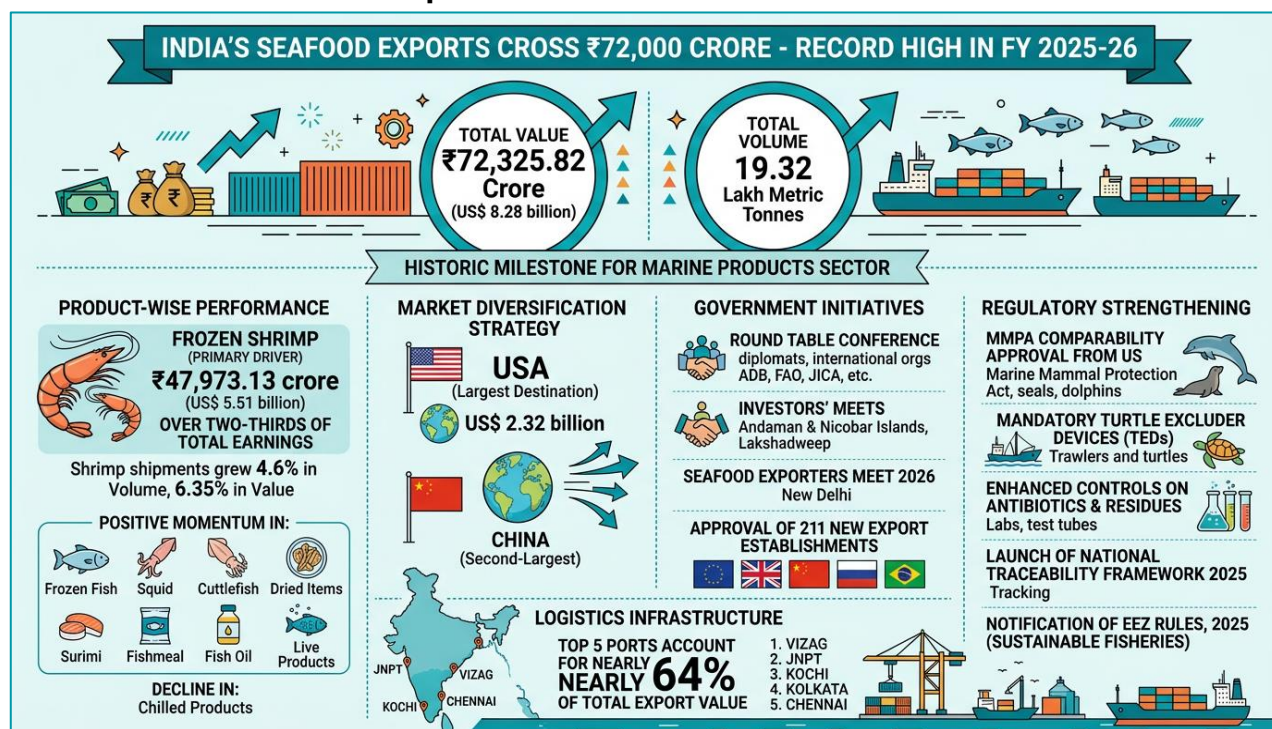
CENSUS OF INDIA: A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW



2.41 India's Seafood Exports hit record ₹72,325 crore in FY 2025-26

Why in News:

- India's marine products exports reached an all-time **high of ₹72,325.82 crore (US\$ 8.28 billion)** in FY 2025-26. Export volume: 19.32 lakh metric tonnes, marking a historic milestone for the marine products sector.



2.42 Cabinet approves Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMI)

Why in News

- Union Cabinet approved creation of **BMI Pool** with a sovereign guarantee of **₹12,980 crore**
 - To ensure **affordable maritime insurance coverage** amid global disruptions in shipping corridors such as the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.
 - Aims to **reduce insurance cost to at least 25%**

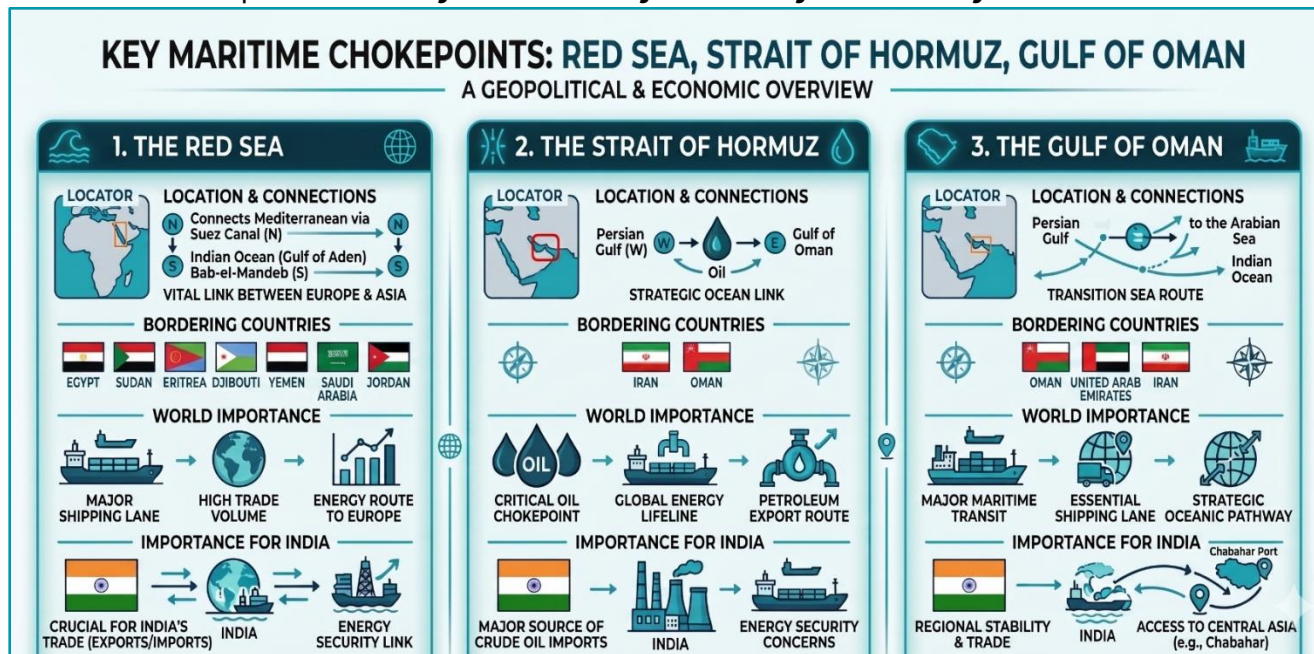
KEY FACT

- India's maritime sector handles **over 70% of the country's trade by volume and nearly 95% by value**
- India presently has **13 major ports**

Key Features

- **Sovereign Guarantee**
 - Backed by Government guarantee of ₹12,980 crore to ensure financial stability and credibility.
- **Administrator of the pool**
 - **GIC-Re will act as the administrator**, contributing around **₹400 crore while** public sector general insurance companies will contribute about ₹280 crore, with the remaining amount coming from private sector insurers and oil marketing companies
- **Domestic Underwriting Capacity**
 - Combined underwriting capacity of around **₹950 crore** through pool member insurers.
- **Coverage of Maritime Risks**
 - Covers Hull & Machinery, Cargo, Protection & Indemnity (P&I), and War risks.
- **Scope of Applicability**
 - Applicable to Indian flagged or controlled vessels or vessels destined to or starting from India.
- **Reduced External Dependence**
 - Aims to reduce reliance on International Group of Protection and Indemnity (IGP&I) Clubs for third-party liability coverage.
- **Governance Structure**
 - A Governing Body to oversee formation and functioning of the pool.
- **Timeline**

- Pool will operate for **10 years** and **may extend by another 5 years**.



2.43 India's March Industrial Output (IIP) slows to 4.1%

Why in News:

- India's industrial growth hit a **five-month low of 4.1% in March 2026**.

Key Highlights:

- Manufacturing Sector Growth**
 - Expanded by 4.3% in March, down from a 5.9% growth recorded in February.
- Electricity Generation**
 - Rose by only 0.8% year-on-year, showing a sharp decline from 2.3% in the previous month.
- Mining Activity**
 - Increased to 5.5% growth, providing a positive contrast to the slowdown in other major sectors.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The IIP is a composite indicator that measures the short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period
- Compiled and published monthly by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Base year used for calculation is **2011-12**.
- Broad Sectoral Classification (Weights)
 - **Manufacturing:** Highest weightage (~77.6%)
 - **Mining:** (~14.4%).
 - **Electricity:** (~8.0%).

2.44 MoSPI releases Approach Paper for Index of Service Production (ISP)

Why in News:

- **The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** has invited stakeholder feedback on a proposed methodology to compile the **Index of Service Production (ISP)**, with **2024-25 as base year**.
 - The initiative aims to fill a critical data gap by providing a short-term indicator for the services sector, **which contributes over 50% of India's GDP**.

Key Highlights:

- **Objective of ISP**
 - To capture monthly and short-term movements in the services sector, functioning similarly to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- **GST Data as a Barometer**
 - Proposes using aggregated data from the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) to monitor outward supplies across service sectors.
- **Technical Advisory Oversight**
 - Developed by the **Technical Advisory Committee on ISP (TAC-ISP)**, a **24-member** expert body constituted in May 2025.
- **Sectoral Coverage**
 - Comprehensively analyzes over 40 sub-sectors including wholesale/retail trade, transport, banking, insurance, communication, and real estate.

INFLATION

2.45 Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) for March 2026

Why in News:

- The **Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA)** released **Index of Eight Core Industries** for the month of March.

Key Highlights:

- Overall ICI Performance

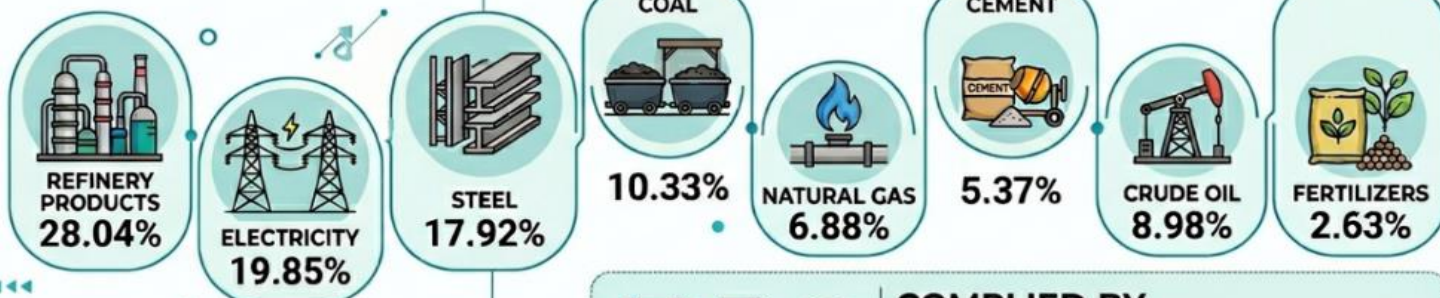
- March 2026: **Declined by 0.4%** (provisional) compared to March 2025.
- Cumulative growth (April-March 2025-26): 2.6% compared to the previous year.
- Four sectors (**Fertilizers, Crude Oil, Coal, and Electricity**) recorded negative growth, impacting overall industrial performance.

INDEX OF EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES (ICI): KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

A monthly production volume index measuring the performance of eight critical infrastructure sectors in India (Base Year: 2011-12=100)

COMPONENTS & WEIGHTS

The ICI is a major component of the IIP, carrying 40.27% of its total weight



COMPLIED BY

Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA)
Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT),
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

WHY THE ICI MATTERS FOR POLICYMAKING



GDP
FORECASTING



INFLATION
MONITORING



FISCAL &
INFRASTRUCTURE
PLANNING

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

2.46 Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

Why in News

- Recently, the Union Budget 2026–27 introduced strategic reforms and a **special one-time duty concession for Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**.
- This one-time measure allows eligible SEZ manufacturing units to sell a prescribed proportion of their output in **the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA)** at **concessional duty rates** instead of standard customs duties.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

- **Launch Year:** The SEZ Policy was announced in **2000**, followed by the SEZ Act in **2005** (effective from February 2006).
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry (implied via the role of Development Commissioners and trade policy).
- **Aim/Objective:** To generate additional economic activity and create employment opportunities.
 - To boost exports of goods and services and attract domestic/foreign investment.
 - To develop world-class infrastructure and serve as engines of export-led growth.
- **Features:**
 - **Legal Status:** Specifically delineated duty-free enclaves deemed to be foreign territory for trade operations and customs.
 - **Pillars/Incentives:** Duty-free import/domestic procurement of goods for development and operations.
 - Zero-rated supplies under the **IGST Act, 2017**.
 - **Single-window clearance** for Central and State level approvals.
 - **Priority Sectors:** Recent focus on high-tech manufacturing like semiconductors with relaxed land requirements and encumbrance norms.
 - **Governing Body:** Oversighted by **Development Commissioners** who monitor performance and compliance via monthly reports.
 - **Key Hubs:** Includes Mundra Port, Kandla Port, Sri City, and **GIFT City**.
- **Targets:** Achieving economies of scale and reducing export costs while maintaining an export-oriented character.

Did You Know?

Domestic Tariff Area (DTA):

The area within India that falls outside the boundaries of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), where standard customs

2.47 Udyam Registration Portal

Why in News

- The Udyam Registration Portal (URP) has recorded a significant growth trend with over 7.83 crore enterprises registered by February.

Udyam Registration Portal (URP)

- **Launch Year:** July 2020.
 - **Ministry:** Ministry of MSME.
 - **Aim/Objective:** To provide a process for the registration of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under the revised classification criteria.
- Features:**
- **Registration Basis:** Based on the composite criteria of investment and turnover adopted in 2020.
 - **Associated Program:** Udyam Assist Platform (UAP), launched in January 2023, to formalize Informal Micro Enterprises (IMEs).

- **Territorial Coverage:** Implemented across all States and Union Territories
- **Awareness Activities:** Awareness programmes are conducted through physical workshops, social media, print, and electronic media in coordination with State/UT Industry Departments.

2.48 Government e Marketplace (GeM)

Why in News

- Recently, **Government e Marketplace (GeM)** reached a historic cumulative Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of **₹18.4 lakh crore**, with the single financial year 2025–26 alone contributing over ₹5 lakh crore.

Government e Marketplace (GeM)

- **Launch Year:** 2016
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Managed by:** GeM SPV, a Section 8 non-profit company.
- **Legal Mandate:** Procurement through GeM is authorized and made mandatory for government entities under **Rule 149** of the **General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017**.

Aim:

- To redefine public procurement by making it a contactless, paperless, and cashless process.
- To provide pan-India market access to small sellers, startups, and women entrepreneurs who were traditionally underserved.
- To enable efficient price discovery and economies of scale for government buyers through tools like e-bidding and reverse auctions.

Core Features:

- **Three Pillars:** Built on the foundation of **Inclusion, Usability, and Efficiency**.
- **Technological Edge:** Utilizes **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Machine Learning (ML)** for catalogue validation, anomaly detection (e.g., collusive bidding), and Bid Health Scores.
- **End-to-End Solution:** Provides a unified portal for the procurement of common-use goods and services, ranging from office stationery to specialized human resource services.

2.49 PNB-GeM Partnership

Why in News

- **Recently, Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, India's second-largest public sector bank, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** to join as a lending partner on the **GeM Sahay Portal**, aimed at providing instant, collateral-free credit to MSMEs.

GeM Sahay Portal

- **Launched in June 2021.**
 - **GeM Sahay 2.0** was introduced in **2024** to offer faster approvals and higher loan limits.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Implementing Agency:** **GeM SPV** (Special Purpose Vehicle) in technical partnership with **iSPIRT** (for OCEN integration).
- **Aim:** To bridge the working capital gap for MSMEs by leveraging their "digital order book" to secure immediate formal credit.

Features:

- The portal fetches multiple loan offers from different lenders, allowing the seller to choose the best interest rate and terms.
- **Purchase Order (PO) Financing:** Allows sellers to take loans specifically against an active Purchase Order received from a government buyer.
 - No physical assets are required; the **government order** itself **acts as the "virtual collateral."**
- **Automated Repayment:** Repayment is secured through a **Virtual Collection Escrow Account**, where payments from the government buyer are first routed to settle the loan.
- Powered by the **Open Credit Enablement Network**, standardizing the APIs between the marketplace (GeM) and lenders (Banks/NBFCs).

2.50 Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)

Why in News

Recently, the Central Government has informed that it is seeking ways to extend the TReDS platform to defence procurement supply chains, a significant move aimed at promoting the "Ease of Doing Business" for the micro, small, and medium enterprise sector.

Note: TReDS have been covered under the news 3.30 of CurrentTap – January 2026

2.51 Vibhor Jain appointed CEO and MD of ONDC

Why in News

- Recently, **Vibhor Jain** was officially appointed as the **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO)** of the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**.

ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce)

- **ONDC** is a government-backed initiative aimed at democratizing the digital commerce landscape in India.
- **Launched in April 2022** under the **DPIIT** (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Unlike Amazon or Flipkart, ONDC is **not an app or a website**. It is a **set of open protocols** (like UPI or HTTP) that allow different platforms to communicate and interoperate.

Key Features:

- **Open Specifications:** Based on the **Beckn Protocol**, an open-source protocol for decentralized digital commerce.
- **Interoperability:** Enables buyers and sellers to be digitally visible and transact with each other irrespective of what application they use.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Specifically designed to bring **MSMEs, local artisans, and small retailers** into the digital fold, who otherwise find it difficult to compete with e-commerce giants.
- **Price Discovery:** Improves transparency and price discovery for consumers by showing options from a broader array of service providers.

Beckn Protocol

The Beckn Protocol is an **open-source, decentralized communication protocol** that allows different digital platforms to "talk" to each other.

INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

2.52 **Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti Assumes Charge as Chairperson of NCBC**

Why in News

- Recently, **Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti** officially assumed charge as the **Chairperson** of the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** in New Delhi, following her appointment by the President of India.

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

- **Constitutional Status:** Established under **Article 338B** (inserted by the **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018**).
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Evolution:** Originally a statutory body (1993) following the **Indra Sawhney (Mandal)** judgment; it was elevated to a constitutional body in 2018.
- **Composition:** Consists of 5 members—**Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and 3 other Members**.
- **Service Conditions:** The tenure (typically **3 years**) and conditions of service are determined by the President.

Key Functions & Powers:

- **Monitoring Safeguards:** Investigates all matters relating to legal and constitutional safeguards for SEBCs.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Inquires into specific complaints regarding the deprivation of rights of backward classes.
- **Advisory Role:** Participates in the socio-economic planning process and evaluates the progress of development for SEBCs.
- **Power of a Civil Court:** Has the legal authority to summon witnesses, require the discovery of documents, and receive evidence on affidavits during investigations.

- **Reporting:** Submits an **Annual Report** to the President, which is then tabled in Parliament.
- **Mandatory Consultation:** The Union and State governments must consult the NCBC on all major policy matters affecting SEBCs.

2.53 National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

Why in News

- **Dr. Partha Biswas** recently assumed charge as a **Member** of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

- **Constitutional Status:** It is a **Constitutional Body** established under **Article 338** of the Indian Constitution.
- **Evolution:** Originally, Article 338 provided for a single Special Officer.
 - The **65th Constitutional Amendment Act (1990)** replaced the single-member system with a high-level multi-member Commission.
 - The **89th Constitutional Amendment Act (2003)** bifurcated the combined Commission into two separate bodies: the **NCSC (Article 338)** and the **NCST (Article 338A)**.
- **Composition:** The Commission consists of a **Chairperson**, a **Vice-Chairperson**, and **three other Members**. They are appointed by the **President** by warrant under his hand and seal.
- **Tenure:** The conditions of service and tenure of office are determined by the President (currently **3 years** as per rules).

Functions:

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the **Constitutional safeguards** provided for the SCs.
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the SCs.
- To participate and advise on the planning process of **socio-economic development** of the SCs.
- To present annual reports to the President upon the working of those safeguards.
- The Commission has the powers of a **Civil Court** while investigating any matter or inquiring into any complaint. It can summon people, require the discovery of documents, and receive evidence on affidavits.

2.54 Reconstitution of NITI Aayog

Why in News:

- The Union Government has revamped the NITI Aayog with a **new Vice-Chairman and seven full-time members**.
 - **Renowned economist Ashok Kumar Lahiri**, former Chief Economic Adviser and 15th Finance Commission member, **replaces Suman Bery**.
 - **Shri Rajiv Gauba, Prof. K. V. Raju, Prof. Gobardhan Das, Prof. Abhay Karandikar, and Dr. M. Srinivas** appointed as Full-Time Members
 - **Dr Joram Aniya's** appointment, along with **Dr R. Balasubramaniam**, raised the number of **full-time members in NITI Aayog to 7**.

DO YOU KNOW

Dr Joram Aniya's is the **first woman from the Nyishi community to earn a PhD** and the first one in **Arunachal Pradesh** to complete the degree in Hindi

REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATIONS

2.55 Panel Discussion on World Trade Organization Ruling on Transnational Subsidies

Why in News:

- The Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, organized a panel discussion on the WTO Panel Ruling in the dispute **DS 616** (European Union vs Indonesia).
 - The discussion focused on legal and policy implications of transnational subsidies under the WTO framework.

Note: WTO has been discussed in the CurrentTap – March 2026

2.56 India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (IN–NZ FTA)

Why in News:

- **Signed on April 27, 2026**, it is **India's 9th agreement with developed nations**, concluded in a record nine months.

Key Highlights:

- **Unprecedented Market Access**
 - **100% duty-free access for Indian exports to New Zealand** (Zero-duty on all tariff lines).
- **Investment Commitment**
 - **New Zealand committed USD 20 billion in investment to India over 15 years** to support startups, infrastructure, and manufacturing.
- **Agricultural Productivity Partnership**

KEY TERM

TRQ (Tariff Rate Quota): A mechanism where a lower tariff applies to a specific quantity of imports, and higher tariffs apply beyond that limit.

- Establishment of "**Centres of Excellence**" for apples, kiwifruit, and honey to boost Indian farmer incomes through technical knowledge transfer.
- **Sensitive Sector Protection**
 - India has excluded dairy (milk, cheese, etc.) and key agricultural products (onions, sugar, edible oils) to protect domestic rural economies.
- **Talent and Student Mobility**
 - **5,000 dedicated visa quota for Indian skilled professionals**; 3–4 year post-study work rights for STEM graduates in New Zealand.
- **AYUSH and Traditional Medicine**
 - **First-ever dedicated chapter in a New Zealand FTA recognizing Ayurveda and Yoga**, promoting India as a global wellness hub.
- **Geographical Indications (GI) Protection**
 - **New Zealand to amend its domestic laws within 18 months to protect Indian GIs** (wines, spirits, and other goods).

INDIAN MONEY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS: LINKAGES WITH THE ECONOMY

2.57 Export Obligation Discharge Certificates (EODC)

Why in News

- The **Directorate General of Foreign Trade**, under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, has concluded a time-bound special drive for the accelerated issuance of **Export Obligation Discharge Certificates (EODC)**.

Export Obligation Discharge Certificates

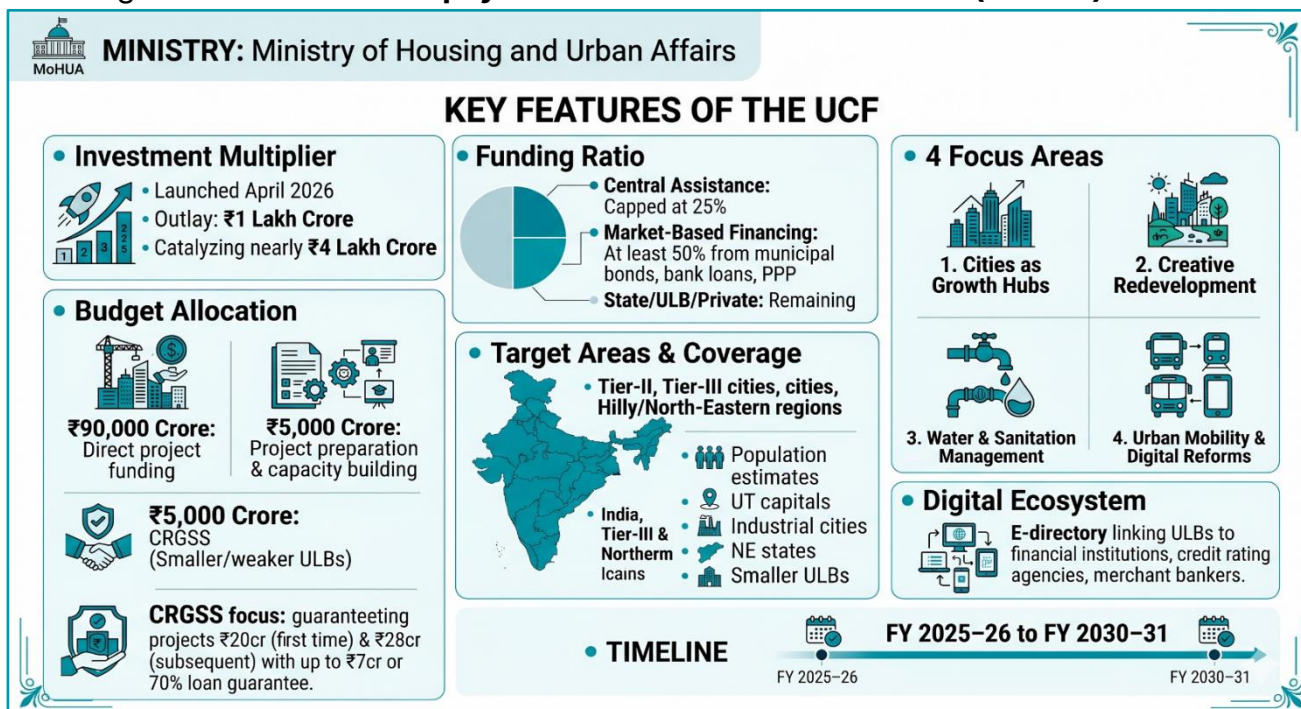
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Implementing Agency:** Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).
- It's a certificate issued to **exporters as proof** that they have fulfilled the export requirements (obligations) tied to specific duty-saving schemes.
- **Functions:** Serves as a vital tool for verifying the fulfillment of export requirements under specific trade schemes.
- **Activities:** The drive involved daily review meetings chaired by senior DGFT officials to monitor progress.
- **Vision:** To promote an exporter-friendly ecosystem and enhance the ease of doing business in India.
- **Key Stakeholders:** Exporters across the country and DGFT regional authorities.

URBANIZATION AND MIGRATION

2.58 Launch of Operational Guidelines for the Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)

Why in News

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the **Operational Guidelines for the UCF** along with the **Credit Repayment Guarantee Sub-Scheme (CRGSS)** to boost urban



infrastructure financing.

SERVICE SECTOR IN INDIA

2.59 Karmayogi Sadhana Saptah

Why in News

- Recently, the Legislative Department has observed **Mission Karmayogi – Sadhana Saptah**, with the objective of promoting continuous learning and capacity building among its officers and staff.

Sadhana Saptah

- It is an initiative under **Mission Karmayogi** (National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building - NPCSCB).
- Nodal Department:** Department of Personnel and Training (**DoPT**).
- Implementing Agencies:** **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)** and **Karmayogi Bharat**.
- Aim:** To foster skills necessary for citizen-centric governance and promote a more responsive and adaptive administrative framework.

Features:

- The initiative is structured around three core pillars: **Technology, Tradition, and Tangible Outcomes**.
- **Holistic Approach:** Combines modern technological tools with Indian traditional values to create a "Humane Aptitude" in public service.
- **Networked Institutions:** Leverages the existing network of Central and State Training Institutes to deliver standardized yet localized training modules.

MISSION KARMAYOGI: THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CIVIL SERVICES CAPACITY BUILDING (NPCSCB)

Nurturing Efficiency, Skills, & Attitude for Citizen-Centric Governance via iGOT Karmayogi Platform



ABOUT THE MISSION KARMAYOGI



- ANCHORED BY APEX BODY HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER
- DESIGNED TO ENHANCE CIVIL SERVICES UNDER A NATIONAL PROGRAMME
- COMPETENCY-DRIVEN CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH
- FOCUS ON IMPARTING CRITICAL ROLES & INDIGENOUS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



VISION OF MISSION KARMAYOGI



LEARNING TRANSFORMATION VIA iGOT KARMAYOGI ONLINE PLATFORM



COMBINING ONLINE, FACE-TO-FACE, BLENDED LEARNING & LIFELONG RECORDS



NEXUS LEADS TO:

- AI-ENABLED COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT
- COMPETENCY GAPS IN AN INDIVIDUAL
- DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGIC HR MANAGEMENT



SUPPLEMENTED BY POLICY & ROBUST INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (SHARED OWNERSHIP CENTER & STATES)



SIGNIFICANCE OF MISSION KARMAYOGI



BUREAUCRATIC EFFICIENCY ENHANCEMENT

DEVELOP SKILLS FOR NEW CHALLENGES, DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS



COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

SHIFT FROM RULE-BASED TO ROLE-BASED SYSTEM, ENGAGING iGOT MODULES



CITIZEN-CENTRIC GOVERNANCE

RESPONSIVE & TRANSPARENT SERVICES, STRENGTHEN PUBLIC TRUST



ENCOURAGING INNOVATION & ADAPTABILITY

PROMOTE 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS: DIGITAL, LEADERSHIP, ETHICS



WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

STANDARDIZED GOVERNANCE PRACTICES, COOPERATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS



LONG-TERM ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

FUTURE-READY CIVIL SERVICE FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OTHER NEWS

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – HEALTH

2.60 IRDAI Forms Panel to Review Private Health Insurance Facets

Why in News

- Recently, The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** constituted a high-level sub-committee of the Insurance Advisory Committee to comprehensively review and reform the private health insurance landscape in India.

Objectives of the subcommittee

- The panel aims to enhance **consumer trust**, improve policyholder experience, and increase health insurance penetration across the country.
- The review covers critical areas such as product design, claims experience, grievance redressal, and **fraud control**.

National Health Claims Exchange

NHCX acts as a unified portal for the exchange of claim-related information between healthcare providers (hospitals) and payers (insurers/TPAs).

- The sub-committee will incorporate recommendations from **CII (Confederation of Indian Industry)** working groups, specifically focusing on a **joint code of conduct** for insurers and healthcare providers.
- The panel will examine the scale-up of the **National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX)** to reduce administrative inefficiencies.

IRDAI

- **Full form:** Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India
- **Establishment:** Based on the recommendations of the **Malhotra Committee**; established as a statutory body under the **IRDAI Act, 1999**.
- **Headquarters:** Hyderabad (moved from Delhi in 2001).
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Finance.
- **Composition:** A ten-member body consisting of a chairman, five whole-time members, and four part-time members, all appointed by the Government of India.
- **Aim:** To protect the interests of insurance policyholders and to regulate, promote, and ensure the orderly growth of the insurance industry.

Features:

- **Licensing:** Issues, renews, modifies, withdraws, or cancels registrations of insurance companies.
- **Standards Setting:** Prescribes regulations for the efficiency and conduct of insurance intermediaries and agents.
- **Investment Oversight:** Regulates the investment of funds by insurance companies to ensure solvency and stability.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Operates the **Bima Bharosa** (formerly IGMS) portal for consumer complaints.
- **Promotion of Competition:** Works to increase efficiency in the insurance sector while maintaining financial stability.
- **Rural & Social Obligations:** Mandates insurers to undertake business in rural and social sectors to ensure wide coverage.

2.61 G7 One Health Summit

Why in News

The **G7 One Health Summit** was held from **5-7 April, 2026 in Lyon, France**, to unveil a global initiative aimed at strengthening health security across human, animal, and environmental systems.

Global One Health Diagnostics Access Compact launched

- **Aim** to expand access to affordable, high-quality diagnostics for faster disease detection.
- It is designed to feed into upcoming G7 health commitments to embed surveillance into global financing frameworks.

Funding Pledges:

- **European Commission:** Committed **€700 million (\$818 million)** to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with an upfront payment of €185 million.
- **World Bank:** Announced **\$750 million** for One Health programmes.

Other key Initiatives taken

- **WHO TB Guidance:** New WHO guidance recommends portable tools for TB results within an hour and simpler sampling methods like tongue swabs.
- **Eradication Strategy:** WHO outlines five priority actions to end TB, noting a return of **\$43** for every dollar spent.
- **Pandemic Agreement:** WHO member states have extended negotiations on the Pandemic Agreement regarding pathogen and benefit sharing until May.
- **UN Child Mortality Report:** Approximately **4.9 million** children died before age five in 2024, mostly from preventable causes.
- **National Health Policies:** China is expanding care for its aging population with disability nursing support, while Germany is pursuing a sugar tax and energy drinks ban for children.
- **Longevity Research:** Studies indicate that a high sense of purpose is a primary driver of healthy longevity, equivalent to being 2.5 years younger.

G7 One Health Summit

- **Key Stakeholders:** More than 20 international partners, the G7 nations, the European Commission, the World Bank, Gavi, and the WHO.
- **Activities:** Unveiling of the "Global One Health Diagnostics Access Compact."
- **Territorial Coverage:** Hosted in Lyon, France.
- **Financial Allocation:** Supported by major pledges from the European Commission (\$818 million), World Bank (\$750 million), and Gavi (\$200 million).

Focus Priority Pillars:

- Expanding diagnostic access across all levels of care
- Strengthening stewardship of diagnostics and antibiotics
- Increasing R&D investment for low-resource settings
- Better integrating diagnostics into health systems.

SOCIAL SECTORS IN INDIA – EDUCATION

2.62 NCERT Granted Deemed-to-be-University Status

Why in News

- Recently, the Central Government granted "**deemed-to-be-university**" status to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), empowering it to award degrees and design its own academic programmes.

Deemed-to-be-university status

This status, granted under **Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956**, fundamentally alters NCERT's mandate and operational structure. The key changes include:

- NCERT can now **design and award its own undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral (Ph.D.)** degrees in education.
- The institution will now function **under the direct regulatory supervision of the University Grants Commission (UGC)**, requiring compliance with UGC norms for courses and quality.
- NCERT must now participate in the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)** and get accreditation from bodies like the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**.
- It is now mandatory for NCERT to adopt the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system**, allowing students flexible learning pathways.

NCERT

- Established on **September 1, 1961**.
- **Ministry: Ministry of Education**
- **Aim:**
 - To undertake, aid, promote, and coordinate research in areas related to school education.
 - To prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, and journals.
 - To organize pre-service and in-service training of teachers.
 - To act as a nodal agency for achieving goals of universalization of elementary education.
- **Features:** Operates through the **National Institute of Education (NIE)**, **Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET)**, and **Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs)** located in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysore, and Shillong.
 - **Governance:** The Union Minister of Education serves as the ex-officio President of the General Body.
 - **Core Functions:** Development of the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)**, conducting the **National Achievement Survey (NAS)**, and managing the **National Talent Search Examination (NTSE)**.
 - **Slogan/Motto:** **Vidhyā'mrtamaśnute (Life eternal through learning)**.
- **Targets:** Enhancing the quality of school education and standardizing teacher training across India.
- **Territorial Coverage:** Headquartered in New Delhi, with its framework followed by CBSE and multiple State Boards nationwide.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

2.63 India's Record Wind Energy Achievement in FY 2025–26

Why in News

- Recently, India achieved its highest-ever annual wind energy capacity addition of 6.05 GW during the 2025–26 financial year and surpassed the previous landmark of 5.5 GW set in FY 2016–17.
- The sector recorded a nearly **46% increase** and India's total installed wind power capacity has officially crossed the **56 GW** mark.

- Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra emerged as the primary contributors to the capacity addition during this year.

2.64 CMS COP15: Expansion of Protected Migratory Species

Why in News

- Recently, the **15th Conference of Parties (COP15)** to the **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)** concluded in **Campo Grande, Brazil**, with the addition of **40 new species** to its protected lists.

Key Highlights

- New Protected Species:** 40 species were added, including high-profile animals such as the **Cheetah, Striped Hyena, Snowy Owl, Giant Otter, and Great Hammerhead Shark**.
- Habitat Gaps:** Analysis revealed that **47%** of the 9,000 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) essential for migratory species fall outside any protected zones.
- Regional Focus:** Approved multi-species conservation plans specifically for the **Amazon region**.
- Threat Identification:** Identified emerging threats such as **deep-sea mining**, underwater noise, and infrastructure-led habitat fragmentation.



ABOUT THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS)

1 ALSO KNOWN AS

The Bonn Convention 

2 LAUNCH/EFFECTIVE DATE

SIGNED IN 1979; ENTERED INTO FORCE IN 1983 

3 NATURE

The **only global intergovernmental treaty** established under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) dedicated to the conservation of migratory species and their habitats. 

4 AIM/OBJECTIVE

To **conserve** terrestrial, aquatic, and avian migratory species throughout their range.



TERRESTRIAL



AQUATIC



AVIAN

5 STRUCTURE (THE APPENDICES)

APPENDIX I

Includes migratory species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range. Parties strive toward strictly protecting these animals.



APPENDIX II

Includes migratory species that have an unfavourable conservation status and require international agreements for their conservation and management.



6 FEATURES

RANGE STATE CONCEPT



Focuses on cooperation between countries through which migratory species pass (Range States).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK



Provides the basis for "Agreements" (legally binding) and 'Memoranda of Understanding' (MoUs) for specific species or groups.

INDIA'S CONNECTION



India has been a party to CMS since 1983 and recently hosted COP13 (Gandhinagar) in 2020.

2.65 MSCI EM index

Why in News

Global index provider MSCI has announced the reclassification of Greece from Emerging Markets (EM) to Developed Markets (DM) by May 2026.

Key Highlights

- **Current status:** Greece currently holds a weighting of approximately **0.5 per cent** in the index.
- **Redistribution Mechanism:** Following Greece's exit, its weighting will be redistributed among the remaining constituents in proportion to their **free-float market capitalisation**.
- **Current Index Composition:**
 - China: Slightly more than **25%**.
 - Taiwan: **22.5%**.
 - South Korea: **15.5%**.
 - India: **12.6%**

MSCI EM Index

- **Developed by:** Global index provider MSCI.
- **Aim/Objective:** To track the equity market performance of emerging markets.
- **Features:**
 - **Functions:** Serves as a benchmark for passive funds and global investors to allocate capital across emerging economies.
 - **Facts:** Weightings within the index are determined based on the **free-float market capitalisation** of the constituent countries.
 - **Coverage:** Includes major emerging economies such as China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, and currently Greece.
 - **Criteria for Reclassification:** Decisions on market status (EM vs. DM) are based on sustained improvements in market accessibility, infrastructure, and alignment with developed market standards.

2.66 COP33 climate summit

Why in News

- The **Government of India** has **formally withdrawn its candidacy to host the COP33 climate summit** scheduled for **2028**, according to recent communications sent to the Asia-Pacific Group in April 2026.

Key Highlights

- **Proposal Background:** The bid was originally proposed by the Prime Minister in December 2023 during the COP28 summit held in Dubai.
- **Organisational Setup:** Prior to the withdrawal, the government had formed an **11-member high-power cell** to oversee the preparations for the event.
- **Historical Context:** India has hosted a climate COP only once before, in the year 2002.

2.67 US imposes 123% Anti-Dumping Duty on Indian Solar Imports

Why in News:

- The United States Department of Commerce imposed a steep preliminary anti-dumping duty of **123.04% on solar cell** and module imports from India.

- Combined with earlier measures, **total tariffs exceed 234%**, significantly impacting Indian solar exporters and global supply chains

ANTI DUMPING DUTY

- A trade measure imposed by a country on imported goods that are sold at less than their normal value (fair price).
 - Aims to Protect domestic industry from injury caused by unfairly cheap imports.
- Governed by:
 - WTO Anti-Dumping Agreement (ADA)
- Authority in India
 - **Investigated by: Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) under Ministry of Commerce**
 - **Imposed by: Ministry of Finance**

2.68 IFC plans to scale up India investments to \$10 billion annually by 2030

Why in News:

News 1

- World Bank's private-sector arm, **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, plans to increase annual investments in India to **\$10 billion by 2030**.

News 2

- The World Bank approved a **\$225 million loan for the Rajasthan Highway Modernisation and Safety Improvement Project**.
 - **Lending arm: IBRD** (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

Key Highlights:

- **Investment Growth**
 - Annual investments rose from **\$1.3 billion (FY 2021–22)** to **\$5.4 billion (FY 2024–25)**.
 - Portfolio size: **\$10.3 billion (as of June 2025)** across equity and debt.
- **India's Position**
 - India is IFC's **largest global investment destination**.
- **Focus Sectors**
 - Renewable energy
 - Urban infrastructure
 - Financial services
 - Climate-linked businesses
 - Agribusiness
- **Equity Share**

- Equity investments constitute **over one-third** of IFC's India portfolio.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

2.69 Uttarakhand Tops National Rankings in New Criminal Law Rollout

Why in News

- Uttarakhand** has been ranked **first in India** for the effective and timely implementation of the three new criminal laws such as **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**, **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, and **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)**.

New Criminal Laws

- Effective Date:** July 1, 2024.
- Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- The Three Laws:**
 - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS):** Replaces the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860. It prioritizes justice over punishment and introduces "Community Service" as a form of punishment.
 - Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS):** Replaces the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973. It mandates time-bound investigations and the use of technology in trials.
 - Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA):** Replaces the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. It expands the definition of "document" to include electronic and digital records.

- **Aim:**
 1. To remove the "colonial imprint" from India's judicial system.
 2. To ensure speedy justice through mandatory time limits for filing charge sheets and delivering judgments.
 3. To institutionalize the use of technology in forensics and evidence collection.
- **Features:**
 1. **Zero FIR:** Allows a person to file an FIR at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction.
 2. **Digitization:** Mandates the videography of search and seizure operations.
 3. **Victim Rights:** Ensures that victims are informed of the progress of their case within 90 days.
 4. **Defined Timelines:** Judgments must be delivered within 30 days of the completion of arguments.

2.70 SAMPANN

Why in News

- Recently, the **Goa Government and Cochin Port Authority** have signed agreement with the **SAMPANN portal** as a 'Platform as a Service' (PaaS) to utilize the platform to streamline their respective pension lifecycles

ABOUT SAMPANN (SYSTEM FOR ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT OF PENSION)



LAUNCH YEAR:
2018



MINISTRY:
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS



IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER GENERAL OF
COMMUNICATION ACCOUNTS (CGCA), DOT



AIM/OBJECTIVE: TO PROVIDE AN END-TO-END DIGITAL SOLUTION FOR THE ENTIRE PENSION LIFECYCLE, ENSURING SEAMLESS PROCESSING, SANCTIONING, AND DIRECT DISBURSEMENT OF PENSIONS.

DIRECT CREDIT



Enables the direct transfer of pension funds from the government treasury to the pensioner's bank account, removing intermediaries.

END-TO-END DIGITIZATION



Covers all stages including case initiation, issuance of e-PPOs (Electronic Pension Payment Orders), and monthly revisions.

PENSIONER PORTAL



Offers a dedicated online interface for retirees to track application status, download monthly statements, and view Form-16.

INTEGRATION



Seamlessly linked with UMANG and DigiLocker for paperless access to pension-related documents.

GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT



Features an in-built online module for lodging and monitoring the status of grievances.

REAL-TIME ALERTS



Provides automated SMS updates to registered mobile numbers regarding payment milestones and application progress.

2.71 Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launches E-PRAAPTI portal

Why in News:

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** is introducing the EPF **Aadhaar-Based Access Portal for Tracking Inoperative Accounts (E-PRAAPTI)**.

- Aimed at helping subscribers trace and reactivate dormant provident fund accounts without a Universal Account Number (UAN).

Key Features:

- **Account Identification and Reactivation**
 - Enables users to identify, link, and merge old or inoperative accounts into their current profile.
- **Aadhaar-Based Authentication**
 - Utilizes Aadhaar for verification, removing the initial dependency on a Universal Account Number (UAN).
- **Target Reach**
 - Addresses a backlog of over 31.83 lakh inoperative accounts that currently lack linkage to a central ID.
- **Implementation Phases**
 - Phase 1 requires a Member Identification (ID), while Phase 2 will assist those who have forgotten their old account details.
- **Self-Service Mechanism**
 - Allows subscribers to update profiles and manage accounts directly, reducing the need for employer intervention.
- **Recovery of Unclaimed Funds**
 - Focuses on returning accumulated unclaimed money in inactive accounts to the rightful subscribers.

GENDER ISSUES

2.72 "TrueCyberSakhi" Digital Safety Initiative

Why in News

- Recently, the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** and **Truecaller** launched a nationwide digital safety initiative, featuring the "**TrueCyberSakhi: Digital Safety Toolkit**," to protect women from evolving online risks. like **phishing, harassment, and financial fraud**.

Did You Know?

Phishing: A type of digital fraud where attackers trick individuals into revealing sensitive information like passwords or financial details by pretending to be a trustworthy entity.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- An **autonomous statutory body** established under the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- **Aim/Objective:** To protect and promote the rights of women by reviewing legal safeguards, recommending reforms, and advising the government on policy matters.
- **Features:**



- **Redressal Mechanism:** Operates a **24x7 helpline** for women in distress.
- **Functions:** Addresses complaints, promotes awareness, and monitors the implementation of constitutional and legal safeguards for women.
- **Chairperson:** Smt. Vijaya Kishore Rahatkar.

2.73 Asia's first UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development

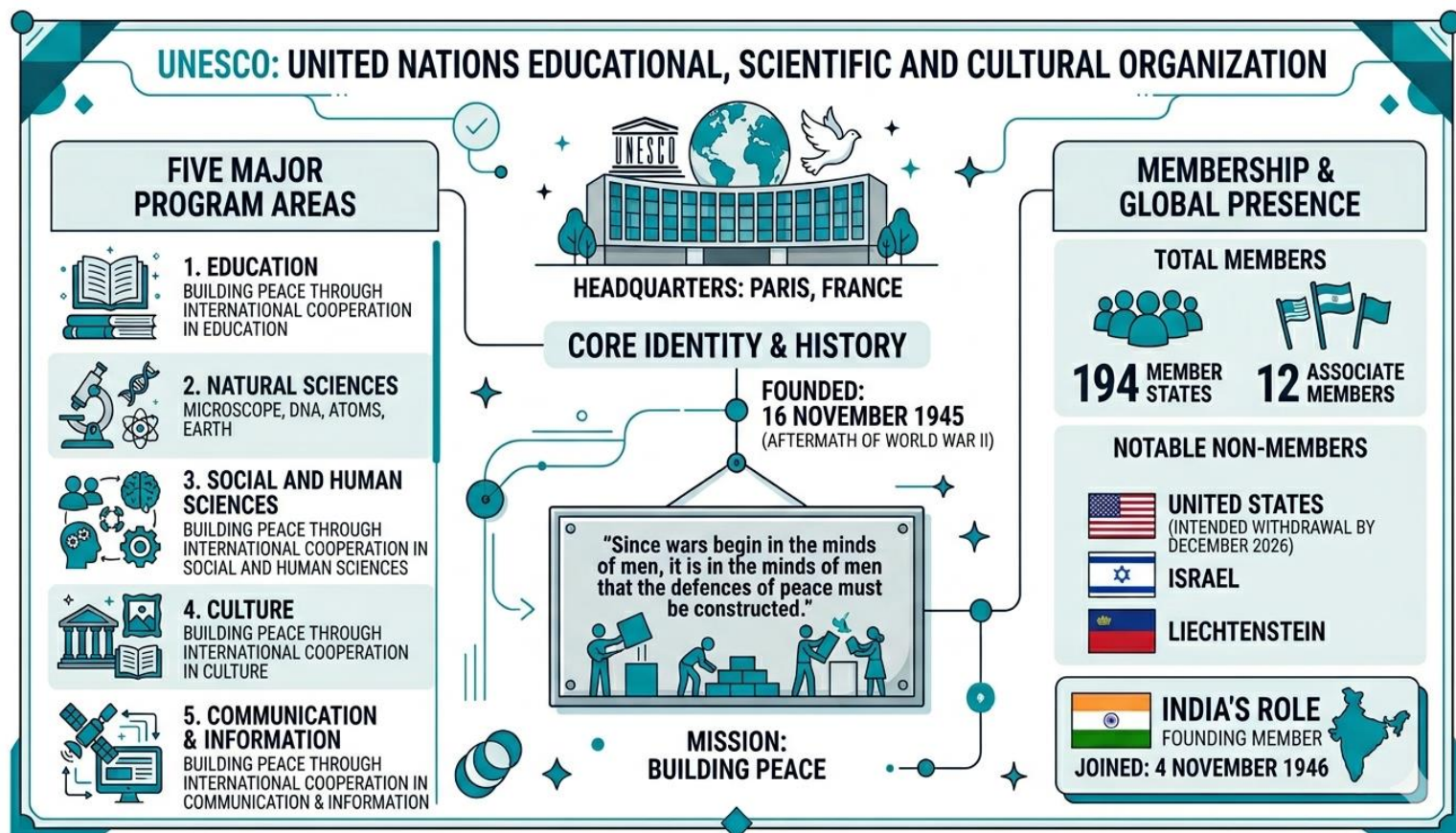
Why in News:

- **Launched at Symbiosis Skills and Professional University (SSPU), Pune**, during the international conference on **"Women Leading the Future of Work"**.
- Marks the **first time such a UNESCO Chair has been established in the Asian region**.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Institutional Leadership:** Spearheaded by **SSPU, Pune**, to serve as a global hub for inclusive skill development, research, and innovation.
- **Target Demographic:** Focuses on the large-scale training of underprivileged girls and women to ensure strong employment outcomes.
- **Future-Ready Skills:** Training provided in sunrise sectors including robotics, automation, semiconductor technology, advanced manufacturing, and defense technology.
- **Proven Impact:** Already **enabled 10,000 girls to receive job offers** following specialized skill development courses.
- **Global Collaboration:** Partnered with UNESCO, ILO, and international experts to align with equity-grounded industrial demands.

- **Economic Empowerment:** Aims to build confidence and independence among women by bringing them into the mainstream of the future workforce.



GLOBALIZATION

2.74 India Elected to UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Subsidiary Bodies

Why in News

- In **April 2026**, India secured a significant diplomatic victory by being elected to several key subsidiary bodies of the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
- Indian Ambassador **Preeti Saran** was re-elected to the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights for the 2027–2030 term.

Key highlights

India was elected by **acclamation** (unanimous approval without a secret ballot) to the following bodies:

- **Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD):** Term 2027–2030. It serves as the UN's focal point for science and technology and its impact on development.

- **Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):** Term 2027–2030. This standing committee vets applications from NGOs seeking consultative status with the UN.
- **Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC):** Term 2027–2029. This is the main subsidiary organ for planning and coordinating the UN's various programs.
- **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR):** Ambassador Preeti Saran will serve from 2027–2030. This body of 18 independent experts monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- **About the Establishment:** 1945 (one of the **six main organs** of the United Nations).
- **Headquarters:** New York and Geneva.
- **Membership:** 54 member states, elected by the UN General Assembly for overlapping **three-year terms**.
- **Aim:** To advance the three dimensions of sustainable development—**economic, social, and environmental**. It serves as the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking on global development goals.

Functions:

- **Coordination:** It coordinates the work of the 15 UN specialized agencies, eight functional commissions, and five regional commissions.
- **Policy Review:** It serves as a central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social, and environmental fields.
- **Consultative Status:** It grants "Consultative Status" to NGOs, allowing them to participate in the UN's work.

2.75 World Bank Funding for Amaravati Capital Phase-I

Why in News

- In **April 2026**, the **World Bank** has released **\$340 million** for the development of Andhra Pradesh's capital, Amaravati.
- The funding follows the "**Program for Results**" (**PforR**) framework, where funds are released upon achieving specific milestones rather than a fixed timeline.
- The **World Bank and ADB have collectively committed \$1,600 million (\$800 million each)** for Phase-I of the Amaravati Integrated Urban Development Programme (AIUDP).
- The **Government of India is contributing ₹1,400 crore as part of its ₹15,000 crore** commitment to the project.

World Bank

- **Established:** 1944 (at the **Bretton Woods Conference**).

- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., USA.
- **Membership:** 189 member countries.
- **Motto:** "Working for a World Free of Poverty."

Core Organizations: The World Bank Group consists of five institutions:

1. **IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development):** Provides loans to middle-income and creditworthy low-income governments.
2. **IDA (International Development Association):** Provides interest-free loans (credits) and grants to the poorest countries.
3. **IFC (International Finance Corporation):** Focuses on the private sector in developing countries.
4. **MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency):** Offers political risk insurance (guarantees) to investors.
5. **ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes):** Settles investment disputes between investors and countries.

Note: The term "World Bank" specifically refers to the **IBRD and IDA**.

GLOBALIZATION

2.76 India-US Trade Facilitation Portal

Why in News

- The Foreign Secretary launched the **India-US Trade Facilitation Portal** during an official visit to the United States to enhance bilateral commercial ties.

Key Highlights

- **Bilateral Trade Target:** The portal was launched as both nations eye a **USD 500 billion** bilateral trade target.
- The initiative comes as part of a broader effort to stabilize relations following previous uncertainties regarding tariffs and regional military de-escalation.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATIONS

2.77 India approved withdrawal of ₹3,000 crore to Maldives

Why in News:

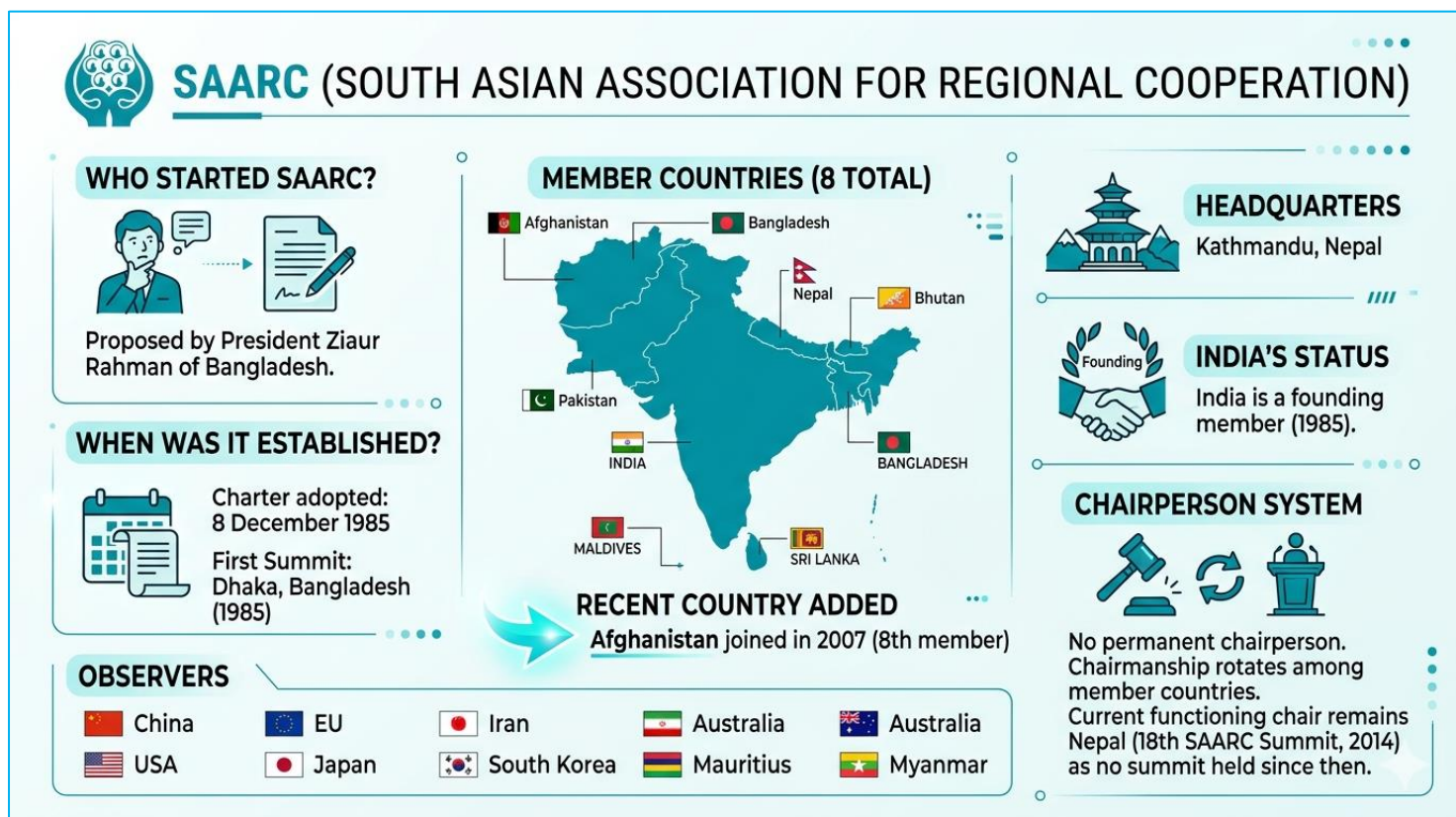
- **India approved the first withdrawal of ₹3,000 crore to Maldives** under the **SAARC Currency Swap Framework** as part of continuing economic and financial assistance.
 - The previous \$400 million withdrawal under this framework matured on April 24, 2026.

Key Highlights:

- **Framework Agreement**
 - Signed between: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Maldives Government

• Historical Support

- Since inception (2012): RBI provided aggregate swap support of \$1.1 billion to Maldives
- 2025: India rolled over Treasury Bills worth \$100 million as emergency financial assistance to Maldives.



2.78 India Submits 2031–35 Climate Targets to United Nations (UN)

Why in News:

- **India formally submitted its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** for the 2031–2035 period to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
 - The document outlines India's updated commitment to emission reduction, clean energy capacity, and carbon sequestration as part of the Paris Agreement.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Emission Intensity Reduction**
 - India pledges to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 47% by 2035 from the 2005 baseline levels.
- **Non-Fossil Fuel Energy Goal**
 - **Targets achieving approximately 60% cumulative electric power** installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources **by 2035**.
- **Carbon Sink Creation**
 - Pledges to create an additional carbon sink of 3.5 to 4.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through expanded forest and tree cover.

- **Past Performance Milestones**

- Highlighting that **India achieved 52.57% non-fossil fuel-based capacity by February 2026** and met intensity reduction goals years ahead of schedule.

- **Strategic Policy Alignment**

- Synchronizes the 2035 targets with the long-term goal of Net-Zero emissions by 2070 and the "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision.

MEASUREMENT OF GROWTH

2.79 India's Composite PMI Rises to 58.3 in April 2026

Why in News:

- India's composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) increased to 58.3 in April 2026, indicating strong economic expansion.
 - Growth driven by robust demand pushing manufacturing sector performance.

About PMI:

- **Composite PMI Performance**

- Indicates strong expansion (above 50 threshold)
- Reflects combined performance of manufacturing and services sectors

- **Manufacturing Sector Growth**

- Strong demand driving manufacturing expansion
- Positive momentum in production levels
- Robust new orders boosting activity

- **Economic Significance**

- PMI above 50 indicates expansion
- PMI below 50 indicates contraction
- Higher the number above 50, stronger the growth

MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY

2.80 CAPEX

Why in News

- The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India released an analysis in April 2026 revealing that **22 states utilised only 55.27% of their combined annual budgeted capital expenditure** during the first eleven months of the financial year.

Key Highlights

- **Utilisation Figures:** Out of a total budgeted capital expenditure (capex) of **₹10.22 trillion** for FY26, 22 states spent **₹5.65 trillion** by the end of February.

• State Performance Rankings:

- **Top Performers:** Haryana led with **94.15%** utilisation, followed by Himachal Pradesh (**90.99%**), Bihar (**84.78%**), and Madhya Pradesh (**74.35%**).
- **Low Performers:** West Bengal (**33.61%**) and Meghalaya (**34.15%**) recorded the weakest progress.
- **Under 50% Club:** Nine states spent less than half of their Budget Estimate (BE), including Rajasthan (44.32%), Maharashtra (48.16%), Uttarakhand (49.71%), and Uttar Pradesh (42.45%).

2.81 India's largest trading partner in 2025-26

Why in News

According to the latest Ministry of Commerce data, China has overtaken the United States to emerge as India's largest trading partner in the fiscal year 2025-26.

Key Highlights

- **Bilateral Trade with China:** Total trade reached **\$151.1 billion**, with India's exports rising **36.66%** to \$19.47 billion and imports increasing **16%** to \$131.63 billion.
- **Trade Deficit with China:** Widened to an all-time high of **\$112.6 billion** in 2025-26, compared to \$99.2 billion in 2024-25.
- **Performance with the US:**
 - Exports grew marginally by **0.92%** to \$87.3 billion.
 - Imports increased **15.95%** to \$52.9 billion.
 - Trade surplus with the US declined to **\$34.4 billion** from \$40.89 billion in the previous fiscal.
- **Export Growth Trends:** Positive growth was recorded in exports to the UAE, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Nepal, Brazil, Spain, Belgium, and Vietnam.
- **Import Growth Trends:** Positive growth was recorded in imports from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Germany, Thailand, and Malaysia.

EXPORT-IMPORT POLICY

2.82 E commerce cap

Why in News

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has removed the ₹10 lakh value cap per consignment for courier-based commercial exports starting from April to boost e-commerce shipments. This measure is part of broader reforms announced in the **Union Budget 2026-27**.

Key Highlights

- **Logistics Efficiency:** A new **Return to Origin (RTO)** mechanism replaces the earlier **30-day** disposal timeline with a simplified **15-day** process for uncleared/unclaimed import consignments.

- **Clearance Speed:** A **risk-based framework** has replaced consignment-wise verification for re-import of returned or rejected goods to accelerate clearances.
- **Digital Integration:** A dedicated return module with additional data fields (reason for return, airway bill info, etc.) has been built into the **Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS)**.

INDIAN MONEY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS: LINKAGES WITH THE ECONOMY

2.83 Indian Rupee Hits Historic Low of 93.72 Against US Dollar

Why in News

- In March 2026, the Indian rupee fell to a record low of **93.72** against the US dollar, its sharpest one-day drop in four years.
- It is driven by high oil prices and a strong global demand for dollars.
- **Record Decline:** The rupee dropped **1.15%** in a single day, hitting an intraday low of **93.77** before ending at **93.72**.

Dollar Index (DXY)

A measure of the USD's value against a basket of six major currencies: Euro (Eurozone), Yen (Japan), Pound (UK), Canadian Dollar (Canada), Krona (Sweden), and Franc (Switzerland)..

Effect:

- **Strong US Dollar:** The **Dollar Index (DXY)** rose to **99.58**, showing that the US dollar is strengthening against all major global currencies, which naturally pushes the rupee down.

2.84 Lok Sabha Passes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Why in News

- Recently, the Lok Sabha passed the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025** that **introduces 12 key amendments** to the original 2016 Code to accelerate the resolution of stressed assets and align Indian law with global best practices.

Key Highlights of the amendment

- **Admission Timeline:** Applications for initiating insolvency must now be admitted within **14 days** once a default is established.
- **Out-of-Court Settlement:** Replaces the fast-track process with a new **creditor-initiated framework**. This features a compressed **150-day timeline** and an "out-of-court" initiation mechanism.
- **Judicial Timelines:** The Adjudicating Authority must approve or reject resolution plans within **30 days** and appeals before the **NCLAT** must be decided within **three months**.
- **Global Alignment:** Enables a new framework for **cross-border insolvency** and **group insolvency** to boost investor confidence.

- **Deterrents for Delays:** Introduces penalties ranging from **₹1 lakh to ₹2 crore** for filing frivolous or vexatious proceedings intended to delay the process.
- **Management Model:** Adopts a "debtor-in-possession" and "creditor-in-control" model, where the existing Board continues management under specific safeguards.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

- **Launch Year:** 2016 (The 2025 Bill marks the **8th amendment** to the Code).
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- **Aim:** To consolidate and amend laws relating to reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms, and individuals in a **time-bound manner** for maximization of value of assets.
- **Features:**
 - **Priority of Dues:** Workmen's dues are given high priority, equivalent to secured creditors and ranked above unsecured financial creditors and government dues.
 - **Adjudicating Authorities:** The **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** handles corporate insolvency, while the **Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT)** handles individual insolvency.
 - **Appellate Body:** The **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** hears appeals against NCLT orders.
 - **IBBI:** The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India** acts as the regulator overseeing insolvency proceedings and entities like Insolvency Professionals (IPs).

Venture Capital Fund

It provides **financial support** to **startups**, and **early-stage businesses**.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

2.85 Census 2027 Helpline 1855 launched

Why in News:

- The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner made the national toll-free helpline number **1855** operational across India.
- It serves as a support system for the upcoming house listing and Housing Census activities of Census 2027.

SERVICE SECTOR IN INDIA

2.86 E-Way Bill Generation Hits Record 140.6 Million

Why in News

- According to **Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)** data released in **April 2026**, e-way bill generation surged to an all-time high of **140.6 million** in March.

- This represents a **13% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y)** growth and a **6.04%** sequential increase from February.

E-Way Bill System

- An electronic document mandatory for the movement of goods under the GST regime.
- **Nodal Agency:** Managed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** under the aegis of the GST Network (GSTN).
- **Threshold:** Mandatory for consignments with a value exceeding **₹50,000** (Inter-state). Intra-state thresholds vary by state, with some limits as high as **₹2 lakh**.
- **Aim:** To eliminate physical check-posts, curb tax evasion, and ensure seamless, paperless movement of goods across India.

Features:

- **Components:** Consists of **Part A** (Consignment details like GSTIN, HSN code, value) and **Part B** (Transporter details/Vehicle number).
- **Validity:** Generally, **1 day for every 200 km** traveled (20 km for Over Dimensional Cargo).
- **Multiple Modes:** Can be generated via the Web portal, SMS, Mobile App, or API for large taxpayers.
- **Real-Time Tracking:** Enables authorities to track the movement of goods in real-time, preventing the "recycling" of invoices.

3. GA + FINANCE

PIB IN NEWS

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MARKET

3.1 Antariksh Venture Capital Fund

Why in News ?

- **Recently (April 2026)**, the Union Minister of State for Science & Technology informed in the Lok Sabha that **India's first dedicated Space Venture Capital Fund (Antariksh VCF)** has been operationalised.

Antariksh VCF

- **About:**

- India's **first** dedicated **Space-Tech investment fund**

- **Type:** **Category II** Alternate Investment Fund

- **Fund Size:** ₹1,005 crore

- **Key Investor:** IN-Space

- **Fund Manager:** SIDBI Venture Capital Limited

- **Objective:** To **invest in Indian space startups** that have technologies at **Technological Readiness Level 4** or higher, meaning their ideas have already been tested and shown to work in a lab.

Alternate Investment Fund

AIF is a **private fund** that **pools investors' money to invest in various assets**, not usual bank deposits or regular mutual funds.

3.2 Indian Natural Gas Derivative Contracts

Why in News ?

- The **National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** has announced a collaboration with the **Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)** to launch **India's first domestically benchmarked natural gas futures contracts**.
- NSE has also **received SEBI's approval** to launch Indian Natural Gas Derivative Contracts.

About Natural Gas Derivative Contracts

- These contracts will be linked to **GIXI (Gas Index of India)**, a **price index** created by **Indian Gas Exchange** that shows the **actual price of gas in India** based on real trades.
 - In simple terms, this means gas prices used in these contracts will be **based on India's own market**, not foreign benchmarks.
- **Significance of Launching Gas Derivative Contracts**
 - By **entering into gas derivative contracts**, eligible participants such as **producers, distributors, and industrial users** can **lock in the price "today" at which they will buy or sell natural gas** in the **"future"**.
 - Overall, these contracts act as a **risk management tool** by **protecting participants from sudden fluctuations in gas prices** (price volatility).

3.3 Verified App Label Initiative

Why in News?

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** launched the **"Verified App Label Initiative"**.

Verified App Label Initiative

- **Objective:** To **protect investors** by ensuring that only apps of **SEBI-registered entities** are easily **identifiable through a "Verified" badge on the Google Play Store**, thereby

preventing fraudulent impersonation, enabling safe app downloads, and enhancing trust in digital trading platforms.

3.4 **Securities and Exchange Board of India extends IPO clearance deadline**

Why in News ?

- SEBI has granted a **one-time relaxation by extending Initial Public Offer (IPO) approval validity** and **easing Minimum Public Shareholding norms**.

Relaxations announced by SEBI:

- IPO Timeline Extension:**
 - Normally, a company must **open its public issue (IPO/FPO) within 12 months** from the date of SEBI's observation letter.
 - In certain cases, the validity can extend up to **18 months** from the date of SEBI's observation.
 - SEBI has granted a **one-time extension of observation letters** expiring between Apr–Sep 2026 **till 30 Sep 2026**.
- Relaxation in Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS)**
 - Under the normal framework of the SEBI, **listed companies** must **maintain a MPS of 25%, failing which penalties** are imposed.
 - However, as a **one-time relief**, **SEBI** has **suspended penal action for MPS non-compliance** for deadlines between April–September 2026.

Initial Public Offer

- An IPO is the process by which a **private company offers** its **shares to the public** for the **first time** to raise capital.
- A company planning an **IPO** files its **Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP)** with **SEBI**.
- SEBI reviews the DRHP for **disclosures, compliance, and investor protection**.
- After review, **SEBI issues** an **Observation Letter**.

3.5 **SEBI Launches Three New IT platforms**

Why in News ?

- SEBI launched three IT platforms** to improve communication, enable online legal processes, and enhance cybersecurity oversight.

Platforms Launched By SEBI

- SUPCOMS (Single Universal Platform for Communications)**
 - This will **centralize communication** between **SEBI and external entities** by shifting all interactions to SUPCOMS.

- The SUPCOMS application is accessible via the **e-Services portal**.
- **e-adjudication portal**
 - It aims to **provide an alternate transparent platform for all parties** involved in quasi-judicial proceedings (like adjudication proceedings).
 - The portal allows users to **interact directly with** SEBI by enabling them to **access notices, submit replies and requests, and attend hearings online in one place**.
 - The Portal is integrated with the **internal Case Management System** of SEBI.
- **Cyber-Sec Audit Compliance (C-SAC)**
- It enables **automated analysis** of **cyber audit reports**, facilitating **identification of compliance gaps, risk areas**, and actionable insights.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR

3.6 Domestic Systemically Important Insurers

Why in News ?

- Recently (April 2026), **IRDAI** released the list of **Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs)** for 2025–26.

D -SII identified for 2025 – 26

- Life Insurance Corporation of India
- New India Assurance Company Ltd.
- General Insurance Corporation of India

Domestic Systemically Important Insurers

- D-SIIs refer to insurers which are **too big or too important to fail** because of their huge **size, market importance**, and domestic and global **interconnectedness**.
 - D-SIIs are perceived as insurers that are '**too big or too important to fail**' (TBTF).
- D-SIIs are being subjected to **enhanced regulatory supervision**.
- **Parameters used to identify D-SII**
 - The **size of operations** in terms of total revenue
 - **Global activities** across more than one jurisdiction
 - Lack of **substitutability** of their products
 - **Interconnectedness** through counterparty exposure and macro-economic exposure
- At global level, the framework of SII is implemented by **International Association of Insurance Supervisors**.

3.7 Kar Saathi

Why in News

- The **Income Tax Department** has recently launched an **AI-powered chatbot “Kar Saathi”** to make **tax filing easier, faster**, and more **accessible** for millions of taxpayers under the new **Income Tax Act, 2025 framework**.

Kar Saathi

- **Objectives:**
 - Kar Saathi **helps taxpayers understand** the **latest tax rules under the Income Tax Act, 2025** and provides **step-by-step guidance for filing Income Tax Returns (ITR)**.
 - It **explains** various **forms, deductions**, and **deadlines** in a simple manner while also **resolving common queries** instantly.
- Kar Saathi does **not file or compute taxes** on behalf of users; it functions **solely** as a **guidance tool**.

3.8 The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026

Why in News ?

- The **Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2026** is in the news as it has been **passed by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in 2026**, marking a major step in India’s regulatory reform agenda.

Key Provisions of the Act

- **Implementing Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- **4 Pillars of the Bill:** The bill aims to remove criminal punishment for minor offences and make laws simpler, more practical, and citizen-friendly.
 - **Warning before punishment:** First-time and minor violations will attract warnings instead of immediate penalties.
 - **Proportionate penalties:** Penalties will be aligned with the severity of the offence.
 - **Faster resolution:** Adjudicating officers and appellate authorities will enable quicker dispute resolution.
 - **Dynamic penalty system:** Penalties will be revised periodically to keep relevant, and up to date.
- **Salient Features of the Act:**
 - **Decriminalisation:** Converts several offences into **civil penalties instead of criminal punishment**.
 - **Removal of imprisonment:** Eliminates **jail terms** in select cases, retaining only **fines or penalties**.
 - **Omission of offences:** Removes certain **minor offences** altogether.

- **Revision of fines:** Updates penalty amounts and provides **10% automatic increase every 3 years** on minimum fines.
- **Warning system:**
 - First Time offence → Advisory
 - Second Time offence → Warning
 - Subsequent offence → Civil Penalty.
- **Improvement notices:** First-time lapses get a chance to **ensure compliance through improvement notice** before penalties, especially under **Legal Metrology Act**.
- **Property tax reforms (New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994):**
 - Splits property tax under NDMC Act into **building and vacant land tax**;
 - Creates **valuation and grievance committee** to determine manner of determining and revising property tax and;
 - Removes **advertisement tax**.

RBIH

It is a **wholly-owned subsidiary of the RBI**, and was set up to solve for India's intricate problems in the financial sector.

3.9 Banking Connect Platform

Why in News ?

- Recently, **Axis Bank** has **joined Banking Connect platform** to enhance interoperable and faster net banking payments.

Banking Connect Platform

- **Launched in 2025**
- **Interoperable net banking platform** enabling seamless transactions across different banks and payment systems.
- Developed by **NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL)** under RBI's **Payments Vision 2025**.
- Enables users to make payments directly through their **own bank's app** while shopping online.
- Supports **mobile-first payment options** such as:
 - **QR code-based payments**
 - **Intent-based payments** (payment initiated directly from merchant/app link)
- Provides **single integration for Payment Aggregators (PAs)** to connect with multiple banks, removing the need for separate tie-ups.

3.10 Unified Lending Interface

Why in News

- **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)** is developing a **mobile app for Unified Lending Interface (ULI)**.

Insolvency & Bankruptcy

Insolvency is a financial condition where a **person or company cannot pay its debts**, whereas **bankruptcy** is the **legal declaration of this condition** by a court.

Unified Lending Interface

- ULI is a **digital platform** that **helps lenders get all borrower information in one place** to give loans faster and smarter.
- It **connects lenders** (banks/NBFCs) and **Data Service Providers (DSP)**.
- **How ULI Work ?**
 - Borrower Applies for Loan → Lender Connects to ULI Platform → Data Fetched from DSPs (Credit, Income, Land, etc.) → Standardised Data Shared → Loan Decision by lender → Loan Approved → Loan Disbursed
- ULI **solves key problems** in lending **by enabling the use of alternative data** like land ownership records from state departments, and dairy-related insights, making the lending process faster and more efficient.

3.11 The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Why in News?

- On April 6, 2026, the President of India gave assent to the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy (IBC) Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025**.
- The Bill **aims to address procedural delays, uncertainty** in recovery outcome, and **ambiguity** from judicial judgements.

About the IBC Code 2016

- The IBC Code 2016 aims to provide a **time-bound process to resolve insolvency** among companies and individuals.
- **Implementing Ministry:**
- **Types of Creditors**
 - **Operational Creditors:** Suppliers, vendors, employees, contractors, service providers
 - **Financial Creditors:** Banks, NBFCs, bondholders, debenture holders + homebuyers
- Under the Code, a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) may be initiated by a **financial creditor, operational creditor** or the **debtor** itself.
- To initiate CIRP, an application is filed with the **National Company Law Tribunal** upon a default of **1 crore rupees or more**.

- **NCLT** require to **pass an order within 14 days** of receiving the application.
- **Resolution professionals** (RPs) are appointed to conduct CIRP.
- The **Committee of Creditors**, comprising all **financial creditors** of the company, takes key business decisions and selects a resolution plan.
- **Appeal Structure**
 - **For Individuals / Partnership Firms:** Debt Recovery Tribunal → Debt Recovery Appellate Tribunal (under SARFAESI Act)
 - **For Companies:** National Company Law Appellate Tribunal

Key Provisions of the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025**

- **Admission of CIRP:** The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) must pass an order **within 14 days**; if delayed, reasons must be recorded in writing.
- **Withdrawals:** Withdrawal is allowed **after Committee of Creditors (CoC) formation** but **before the first invitation for resolution plans**, with **90% CoC approval**.
 - **Voluntary liquidation** can be withdrawn via a **special resolution** of **shareholders** and **2/3rd creditor** approval (if required).
- **CoC's Role in Liquidation:** CoC can **supervise liquidation**. The **Resolution Professional (RP)** is **not automatically appointed as liquidator**; the **liquidator** is **appointed** (and can be replaced) by the CoC.
- **Timelines for Liquidation:** NCLT must order liquidation **within 30 days**. The process must be completed **within 180 days (extendable by 90 days)**.
 - **Voluntary liquidation** must be **completed within 1 year**.
- **CIIRP (Creditor-initiated IRP):** It is **initiated only by specified financial creditors, out-of-court**, with **at least 51%** (by value) approval.
 - **Management remains with the debtor** under RP oversight. It must be **completed within 150 days (extendable by 45 days)**.
- **Cross-border Insolvency:** Rules are prescribed for handling international insolvency cases.
- **Group Insolvency:** The central government is **empowered to frame rules for group insolvency proceedings**.
- **Assets of Guarantor:** If a creditor has taken possession of a guarantor's asset, it can be sold or transferred during CIRP with CoC approval.

OTHER NEWS

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MARKET

3.12 10 years of UPI

Why in News?

- The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** has recently **completed 10 years** since its launch in April 2016.

Progress in UPI led Transactions

- As per the International Monetary Fund, **UPI** is the **world's largest real-time payment system by volume**.
- It is now used by **450+ million users**, processing **22+ billion transactions monthly**.
- The ecosystem has expanded significantly, with **691 banks onboarded as of January 2026**.
- UPI dominates India's digital payments landscape, accounting for **81% of retail digital transactions**, while India contributes **49% of global real-time payments**.
- Growth, though strong, is moderating:
 - FY24:** 56.56%
 - FY25:** 41.75%
 - FY26:** 30%
- In **March 2026**, UPI recorded its **highest-ever performance** with:
 - ₹29.52 trillion in value** (↑10%)
 - 22.64 billion transactions** (↑11%)
- UPI has also expanded globally and is operational/linked with payment systems in countries such as the **UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar**.

Launches over the years

Type*: UPI 1.0
Launch year: 2016
Use case: Bank-to-bank transfer via mobile

Type*: Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)
Launch year: 2016
Use case: Sovereign UPI-app launched by PM Narendra Modi

Type*: UPI Autopay
Launch year: 2020
Use case: Recurring payments

Type*: RuPay Credit Card on UPI

Launch year: 2022
Use case: Linkage of RuPay credit cards to UPI apps for merchant payments

Type*: UPI Lite
Launch year: 2022
Use case: Process low value payments below ₹1,000 in a PIN-less manner; reduce loan on core banking system

Type*: UPI Lite X
Launch year: 2023
Use case: Process fully offline payments

Type*: Credit line on UPI
Launch year: 2023
Use case: Access pre-sanctioned credit lines from banks; low-ticket high volume lending

Type*: UPI Circle
Launch year: 2024
Use case: Ability to delegate transactions

Type*: UPI Reserve Pay
Launch year: 2025
Use case: Block part of credit card/pre sanctioned credit line limits for repetitive payments

UPI

- Launched in **April 2016** by **National Payment Corporation of India**.
- UPI's vision was first highlighted in the **Payments Vision 2018**.
- It is built on the **Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) Infrastructure**.
- UPI mandates **two-factor authentication (2FA)** for every transaction.
- The **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** on standard bank-to-bank UPI transactions is **0%**.

3.13 Social Impact Fund

Why in News?

- Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) reduced the minimum investment amount in Social Impact Funds from ₹2 lakh to ₹1,000.

Key Highlights of the SEBI's Measure

- Registration Period for NPOs**
 - Non-Profit Organisations can remain registered on Social Stock Exchange (SSE) for 2 years without raising funds.
 - This can be extended by 1 more year with SSE approval.
 - Total possible period: 3 years.
- Minimum Subscription for Zero Coupon Zero Principal Instruments**
 - Earlier requirement: 75% of the proposed funds.
 - New relaxed requirement: 50%, in specific cases.
- Condition for minimum 50% Subscription**
 - SSE must check whether the funds raised can be used meaningfully.
 - The project should remain viable and aligned with its stated social objective.
- Refund Rule**
 - If minimum subscription is not achieved, the funds must be refunded.

3.14 SEBI's amendment to Alternative Investment Fund Regulations

Why in News?

- Recently, SEBI amended regulations related to Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).
- The amendment introduced a new concept called "inoperative fund" status to streamline the exit process of AIFs.

Key Highlights of the SEBI's Measure

- Introduction of Inoperative Fund Status**
 - AIFs can now be classified as "inoperative funds".
- Meaning of Inoperative Fund**
 - AIFs that have:
 - Completed their fund lifecycle
 - Have no active investments or funds.

FFRI

- The **Financial Fraud Risk Indicator** as a **preventive alert system**.
- It collects data from multiple sources such as:
 - Chakshu facility** (under Sanchar Saathi)
 - Financial institutions
 - Law Enforcement Agencies
- Chakshu** is a tool launched under the **Sanchar Saathi initiative** of the **DoT** to enable users to **report suspected fraudulent communications**.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN FINANCIAL MARKET

3.15 PPFAS Asset Management gets approval to sponsor Pension Funds

Why in News?

- **PPFAS Asset Management** has received approval from the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority** (PFRDA) to sponsor a pension fund under the National Pension System (NPS).
- With this approval, PPFAS Asset Management will start managing the retirement savings of people who invest through NPS.

3.16 MoU between DoT and SEBI

Why in News?

- **Recently, Department of Telecom (DoT) and SEBI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to tackle telecom-linked financial frauds and investment scams.

Key Provisions of MoU

- **Data Sharing Mechanism** for early fraud detection.
- **DoT will share following with the SEBI:**
 - **Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)** → identifies **suspicious mobile numbers**.
 - **Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL)** → ensures only **valid mobile numbers** linked to investor accounts.
- **SEBI will share following with the DoT:**
 - Inputs on telecom resources linked to **cyber fraud, impersonation, and money mule activities**.
- **Platform used to exchange intelligence: Digital Intelligence Platform** of Department of Telecom.

3.17 SEBI's New Variable Net Worth Framework for Stockbrokers

Why in News:

- SEBI proposed a new risk-sensitive model **for calculating variable net worth for stockbrokers**.
 - Aims to align capital requirements with a broker's actual operational scale and client base.

Key Highlights:

- **Client Funds Component**
 - **Requires brokers to maintain 10% of the average credit balance** of all clients over the **preceding six months**.
- **Direct Active Client Slabs**
 - Mandates an additional ₹50 lakh for 10,001–50,000 clients, with incremental ₹50 lakh for every subsequent 50,000 clients.
- **Authorised Person (AP) Client Slabs**
 - Prescribes capital buffers ranging from ₹5 lakh (up to 2,500 clients) to incremental ₹50 lakh for every 10,000 additional clients.
- **Impact of Upstreaming Framework**

- Shift necessitated by rules requiring brokers to transfer client funds to clearing corporations, leaving minimal cash at the entity level.

• Consultation Period

- SEBI has invited public and stakeholder feedback on the draft framework until May 15, 2026.

3.18 JPMorgan downgrades Indian equities to 'Neutral'

Why in News:

- JPMorgan **has lowered its rating on Indian stocks from positive to 'neutral'**, citing expensive valuations and risks to corporate earnings.
- The shift reflects a tactical move towards other emerging markets like Taiwan that offer higher exposure to the Artificial Intelligence (AI) rally.

3.19 India Sells 30-Year Green Bond at 6 bps Greenium, Highest in 3 Years

Why in News:

- India sold a **30-year sovereign green bond at a 6-basis-point (bps) greenium**, the largest greenium since January 2023.
 - Strong investor demand and reduced supply of ultra-long bonds drove the premium.

SIMPLE DEFINITION OF SGrB

BOND
A government-issued debt instrument where the money raised is used **ONLY** for **environmentally sustainable (green)** projects.

NORMAL GOVT. BOND
Similar but with funds earmarked for climate-friendly projects

UNDERSTANDING SOVEREIGN GREEN BONDS (SGrB)

Focus on **INDIA**

LEGAL BASIS IN INDIA

Government Securities Act, 2006
Managed by RBI
ICMA Green Bond Principles Alignment

WHO ISSUES SGrBs IN INDIA?

Government of India (GoI) (BORROWER) → **RBI (Reserve Bank of India)** (DEBT MANAGER & AUCTIONEER)

ELIGIBLE GREEN PROJECTS (Where Money Goes)

- Renewable Energy (Solar panels)
- Clean Transportation (Metro train, EV)
- Energy Efficiency (Lightbulb)
- Sustainable Water Management
- Pollution Control (Filter on)
- Biodiversity Conservation (Trees, wildlife)

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS (Where Money Doesn't Go)

- Fossil Fuels (Coal stack, oil derrick)
- Defense (Military tank, rifle)
- General Revenue Expenditure (Cash pile, office)

WHAT IS GREENIUM? (Green Premium)

Lower yield accepted for green bonds compared to similar normal bonds.

Normal bond 7.56% = Green bond 7.50% Greenium: 6 basis points (0.06%)

Reasons:

- ESG Mandates
- Sustainability Focus
- Long-term Climate Commitment

WHY DO GOVERNMENTS ISSUE SGrBs?

- Finance climate commitments (Paris Agreement)
- Fund green infrastructure
- Attract ESG investors
- Lower borrowing cost (Greenium)
- Show global climate leadership
- Diversify funding sources

NORMAL G-SEC vs SOVEREIGN GREEN BOND

Feature	Normal G-Sec	Sovereign Green Bond
Issuer	Govt	Govt
Use of Funds	Any	Only Green
Risk	Sovereign backed	Sovereign backed
Yield	Market determined	Slightly lower - greenium
ESG Tag	No	Yes

CORRECTION: Both Normal G-Sec and Sovereign Green Bond are sovereign backed. (Corrected ✓)

INDIA'S SOVEREIGN GREEN BOND JOURNEY

Announced in Union Budget 2022-23 → First issued in January 2023 → Net-zero target: 2070 → Total raised till 2026: ₹777 Billion → Managed by RBI on behalf of GoI

Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) are a key step in India's sustainable finance journey – mobilizing capital for a greener, cleaner and more resilient future.

3.20 SEBI amends 'Fit and Proper' framework for Market Intermediaries

Why in News:

- SEBI has revised the 'fit and proper' rules to bring fairness and procedural clarity to the regulatory process.
- The amendment removes the automatic disqualification of intermediaries triggered merely by the filing of FIRs or criminal complaints.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Removal of Automatic Disqualification**
 - Filing of a criminal complaint or FIR in economic offences will no longer lead to an immediate bar on an intermediary.
- **Expanded Conviction Criteria**
 - Disqualification will now be triggered upon actual conviction for any economic offence or violation of securities laws.
- **Winding-up Proceedings**
 - Disqualification will only apply if an actual winding-up order is passed, rather than just the initiation of proceedings.
- **Right to be Heard**
 - An explicit provision has been added to ensure entities get a reasonable opportunity to be heard before being declared "not fit and proper."
- **Reduced Cooling-off Period**
 - The period for which an application is not considered following a show-cause notice (SCN) is reduced from 1 year to 6 months.
- **Reporting Timelines**
 - Intermediaries are now mandated to inform SEBI of any disqualifying events within 15 working days.
- **Corrective Action for Personnel**
 - Intermediaries must replace "unfit" key individuals within 30 days or ensure they divest holdings within six months.

3.21 SEBI Allows Net Settlement for FPI Trades; Deadline Set for December 2026

Why in News?

- SEBI has operationalised **net settlement of funds for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** in the cash market.
- **Implementation deadline** is set as **31 December 2026** to improve **liquidity and reduce transaction costs**.

Key Highlights

- **Netting of fund obligations will be allowed only for “outright transactions”**, i.e., where an FPI has either only buy positions or only sell positions in a particular security within a settlement cycle.
- However, **settlement of securities will continue on a gross basis**, ensuring that delivery and ownership transfer mechanisms remain unchanged while only the fund flows are optimised.
- SEBI has indicated that this change can **significantly reduce pay-in obligations – potentially by up to 50%**, thereby improving capital efficiency for FPIs.

Net vs Gross Settlement:

- In the gross settlement system, each trade is settled separately, requiring FPIs to fund full obligations despite offsetting positions, leading to higher capital requirements and increased forex costs.
- Net settlement allows offsetting of buy and sell obligations within a settlement cycle, requiring only net payment, thereby reducing funding needs, improving liquidity, and enhancing operational efficiency.

Scope of Net Settlement

- The netting facility will apply strictly to **outright transactions**, ensuring clarity and reducing operational complexity.
- In cases where **both buy and sell transactions occur in the same security within a settlement cycle**, such trades will **continue to be settled on a gross basis**, maintaining prudence in risk management.
- **Where there is a mismatch:**
 - If **purchase obligations exceed sales**, the FPI must fund the **residual amount along with non-nettable obligations**.
 - Surplus proceeds from sales **cannot be adjusted against obligations arising from non-outright transactions**, ensuring proper segregation of exposures.
- Statutory levies such as **Securities Transaction Tax (STT)** and **stamp duty** will **remain unchanged and continue to be applied on delivery**, indicating that the reform is operational rather than fiscal.
- The implementation framework will be finalised by **custodians and Designated Depository Participants (DDPs)** in consultation with stakeholders, and all market participants; including exchanges and clearing corporations - are required to **upgrade systems before the deadline**.

3.22 SEBI Operationalises PaRRVA to Enhance Transparency and Investor Protection

Why in News?

- Securities and Exchange Board of India operationalised the **Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA)**.
- The initiative aims to improve **transparency, standardisation of performance reporting, and investor protection** in financial markets.

Key Highlights

- SEBI has recognised CARE Ratings Limited as the **PaRRVA entity**, while National Stock Exchange of India will act as the **PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC)**.
- The framework for PaRRVA was issued in **April 2025**, and after a successful **pilot phase (December 2025)**, the system will become fully operational from **May 4, 2026**.
- The platform will allow regulated intermediaries such as **investment advisers, research analysts, and algorithmic trading service providers** to present their **verified historical performance data**.
- Investment advisers and research analysts have been advised to enrol with PaRRVA by August 3 to continue sharing certified past performance with clients.
- After May 2028, only PaRRVA-verified risk and return metrics can be communicated; historical performance data from the pre-PaRRVA period will no longer be allowed in client communication.

PaRRVA – Concept & Functioning

- PaRRVA is designed as a **centralised verification mechanism** to validate the **past risk and return claims** made by market intermediaries.
- It ensures that any performance data shared with investors is **authenticated, standardised, and comparable**, thereby reducing the risk of misleading or exaggerated claims.
- Investors will gain access to **reliable and verified performance records**, enabling more **informed investment decisions**.
- **Use in Advertisements**
 - SEBI has permitted regulated entities to use **PaRRVA-verified performance data in advertisements**, subject to regulatory guidelines.
 - This ensures that promotional claims are backed by **credible and independently verified data**, enhancing **trust in financial market participants**.
- **Significance of the Reform**
 - Strengthens **investor protection** by reducing information asymmetry
 - Improves **transparency and accountability** among intermediaries
 - Promotes **standardisation in performance reporting**
 - Enhances **credibility of financial advisory and research services**

3.23 SEBI Introduces Fast-Track Mechanism for AIF Scheme Launches

Why in News?

- Recently, Securities and Exchange Board of India introduced a **fast-track route for launching Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) schemes**.
- The reform aims to **reduce delays, improve ease of doing business, and accelerate capital deployment**.

Key Highlights

- Under the revised framework, AIFs (excluding **Large Value Funds for Accredited Investors – LVFs**) can **launch schemes after 30 days of filing their Private Placement Memorandum (PPM)**.

- For first-time schemes, AIFs can proceed with launch **after receiving registration or completion of 30 days from filing (whichever is later)**, ensuring regulatory safeguards while reducing delays.
- The earlier system involved **prior SEBI review and multiple rounds of comments on PPMs**, often leading to prolonged timelines; this requirement has now been relaxed.
- AIFs are required to achieve **first close within 12 months** from the date they become eligible to launch the scheme.

Shift in Regulatory Approach

- The new framework reflects a shift from **pre-approval-based regulation to reliance on due diligence by intermediaries**, particularly **merchant bankers and AIF managers**.
- Responsibility for the **accuracy, completeness, and compliance of disclosures** now lies primarily with these intermediaries, rather than SEBI's prior scrutiny.
- Mandatory filings include **due diligence certificates, fit-and-proper declarations, and PAN details of key entities**, ensuring accountability.

Disclosure & Compliance Requirements

- PPMs must include a **standard disclaimer** stating that SEBI does not guarantee or verify the accuracy of disclosures.
- Any **regulatory comments issued within the 30-day window must be incorporated before launch**, maintaining oversight despite the relaxed timeline.
- In case of **misstatements or lapses**, the concerned entities will be **liable for regulatory action**, reinforcing compliance discipline.

3.24 SEBI Launches 3 IT Platforms to Strengthen Regulation & Cybersecurity

Why in News?

- Securities and Exchange Board of India launched **three new IT platforms – SUPCOMS, e-adjudication portal, and C-SAC** to enhance **regulatory efficiency, transparency, and cybersecurity supervision**.

Key Highlights

- The initiative is part of SEBI's broader push towards **digital transformation and ease of doing business**, aiming to modernise regulatory processes and improve interaction with market participants.
- The three platforms focus on distinct areas:
 - **SUPCOMS**: communication management
 - **e-adjudication portal**: quasi-judicial proceedings
 - **C-SAC**: cybersecurity supervision
- **SUPCOMS (Supervision Communication System)**
 - SUPCOMS is a **centralised digital platform for all communications between SEBI and regulated entities**, replacing traditional email-based interactions.
 - It ensures that all communications are **recorded, traceable, and easily accessible**, thereby creating a **robust institutional memory**.
 - The platform also establishes a **clear audit trail**, preventing fragmented communication and improving regulatory transparency.

- **E-Adjudication Portal**

- The e-adjudication portal is a **next-generation digital platform for quasi-judicial proceedings** conducted by SEBI.
- It enables regulated entities to:
 - Access and download **Show Cause Notices**
 - Submit responses online
 - Participate in hearings through a **dedicated digital interface**
- This enhances **transparency, efficiency, and accessibility** in regulatory enforcement processes.

- **Cyber-Sec Audit Compliance (C-SAC) Platform**

- C-SAC is an **AI-enabled platform** designed to strengthen **cybersecurity oversight of SEBI-regulated entities**.
- It analyses **cyber audit reports**, identifies:
 - Compliance gaps
 - Risk areas
 - Provides actionable insights and **risk scores**
- The platform supports **risk-based supervision** by enabling data-driven regulatory decisions and reducing manual effort.

3.25 SEBI Proposes Easing Rules on Handling Unpaid Client Securities

Why in News?

- SEBI has proposed changes to the framework governing **handling of unpaid client securities** with an objective to **reduce operational complexity while maintaining investor protection safeguards**.

Key Highlights

- SEBI has issued a **consultation paper** suggesting reforms in the existing framework for managing securities that remain unpaid after trades.
- The proposal is part of SEBI's broader initiative to **simplify regulatory processes, eliminate redundancies, and improve ease of compliance** for market participants.
- **Existing Framework:**
 - Currently, when clients do not pay for securities purchased:
 - Such securities must be **transferred to a separate client account** or
 - Pledged in favour of brokers
 - The framework prescribes **strict timelines** for:
 - **Release of securities** to clients upon payment
 - **Liquidation of securities** in case of default
 - These provisions were introduced to ensure:
 - Segregation of client assets
 - Prevention of misuse by intermediaries
- **Proposed Changes:**

- SEBI aims to **simplify the handling mechanism** for unpaid securities without compromising core safeguards.
- The focus is on:
 - Reducing **operational complexity and compliance burden**
 - Streamlining processes followed by **trading and clearing members**
- While easing norms, SEBI intends to **retain essential investor protection measures**, ensuring that client assets remain secure.

3.26 NSE Revises FCFE Norms for SME Listings on NSE Emerge

Why in News?

- National Stock Exchange of India revised the **Free Cash Flow to Equity (FCFE)** calculation for SME listings on its **NSE Emerge platform**.
- The move aims to **align listing norms with the funding realities of growth-stage SMEs**.

Key Highlights

- NSE has modified the FCFE formula to **include proceeds from issuance of share capital (equity, preference shares, and securities premium)** as a positive component.
- The revised framework is applicable **immediately to all Draft Red Herring Prospectuses (DRHPs)** filed for SME listings.
- The earlier formula excluded such capital inflows, which often led to **underestimation of financial strength for capital-raising SMEs**.
- **FCFE Requirement for SME Listings:**
 - SMEs applying for listing on NSE Emerge are required to demonstrate **positive FCFE in at least 2 out of the last 3 financial years**.
 - This requirement was introduced to **filter out companies with weak financial fundamentals** and ensure only financially viable firms access public markets.
- By including equity issuance proceeds, NSE recognises that **growth-stage firms often rely on fresh capital infusion**, which should be reflected positively in their financial evaluation.
- **Special Provision for NBFCs**
 - For NBFCs, **net borrowings will include only long-term borrowings** in FCFE calculation.
- This avoids **double-counting**, as short-term borrowings and interest are already reflected in operating cash flows for NBFCs.
- **Revised FCFE Formula:**

FCFE Formula

$$\text{FCFE} = \text{Cash Flow from Operations} - \text{Purchase of Fixed Assets} + \text{Proceeds from Issuance of Capital} + \text{Net Borrowings} - \text{Interest} \times (1 - t)$$



FCFE (Free Cash Flow to Equity) shows the cash available for equity holders after meeting operational, investment, financing and interest obligations, adjusted for taxes.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FINANCIAL SECTOR

3.27 MobiKwik Receives NBFC Licence from RBI

Why in News?

- Reserve Bank of India approved the application of One MobiKwik Systems Ltd (MobiKwik) for a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) licence**.
- The move will enable the company to expand its **regulated lending operations**.

Key Highlights

- The approval allows MobiKwik to set up a new lending arm, **MobiKwik Financial Services Private Limited (MF SPL)**, which will operate as a **wholly owned subsidiary**.
- The NBFC will begin operations after receiving the **Certificate of Registration (CoR)** from RBI, subject to fulfilment of prescribed regulatory conditions.
- This marks a significant step in MobiKwik's transition from a **payments-focused fintech platform to a broader financial services provider**.
- Notably, the approval was granted in a relatively **short timeframe (under four months)**, reflecting regulatory responsiveness to fintech evolution.

Non-Banking Financial Company

- A **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** is a financial institution registered under the RBI that provides services such as:
 - Loans and advances
 - Asset financing
 - Investment activities
- Unlike banks, NBFCs:
 - Cannot accept demand deposits**

- Do not form part of the **payment and settlement system**
- However, they play a crucial role in **credit delivery, especially in underserved segments**.

3.28 Shriram Finance subsidiary gets RBI nod for Primary Dealer business

Why in News:

- Shriram Overseas Investments Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Shriram Finance, received in-principle approval from the RBI on April 15, 2026.
- The approval allows the subsidiary to commence Primary Dealer (PD) operations in the Indian financial market.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Nature of Approval**
 - Granted "in-principle" approval, meaning the final license is subject to meeting specific compliance conditions set by the RBI.
- **Corporate Structure**
 - The business will be operated through Shriram Overseas Investments Limited, which is entirely owned by Shriram Finance.
- **Market Impact**
 - Following the regulatory filing, Shriram Finance shares saw a positive movement, closing up 1.67% on the BSE.
- **Strategic Expansion**
 - Marks the entry of a prominent Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) group into the specialized government securities market.

3.29 Credit Growth Continues to Outpace Deposit Growth in FY26

Why in News?

- Recent data shows that **bank credit growth exceeded deposit mobilisation in FY26**, indicating **persistent funding pressures for banks**.

Key Highlights

- In **March 2026**, bank credit grew by **16.08%**, compared to **11.03% in March 2025**, reflecting a strong rebound in credit demand.
- Deposit growth also improved to **13.47% in March 2026**, up from **10.28% in the previous year**, indicating some recovery in deposit mobilisation.
- Despite this improvement, **credit growth continued to outpace deposit growth**, maintaining a **gap that signals tighter liquidity conditions for banks**.
- The divergence was even sharper in **March 2024**, when credit growth peaked at **20.16%**, significantly higher than deposit growth of **13.47%**.

- During the **pandemic years (FY20–FY21)**, credit growth slowed sharply to around **5–6%**, while deposits grew faster due to **precautionary savings behaviour**.
- In the **post-pandemic phase**, the trend reversed, with **credit demand rebounding strongly**, driven by economic recovery and increased borrowing. However, deposit growth has **not kept pace with credit expansion**, leading to a **persistent credit-deposit imbalance**.
- Higher credit growth relative to deposits leads to **funding pressure**, as banks need to mobilise additional resources to support lending.
- This may result in:
 - Increased **competition for deposits**
 - Upward pressure on **deposit interest rates**
 - Greater reliance on **alternative funding sources**

Credit-Deposit Gap

- The **credit-deposit gap** refers to the difference between growth in loans (credit) and deposits.
- A widening gap indicates:
 - Higher **credit demand relative to available funds**
 - Potential **liquidity tightening**
- A balanced growth is important for maintaining **financial stability and efficient credit delivery**.

3.30 Bank Borrowings to Dominate NBFC Funding Mix in FY27: CRISIL

Why in News?

- According to CRISIL Ratings, **bank borrowings are expected to dominate the funding mix of NBFCs in FY27**, reflecting changing cost dynamics in financial markets.

Key Highlights

- The share of **bank loans in NBFC borrowings** is expected to rise to **44–45% in FY27**, up from around **43% in H2 FY26**, indicating a continued shift towards bank funding.
- This trend is driven by the fact that **bank lending rates have softened**, while **government security (G-sec) and corporate bond yields remain elevated**, making market borrowings relatively costlier.
- As a result, NBFCs are increasingly preferring **bank credit over capital market instruments**, particularly in the near term.

Changing Funding Dynamics

- In FY26, the cost dynamics shifted significantly:
 - Bond yields declined initially but later **rose above earlier levels**
 - Bank lending rates continued to **decline steadily**

- Consequently:
 - **Bond issuances declined sharply** (₹2.1 trillion – ₹1.4 trillion)
 - **Bank lending to NBFCs increased significantly** (net rise of ₹2.5 trillion)
- This reflects a clear preference for **lower-cost and more stable funding sources**.
- **External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)** are expected to remain **muted in the near term** due to:
 - **Exchange rate volatility**
 - **Geopolitical uncertainties**
- However, recent regulatory changes in ECB norms (relating to maturity, end-use, limits, and hedging) may improve their attractiveness in the **medium to long term**.
- **Securitisation** has emerged as a supportive funding avenue:
 - Volumes increased by **30% (~₹1.3 trillion in H2 FY26)**
 - Particularly important for **mid-sized and small NBFCs**
- **Implications for NBFC Sector:**
 - Increased reliance on bank funding highlights the importance of **bank-NBFC interlinkages** in the financial system.
 - Elevated bond yields may limit **capital market access**, especially for smaller NBFCs.
 - Going forward, NBFCs will need to focus on **diversifying funding sources** to ensure:
 - Adequate liquidity
 - Optimal cost of funds
 - Stability in operations

NBFC Funding Sources

- NBFCs typically raise funds through:
 - Bank borrowings
 - Market instruments (bonds, debentures)
 - External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)
 - Securitisation
- The mix depends on **interest rates, market conditions, and regulatory environment**.

3.31 EPFO Introduces Form 121 for TDS Exemption on EPF Withdrawals

Why in News?

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has replaced **Forms 15G and 15H** with a unified **Form 121**, effective **April 1**.

- The reform is aligned with the **Income Tax Act, 2025** and aims to **simplify compliance while strengthening verification mechanisms**.

Key Highlights

- Form 121 replaces both **Form 15G (below 60 years)** and **Form 15H (senior citizens)** with a **single declaration applicable to all eligible subscribers**, eliminating confusion in form selection.
- The new system is integrated with **EPFO and income tax databases**, enabling **automated verification, faster processing, and reduced rejection of claims**.
- While the process has been simplified, it introduces **stricter data validation and compliance checks**, ensuring greater accuracy in declarations.

TDS Exemption on EPF Withdrawals

- EPF withdrawals exceeding **₹50,000** are subject to **Tax Deducted at Source (TDS)**.
- Form 121 allows eligible individuals (those with income below the taxable limit) to **claim exemption from TDS**, but:
 - The form must be **filed every financial year**
 - The exemption is **not automatic**
- Failure to submit the form correctly or on time may result in **TDS deduction even if income is non-taxable**.

Shift to Data-Driven Compliance

- The new framework reflects a transition from **manual, form-based verification to system-driven validation**, where:
 - PAN, Aadhaar, and EPF details must be **accurately linked and verified**
 - Declared income must match **actual tax records and filings**
- Any mismatch may lead to:
 - **Rejection of exemption claims**
 - Additional scrutiny or requirement of **income proof**

FINTECH

3.32 Paytm Introduces Biometric UPI Authentication & Cardless ATM Withdrawals

Why in News?

- One97 Communications (Paytm) has introduced **biometric authentication for UPI payments** and **cardless ATM withdrawal facility**.
- The move aligns with new **two-factor authentication (2FA) norms** issued by Reserve Bank of India.

Key Highlights

- Paytm users can now **authenticate UPI transactions using biometric methods**, such as **fingerprint or Face ID**, instead of entering a UPI PIN.
- The platform has also enabled **cardless ATM withdrawals**, allowing users to withdraw cash directly using the app without requiring a physical debit card.
- These features aim to enhance **convenience, security, and user experience** in digital payments.
- Biometric authentication serves as an alternative to traditional methods like **UPI PIN**, complying with RBI's **two-factor authentication requirements**.
- Under National Payments Corporation of India guidelines:
 - Biometric-based UPI transactions are **capped at ₹5,000 per transaction**
 - The **UPI PIN option continues to remain available**
- Importantly, biometric data is **not stored by Paytm or banks**, ensuring **user privacy and security**.

RBI's Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) Framework

- Effective from **April 1**, RBI mandates that digital transactions must involve **two levels of authentication**, such as:
 - OTP + PIN
 - Password + biometric
 - Secure token + biometric
- The framework applies to **UPI, cards, and wallet-based payments**, aiming to strengthen **transaction security and fraud prevention**.

3.33 NBBL onboards Postal Life Insurance on Bharat Connect

Why in News:

- NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL) has integrated Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI) onto the Bharat Connect platform.
- The move enables over 1.25 crore policyholders to pay their renewal premiums through a wide network of digital and offline channels.

Key Features/ Highlights:

- **Policyholder Reach**
 - Facilitates digital payment convenience for 1.25 crore active policies that generate approximately 2.5 lakh transactions daily.
- **Strategic Integration Partner**
 - State Bank of India (SBI) served as the Biller Operating Unit (BOU), managing the technical integration between the insurer and the platform.
- **Multichannel Access**
 - Customers can pay premiums via 700+ Bharat Connect-enabled apps and websites, as well as through a network of 5 lakh+ offline agents.



- **Expansion of Insurance Category**

- With the addition of PLI, the insurance sector on Bharat Connect now features 65 active billers.

- **Digital Transformation of Posts**

- Aligns with the Department of Posts' goal to modernize legacy services while maintaining trust and reliability.

- **Ecosystem Scale**

- Bharat Connect now supports over 22,640 billers across 29 distinct categories, strengthening India's digital public infrastructure.