# CURRENT ISSUES

## (OCTOBER - 2025)

THE PROMOTION AND REGULATION OF
ONLINE GAMING BILL 2025

MINISTRY OF
INFORMATION AND
BROADCASTING
PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana

INDIA–EU FREE TRADE

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## 1. Polity and Governance

1.  **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:**

    **Context:**

    Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) proposed amendments to Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules 2021) to check misuse of Synthetically Generated Information, including Deepfakes.

    **More about:**

    *   Amended Rules to come into effect from 15 November 2025.
    *   To be called Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2025.
    *   Aim to strengthen due diligence obligations of intermediaries.
    *   Special focus on Social Media Intermediaries (SMIs) and Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs).
    *   Enhance accountability and compliance requirements for digital platforms.
    *   Intended to improve user safety, content regulation, and ethical standards in digital media.

    **About Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021:**

    *   Notified in 2021, with amendments in 2022 and 2023.
    *   Provide a regulatory framework for online news, current affairs, and curated audio-visual content.

- Lay down due diligence obligations for intermediaries to ensure online safety, security, and accountability.

- **Social Media Intermediary (SMI):** Platform enabling online interaction and user-generated content sharing or access.

- **Significant Social Media Intermediary (SSMI):** SMI exceeding a government-notified user threshold in India.

**Key Features of the proposed Amendments:**

- **Synthetically Generated Information (SGI):** Content artificially or algorithmically created or altered to appear authentic.

- **SGI Labelling:** Intermediaries must ensure SGI carries a permanent, unique metadata/identifier.

- **Visual SGI Rule:** Label must cover at least 10% of total visual surface area.

- **Audio SGI Rule:** Label must cover first 10% of audio duration.

**Immediate Identification:** Labels/identifiers must enable instant recognition of content as SGI.

**Non-tampering Clause:** Intermediaries cannot modify, suppress, or remove SGI labels.

**SSMI User Declaration:** SSMIs must obtain user declarations on whether uploaded content is SGI.

**Verification Measures:** SSMIs must deploy reasonable technical and automated tools to verify declarations.

**Prominent Display:** SGI must be clearly and prominently labelled or noticed on platforms.

**Loss of Safe Harbour:** Non-compliance may result in loss of legal immunity for third-party content.

**Senior-level Authorization:** Content removal directions can be issued only by Joint Secretary or above (Centre/States) or DIG and above in police forces.

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## 2. Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan:

**Context:** Special Gram Sabhas held across 1 lakh tribal-dominated villages and Tolas adopted the Tribal Village Vision 2030 Declaration as part of Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan.

**Tribal Village Vision 2030 Declaration:**

- **Village-level roadmap:** Defines actionable goals in education, health, livelihoods, social & financial inclusion, and infrastructure.

- **Localised planning:** Focuses on need-based development priorities at the village level.

- **Adi Sewa Kendras:** Proposes single-window citizen service centres in every village.

- **Community participation:** Encourages villagers to contribute one hour per week as voluntary service (Adi Sewa Samay).

**Adi karmayogi Abhiyan:**



- **Purpose:** Tribal grassroots leadership programme to empower communities, strengthen governance, and create local leadership.

- **Target:** Build a cadre of 20 lakh operating in over 1 lakh tribal villages across 30 States/UTs, 550+ districts, and 3,000 blocks, reaching 10.5 crore tribal citizens.

- **Vision:** Aadi Karmayogi cadre as a "Tribal Seva Path", guided by Seva (Service), Samarpan (Dedication), and Sankalp (Resolve) for responsive governance and last-mile service in tribal areas.

**Key Objectives:**

- Promote governance that is responsive, transparent, and accountable.
- Facilitate participatory planning through bottom-up visioning.
- Institutionalize grievance redressal and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure last-mile delivery via convergence of flagship tribal initiatives

**Tribal Governance structure:**

| Aspect | Key Provisions / Role |
|---|---|
| **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** | Established in **1999** to ensure an organised and focused approach towards **integrated socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes (STs)**. |
| **Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** | Empowers tribal communities to practice **self-governance** and protect their **customs, traditions, and way of life** in Scheduled Areas. |
| **Role of Gram Sabha under PESA** | Grants Gram Sabhas authority over **natural resources, land transfers, socio-economic development, and local dispute resolution**. |
| **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** | Provides **autonomous governance** to tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram** through Autonomous District and Regional Councils. |

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| Fifth Schedule of the Constitution | Deals with the **administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes** in states **other than those under the Sixth Schedule**. |
|---|---|
| **Customary Tribal Institutions** | Includes **Adivasi Sabhas and Tribal Panchayats** that manage **culture, resources, internal governance, and conflict resolution**, often coexisting with formal Panchayati Raj Institutions. |

**3.  Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025:**

**Context:** MeitY issues the draft Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2025

**Key Provisions of the Act:**



- **Online Games:** Defined as digital/electronic games operated via internet/technology.
- **E-Sports:** Recognized competitive digital sports (e.g., Pokémon GO World Championship 2025).
- **Social Games:** Skill-based, recreational/educational.
- **Money Games:** Involving financial stakes (e.g., Dream11, Rummy, Poker) — prohibited nationwide.

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- **Applicability:** Extends to all of India, including foreign-operated services targeting India.

- **Ban Enforcement:** Prohibits money games, ads, bank transactions, and enables blocking under IT Act, 2000.

- **E-Sports Promotion:** To be developed as a legitimate sport with training centers and guidelines by Youth Affairs Ministry.

- **Social/Edu Games Promotion:** Govt may register and support safe, age-appropriate games.

- **Regulatory Authority:** National-level body to categorize/register games, check money games, and resolve grievances.

- **Penalties:** 3 years jail + ₹1 crore fine for offering money games; 2 years jail + ₹50 lakh fine for advertising them.

- **Corporate Liability:** Companies and officers accountable; safeguards for diligent independent directors.

- **Enforcement:** Govt officers empowered for investigation, search, seizure, and arrest without warrant.

**Key Highlights of Rules:**

- **Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI):** To be established as the central regulator for online gaming, including legality, registry maintenance, and penalties.

- **Composition of OGAI:** To consist of a Chairperson and five members from various government ministries.

- **Mandatory Registration:** Social games and e-sports must register with OGAI and obtain a Certificate of Registration.

- **Grievance Redressal:** Mandatory 3-tier grievance redressal mechanism for every registered online game/e-sports provider.

- **Appeals Structure:** Complaints can be escalated to the Grievance Appellate Committee and finally to the OGAI.

- **Stringent Violations:** Violations proposed as non-bailable offences, with company-wide liability for facilitating breaches.

## 4. Postal Ballot:

**Context:** According to ECI's notification, penultimate round of EVM counting shall be taken up only after complete counting of Postal Ballots.

**About Postal Ballot (Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System ETPBS):**

- Enables voters to cast votes through electronically received postal ballots, avoiding physical visits to polling stations.

- **Legal framework:** Governed by the Representation of People Act, 1951 and Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

- **Eligible voters:** Includes service voters, special voters, absentee voters, persons under preventive detention, and election duty personnel.

- **Service voters:** Members of the Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Forces, and government servants posted abroad.

- **Special voters:** President, Vice President, Governors, Cabinet Ministers, other constitutional dignitaries, and their spouses.

- **Absentee voters:** Senior citizens (85+ years), persons with disabilities, and other notified categories.

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## 2. International News

1. **Gaza Peace Summit 2025:**

   **Context:** Recently, USA and Egypt co-hosted the Gaza Peace Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt to advance peace in Gaza and overall stability in the Middle East.

   **More about:**

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- Four mediators —United States, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey —signed the declaration at the summit.
- The declaration inaugurates the USA's 20-point peace plan, also called the Trump Declaration for Enduring Peace and Prosperity.
- The plan mandates that future disputes be resolved through diplomacy and negotiation, not force.
- It calls for disarmament of Hamas and internationally supervised reconstruction of Gaza.
- The plan assures that Palestinians will not be forcibly displaced from Gaza.
- Israel commits not to occupy or annex the Gaza Strip under the long-term framework.
- The 20-point plan does not guarantee a two-state solution or the creation of a Palestinian state.
- India's Minister of State for External Affairs attended the summit and welcomed efforts toward lasting regional peace.



Key Milestones in Israel-Palestine Conflict

| Balfour Declaration (1917) | UN Partition Plan (1947) | Six-Day War (1967) | Oslo Accords (1993) | Hamas wins Palestinian legislative elections (2006) | Abraham Accords (2020) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Britain took control as Israel on the tail in tones sehbtish Balfour Cotusx nagies. | UN Partition Plan: divides the nuamony of UK isrokeny Palestine diridges. | Israel occupies ae the US., and the Israelt military control. | Oslo Accords: grants hamas and consorted in Israel deboretration and condacs. | Hamas wins along with this Bilcon legislative elections. | Abraham Accords to normalize palestine to magnation and modem accords |

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# European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

**EFTA**

EST. 1960

## About EFTA

- Intergevermenal organisation for free trade & economic integration.

- Current Members: Iceland, Licchtetnain, Norway, Switzerand.
- Schengen Area but NOT EU members.

**13 MILLION**

**OVER $ TRILLION GDP**

## EFTA & India Trade

European Union   Utates   Britain   India (5ᵗʰ Largest Partner)

## Key Partners with India

**Switzerland** Largest

**Norway** Second Largest

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India's Stance on the Israel-Palestine Issue: A Timeline of Policy Evolution

**1947-1991: Support for Two-State Solution & Anti-Colonial Solidarity**

Non-Aligned Movement

Driven by a combination of **anti-colonial solidarity with Arab states** and commitment to **Non-Aligned Movement.**

India favours a sovereign and independent **State of Palestine** living side by side with Israel.

1988 India recognized Palestine in 1988

**1991-2014: Strategic Ties with Israel & Policy Shift**

Establishment of **full diplomatic relations with Israel** in 1992 marking a fundamental policy shift.

Presently, **India and Israel** have formed a **strong strategic connection**, with India being **top buyer of Israel's defence products.**

**2014- Present: De-hyphenation & Independent Engagement**

**De-hyphenation:** It establishes **diplomatic ties with Israel separate from** those India would have with Palestine.

2017 (Israel Visit)    2018 (Palestine Visit)

Indian Prime Minister's **visit to both Israel** (2017) and Palestine (2018) highlights that **India's ties with Israel** would **not alter its fundamental attitude on Palestine.**

2. **India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA):**

**Context:** India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), signed on 10 March 2024, came into effect from 01 October 2025.

**About Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA):**

• The agreement advocated with a goal of reaching $100 billion in investments in India and one million jobs within 15 years.

• The agreement will see considerable tariff reduction, increase in market access, and simplification of customs procedures.
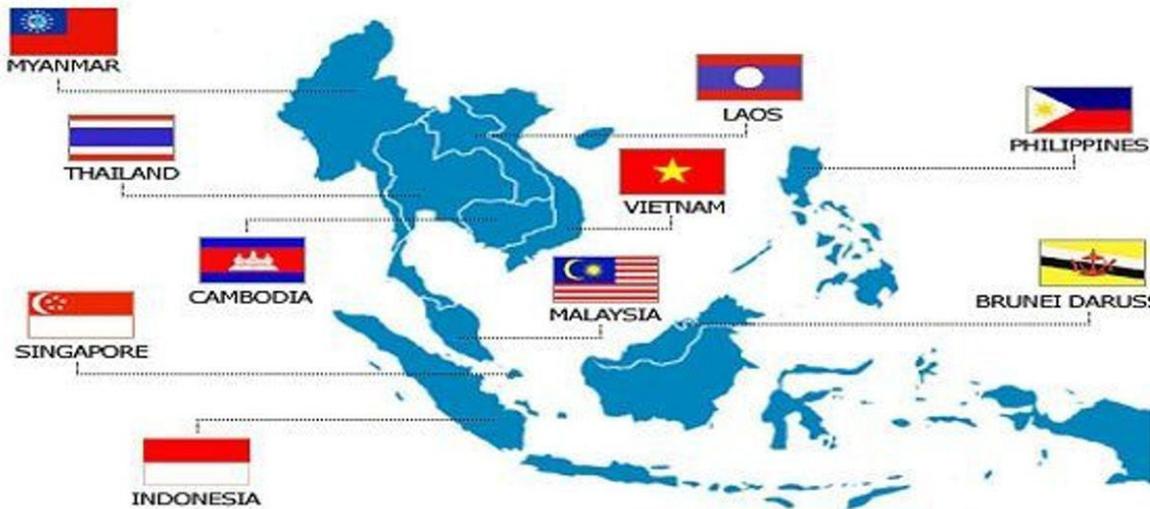
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INDIA – EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION
Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement
(India-EFTA TEPA)
SIGNING CEREMONY
SUNDAY, 10TH MARCH 2024 | BHARAT MANDAPAM, NEW DELHI

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- FTA also included a chapter on commitments to human rights and sustainable development.
- First time in the history of the world that an FTA with a binding commitment to invest $100 billion in India from EFTA countries.
- The two sides had shared "objectives" to increase foreign direct investment from EFTA states into India by $50 billion within 10 years and another $50 billion in the next five years.

## 3. 47th ASEAN summit:

**Context:** The 47th ASEAN summit was held recently in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ASEAN Summits take place twice a year, hosted by the country holding the ASEAN Chairmanship.

- 22nd ASEAN-India annual Summit was also held on the sidelines of the summit.



ASEAN Member Countries

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## Key Highlights of the ASEAN Summit

**11th Member: Timor-Leste**
Timestre (East Timor) officially admitted

**Theme**
Inclusity Sustainability

**Kuala Lumpur Accord**
Joint cieesfare agreement between Thailand and Cambodia

## 22nd ASEAN-India Annual Summit Highlights

**Maritime Cooperation**
2026 designated as "ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation".
Supported ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific.
Focus on security & connectivity.

**Sustainable Tourism**
Adoption of the ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement.
Promoting eco-friendly and responsible travel.
Joint initiatives for green tourism.

**Plan of Action (2026-2030)**
Extended support for implementation of ASEAN-India Plan of Action.
To implement Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
Forward-looking roadmap for cooperation.

Summit held on the sidelines, strengthening regional ties and strategic partnership.

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## 4. Sevilla Forum on Debt:

**Context:** The forum is launched at the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) to tackle the entrenched debt crisis in developing countries.

**About Sevilla Forum on Debt:**

- Led by Spain, with support from UNCTAD and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).
- Aims to bring together creditors, borrowers, international financial institutions, and academia on debt sustainability and management.
- Focuses on innovative solutions for addressing sovereign debt challenges.
- Emerged as an outcome of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4).
- Forms part of the broader Sevilla Platform for Action.
- Other FfD4 outcomes include Debt Swaps for Development Hub, Debt-for-Development Swap Programme, and Debt "Pause Clause" Alliance.
- Complements the Sevilla Commitment.
- **Sevilla Commitment:** First inter-governmentally agreed financing-for-development framework since 2015.
- Seeks to bridge the $4 trillion annual SDG financing gap in developing countries.

## 5. UN Human Rights Council:

**Context:** India was elected unopposed to UN Human Rights Council for the seventh time. India is elected for a three-year term (2026–28) starting next year.

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**About UN Human Rights Council:**

- An intergovernmental UN body responsible for promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

- Established in 2006 by the UN General Assembly, replacing the Commission on Human Rights.

- Comprises 47 member states, elected by the UN General Assembly.

- Members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

- Functions as a global forum on human rights, adopting resolutions and policy decisions.

- Conducts reviews of member states' human rights records and mandates investigations and special procedures.

6. **Conflict areas in news:**



| Myanmar (Sagaing Region) | Reason | Key Geographical Features |
|---|---|---|
| Over a million Rohinya from now live as refugres in Bangladesn, wres in being violated. | • Over a million Rohinya Muslims from Myanmar Bangladess, where huging violated. | • Major mountain ranges Rakhine, Shan, Shan, Dawna Highunt Hlakabo Razi <br> • Major Rivers Irrawaddy, Chindwin, Sittting, Salwen River, Yangon River |

| Madagascar | Reason | Key Geographical Features |
|---|---|---|
| (Antanaarivo, the capital city)<br><br>Anti-government Gen Gen Z protests in Madascar have led the fall tor government. | <br>• Neighbors<br>• Mauritius, Réunion, Mayhiles, Comorios off East Afirlian off East Africal country<br>• Second-largest island is<br>• uniques flora a flora and fanua |  |

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## 3. Economy and Development

1.  **2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report:**

    **Context:** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Initiative (OPHI) released the 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report.



Global MPI: Dimensions, Indicators & Weights

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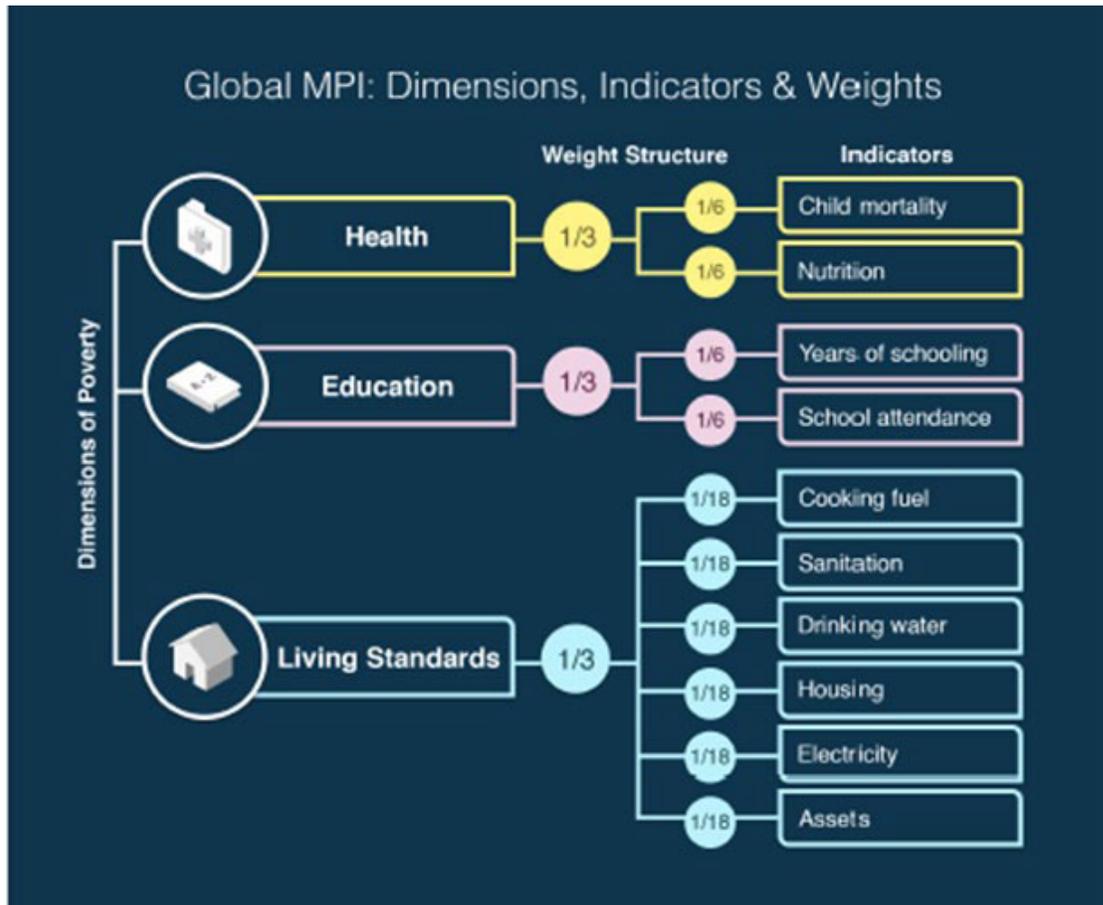
# Key Highlights of Global Multimiputional Poverity Report

## Multimimusional Poverty

**1.1 BILLION**
out of 6.3 billion people live in acute multdiminsional poverty

Almost half in 6 middle-income countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Nigeria, Pakistan & Tanzania

**27.8% of children vs 13.5% adults**

## Poverty & Climate Hazards: A Double Burdan

Poverty drives exposure, climate reinfrrices poverty

**887 MILLION**
poor people exposed to climate hazards

**309 MILLION**
face 'triple or quattfiule burden'

High Heat (608M), Air Pitolution (577M)
**Global Hotspots**

## Poverty in India: A Remarkable Change
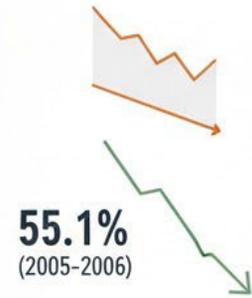
**55.1%**
(2005-2006)

**16.4%**
(2019-2021)

18.2%
**16.4%**

**414 MILLION**
people left poverty

Source: Global Multimimustional Poverty Index
Based on data from UNDP and OPHI

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**2. 2025 (Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences:**

**Context:** The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences 2025 (Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences) was awarded to Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt for explaining innovation-driven economic growth.

**About The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences:**

- Established in 1968 by Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank).
- Not part of the original five Nobel Prizes instituted by Alfred Nobel's 1895 will.
- Awarded annually by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.
- First awarded in 1969 to Ragnar Frisch and Jan Tinbergen.
- Amartya Sen became the first Indian laureate in 1998, for contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory.

| Laureate(s) | Key Contributions |
|---|---|
| Joel Mokyr | Identified the **prerequisites for sustained economic growth** driven by technological progress.<br><br>Emphasised **the joint evolution of science and technology** as essential for long-term growth.<br><br>Highlighted the role of **mechanical competence** in effectively applying innovations.<br><br>Stressed the need for a **society open to change** to absorb and sustain technological advances. |
| Philippe Aghion & Peter Howitt | Developed the **theory of creative destruction** through a mathematical growth model (1992). |

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| | Explained how **new innovations replace obsolete products**, benefiting overall growth while disrupting existing firms. |
| --- | --- |
| | Showed that **temporary monopoly power via patents** incentivises firms to invest in **R&D**. |
| | Clarified that patents **do not block future innovations**, as competitors can introduce new patentable technologies. |

**3.** **Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY):**

**Context:** The Prime Minister launched The Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) initiative to revolutionize Indian agriculture by making it more productive, sustainable, and financially rewarding for farmers.

**More about:**

- Inspired by NITI Aayog's Aspirational District Programme, the scheme focuses exclusively on agriculture and allied sectors.

- It focuses on 100 low-performing districts facing issues such as low yields, water scarcity, and limited resource access.

**The Dhan dhanya krishi yojana aims are to:**

1. Enhance agricultural productivity
2. Adopt crop diversification and sustainable agricultural practices
3. Augment post-harvest storage at panchayat and block level
4. Improve irrigation facilities
5. Facilitate availability of long-and short-term credit

**Salient features:**



## Greener fields

The PMDDKY aims at enhancing **agricultural productivity,** increasing adoption of **crop diversification** and **sustainable agricultural practices,** and augmenting **post-harvest storage**

**₹ 24,000 cr.** to be allocated yearly for **six years** for the scheme

■ States and private sector to **partner with the Centre** to implement the scheme

**100 districts** to come under the scheme which will begin this financial year

■ Districts to be identified based on 3 key indicators: **low productivity, low cropping intensity, less credit disbursement**

**Helping hand:** Nearly 1.7 crore farmers will benefit from the scheme. PTI

- ₹24,000 crore annually for a period of six years starting FY 2025–26.
- The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and monitored through a three-tier structure:-National-level oversight bodies, State-level nodal committees, and District Dhan Dhaanya Samitis chaired by District Collectors.

**Criteria and Selection of Districts:** NITI Aayog will finalize 100 districts based on:

o   **Low Crop Productivity:** Yields below national averages.

o   **Moderate Cropping Intensity:** Below national average(155%).

o   **Low Credit Access:** Limited penetration of bank loans or Kisan Credit Cards.

o   **Geographic Representation:** At least one district per state and Union Territory.



**PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY): Transforming Indian Agriculture (2025-26 to 2030-31)** — Announced in Union Budget 2025-26, Inspired by NITI Aayog's Aspirational District Programme
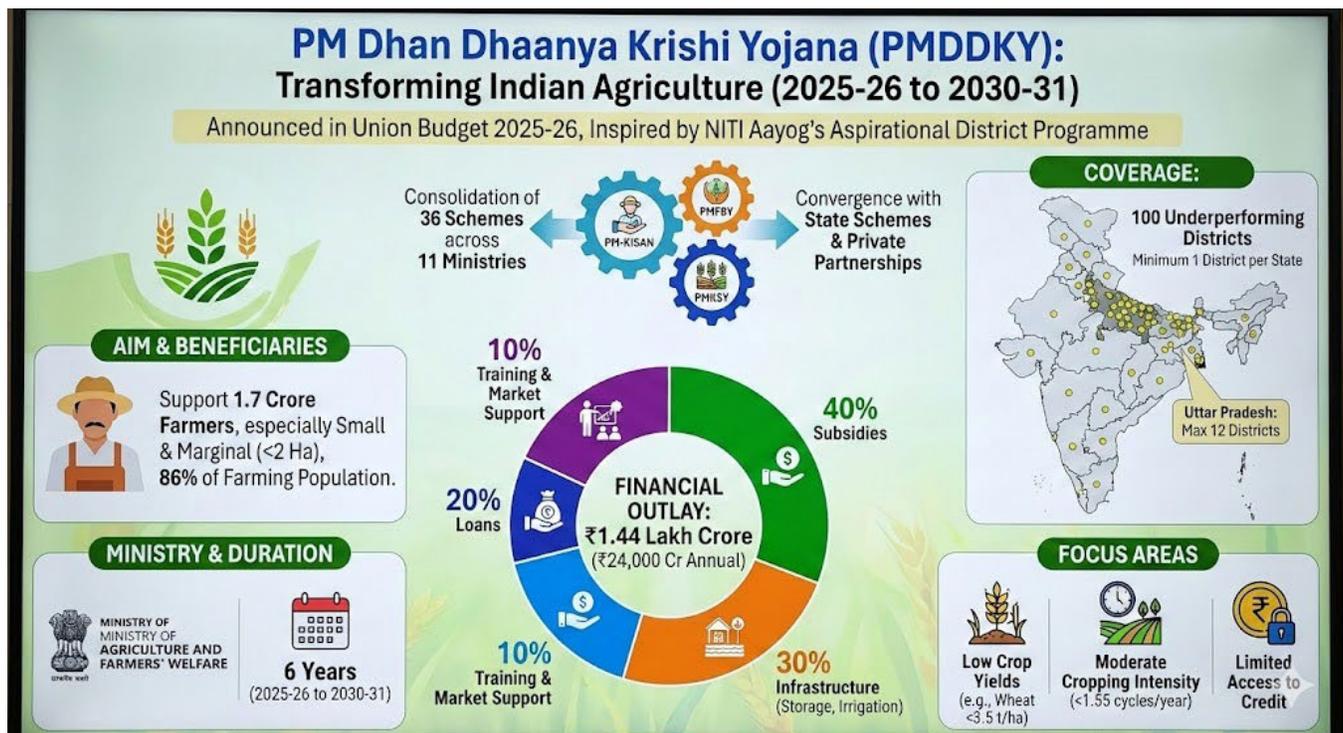
4.   **Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission):**

**Context:** Prime Minister of India recently launched the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (Dalhan Aatmanirbharta Mission).

**Key Features of Mission:**

- Launched to boost domestic pulse production and reduce import dependence.

- Aims to achieve self-sufficiency (Aatmanirbharta) in pulses by December 2027.

- **Duration:** 6 years (2025–26 to 2030–31).

- **Financial outlay:** ₹11,440 crore.

- Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India.

- Focuses on Tur/Arhar (pigeon pea), Urad (black gram), and Masoor (red lentil).

- Adopts a cluster-based approach with crop-and region-specific interventions.

- Expected to benefit around 2 crore farmers through assured procurement, quality seed supply, and value-chain support.

**Operational Strategy:**

- Seed development & distribution: Production of 126 lakh quintals of certified seeds and free distribution of 88 lakh seed kits to farmers.

- Focus on high-yielding, pest-resistant, and climate-resilient pulse varieties.

- **Assured procurement:** 100% MSP procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masoor for four years.

- **Procurement agencies:** NAFED and NCCF to procure under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) of PM-AASHA.

- **Role of states:** States to prepare rolling five-year seed production plans.

- **Quality monitoring:** ICAR to monitor breeder seed production and quality assurance via the SATHI portal.

- **SATHI portal:** Centralized Seed Authentication, Traceability & Holistic Inventory platform developed with NIC.

- Post-harvest value chain: Establishment of 1,000 processing and packaging units with subsidies of up to ₹25 lakh per unit.
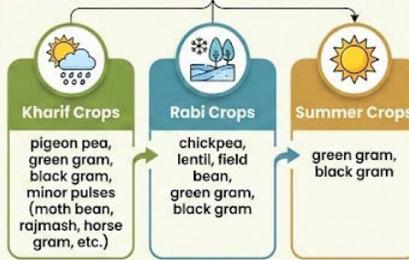
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# STATUS OF PULSES PRODUCTION IN INDIA

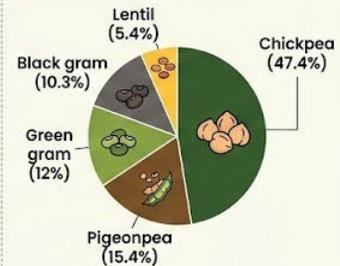India is world's largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses.

## TOP 3 PULSES-PRODUCING STATES

Rajasthan

Madhya Pradesh (Largest Producer, 22.11%)

Maharashtra

Accounting nearly 55% of India's pulse production

## SEASON

**Kharif Crops**
pigeon pea, green gram, black gram, minor pulses (moth bean, rajmash, horse gram, etc.)

**Rabi Crops**
chickpea, lentil, field bean, green gram, black gram

**Summer Crops**
green gram, black gram

## IMPORTANT PULSES (SHARE)

- Lentil (5.4%)
- Black gram (10.3%)
- Chickpea (47.4%)
- Green gram (12%)
- Pigeonpea (15.4%)

## PRODUCTION TREND

Production (in lakh tonnes)

192.55 (FY14)

244.93 (FY24)

Rose from 192.55 to 244.93 lakh tonnes

26

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**Initiatives for Promoting Pulse Production**

**NFSM – Pulses**
- Launched in 2007, aimed at area expansion, productivity enhancement & modern technologies.

**Accelerated Pulses Production Programme (IA3P)**
- 2010-2014: Cluster demonstrations of advanced farming practices.

**PM-AASHA Scheme**
- Launched in 2018 to provide price assurance for pulses & oilseeds.

**Minimum Support Prices (MSPs)**
- MSPs for Tur, Chana, Moong, Urad, and Masoor.

**Buffer Stock Management**
- Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) & PSS for pulse buffer stocks.

**Bharat Dal Initiative**
- Subsidized retail distribution of chana, moong & masoor as "Bharat Dal".

## 5. WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies:

**Context:** The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies has officially entered into force after two-thirds of WTO members submitted their instruments of acceptance.

About WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies:

- First WTO agreement explicitly focused on environmental protection.
- First binding multilateral agreement on ocean sustainability.
- Adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), Geneva, in 2022.
- Entered into force on 15 September 2025.
- Aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 –Life Below Water.

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- Seeks to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies that damage marine ecosystems.

- Targets subsidies causing overfishing, overcapacity, and IUU fishing.

- SDG 14.6 specifically mandates elimination of such harmful subsidies.

- India has not yet ratified the agreement.

**Key Provisions of the Agreement:**

- Prohibits subsidies contributing to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

- Bans subsidies linked to overfished stocks and unregulated fishing in the high seas.

- Top five subsidizers—China, EU, USA, South Korea, and Japan—account for 58% of global fisheries subsidies.

- Provides Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) to developing countries and LDCs.

- Grants a two-year transition period to developing countries and LDCs from the Agreement's entry into force.

- Establishes a WTO Fish Fund to provide technical assistance and capacity building.

- The WTO Fish Fund is fully operational.

- Imposes transparency obligations, requiring members to notify fisheries subsidies, fish stock status, and management measures.

- Prohibits subsidies for high seas fishing, beyond national jurisdiction and outside RFMO/As control.

- Creates a Committee on Fisheries Subsidies to oversee implementation, ensure transparency, and facilitate dialogue among members.

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WHY INDIA HAS NOT RATIFIED THE WTO AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES ?

**1. LOW SUBSIDIES & ARTISANAL FISHERIES**

Small-Scale & Sustainable

India is one of the lowest fisheries subsidizers globally, despite large coastal population & sector.

Supports livelihoods of millions of traditional & artisanal fishers.

**2. PPP & CBDR: PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY**

POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE

PROTECTING DEVELOPING NATIONS

India advocates 'Polluter Pays Principle' and 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)'. Ensuring responsible countries take greater obligations, protecting developing nations from undue burden.

**3. MORATORIUM PROPOSAL FOR DISTANT WATER FISHING**

Year 0 — Year 25

India proposed that Distant Water Fishing Nations be subject to a 25–year moratorium on all subsidies for fishing or fishing-related activities beyond their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

**4. OTHER ISSUES & FLAWED APPROACHES**
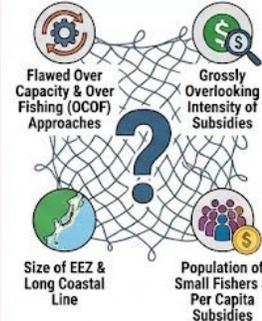
Flawed Over Capacity & Over Fishing (OCOF) Approaches

Grossly Overlooking Intensity of Subsidies

Size of EEZ & Long Coastal Line

Population of Small Fishers & Per Capita Subsidies

Concerns over OCOF, subsidy intensity, EEZ size, coastal line, small fisher population, and per capita subsidies.

6.    **Critical minerals:**

**Context:** The Ministry of Mines has issued detailed guidelines for the Incentive Scheme for the Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling.
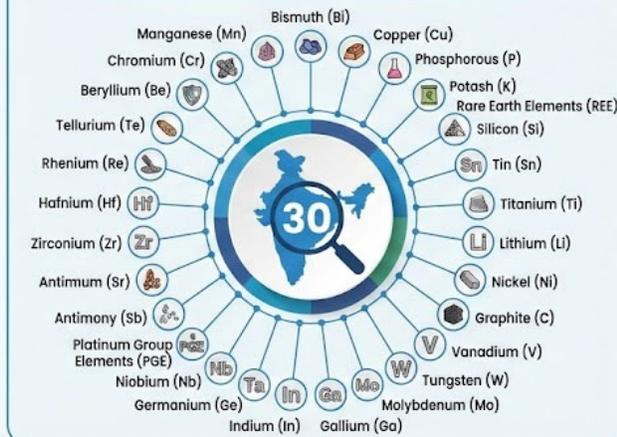
## CRITICAL MINERALS: ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC & NATIONAL SECURITY

### WHAT ARE THEY?

Naturally occurring elements and compounds vital for a country's economic development and national security, yet facing significant supply-related challenges due to limited geographical occurrences or sourcing vulnerabilities.

### INDIA'S IDENTIFIED CRITICAL MINERALS (MINISTRY OF MINES)

**30**

- Bismuth (Bi)
- Manganese (Mn)
- Copper (Cu)
- Chromium (Cr)
- Phosphorous (P)
- Beryllium (Be)
- Potash (K)
- Rare Earth Elements (REE)
- Tellurium (Te)
- Silicon (Si)
- Rhenium (Re)
- Tin (Sn)
- Hafnium (Hf)
- Titanium (Ti)
- Zirconium (Zr)
- Lithium (Li)
- Antimum (Sr)
- Nickel (Ni)
- Antimony (Sb)
- Graphite (C)
- Platinum Group Elements (PGE)
- Vanadium (V)
- Niobium (Nb)
- Tungsten (W)
- Germanium (Ge)
- Molybdenum (Mo)
- Indium (In)
- Gallium (Ga)

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK & REGULATION (MMDR ACT)

**Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act)**

#### PART D OF THE FIRST SCHEDULE

**24 minerals** from the identified list are included

- Bismuth • Cobalt • Copper • Phosphorous • Potash • Rare Earth Elements (REE) • Silicon • Tin • Titanium • Lithium • Nickel • Graphite • Vanadium • Tungsten • Molybdenum • Gallium • Germanium • Indium • Tantalum • Niobium • Platinum Group Elements • Antimony • Zirconium • Hafnium

Included in MMDR Act to ensure strategic management and secure supply chains.

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**National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM):**

**Cabinet Decision:** 29th January, 2025

# National Critical Mineral Mission

- Mission to establish effective framework for India's self-reliance in **critical mineral sector**

- Expenditure of **Rs.16,300 crore**
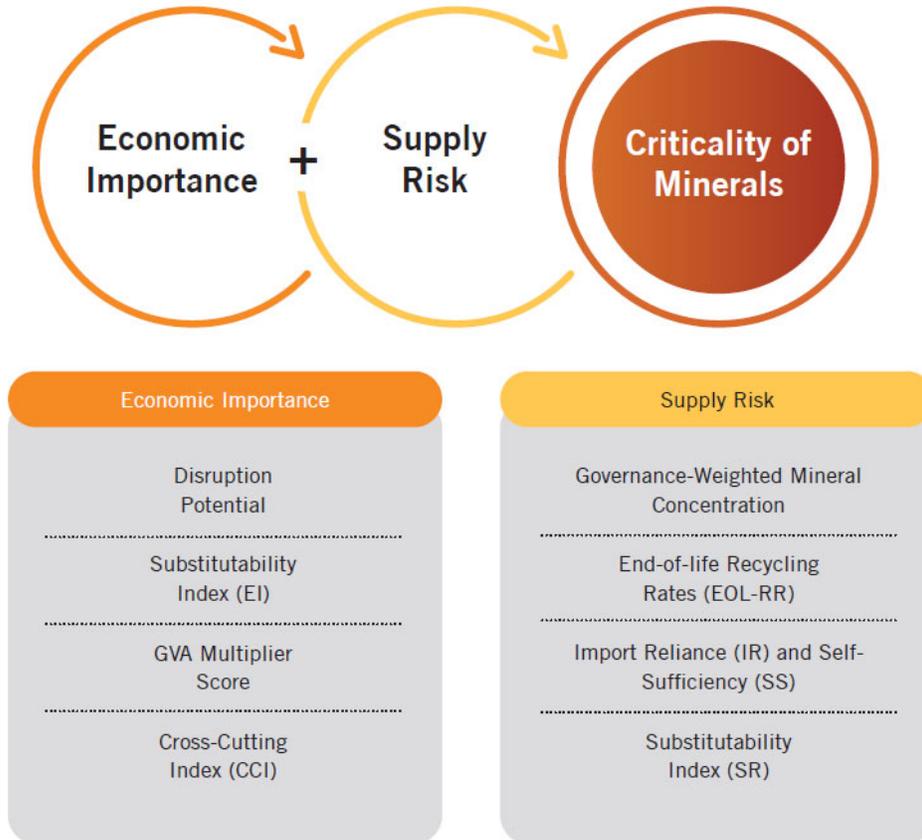
- Expected investment of **Rs.18,000 crore** by **PSUs**, etc.

## Mission will:

- Promote the recovery of these minerals from overburden and tailings

- Encourage Indian PSUs and private sector companies to acquire critical mineral assets abroad and enhance trade with resource-rich countries

- Develop stockpile of critical minerals within the country

2/2

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**What are critical minerals?**



- A mineral is critical when the risk of supply shortage and associated impact on the economy is (relatively) higher than other raw materials.
- These minerals are essential for economic development and national security, and their lack of availability/ the concentration of extraction/ processing in a few geographical locations could potentially lead to supply chain vulnerabilities.

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| 1. | Antimony | 15. | Nickel | | iv. | Neodymium | 20. | Rhenium |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Beryllium | 16. | PGE | | v. | Promethium | 21. | Selenium |
| 3. | Bismuth | | i. Platinum | | vi. | Samarium | 22. | Silicon |
| 4. | Cadmium | | ii. Palladium | | vii. | Europium | 23. | Strontium |
| 5. | Cobalt | | iii. Rhodium | | viii. | Gadolinium | 24. | Tantalum |
| 6. | Copper | | iv. Ruthenium | | ix. | Terbium | 25. | Tellurium |
| 7. | Gallium | | v. Iridium | | x. | Dysprosium | 26. | Tin |
| 8. | Germanium | | vi. Osmium | | xi. | Holmium | 27. | Titanium |
| 9. | Graphite | 17. | Phosphorous | | xii. | Erbium | 28. | Tungsten |
| 10. | Hafnium | 18. | Potash | | xiii. | Thulium | 29. | Vanadium |
| 11. | Indium | 19. | REE | | xiv. | Ytterbium | 30. | Zirconium |
| 12. | Lithium | | i. Lanthanum | | xv. | Lutetium | | |
| 13. | Molybdenum | | ii. Cerium | | xvi. | Scandium | | |
| 14. | Niobium | | iii. Praseodymium | | xvii. | Yttrium | | |

- **Genesis:** Announced in Budget 2024-25 to establish a Critical Mineral Mission.
- **Objective:** To secure India's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic & foreign sources.
- **Coverage:** Covers entire value chain –exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing, and recovery from end-of-life products.

**Governance Framework:**

- Empowered Committee on Critical Minerals to coordinate activities.
- Ministry of Mines as the administrative authority.

**Incentive Scheme for the Promotion of Critical Mineral Recycling:**

- Implemented as part of the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM).

- **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

- Aims to incentivize domestic recycling capacity for extraction and separation of critical minerals from waste.

- **Tenure:** 6 years (FY 2025–26 to 2030–31).

- **Financial outlay:** ₹1,500 crore.

- **Eligible feedstock:** E-waste, Lithium-ion battery (LIB) scrap, and scraps from end-of-life vehicles (e.g., catalytic converters).

- Covers 27 critical minerals, including Lithium, Cobalt, Nickel, Graphite, Gallium, Niobium, Antimony, Cadmium, and Rare Earth Elements (excluding Uranium and Thorium).

- **Beneficiaries:** Open to large recyclers, MSMEs, new recyclers, and start-ups.

**Incentive Mechanism:**

- Capex subsidy: Up to 20% subsidy on plant and machinery for timely production.

- Opex subsidy: Provided on incremental sales.

- Opex rate: 40% in the 2nd year and 60% by the 5th year (FY 2026–27 to 2030–31).

- Incentive cap (large entities): Maximum ₹50 crore per entity.

- Incentive cap (small entities): Maximum ₹25 crore per entity.

- Opex ceiling: Limited to ₹10 crore for large entities and ₹5 crore for small entities.

7. **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) FY 2023-24:**

   **Context:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) FY 2023-24.

**About Annual Survey of Industries (ASI):**

- Conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

- Carried out annually under the Collection of Statistics (Amendment) Act, 2017.

- Covers factories registered under Sections 2(m)(i) & 2(m)(ii) of the Factories Act, 1948.

- Includes bidi and cigar manufacturing units under the Bidi & Cigar Workers Act, 1966.

- Covers electricity undertakings not registered with the Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

- Includes units with 100 or more employees listed in the Business Register of Establishments (BRE) maintained by State Governments.

- Excludes defence establishments, oil storage and distribution depots, railway workshops, gas storage units, and other departmental units.

**Key Findings from the ASI 2023-24 Report:**

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** Increased by 11.89% at current prices over the previous year.

- **Top GVA industries:** Basic metals, motor vehicles, chemicals & chemical products, food products, and pharmaceuticals.

- **Top GVA states:** Maharashtra (16%), followed by Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.

- **Industrial output:** Grew by 5.80% year-on-year.

- **Employment growth (decade):** Industrial sector added over 5.7 million jobs in the last decade.

- **Employment growth (2023–24):** Recorded a 5.92% year-on-year increase.

- **Top employment states:** Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.

## 8. Payments Regulatory Board:

**Context:** Payments Regulatory Board was constituted by RBI.

**More about:**

- The 6-member Board will be responsible for the regulation and supervision of payment systems under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- It has replaced the earlier Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).

**About Payments Regulatory Board:**

- Constituted under Section 3 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act.
- **Chairperson:** Governor of the RBI (ex officio).
- **Members:** RBI Deputy Governor (PSS), one RBI officer nominated by the Central Board, and three Central Government nominees with expertise in payments, IT, cyber security, or law.
- **Tenure:** 4 years, with no re-nomination permitted.
- **Resignation:** Allowed with 6 weeks' notice.
- **Disqualifications:** Age above 70 years, insolvency, criminal conviction ≥180 days, or holding office as MP/MLA, etc.
- **Permanent invitee:** Principal Legal Adviser of RBI.
- **Expert participation:** RBI may invite permanent or ad hoc experts for meetings.
- **Meetings:** Held at least twice a year.
- **Quorum:** 3 members, including the Chairperson (or Deputy Governor) and one nominated member.
- **Decision-making:** By majority vote of members present and voting.
- **Casting vote:** Chairperson (or Deputy Governor) has a casting vote in case of a tie.

## 9. Engels' pause:

**Context:** Geoffrey Hinton who was awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize, warned that AI could trigger a modern Engels' pause.

**About Engels' Pause:**

- **Engels' Pause:** A term coined by Oxford economist Robert Allen, based on Friedrich Engels' observations of 19th-century Britain.
- Describes the paradox of early Industrial Revolution (c. 1780–1840) where industrial output surged but real wages stagnated.
- Highlights a phase of economic growth without proportional improvement in workers' living standards.
- Raises concerns that an AI-driven economy could replicate Engels' Pause, with growth occurring alongside unequal distribution of gains.

## 10. World Economic Outlook 2025:

- **World Economic Outlook (WEO):** Projects global growth to slow from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026.
- Published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Provides analysis and projections of the global economy in the short and medium term.
- Released twice a year, with interim updates in between.
- **Other Key Reports by IMF:** Global Finance Stability Report (GFSR), Fiscal Monitor.

**11. Prime Minister launched PM-SETU (Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs):**

**Context:** The scheme will be implemented under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

**About PM-SETU:**

- **Type:** ₹60,000 crore centrally sponsored scheme.

- **Aim:** To modernise and industry-align 1,000 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across India.

- **Implementation model:** Hub-and-spoke, with 200 hub ITIs connected to 800 spoke ITIs.

- **Hub ITIs:** Equipped with advanced infrastructure, innovation & incubation centres, production units, trainer training facilities, and placement services.

- **Spoke ITIs:** Focus on expanding access, outreach, and last-mile skill delivery.

- **Course reforms:** Introduction of new demand-driven courses and revamping of existing courses in industry collaboration.

- **Industry linkage:** Establishment of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) with Anchor Industry Partners for cluster management and outcome-based training.

- **Learning pathways:** Creation of long-term diplomas, short-term courses, and executive programmes.

- **Centres of Excellence:** Strengthening 5 National Skill Training Institutes at Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, and Ludhiana with global partnerships.

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## Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)

**Structure**
State-run institutions serving as bacitional Education (VET) in India sindia since the 1950s.

**Accreditation**
by the Directorate General of Training (DGT) under the **Ministry of Skill Entrepreneurship.**

**Status**
Around 15,034 ITIs operational, with 78% privately of privately owned.

**Schemes**
STRIVE, Model ITI, and ESDI (Enhancing Skill Development Infrastrutuire in NE Sates).

**12. 'We Rise' (Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive and Sustainable Enterprises) initiative:**

**Context:** 'We Rise' (Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive and Sustainable Enterprises) initiative was launched recently.

**About We Rise Initiatives:**

• It was launched by NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) under its Award to Reward (ATR) initiative along with DP World.

• It aims to help women entrepreneurs, including women-led MSMEs, to scale their businesses globally through trade facilitation, mentorship, and strategic partnerships.

**Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP):**

• Incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform.

• Transitioned into a public-private partnership in 2022.

• Aims to build a comprehensive ecosystem supporting women entrepreneurs across India.

• Focuses on empowering women by overcoming information asymmetry.

**13. MAHA MedTech Mission (Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas -Medical Technology):**

**Context:** MAHA-MedTech Mission has been launched by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Gates Foundation.

**Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF):**

- Established under the ANRF Act, 2023 to promote research and innovation across India.
- Aims to seed, grow, and foster a research culture as envisaged in the National Education Policy (NEP).
- Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has been subsumed into ANRF.
- Funding target: ₹50,000 crore for the period 2023–2028.

**About MAHA-MedTech Mission:**

- **Aim:** Accelerate innovation in India's medical technology sector, reduce import reliance, and promote affordable, high-quality access.
- **Funding support:** Available for academic & R&D institutions, hospitals, startups, MSMEs, MedTech industry, and collaborations.
- **Project funding:** ₹5–25 crore per project, up to ₹50 crore in exceptional cases, linked to milestones.
- **Enabling support:** Through Patent Mitra (IP & tech transfer), MedTech Mitra (regulatory guidance), and a Clinical Trial Network.
- **Technology focus:** Innovative medical devices and IVDs, including high-end frontier technologies like imaging, radiotherapy, robotics, minimally invasive devices, implants, and AI/ML-enabled platforms.

## 4. Defence and Internal Security

1. **Naxalism:**

**Context:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed that the number of most affected districts reduced from 6 to three (Bijapur, Sukma, Narayanpur-all in Chhattisgarh).
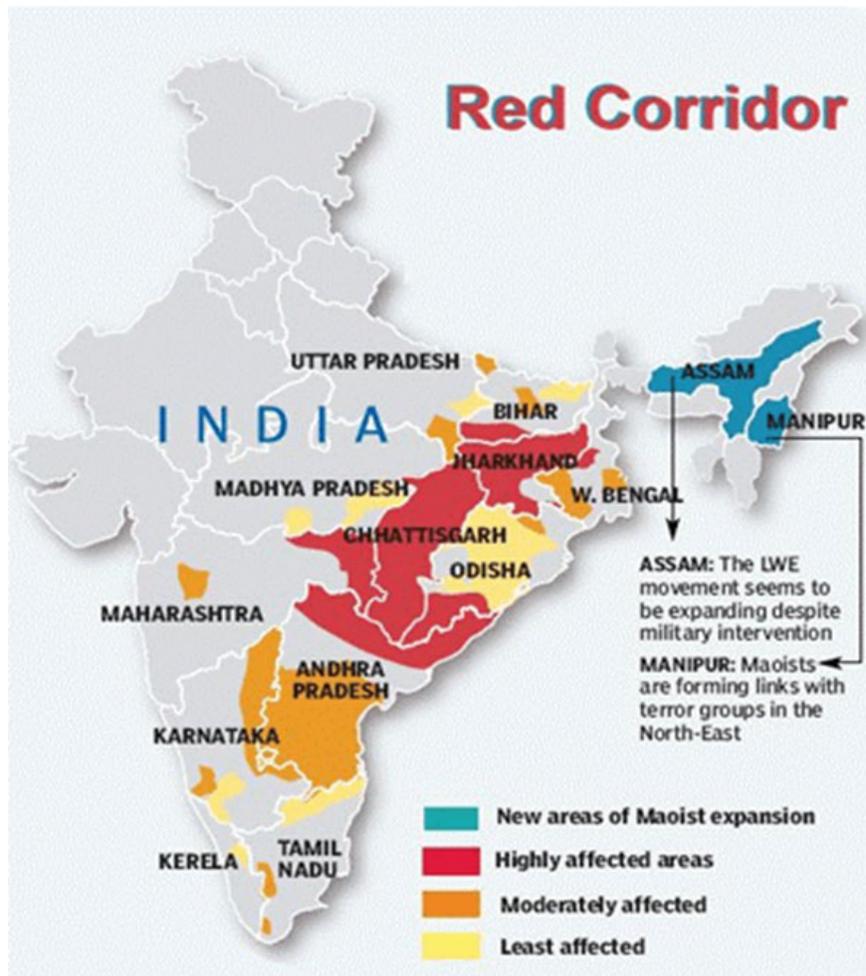
**What is Naxalism?**



- The term Naxalism derives its name from the village Naxalbari of West Bengal.

- It originated as rebellion against local landlords who bashed a peasant over a land dispute.

- The rebellion was initiated in 1967, with an objective of rightful redistribution of the land to working peasants under the leadership of Kanu Sanyal and Jagan Santhal.

- The movement has spread across the Eastern India; in less developed areas of states such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

- The influence zone of Naxalism in India is called the Red corridor, which has been steadily declining in terms of geographical coverage and number of violent incidents.

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- The movement initially took inspiration from China's founding father, Mao Zedong, but had later become radically different from Maoism.

- Maoism is a form of communism developed by Mao Tse Tung. It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances.

- The overall number of LWE-affected districts has reduced to 11 compared to 96 districts in 2010.

- Union Home Ministry has stated that violence related to LWE had come down by 76% in 2022as compared to 2010.



Red Corridor

UTTAR PRADESH
INDIA
BIHAR
JHARKHAND
MADHYA PRADESH
W. BENGAL
CHHATTISGARH
ODISHA
MAHARASHTRA
ANDHRA PRADESH
KARNATAKA
KERELA
TAMIL NADU

ASSAM
MANIPUR

ASSAM: The LWE movement seems to be expanding despite military intervention

MANIPUR: Maoists are forming links with terror groups in the North-East

New areas of Maoist expansion
Highly affected areas
Moderately affected
Least affected

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**Samadhan doctrine:**



LEFT WING EXTREMISM
New Operational Doctrine 'SAMADHAN' enunciated to tackle LWE menace:

**S** - SMART POLICING AND LEADERSHIP
**A** - AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY
**M** - MOTIVATION AND TRAINING
**A** - ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE
**D** - DASHBOARD FOR DEVELOPMENT AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
**H** - HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY
**A** - ACTION PLAN FOR EACH THEATRE
**N** - NO ACCESS TO FINANCING

- It encompasses the entire strategy for security operations, ranging from short-term policy to long-term policy formulated at different levels.

- This includes providing Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), sanctioning India Reserve (IR) battalions, and supporting the modernization and upgradation of State Police forces for State Governments.

2. **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958:**

   **Context:** The Ministry of Home Affairs recently extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 in parts of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland for another six months.

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**About AFSPA, 1958:**

- **AFSPA:** Special law granting extraordinary powers to the military to maintain law and order.

- **Objective:** Empower armed forces to operate in "disturbed areas" with serious threats to public order.

- **Current enforcement:** In parts of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh.

- **Previous repeals:** Lifted in Tripura (2015), Meghalaya (2018), and Mizoram (1980s).

- **Jammu & Kashmir:** AFSPA enforced through the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.

**Key Provisions of the Act:**

- **Declaration of Disturbed Area (Section 3):** Governor, Administrator, or Central Government can declare part or whole of a state/UT as "disturbed".

- **Special Powers of Armed Forces (Section 4):** Allows use of force, including shooting to kill, against law violators.

- Permits arrest and search without warrant based on suspicion.

- Can prohibit assemblies of five or more persons.

- Authorizes destruction of arms dumps, fortified positions, or training camps of armed volunteers.

- **Immunity (Section 6):** Armed forces personnel are protected from prosecution or legal suits without Central Government sanction.

- Treatment of arrested persons: Must be handed over to nearest police with least possible delay.

3. **Anant Shastra:**

   **Context:** Army to acquire Anant Shastra system to boost air defence on Pak, China fronts.

**Key features:**

- It is an indigenous Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) system.
- It is developed by DRDO in collaboration with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- **Capabilities:** Highly mobile and agile with a range of around 30 km.
- **Integration:** Works alongside MR-SAM, Akash, Spyder, and Sudarshan S-400 systems.
- **Deployment:** To be stationed along western and northern borders once approved.

## 4. SAKSHAM (Situational Awareness for Kinetic Soft and Hard Kill Assets Management):

**Context:** Indian Army initiated procurement of indigenously developed SAKSHAM (Situational Awareness for Kinetic Soft and Hard Kill Assets Management) Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) Grid System.

**About SAKSHAM System:**

- **SAKSHAM:** Modular, high-end Command and Control (C2) system operating on the secure Army Data Network (ADN).
- Capable of detecting, tracking, identifying, and neutralising hostile drones and unmanned aerial systems in real time.
- Ensures comprehensive airspace security across the Tactical Battlefield Space (TBS).
- **TBS:** Domain extending up to 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) above ground level.
- Developed in collaboration with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

## 5. Drone Wall:

**Context:** After suspected Russian drone incursions in Denmark, the European Union has started efforts towards building a 'drone wall'.

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**About Drone Wall:**

- An artificial intelligence (AI)-based multilayered drone defence system called Eirshield, an anti-drone platform.

- Designed to work on fast-flying unmanned targets carrying warheads.

- Provides early warning, real-time threat detection, and intelligence against drone incursions, GPS jamming, and other unconventional attacks.

6. **SITAA (Scheme for Innovation and Technology Association with Aadhaar):**

   **Context:** Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) launched Scheme for Innovation and Technology Association with Aadhaar (SITAA).

**About SITAA:**

- **Aim:** Strengthen India's digital identity ecosystem and counter threats like deepfakes, spoofing, and presentation attacks.

- **Implementing agency:** UIDAI under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

- **Focus areas:** Biometric authentication, AI/ML solutions, data privacy, and advanced biometric security.

7. **INS Androth:**

   **Context:** The Indian Navy commissioned INS Androth at the Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam.

**About INS Androth:**

- **Type:** Second Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) after INS Arnala.

- Part of 8 ASW-SWCs being built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE), Kolkata.

- **Named after:** Androth, the northernmost island of the Lakshadweep group.
- **Capabilities:** Maritime surveillance, search and rescue, coastal and anti-submarine defence, and Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO).

## 8. Exercises in news:

| Exercise | Type / Details | Participants / Host |
|---|---|---|
| Pacific Reach | Biennial **submarine rescue exercise** | Over **40 nations**, hosted by **Singapore** |
| KONKAN-25 | **Bilateral naval exercise** | **Indian Navy & UK Royal Navy** |
| AUSTRAHIND 2025 | **Annual joint military exercise** | **India & Australia** |
| Samudra Shakti | **Bilateral maritime exercise** | **India & Indonesia** |
| JAIMEX-2025 | Biennial **naval exercise** | **Indian Navy & Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force** |
| Exercise Ocean Sky | **Multinational air exercise** | Hosted by **Spanish Air Force**; first participation of **India** (non-NATO) |

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## 5. Ecology and Environment

1. **Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve:**

   **Context:** UNESCO designated the Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve in India to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).



Biosphere Reserves in India

Cold Desert
Himachal Pradesh

*Nanda Devi
Uttarakhand

Kachchh
Gujarat

*Pachmarhi, Panna
Madhya Pradesh

*Achankmar-Amarkantak
Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

*Nilgiri
Karnataka

*Agasthyamala
Tamil Nadu & Kerala

*Khangchendzonga
Sikkim

Manas, Dibru Saikhowa
Assam

Dehang Debang
Arunachal Pradesh

*Nokrek
Meghalaya

*Sunderbans
West Bengal

Similipal
Odisha

Seshachalam
Andhra Pradesh

*Gulf of Mannar
Tamil Nadu

*Great Nicobar
Andaman & Nicobar Islands

*World Network of Biosphere Reserve (NAB-UNESCO)
Source: moef.gov.in
Map not to scale.

Graphic: IE Design

**More about:**

- With this designation, India now has 13 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.

- These reserves are part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

- The global network currently includes 785 biosphere reserve sites worldwide.

- São Tomé and Príncipe, a Central African island nation, achieved a unique milestone.

- It became the first country in the world to have its entire national territory designated as a biosphere reserve.

**About Cold desert biosphere reserve:**

- Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve is India's first high-altitude cold desert biosphere reserve and among the coldest and driest ecosystems in UNESCO's WNBR.

- It is located in the Trans-Himalayan region, extending from Ladakh (Leh & Kargil) to Spiti–Kinnaur region of Himachal Pradesh.

- The reserve includes Pin Valley National Park, Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandratal, and Sarchu areas.

- It represents a Cold Desert biome with extreme climate due to rain-shadow effect of Himalayas and very high altitude.

- Soils are thin, coarse, sandy-loamy, and low in organic matter because of sparse vegetation.

- Glacial meltwater sustains rivers such as the Spiti and Pin rivers.

- Dominant flora includes Caragana, Ephedra, Juniperus, Artemisia, and Seabuckthorn.

- Seabuckthorn plays a key role in soil stabilization, carbon sequestration, and local livelihoods.

- Snow Leopard is the flagship species, along with Himalayan Ibex, Tibetan Argali, Bharal, Red Fox, Eurasian Lynx, and Himalayan Wolf.

- The region is characterized by a distinct Buddhist cultural landscape with Gompas, Chortens, and Mani walls.

- Major inhabitants include Bhotia, Changpa, and Spiti tribes, practicing pastoralism and cold-desert agriculture.

2. **Environment accounting of forests report 2025:**

   **Context:** The report is released by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

**Major highlights of the report:**

- **Physical Asset Account:** India's forest cover increased by 17,444.61 sq km (22.5%) from 2010-11 to 2021-22, reaching 7.15 lakh sq km (21.76% of geographical area).

- Highest forest cover gains were recorded in Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

- **Extent Account:** Forest extent showed a net increase of 3,356 sq km (2013–2023) mainly due to reclassification and boundary adjustments.

- Top states in Recorded Forest Area (RFA) growth are Uttarakhand, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

- Condition Account: Evaluates forest ecosystem quality using growing stock as a key indicator.

- Growing stock increased by 305.53 million cubic metres (7.32%) during 2013–23.

- Major contributors to growing stock growth include Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana.

- Service Accounts –Provisioning services: Value of timber and non-timber forest products rose to ~0.16% of GDP in 2021-22.

- Top provisioning states are Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Kerala.

- Service Accounts –Regulating services: Value of carbon retention services increased to ~2.63% of GDP in 2021-22.
- Leading states in regulating services are Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam.

## 3. NATPOLREX-X:

**Context:** The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted the 10th edition of the National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-X). NATPOLREX is a biennial flagship exercise which aims to evaluate and enhance India's national preparedness to respond to marine oil spill incidents.

## 4. Ramsar sites:

**Context:** Gokul Reservoir and Udaipur Lake in Bihar have been designated as new Ramsar Sites. With these additions, India now has 93 Ramsar sites. They cover total area of 1,360,719 hectares.

**What is Ramsar convention?**

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- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands establishes the guidelines for the preservation and judicious use of all wetlands.

- It is the only international environmental agreement that addresses a specific habitat.

- It was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971and entered into force in 1975.

- The Cobourg Peninsula in Australia was the world's first Site, designated in 1974.

- On February 1, 1982, India became a party to the 'Convention on Wetlands.

**Three pillars of Ramsar sites:**

1. **Wise Use:** Work to ensure that all of their wetlands are used wisely

2. **List of Wetlands of International Importance:** Designate appropriate wetlands under the Ramsar List

3. **International Cooperation:** Cooperation on a global scale regarding common species, shared wetland systems, and transboundary wetlands.

**Montreux Record:**

- Montreux Record is the primary tool under the Ramsar Convention for recognising wetlands sites on priority basis.

- It was adopted by the Conference of the Contracting Parties in Brisbane, in 1996.

- Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan and Loktak Lake in Manipur were both inducted into the Montreux Record in 1990 and 1993, respectively.

**New wetlands:**

## New Ramsar Sites in Bihar, India: Gokul Reservoir & Udaipur Lake

### India's Ramsar Status & Bihar's Wetlands

India now has **93 Ramsar sites**. They cover total area of **1,360,719 hectares**.

**Bihar's Ramsar Sites:**
- **New:** Gokul Reservoir, Udaipur Lake
- **Existing:** Kabar Jheel (Begusarai), Nagi & Nakti bird sanctuaries (Jamui)

### About New Wetlands (Oxbow Lakes)

**Gokul Reservoir** (Buxar district)
Located on the southern edge of the Ganga River.

**Udaipur Lake** (West Champaran district)
Surrounded by the Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary.
Important wintering ground for migratory bird species, including pochard (*Aythya ferina*).

An **oxbow** is a crescent-shaped lake lying alongside a winding river.

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**5.    New initiatives of Ministry of environment:**

| Initiative / Project | Purpose / Focus | Key Species & Distribution | Protection Status | Special Features / Facts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project Dolphin (Phase-II) | Strengthening conservation of riverine and marine cetaceans across India | Freshwater dolphins – Ganges River Dolphin (National Aquatic Animal of India) and Indus River Dolphin | Endangered (IUCN); Schedule I (WPA, 1972) | Focus on habitat protection, pollution control, and community participation |
| Project Sloth Bear | National implementation framework for Sloth Bear conservation | Found mainly in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka | Vulnerable (IUCN); Schedule I (WPA, 1972) | Feeds mainly on termites and ants; unique behavior of carrying cubs on the back |

| Project Gharial | Implementation of action plan for Gharial conservation | Restricted to India and Nepal | Critically Endangered (IUCN); Schedule I (WPA, 1972) | Males have a bulbous snout growth called "ghara" used as a vocal resonator |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves | Managing human–tiger conflict outside protected areas using a landscape approach | Found in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar | Endangered (IUCN); Schedule I (WPA, 1972) | Unique stripe patterns help in individual identification |
| Centre of Excellence for Human–Wildlife Conflict Management (CoEHWC) | National centre for policy support, research, and field mitigation of human–wildlife conflict | Established at SACON (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History) | — | Supports technology use, capacity building, and community-based solutions |

6. **Global Forest resources assessment report:**

**Context:** It is released by Food and Agriculture Organisation on the sidelines of Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI) Plenary in Bali, Indonesia.
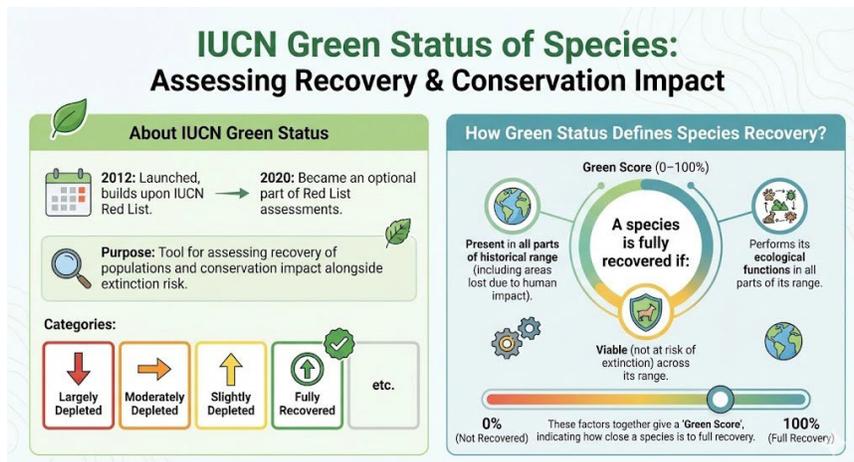
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**Highlights of GFRA 2025:**

- Global forest cover stands at 4.14 billion hectares, covering 32% of Earth's land area.

- Tropical forests dominate, hosting nearly 50% of global forest area, followed by boreal, temperate and subtropical zones.

- Europe leads globally, accounting for 25% of the world's total forest area.

- India ranks 9th globally in forest area, contributing about 2% of global forest cover.

- India stands 5th worldwide in rubber plantation area.

- Global deforestation rate declined to 10.9 million ha/year (2015–25) from 17.6 million ha/year (1990–2000).

- Over 90% of forests regenerate naturally, indicating strong ecological resilience.

- Forest carbon stocks increased to 714 gigatonnes, with soil as the largest carbon reservoir, followed by biomass, litter and deadwood.

**7. Tiger as 'Critically Depleted,':**

**Context:** The IUCN released the first Green Status of Species Assessment for the tiger (Panthera tigris) in October 2025, classifying the species as "Critically Depleted"

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**About tiger:**

- Tiger (Panthera tigris) is the largest wild cat species in the world.

- India hosts nearly 75% of the global wild tiger population.

- Tiger range countries include India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Indonesia, among others.

- Tigers inhabit diverse ecosystems such as forests, savannas, shrublands, grasslands and inland wetlands.

- Conservation status: Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

- Legal protection in India: Schedule I under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- International protection: Listed under CITES Appendix I, prohibiting international commercial trade.

8. **Status of Elephants in India: DNA Based Synchronous All India Population Estimation of Elephants (SAIEE) 2021-25:**
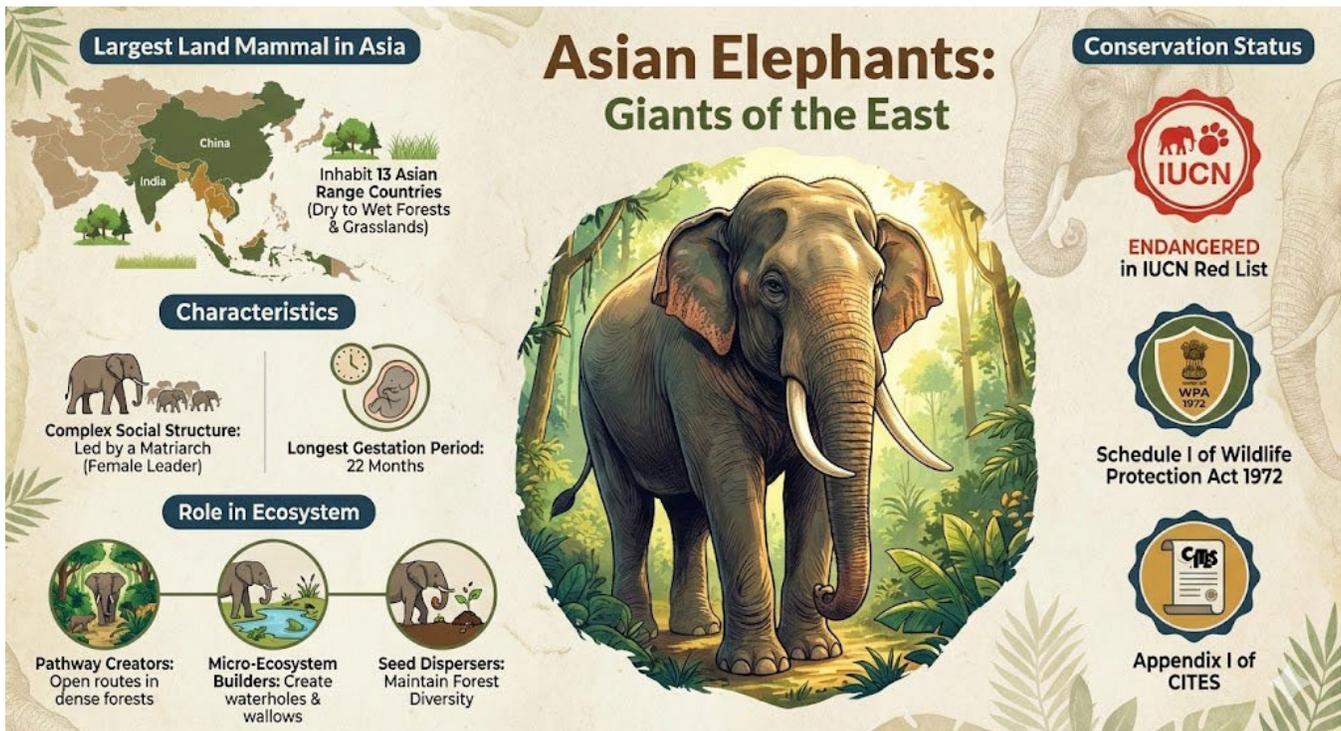
   **Context:** SAIEE is India's first DNA-based count of elephants conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India, under the aegis of Project Elephant, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

**Key findings:**

- Total Asian elephant population is estimated at 22,446, with India hosting ~60% of the global wild population.

- Wild elephants are mainly confined to four regions: Himalayan foothills, North-Eastern states, East-central India, and Western & Eastern Ghats.

- A small feral elephant population exists in the Andaman Islands.

- Western Ghats supports the largest wild elephant population, followed by North-Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra flood plains.

- Karnataka has the highest elephant population, followed by Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

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- Habitat shrinkage and fragmentation due to plantations, invasive species, fencing, encroachment and infrastructure is a major threat, especially in the Western Ghats.

- Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC) is increasing sharply in Central India and Eastern Ghats.

- Linear infrastructure such as roads, railways and power lines disrupt corridors and cause electrocution and collision deaths.

- Key recommendations include strengthening elephant corridors, restoring habitats, improving protection measures, and mitigating impacts of developmental projects.

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## 9. Dugongs:

**Context:** International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has adopted a motion recognising India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025.

**Dugong Conservation Reserve:**

- Dugong Conservation Reserve was established in 2022 by the Tamil Nadu government under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The reserve spans 448.34 sq. km in the northern Palk Bay.
- The area contains over 12,250 hectares of seagrass meadows, the primary habitat of dugongs.
- Seagrass ecosystems support rich marine biodiversity, enhancing the reserve's ecological value.
- Seagrasses act as major blue-carbon sinks, playing a crucial role in carbon sequestration.



DUGONG (SEA COW)
KEY FEATURE:
Only marine herbivorous mammal dependent on seagrass.

DISTRIBUTION:
Palk Bay (Highest),
Gulf of Mannar,
Gulf of Kutch, etc.

POPULATION:
Expected about 200

THREAT:
Habitat degradation, hunting, unintentional captures

STATUS:
IUCN Red list status: Vulnerable

Listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

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## 10. Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI):

**Context:** Central Asian countries have come together under CAMI to protect 17 shared species like Saiga, Bukhara Deer etc.

**Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI):**

- It was launched in 2014 at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- It aims to coordinate conservation efforts for 17 key migratory mammal species in Central Asia.

## 11. Maitri II:

**Context:** Union Finance Ministry granted approval to Maitri II, new research station in Eastern Antarctica.

**More about:**

- This will be India's 4th research base expected to be operational by January 2029.
- It would be established as a green research base powered using renewable energy sources (solar and wind) and would house automated instruments.

**Importance of the Antarctica Region:**

- **World's Natural Laboratory:** The 5th-largest continent, crucial for understanding Earth's climate and ocean systems, serving as a natural indicator of global climate change.
- **Natural Resources:** Contains nearly 75% of the world's freshwater reserves, rich edible algae, over 200 fish species, and deposits of iron and copper.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Marked by overlapping territorial claims, with China's expansion through dual-use infrastructure raising international concerns.

**12. Mud Volcano:**

**Context:** India's only Mud Volcano in Baratang Island in Andamans and Nicobar Islands erupts after 20 years.

**About Mud Volcano:**

- **Mud Volcano:** A geological feature where mud, water, and gases (mainly methane) erupt, forming cone-like structures without lava.

- **Occurrence:** Commonly found in regions rich in natural gas deposits.

- **Eruption Cause:** Driven by tectonic pressure or the buildup of hydrocarbon gases beneath the surface.

# 6. Social Development

1. **Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2025:**

   **Context:** Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2025 ranks India under 'serious' category.

**About Global Hunger Index (GHI):**

- **Global Hunger Index:** Released by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, in collaboration with FAO, UNICEF, WHO, and IFPRI.

- **Purpose:** Measures and tracks global hunger using nutrition and mortality indicators.



Note: All indicator values are standardized.

1/3 Undernourishment + 1/6 Child stunting + 1/6 Child wasting + 1/3 Child mortality = GHI SCORE

**Key findings:**

- **India's Ranking:** India ranks 102$^{nd}$ out of 123 countries with a GHI score of 25.8, placing it in the serious category.

- **Child Nutrition in India:** One in three Indian children is stunted, while undernourishment affects 172 million people, up by 13.5 million since 2016.

- **SDG-2 Status:** At current trends, achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 remains unlikely, with at least 56 countries off track.
- Global Hunger Level: The 2025 global GHI score stands at 18.3 (moderate), showing only marginal improvement from 19.0 in 2016.
- Regional Disparities: Serious hunger persists in Africa and South Asia, with alarming levels in seven countries, including Somalia (worst), DRC, and South Sudan.

## 2. CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM (CRS) REPORT:

**Context:** The report is compiled by the Registrar General of India (RGI), Ministry of Home Affairs.

| Indicator | Key Highlights |
|---|---|
| Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) | 928 females per 1000 males (excluding Sikkim) |
| Highest SRB | Arunachal Pradesh – 1,085 |
| Lowest SRB | Jharkhand – 899 |
| Institutional Events | Institutional deaths: 74.7%; Institutional births: 24% (excluding Sikkim) |
| Registered Births (Trend) | Decreased by 0.9% compared to 2022 |
| Level of Registration of Births (LoR) | 98.4% |
| Birth Registration Pattern | Higher in urban areas than rural areas |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Registered Deaths (Trend)** | Increased by 0.1% compared to 2022 |
| **Level of Registration of Deaths (LoR)** | 97.2% |
| **Death Registration Pattern** | Higher in rural areas than urban areas |
| **Infant Deaths** | Increased compared to 2022 |
| **100% Registration Achieved** | 21 States/UTs for births; 19 States/UTs for deaths |
| **Gender-wise Registration** | Birth and death registrations for males higher than females in both rural and urban areas |

## 3. Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ) initiative:

**Context:** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched the Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ) initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U).

**Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ) initiative:**

- SSJ Initiative: A structured mentorship and collaborative program involving 72 mentor cities and about 200 mentee cities.
- Mentorship Model: Mentee cities gain direct exposure to high-performing cities to replicate best practices.
- Aim: Promote peer learning, knowledge sharing, and adoption of best practices in urban sanitation and waste management across India.

## 7. Science and Technology

1.  **Nobel Prizes 2025:**

    **Context:** Nobel prizes were announced.

**Background:**

*   The Nobel Prize was set up when Alfred Nobel died and left the majority of his fortune to the establishment of prizes
*   Alfred Nobel's will stated that the prizes should be awarded to "those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind."
*   Alfred Nobel is known for inventing dynamite and is a holder of 355 patents.

**About Nobel Prize:**

*   The first Prizes were awarded in 1901and they have been awarded annually since then.
*   The Nobel Day –which takes place on 10 December every year, marks the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.
*   The Nobel Foundation, a private institution established in 1900, has ultimate responsibility for fulfilling the intentions of Alfred Nobel's will.

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**Nobel Prize categories?**

- Physics

- Chemistry

- Physiology or medicine

- Literature

- Peace

- In 1968, Sveriges Riks bank (Sweden's central bank) established the Sveriges Riks bank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

**Facts about Nobel prize:**

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**Facts about Nobel prize:**

- Laureates receive a: Nobel Prize diploma, a Nobel Prize medal, and a document detailing the Nobel Prize amount, which amounts to about $900,000 in current exchange rates.

- The Prize can be shared by up to three individuals, or in the case of the peace prize, it can also be awarded to an organization.

- Nobel Prize cannot be awarded posthumously.

- However, since 1974, if the recipient dies after the prize has been announced they can still be awarded it.

- It's not possible to revoke a Nobel medal as it is mentioned in Alfred Nobel's will.

- Malala Yousafzai is the youngest Nobel Laureate who got the Peace Prize in 2014 at the age of just 17 years.

- John B. Good enough is the oldest recipient of this prize in Chemistry 2019 at the age of 97 years.

- Marie Curie is the only woman who has been honored twice, with the 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics and the 1911 Prize in Chemistry.

**Indian Origin Winners list:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| S. Chandrashekhar | 1983 | Physics | Studies on the evolution of stars |
| Amartya Kumar Sen | 1998 | Economics | Welfare Economics |
| Venkatraman Ramakrishnan | 2009 | Chemistry | Structure and function of ribosomes |
| Kailash Satyarthi | 2014 | Peace | Children's education |

| Nobel Prize Category | Laureates (2025) | Awarded For (Core Work) | Speciality / Key Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Physiology or Medicine** | Mary E. Brunkow, Fred Ramsdell, Shimon Sakaguchi | Discoveries concerning **peripheral immune tolerance** | Explained how regulatory T cells prevent the immune system from attacking the body's own cells |
| **Chemistry** | Susumu Kitagawa, Richard Robson, Omar M. Yaghi | Development of **Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs)** | Creation of highly porous materials with tunable cavities for gas storage, separation, and catalysis |
| **Physics** | John Clarke, Michel H. Devoret, John M. Martinis | Discovery of **macroscopic quantum tunnelling and energy quantisation in electric circuits** | Demonstrated quantum behavior in macroscopic systems, bridging quantum and classical physics |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Economic Sciences** | Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, Peter Howitt | Explanation of **innovation-driven economic growth** | Linked sustained economic growth to technological progress, institutions, and openness to change |
| **Peace** | Maria Corina Machado | Struggle for a **peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy in Venezuela** | Promotion of democracy, human rights, and non-violent political change |
| **Literature** | László Krasznahorkai | Distinctive prose balancing **apocalyptic vision with artistic affirmation** | Known for dense, philosophical narratives, long sentences, and themes of moral and societal collapse |

## 2. AstroSat:

**Context:** India's first dedicated space observatory, AstroSat, has completed 10 years since its launch.

**About AstroSat Mission:**

- It is the first dedicated Indian astronomy mission aimed at studying celestial sources in the X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands simultaneously.

- AstroSat, with a lift-off mass of 1515 kg, was launched on September 28, 2015, into a 650 km orbit by PSLV-C30from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

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- AstroSat carries a total of five scientific payloads enabling imaging, studying the temporal and spectral properties of galactic cosmic sources in a wide range of wavelengths.

**Scientific objectives of AstroSat mission:**

- To understand the high energy processes in interacting binary systems with a compact object accreting matter from a companion star.
- Study star birth regions and high-energy processes in star systems lying beyond our galaxy.
- Detect new transient X-ray sources in the sky.
- Perform a limited deep-field survey of the Universe in the Ultraviolet region.

**Other missions:**

| Observatory / Mission | Key Details |
|---|---|
| **XPoSat** | India's first dedicated ISRO satellite to study and measure X-ray emissions from celestial sources. |
| **Aditya-L1** | India's first solar mission (launched Sept 2023) placed at the Sun–Earth L1 point for continuous solar observation. |
| **Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO), Hanle** | Located in Ladakh; hosts optical, infrared, and gamma-ray telescopes for astronomical and atmospheric studies. |
| **Kodaikanal Solar Observatory** | One of India's oldest solar observatories in Tamil Nadu, renowned for long-term solar observations. |

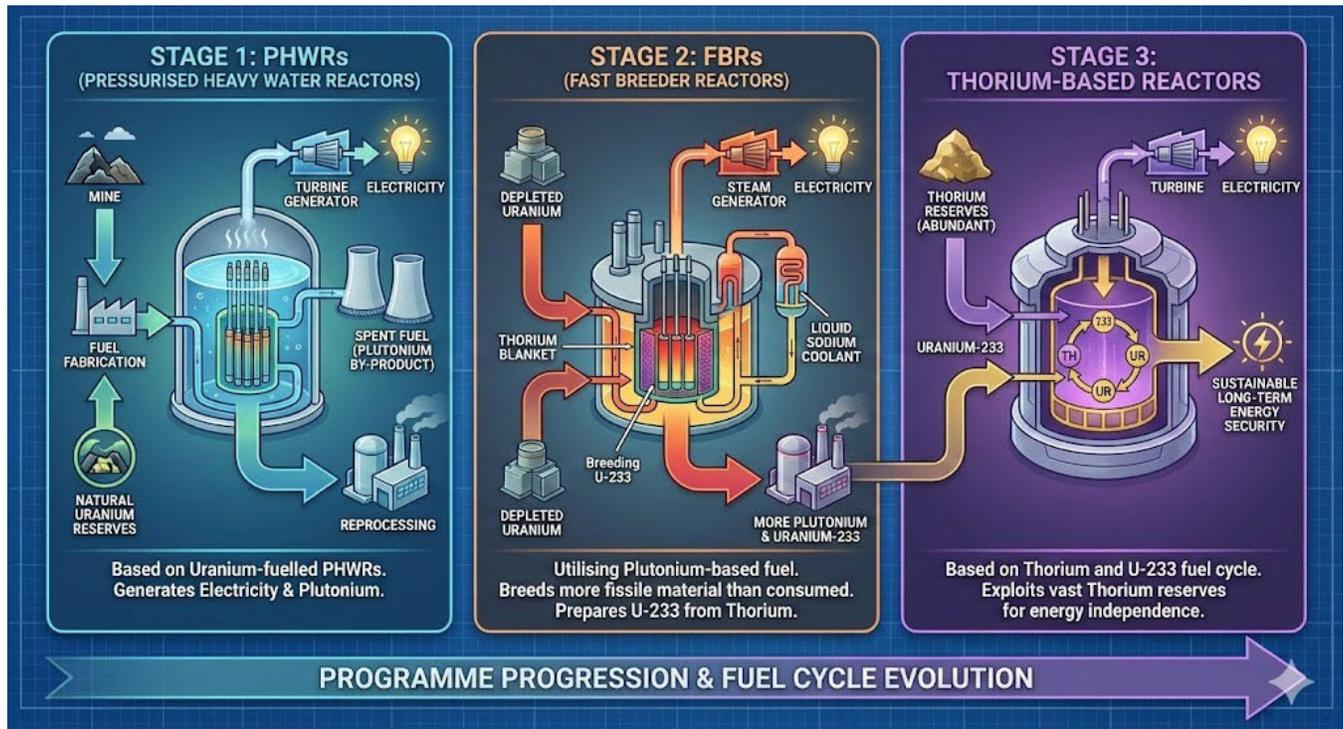**3. Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (MBRAPP):**

**Context:** PM laid the foundation of the Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (MBRAPP).
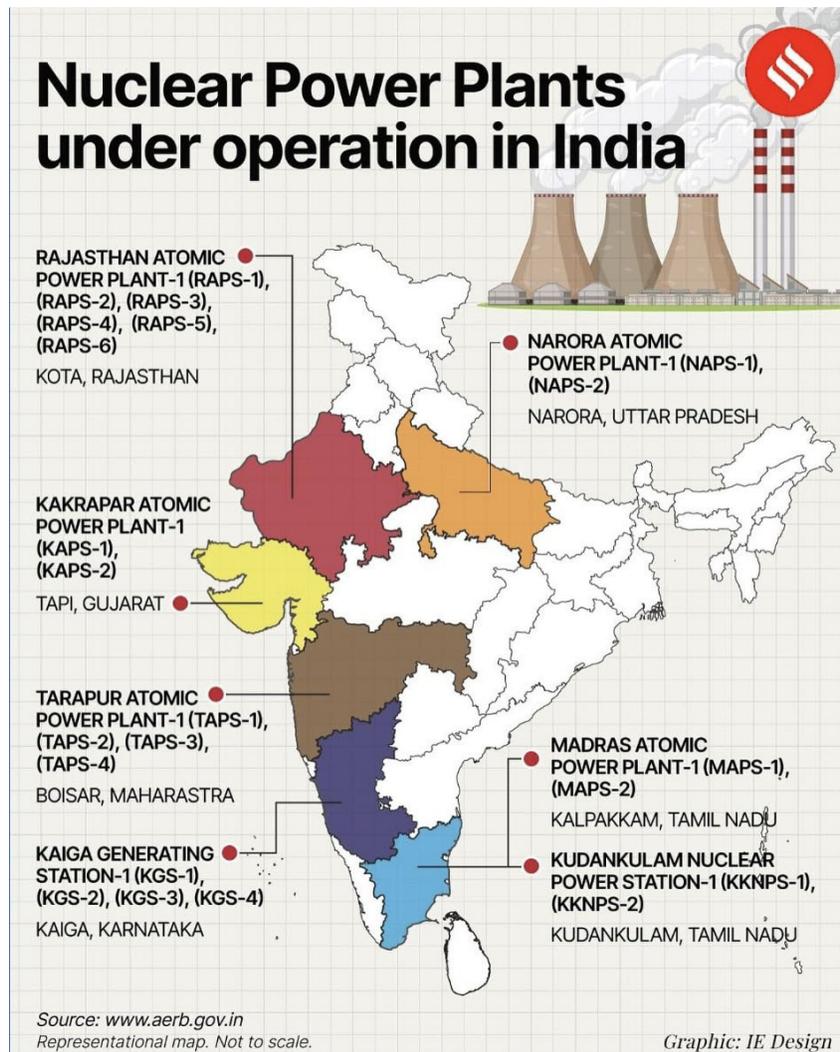
**Nuclear Power Capacity in India:**

- **Current Capacity:** India operates 24 nuclear reactors across 7 power plants with a total installed capacity of 8,180 MW (as of January 30, 2025).

- **Future Target:** The government aims to expand nuclear power capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031–32.

- **Energy Mix Share:** Nuclear power contributed 3.61% of India's total electricity generation in 2022–23, ranking as the fifth-largest non-fossil fuel source.

**India's nuclear energy programme:**

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**About Mahi Banswara Rajasthan Atomic Power Project (MBRAPP):**

•   The nuclear power project is located at Banswara, Rajasthan, near the Mahi Dam on the Mahi River.

•   It will comprise four indigenous 700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), totaling 2,800 MWe.

•   Being developed by Anushakti Vidhyut Nigam (ASHVINI), a joint venture of NPCIL and NTPC.



**Nuclear Power Plants under operation in India**

RAJASTHAN ATOMIC POWER PLANT-1 (RAPS-1), (RAPS-2), (RAPS-3), (RAPS-4), (RAPS-5), (RAPS-6)
KOTA, RAJASTHAN

NARORA ATOMIC POWER PLANT-1 (NAPS-1), (NAPS-2)
NARORA, UTTAR PRADESH

KAKRAPAR ATOMIC POWER PLANT-1 (KAPS-1), (KAPS-2)
TAPI, GUJARAT

TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER PLANT-1 (TAPS-1), (TAPS-2), (TAPS-3), (TAPS-4)
BOISAR, MAHARASTRA

MADRAS ATOMIC POWER PLANT-1 (MAPS-1), (MAPS-2)
KALPAKKAM, TAMIL NADU

KAIGA GENERATING STATION-1 (KGS-1), (KGS-2), (KGS-3), (KGS-4)
KAIGA, KARNATAKA

KUDANKULAM NUCLEAR POWER STATION-1 (KKNPS-1), (KKNPS-2)
KUDANKULAM, TAMIL NADU

Source: www.aerb.gov.in
Representational map. Not to scale.

Graphic: IE Design

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# 8. Sports and Culture

## 1. Sree Narayana Guru:

**Context:** The President inaugurated the observance of the Mahasamadhi centenary of Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala.

**Sree Narayana Guru:**

- Sree Narayana Guru (1856–1928) was a saint-philosopher and social reformer who led Kerala's anti-caste renaissance.

- He was born at Chempazhanthy near Thiruvananthapuram in the socially oppressed Ezhava community.

- Popularly known as Gurudevan, he revolted against caste hierarchy through spiritual and social reform.

- He propounded the universal ideal of "One Caste, One Religion, One God for humankind."

- He stressed self-purification, simplicity, universal love, knowledge and compassion over ritualism.

- Guru viewed education as the supreme remedy for social evils like superstition and inequality.

- He actively promoted women's education and equal opportunities in society.

- In 1888, he led the Aruvipuram movement by consecrating a Shiva Linga, challenging caste-based temple exclusion.

- The Aruvipuram consecration symbolized the spiritual empowerment of marginalized communities.

- He founded the Advaita Ashram at Aluva (1913) based on the principle "Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra."

- In 1903, he inspired the formation of Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam for Ezhava upliftment.

- SNDP represented a self-respect-based reinterpretation of Hinduism against Brahminical hierarchy.

- He created parallel religious institutions like non-Brahmin priests and monasteries to assert social equality.

- Sree Narayana Guru supported the Vaikom Satyagraha (1924–25) for temple access in Travancore.

- Vaikom Satyagraha was a non-violent mass movement against untouchability, led by T.K. Madhavan and others.

## 2. Vande Mataram:

**Context:** The Union Cabinet announced nationwide celebration of 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram'

**About Vande Mataram:**

- Vande Mataram was composed in Sanskrit by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and first appeared in Anandamath (1882).

- It personifies Mother India and inspires national devotion, courage and unity.

- Rabindranath Tagore first recited Vande Mataram at the 1896 Indian National Congress session.

- On 24 January 1950, Vande Mataram was accorded equal status with the National Anthem.

- Jana Gana Mana, originally composed in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted in its Hindi version as the National Anthem.

- The Constituent Assembly adopted Jana Gana Mana on 24 January 1950.

### 3. World Para Athletics:

**Context:** India won a record 22 medals including 6 Gold, marking its best-ever performance at World Para-Athletics Championships 2025.

**About World Para Athletics:**

- Para athletics is the largest sport within the Paralympic Movement.
- The first Para athletics competition was held in 1952.
- Para athletics is governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).
- It features a wide range of track and field events for athletes with disabilities.
- Paralympic Games in Para athletics are held once every four years.
- The World Para Athletics Championships are conducted biennially.
- The World Para Athletics Grand Prix has been held annually in different cities since 2013.

**World Para Athletics 2025:**

- The 2025 World Para Athletics Championships was organised by World Para Athletics under the IPC.
- It was the 12th edition of the World Para Athletics Championships.
- The event was held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi, from 27 September to 5 October 2025.
- It marked the first time India and South Asia hosted the World Para Athletics Championships.
- The championship was officially titled Indian Oil New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships due to sponsorship.
- The logo and mascot were unveiled on 20 June 2025.
- The mascot "Viraaj", a young elephant with a blade prosthesis, symbolises strength, optimism and resilience.

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| Rank | Nation | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brazil | 15 | 20 | 9 | 44 |
| 2 | China | 13 | 22 | 17 | 52 |
| – | Neutral Paralympic Athletes | 11 | 16 | 19 | 46 |
| 3 | Iran | 9 | 2 | 4 | 15 |
| 4 | Netherlands | 8 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| 5 | Poland | 8 | 2 | 6 | 16 |
| 6 | Colombia | 7 | 10 | 4 | 21 |
| 7 | Great Britain & N.I. | 7 | 5 | 13 | 25 |
| 8 | Italy | 7 | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| 9 | United States | 6 | 9 | 12 | 27 |
| 10 | India* | 6 | 9 | 7 | 22 |

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## 9. Important Days

| Date | Day of Recognition | Theme (2025) |
|------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 Oct | International Day of Older Persons | *Resilience of Older Persons in a Changing World* |
| | World Vegetarian Day | *Plant-Powered for a Sustainable Future* |
| | International Coffee Day | *Embrace Collaboration for Collective Action – More Than Ever* |
| 2 Oct | Gandhi Jayanti / International Day of Non-Violence | *Non-Violence for Peace and Sustainable Development* |
| 4 Oct | World Animal Day | *Save Animals, Save the Planet!* |
| 5 Oct | World Teachers' Day | *Recasting Teaching as a Collaborative Profession* |
| 6 Oct | World Cerebral Palsy Day | *#UniqueAndUnited* |
| 6 Oct (First Monday) | World Habitat Day | *Urban Crisis Response* |

| Date | Day | Theme |
|---|---|---|
| **7 Oct** | World Cotton Day | *Cotton for Good: Sustainability & Livelihoods* |
| **8 Oct** | Indian Air Force Day | *No official theme (Service Commemoration)* |
| **9 Oct** | World Post Day | *Together for Trust: Collaborating for a Safe and Connected Future* |
| **9 Oct** (2nd Thursday) | World Sight Day | *#LoveYourEyes* |
| **10 Oct** (2nd Friday) | World Egg Day | *The Mighty Egg: Packed with Natural Nutrition* |
| **10 Oct** | World Mental Health Day | *Access to Services – Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies* |
| **11 Oct** | International Day of the Girl Child | *The Girl I Am, The Change I Lead: Girls on the Frontlines of Crisis* |
| **12 Oct** | World Arthritis Day | *Achieve Your Dreams* |
| **13 Oct** | International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction | *Fund Resilience, Not Disasters* |

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| **14 Oct** | World Standards Day | *A Shared Vision for a Better World: Standards for the SDGs* |
| **15 Oct** | World Students' Day | *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow* |
| | Global Handwashing Day | *Clean Hands for All* |
| | White Cane Safety Day | *Independence and Accessibility for the Visually Impaired* |
| | Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day | *Remembering, Supporting, Healing* |
| | International Day of Rural Women | *Rural Women Cultivating Good Food for All* |
| **16 Oct** | World Food Day | *Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future* |
| | World Anaesthesia Day | *Anaesthesiology in Health Emergencies* |
| **17 Oct** | International Day for the Eradication of Poverty | *Ending Social & Institutional Maltreatment* |

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| **20 Oct** | National Solidarity Day (India) | *Unity, Sacrifice & National Integrity* |
| | World Osteoporosis Day | *It's Unacceptable!* |
| **21 Oct** | Police Commemoration Day (India) | *Honouring Supreme Sacrifice* |
| **22 Oct** | International Stuttering Awareness Day | *The Power of Listening* |
| **24 Oct** | United Nations Day | *Peace, Dignity and Equality on a Healthy Planet* |
| | World Polio Day | *End Polio: Every Child, Every Vaccine, Everywhere* |
| | World Development Information Day | *Harnessing Information for Sustainable Development* |
| | ITBP Raising Day | *Service, Courage and Vigilance* |
| **27 Oct** | World Day for Audiovisual Heritage | *Preserving Our Documentary Heritage* |

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| 27 Oct – 2 Nov | Vigilance Awareness Week (India) | *Vigilance – Our Shared Responsibility* |
| 28 Oct | International Animation Day | *Animation for Cultural Expression* |
| 29 Oct | World Stroke Day | *Every Minute Counts* |
| **30 Oct (India)** | World Savings Day | *Secure Today, Safe Tomorrow* |
| 31 Oct | National Unity Day (India) | *Unity in Diversity, Strength in Integrity* |
| | Halloween | *Traditional Cultural Observance (No Official Theme)* |

**Other important National news:**

| Event / Initiative | Key Highlights |
| --- | --- |
| India–Bhutan Cross-Border Railway Links | First-ever rail links approved: Kokrajhar–Gelephu (70 km, ₹3,456 cr) and Banarhat–Samtse (20 km, ₹577 cr); boost trade, connectivity & diplomacy; Gelephu to be developed as Mindfulness City |
| Integrative Oncology Research & Care Centre (IORCC) | India's first integrative oncology centre inaugurated at AIIA, Goa; blends Ayurveda, Yoga, Panchakarma with modern oncology for holistic cancer care |
| India's First Private Helicopter FAL | Tata–Airbus to set up helicopter Final Assembly Line at Vemagal, Karnataka; to manufacture Airbus H125; deliveries from 2027; strengthens civil & defence aviation |
| First Child Marriage-Free District | Balod district, Chhattisgarh declared child marriage-free; zero cases in 2 years; verified across 436 gram panchayats |
| National Initiative on Water Security | Launched by Shivraj Singh Chouhan & C.R. Patil; water security prioritized under MGNREGA; focus on rural water sustainability |

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| **World's Highest Motorable Road** | BRO constructed road at 19,400 ft in Ladakh under Project Himank; passes through Mig La Pass; surpasses Umling La record |
| **First Cooperative CBG Plant** | India's first cooperative multi-feed CBG plant inaugurated at Kopargaon, Maharashtra; promotes clean energy & farmer income |
| **Bathukamma Guinness World Records** | Telangana's Bathukamma festival set records for largest floral arrangement & most synchronized women dancers |
| **India Mobile Congress 2025** | PM Modi to inaugurate IMC 2025 at New Delhi; theme: "Innovate to Transform"; focus on 6G, AI, IoT, Satcom & Atmanirbhar telecom |
| **EV Truck Battery Swapping Station** | India's first commercial electric truck battery swapping & charging station inaugurated in Sonipat, Haryana |
| **NAKSHA Programme** | Launched under DILRMP to modernize urban land records; aims for transparent & citizen-friendly land administration |
| **Green Hydrogen Port Hubs** | Deendayal Port, V.O. Chidambaranar Port & Paradip Port designated as Green Hydrogen Hubs under National Green Hydrogen Mission |

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| **Semiconductor Innovation Museum** | India's first Semiconductor Innovation Museum inaugurated in Hyderabad by T-Chip on Oct 12, 2025 |
| **Female Labour Force Participation** | FLFPR rose to 42% in 2023–24 from 23% in 2017–18; highest growth among BRICS nations |
| **'We Rise' Initiative** | NITI Aayog's WEP & DP World launched 'We Rise' to support 100 women-led MSMEs in global trade |
| **Kerala Extreme Poverty-Free State** | Kerala to become India's first extreme poverty-free state on Nov 1, 2025; result of sustained welfare programmes |
| **Chennai Flood Forecasting System** | Chennai becomes first Indian city to fully implement RTFF & SDSS for real-time flood management |
| **Bajrang Setu, Rishikesh** | New suspension bridge replacing Laxman Jhula; 132 m long, ₹60 cr project; includes glass walkways |

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**Other international news:**

| Event / Development | Key Highlights |
| --- | --- |
| **India International Tea Convention & UPASI Conference** | 8th India International Tea Convention and 132nd UPASI Annual Conference to be held in Kochi (Sept 18–20, 2025); organised with Tea Board of India support; includes Specialty Tea Competition |
| **Maldives Joins IAEA** | IAEA approved Maldives' membership at its 69th General Conference in Vienna; became 181st IAEA member on Sept 15, 2025 |
| **Zubeen Garg Island in Singapore** | Singapore renamed an island "Zubeen Garg Island" on Google Maps to honour late Assamese singer Zubeen Garg; symbolic tribute to his global cultural influence |
| **Coral Larvae Cryobank – Philippines** | Philippines launched Southeast Asia's first Coral Larvae Cryobank; multinational collaboration to preserve coral genetic diversity using cryopreservation |

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| **Maldives Achieves WHO Triple Elimination** | Maldives became the world's first country to achieve WHO-validated elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B & Syphilis |
| **East Timor Joins ASEAN** | East Timor (Timor-Leste) became ASEAN's 11th member on Oct 26, 2025, at the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur |
| **IUCN Lists Indian Heritage Sites as Ailing** | IUCN listed Western Ghats, Manas NP & Sundarbans NP among Asia's ailing World Heritage Sites; Khangchendzonga NP rated "good" |

**Awards and honours:**

| Event / Award | Key Details |
|---|---|
| **Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department – Global Tourism Award 2025** | Won for outstanding tourism promotion; recognised for sustainable tourism, heritage conservation & cultural promotion; award received by Nishitha Goyal in New Delhi |
| **Tamil Nadu Scientist Award (TANSA) 2022** | Dr. R. Arthur James (BDU) honoured in Environmental Science; awarded by Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology |
| **Mrs Universe 2025** | Sherry Singh became the first Indian to win Mrs Universe title; event held in Manila, Philippines |
| **Kenton R. Miller Award (IUCN)** | Dr. Sonali Ghosh (Director, Kaziranga NP & TR) became first Indian recipient; awarded by IUCN–WCPA in Abu Dhabi |

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| **70th Filmfare Awards 2025** | Held in Ahmedabad; *Laapataa Ladies* won 13 awards; Best Film & Director – Kiran Rao; Best Actor (Male) – Abhishek Bachchan & Kartik Aaryan; Best Actor (Female) – Alia Bhatt |
| **India–UK Ramanujan Junior Researchers Programme** | Launched to promote young Indian talent in theoretical sciences; collaboration with LIMS; supported by DST |
| **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025** | India's highest science honour announced; categories include Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva–SSB, and Vigyan Team Award |
| **World Food Prize Foundation – Top Agri-Food Pioneer 2025** | Padma Shri Sanjeev Kapoor recognised for contributions to nutrition, sustainable agriculture & food systems innovation |

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**Reports and rankings:**

| Topic / Event | Key Facts & Rankings |
|---|---|
| **Elon Musk Net Worth Record (2025)** | Became first person to cross **USD 500 billion** net worth (USD 500.1 bn); ranked world's richest; wealth driven by Tesla, SpaceX & xAI |
| **M3M Hurun India Rich List 2025** | **Mukesh Ambani** tops with ₹9.55 lakh crore; followed by Gautam Adani (₹8.15 lakh crore); **Roshni Nadar** becomes India's richest woman |
| **Indian States with Most SEZs (2025)** | **Tamil Nadu (51)** leads; followed by Telangana (38), Maharashtra (38), Karnataka (37) |
| **World's Richest Actor** | **Shah Rukh Khan** becomes world's richest actor with net worth of $1.4 billion |
| **Henley Passport Index 2025** | **Singapore** ranked 1st (193 visa-free); South Korea (2nd – 190), Japan (3rd – 189); **India ranked 85th** |
| **Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025** | India ranked **9th globally** in total forest area; **3rd** in annual forest area gain |
| **Cleanest Air Quality – Indian Cities (2025)** | Top cities: **Pune (AQI 51)**, Mumbai (60), Nashik (63), Ahmedabad (64), Bhopal (64), Pimpri-Chinchwad (66) |

**Sports news:**

| Event / Tournament | Key Highlights |
|---|---|
| **Asia Cup 2025 (Cricket)** | **India won 9th Asia Cup**, defeated Pakistan by 5 wickets in Dubai; Tilak Varma scored 69* |
| **Asia Cup Awards** | Man of the Match – Tilak Varma; MVP – Kuldeep Yadav; Player of Tournament – Abhisek Sharma |
| **SAFF U-17 Championship** | **India won 7th title**, defeated Bangladesh on penalties (4-1) after 2-2 draw |
| **World Para Archery Championships 2025** | **Sheetal Devi** won Gold (Women's Compound Open); Total **3 medals** (1G, 1S, 1B) |
| **12th World Para Athletics Championship** | Hosted at **JLN Stadium, New Delhi** (till Oct 5, 2025) |
| **India at Para Athletics Worlds 2025** | **Best-ever haul: 18 medals** (6 Gold, 7 Silver, 5 Bronze) |
| **Top Para Gold Winners (India)** | Simran Sharma, Nishad Kumar, Sumit Antil, Sandip Sargar, Rinku Hooda, Shailesh Kumar |

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|---|---|
| **BWF World Junior Championships 2025** | Hosted in **Guwahati (Oct 6–19)**; India hosting after 17 years |
| **World Weightlifting Championships 2025** | **Mirabai Chanu won Silver** (48 kg); set new national records |
| **Cricket Milestone** | **Jasprit Bumrah** became first Indian pacer to play **50 Tests** |
| **Asian Aquatics Championships 2025** | Hosted in **Ahmedabad**; India best-ever finish (13 medals) |
| **Top Indian Aquatic Performer** | **Srihari Nataraj** – 7 medals (highest by Indian in one edition) |
| **Football Record** | **Lionel Messi** became all-time leader in international assists (60) |
| **Commonwealth Games 2030** | **Ahmedabad recommended** as host city (final decision Nov 26, 2025) |
| **FIFA World Cup Qualification** | **Cape Verde** became 2nd smallest nation to qualify |

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|---|---|
| **ICC Players of the Month (Sept 2025)** | **Abhishek Sharma (Men), Smriti Mandhana (Women)** |
| **Formula 1 – US GP 2025** | **Max Verstappen won**; 68th career victory |
| **U-20 FIFA World Cup** | **Morocco won first title**, defeated Argentina 2-0 |
| **FIDE World Cup 2025** | Logo & anthem unveiled in **Goa**; event from Oct 31–Nov 27 |
| **ODI Record (India)** | **Rohit Sharma** became India's 3rd highest ODI run-scorer |
| **MLS 2025** | **Lionel Messi** won Golden Boot (29 goals) |
| **FIFA ASEAN Cup** | Announced at **47th ASEAN Summit**, Kuala Lumpur |
| **European Chess Club Cup 2025** | **D Gukesh & Divya Deshmukh** won individual gold |
| **Mexico City GP 2025** | **Lando Norris won**, leads F1 Drivers' Championship |
| **Asian Youth Games 2025 (Kabaddi)** | **India won Gold** in both boys' & girls' events |
| **Honours in Cricket** | **James Anderson knighted** at Windsor Castle |