

# CURRENT PULSE

JANUARY 2026



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PREPARATION

CHANAKYA IAS ACADEMY  
SECTOR 25 CHANDIGARH

WE HAVE COMPILED THIS MAGZINE FROM ONLINE SITES AND NEWSPAPERS

# Regulation of social media in India



The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has send notice to 'X' over misuse of its AI tool 'Grok' to generate obscene, indecent, sexually explicit synthetic images/videos of women and children.

## Issues flagged by Government

- **Non-compliance with Indian IT laws:** Failure to meet due-diligence obligations under IT Act, 2000 and IT Rules, 2021.
- **Violation of privacy and dignity:** AI-generated content undermining women's privacy, dignity, and safety.

## Regulation of social media in India

- **Information Technology Act, 2000**
  - **Section 66E:** Punishes violation of privacy (**capturing/transmitting private images without consent**).
  - **Section 67:** Punishes **publishing or transmitting obscene material** in electronic form.
    - **Section 67A:** Punishes **sexually explicit content in electronic form**.
    - **Section 67B:** Specifically covers **sexual content involving children**.
- **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (under IT Act, 2000)**
  - **Rule 3 (Due diligence by intermediaries):** Platforms must **remove unlawful content, stop hosting obscene/sexual content**.
  - **Rule 4 (Additional rules for Significant Social Media Intermediaries):** They must appoint **Chief Compliance Officer, Grievance Officer, enable traceability of unlawful content etc.**
  - **Non-compliance risks loss of 'safe harbour protection' (which shields from liability for user-generated content).**
- **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023:** Platforms must inform police when they detect **serious cognisable offences especially involving women or children**.

# Gig Worker's Nationwide Strikes



Delivery workers of the platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, Blinkit, and Zepto went on strikes on New Year's Eve, calling for a ban on 10-minute deliveries.

## About Gig Economy in India

- As per Code on Social Security, 2020, it means a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities **outside of traditional employer-employee relationship**.
- Broadly classified into 2 categories:
  - **Platform based:** Whose work is based on online software apps or digital platforms. E.g., delivery workers of Zomato.
  - **Non-platform based:** Casual wage workers in conventional sectors, working part-time or full-time. E.g., domestic workers.
- **Scale:** India has around **10 million gig and platform** workers, which is expected to rise to **23.5 million by 2029-30**.
- **Drivers of growth:**
  - **Demand-side:** Urban consumption, proliferation of **quick commerce** digital platforms, etc.
  - **Supply-side:** Flexible work models, attractive remunerations.

## Challenges with Gig Economy

- **Income Volatility:** Declining per-order payouts and **low base pay** lead to **reduced income stability**.
- **Occupational Hazards:** Aggressive delivery timelines (e.g., 10 minute delivery) **increase accident risks and stress**.
- **Social Vulnerability:** Absence of assured health insurance, accident cover, and pensions.
- **Coverage Gaps:** Existing social security proposals (like the **90-day rule**) are criticized for being restrictive.
- **Algorithmic Management:** **Algorithmic Opacity** in order allocation, "**de-platforming**" workers, and **limited collective bargain**.

## Steps taken for welfare of Gig Workers

- **Code on Social Security (2020)** provides a **formal safety net**.
  - **Inclusion Criteria (90-day rule):** gig workers engaged for **at least 90 days a year (or 120 days across multiple platforms)** are now **eligible for formal social security benefits** like health and accident insurance via the e-Shram portal and Ayushman Bharat.
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):** All eligible registered unorganised workers including gig workers are entitled to get benefit of an accidental insurance cover of Rs. 2.0 Lakh for a year.
- **Legal interventions by State Governments:** Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers Act, 2023, etc.

# Duopolies dominating Indian Market



The recent Indigo fiasco in the aviation sector highlighted the issues and concerns faced due to duopoly in delivery of commodities and services.

## What is Duopoly?

- It refers to a scenario in which **two suppliers dominate the market for a commodity or service**.
- In India, markets with just two suppliers in operation are becoming more common. E.g., **Duopoly of Ola and Uber in cab services**.
- **Reason for Rise of Duopoly**
- **High capital requirements:** Makes entry and survival difficult for smaller firms. E.g., **Aviation sector**.
- **Network effects:** Big firms spend early on to acquire customers, squeezing out competitors. E.g., **Telecom sector**
- **Regulatory Gaps:** Allows dominance to deepen.

## Challenges posed by Duopoly

- **Inflated Pricing and Reduced Affordability:** Lack of competitive pressure lets dominant firms raise prices with little resistance, increasing consumer costs. E.g., **Food delivery**.
- **Limited Consumer Choice and Market Options:** Shrinks the presence of smaller players leaving consumers with very few alternatives.
- **Stagnation in Innovation:** Innovation is driven by staying slightly ahead of the lone rival, not by fear of disruptive new entrants. E.g., **Telecom sector**.
- **Excessive Lobbying Power and Regulatory Influence:** Powerful duopolistic firms can use their significant influence to protect their interests and block new technologies. E.g., **e-commerce sector**.
- **Systemic Vulnerability and Capacity Failures:** Failure of one player in a duopoly can lead to economy-wide losses and unsatiated demand. E.g., **Recent Indigo crisis in aviation sector**.

## Conclusion:

India's rising duopolies need preventive regulation rather than delayed action. This requires stronger ex-ante powers for the Competition Commission of India, better coordination with sector regulators, easier market entry for new players, and transparent pricing with data portability to protect consumer choice.

## NOTE

### Existing Regulatory Mechanism

- **The Competition Act, 2002:** Provides the legal framework to prevent market distortion by prohibiting anti-competitive agreements and the abuse of a dominant market position.
  - Competition Commission of India (CCI) acts as the statutory watchdog responsible for enforcing competition laws.
- **Role of Sectoral Regulators:** TRAI (in Telecom sector), DGCA (in aviation sector), among others.

# RBI releases Financial Stability Report



FSR is a biannual publication (June and December) by RBI that incorporates inputs from Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) subcommittee on current and emerging risks to the stability of Indian financial system.

## Key Highlights of Report:

- **Fiscal Health:** Sovereign debt remains sustainable, supported by an S&P rating upgrade to 'BBB', favorable interest rate-growth differential and low level of foreign currency liabilities.
- **AI Optimism:** While markets are buoyed by Artificial Intelligence prospects, this optimism may mask underlying vulnerabilities and susceptibility to global spillovers.
- **Fintech Risks:** Lending in the fintech sector grew by 36.1%, but the RBI flagged concerns regarding elevated impairment among borrowers who have taken unsecured loans from five or more lenders.
- **Stablecoins:** The report warns that the widespread adoption of foreign-currency-denominated stablecoins could undermine India's monetary sovereignty, weaken policy transmission, and facilitate money laundering.
- **Currency Performance:** The Indian rupee experienced depreciation against the US dollar, influenced by falling terms of trade, higher tariffs compared to trading partners, and a slowdown in capital flows.
- **Banking Health:** Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) maintain robust capital buffers; notably, the GNPA ratio declined to a multi-decadal low of 2.2% as of September 2025.

## About the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC):

- **Nature:** Apex, non-statutory council under the Ministry of Finance established in 2010 to strengthen financial stability mechanisms.
- **Composition:** Chaired by the Union Finance Minister with members including the RBI Governor, heads of SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA, IBBI etc. along with several government secretaries and Chief Economic Adviser.
- **Functions:** Coordinates macro-prudential supervision, promotes inter-regulatory coordination, financial sector development, inclusion and literacy.
- **FSDC Sub-Committee:** Chaired by the RBI Governor; provides inputs to FSR and deliberates on systemic risks.

# Export Promotion Mission



These pilot schemes form part of NIRYAT PRO TSAHAN component of the Export Promotion Mission.

## About New Schemes

- **Interest Subvention for Pre- and Post-Shipment Export Credit:** Provides interest subvention of **2.75%** (as base rate) on rupee export credit.
  - **Additional incentive** for exports to **notified under-represented or emerging markets**.
  - **Annual cap:** ₹50 lakh for FY 2025–26.
  - **Eligibility:** restricted to exports **under a notified positive list of tariff lines** (at HS 6-digit level), covering ~75% of India's tariff lines.
- **Collateral Support for Export Credit:** Implemented in partnership with the **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)**.
  - It provides **guarantee coverage**:
    - Up to **85%** for **Micro and Small exporters**.
    - Up to **65%** for **Medium exporters**.
  - **Maximum limit:** ₹10 crore outstanding guaranteed exposure per exporter in a financial year.
  - **Eligibility:** same as above.

## About Export Promotion Mission (EPM)

- **Launched:** In November 2025, for **6 years (FY 2025-26 to 2030-31)** with financial outlay of ₹25,060 crore.
- **Objective:** Providing **affordable trade finance**, specifically for MSMEs, labour-intensive sectors (e.g. Textile), etc.
- **Mission Architecture:** Two distinct but integrated pillars:
  - **Niryat Protsahan (Financial Support):** through instruments like **interest subvention, collateral guarantees, and credit cards** for e-commerce exporters.
  - **Niryat Disha (Non-Financial Support):** support for **export quality, compliance, international branding, and logistics**.

## Significance of EPM

- Enhancing Indian exporters' **global competitiveness** through
  - Lowering the **cost of exporting** and expand **access to finance**,
  - Strengthening **India's export brand** and **diversify export markets** through **compliance, certification, and international branding**.
- Boosting **job creation** by supporting labour intensive industries and first time exporters.

# Geo- Economics

India is facing challenges as the traditional boundaries of geopolitics are being redrawn by geo-economics.



- **Geopolitics:** Power through traditional factors like **geography and military**.
- **Geo-economics:** Use of **economic instruments** (trade, sanctions) to promote and defend national interests and produce beneficial geopolitical results.

## How Geo-economics is shaping Geopolitics?

- **Energy and Resource Diplomacy:** E.g. the U.S. recently launched the "**Pax Silica**" initiative to secure supply chains for semiconductors, AI, and critical minerals; **India was excluded** from the nine-member group.
- **Weaponization of Interdependence:** E.g. use of **financial sanctions** by the US like cutting off Russian banks from SWIFT.
- **Trade Policy as Strategic Tool:** E.g. "**Trade War**" between the US and China, involving **technological supremacy** (e.g. semiconductors).
- **Geo-economic Fragmentation:** E.g. EU's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** that shifts the burden of emission reductions onto the Global South.

## India's Key Challenges in the Geo-economic Arena

- **Mineral and Technology Gaps:** Despite a **geology comparable to Australia**, India has only explored **25-30 percent** of its potential, leading to a 100 percent import dependence for critical minerals like lithium.
- **Low R&D & Tech Ecosystem:** India spends **just about 0.6-0.7% of its GDP** on the R&D Sector, significantly lower than the **2.5-3% spent by China and the US**.
- **Policy & Governance Gaps:** such as bureaucratic red-tapism which limits private sector participation and investment in mineral exploration.

## Way Ahead for India

- **Forging More Geo-economic Partnerships:** such as **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** with Japan, Australia, and USA and **Global Biofuels Alliance** to create a geo-economic alternative to traditional fossil fuel blocks like OPEC.
- **Ramping Up Innovation & R&D:** E.g. Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme.
- **Critical Infrastructure & Connectivity:** Fast tracking the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** as a geo-economic bridge that secures India's trade routes and energy interests.

# India becomes world's largest rice producer



Union Agriculture Minister also released 184 new high-yielding seed varieties for 25 crops.

## Status of Rice Production and export:

- **Major producers of rice:** India (150 MT), China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Japan, Sri Lanka and Egypt.
- **State wise Production in India (2024-25):** Uttar Pradesh (13.8%), Telangana (11.6%), West Bengal (10.6%), Punjab (9.5%), Chhatisgarh (7%) etc.
- **Export:** India is the world's **largest rice exporter** (exporting 20.1 million metric tonnes of rice in 2024–25).
- **Major export destinations of India's Rice:** Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Benin, United Arab Emirates etc.

## About Rice Crop

- **Type:** Major **food crop** of the world and **staple diet** of the tropical and sub-tropical regions.
- **Growth Conditions:**
  - Rice is grown under varying conditions in India from **8°N to 30°N latitude** and from **sea level to about 2,500 metre altitude**.
  - Grown in **variety of soils including silts, loams and gravels** and can tolerate acidic as well as alkaline soils.
  - Abundant rainfall (100-150cm), high humidity and high temperature (**30°C** during day and **20°C** at night).
    - Paddy is a **semi-aquatic plant** that requires standing water (averaging 10–15 cm) for three-quarters of its growing season.
    - It grows best in **impermeable subsoil** with a pH between **5.5 and 6.5**.
- **Cropping Seasons in India:** Rice is grown in three distinct seasons based on the region:
  - **Aman (Winter rice):** Sown in June–July and harvested in November–December.
  - **Aus (Autumn rice):** Sown in May–June and harvested in September–October.
  - **Boro (Summer rice):** Cultivated between November and May, often in areas that remain moist during winter.

# Board of Trade

BoT highlighted slowing exports due to the steep US tariffs of 50 %.



## Board of Trade

- **About:** It is apex advisory body on policy measures related to the Foreign Trade Policy aimed at strengthening India's trade ecosystem.
- **Chairman:** Minister for Commerce & Industry.
- **Members:** Comprise ministers in charge of trade and commerce in state governments and union territories, export promotion councils, industry associations etc.
- It was reconstituted in 2019 through the merger of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion with the BoT.

# India's RCEP advantage without 'China-risk'



Once the FTA with New Zealand comes into force, India would have trade deals with all RCEP countries except China.

## About Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- It is a comprehensive free trade agreement among **15 Asia-Pacific countries**.
- **Members: 10 ASEAN Member States** - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam along with **five of ASEAN's major trade partners**: Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand.
  - India **withdrew from the RCEP negotiations in 2019**.

## Reason for India to opt out of RCEP

- **The "China Risk" and Trade Imbalances:** RCEP would provide China virtually duty-free access to the Indian market leading to a massive influx of superior and more competitive Chinese manufactured goods
- **Protection of Domestic Industry and Agriculture:** Safeguarding sensitive sectors such as dairy and agriculture.
- **Unaddressed Technical and Legal Demands:** India's concerns on tariff base rates, modification of MFN status and recognition of its federal structure in investment decisions were not addressed.
- **Threat to Self-Reliance:** Joining RCEP was seen as potentially undermining domestic programs like Atmanirbhar Bharat (Independent India), Make in India, and Vocal for Local.

## How India secured RCEP's advantages?

- **The "RCEP minus China" Formula:** By late 2025, India signed FTAs with all RCEP members except China, securing market access while retaining tariff control over Chinese imports.
- **Selective Liberalization and Safeguards:** Bilateral agreements allow India to exclude sensitive sectors such as dairy and agriculture.
- **Preventing indirect entry:** Staying out of RCEP prevented the indirect entry of Chinese goods.

## Conclusion

- India's decision to stay out of RCEP reflects a carefully balanced trade strategy. By choosing selective bilateral FTAs over a China-centric bloc, India protected sensitive sectors, retained tariff autonomy, reduced risks, and pursued openness without weakening economic security.

# US' strikes on Venezuela



The strikes, codenamed 'Operation Absolute Resolve', highlighted issues such as violations of international law, violation of national sovereignty, unilateral armed aggression, and US imperialism, among other.

- **India is unlikely to be impacted** due to weakened bilateral engagement post 2019 US sanctions.

## Probable reasons for the Strikes

- **Resurrection of the Monroe Doctrine:** To re-establish U.S. hegemony in the Americas.
- **Countering China's expansion in Latin America:** China (world's largest crude importer) has been biggest buyer of Venezuelan oil.
- **Controlling Venezuela's resources:** It has the **world's largest oil reserves**, large gas reserves, largest gold reserves in South America, etc.
- **Others:** To counter state-sponsored drug trafficking, spread of socialism, mass immigration, etc.

## Potential consequences of the US Imperialism

- **Historical Parallel:** The 2003 invasion of Iraq, which was launched on "false premises to depose a dictator and 'export' democracy" but instead resulted in the destabilization of West Asia and the rise of groups like ISIS.
- **Violations of International Law and Norms:** The "apprehension and forced exile" of Venezuelan President is condemned as a "flagrant violation of international law" and a direct contravention of **Article 2 of the UN Charter**.
  - **Article 2** of UN charter legally mandated **states to refrain from use of force** with some exception such as self-defence.
- **Bypassing the UN Security Council:** The U.S. has circumvented the UN Security Council, positioning itself as "judge and executioner."
- **Warning to International community:** Failure of the **post-Cold War hope for a "stable liberal order"** is underscored by the actions of both the US and Russia (e.g., the ongoing conflict in Ukraine).

# India-Pakistan Non-attack Agreement



India and Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations under 'Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities' (or India-Pakistan Non-attack Agreement).

## About the India-Pakistan Non-attack Agreement

- **Signed:** 31st December 1988, and entered into force on January 27, 1991.
  - It requires both nations to **exchange information on January 1st each year** regarding the location of their nuclear installations.
- **Aim:** Refrains both sides from directly or indirectly causing the destruction of, or damage to, **any nuclear installation or facility in the other country.**
- **Significance:** Considered a key measure for **reducing nuclear risk** between India and Pakistan.

# OPEC+

OPEC+ has agreed in principle to maintain steady oil output despite rising geopolitical tensions.



## About Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and OPEC+

- OPEC is a **permanent intergovernmental organization** of 12 oil-exporting developing nations.
  - **India is not a member.**
- **Genesis:** Baghdad Conference in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- **Objective:** To co-ordinate and **unify petroleum policies** among Member Countries, in order to secure **fair and stable prices** for petroleum producers.
- **HQ:** Vienna (Austria)
- **OPEC+:** In response to falling oil prices driven by significant increase in the US shale oil output, **OPEC signed an agreement** with 10 other oil-producing countries in 2016 to create **OPEC+**.

# UN Security Council

Five countries Bahrain, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Latvia, and Liberia; elected to serve as non-permanent members of UNSC for 2 year term.



UN Security Council

## About UN Security Council

- **Genesis:** Established in 1945 through the UN Charter as one of the 6 principal organs of the UN.
- **Purpose:** Maintaining international peace and security.
- **Members:** 5 permanent members (P5) and 10 non-permanent members.
  - P5 includes China, France, Russia, USA and UK.

# Wolf Supermoon

A Wolf Supermoon occurred recently.



## About the Wolf Supermoon:

- The **Wolf Moon** is the traditional name for the first full moon of January.
- A **Supermoon** is a full moon that occurs when the Moon is closest to Earth (at **perigee**), making it appear slightly larger and brighter than usual.
- Therefore, a **Wolf Supermoon** is the January full moon that coincides with the Moon's perigee.

# Secondary Pollutants

A recent analysis by Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) found that at least one-third of the Delhi's annual PM2.5 pollution can be attributed to Secondary pollutants, mostly Ammonium Sulphate.



## About Secondary Pollutants

- These pollutants are **not emitted directly from a source** (like vehicles or power plants).
- Instead, they form as a result of the **pollutants emitted from these sources reacting with molecules in the atmosphere to form a new pollutant**. E.g., Ammonium Sulphate, Ozone, NO<sub>x</sub>, etc.
  - Pollutants that are emitted into the environment from a source are called **primary pollutants**.
- **Formation of Ammonium Sulfate:** Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) gas gets oxidised in the atmosphere to form sulfate. This sulfate then reacts with ammonia to form ammonium sulfate.

# Carbon border adjustment mechanism

The EU implemented the world's first carbon tax (CBAM) from January 1, 2026, imposing a carbon-related levy on imports of carbon-intensive goods.



## About Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM)

- It is the European Union's (EU) policy to impose a **carbon tax** on imports of certain products from countries with less stringent climate policies. E.g. Steel.
- CBAM, **implemented in 2023**, moves from transitional phase to full enforcement by **2026**.
- **Objective:** Prevent Carbon Leakage by stopping firms from shifting production to countries with weaker climate rules.
- **Sectors Covered:** Cement, aluminium, fertilisers, iron and steel, hydrogen and electricity.
- **Trade Impact:** Indian exports of steel, aluminium, cement may face higher costs.

# Stingless Bees

Amazon's stingless bees become the first insect to be granted legal rights.



## About Stingless Bee

- **Ancient origin:** The world's oldest bee lineage, existing for nearly 80 million years.
- **Anatomy:** They possess stingers, but these are **highly reduced** and functionally useless for defense.
- **Diversity:** Nearly **500 species** exist globally, with over **170 found specifically within Peru**.
- **Healing:** Their "liquid gold" honey is prized for its potent antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Significance:** These ancient pollinators **sustain 80% of Amazonian flora**, including cacao and coffee.

# Galaxy Frog

According to a recent study, a group of seven galaxy frogs vanished from the Western Ghats due to rise in photo tourism.



## About Galaxy frog

- **Location:** The only known species of its genus (*Melanobatrachus indicus*), it is endemic to the **Western Ghats** of south-western Ghats.
  - It is mostly found in **high-altitude evergreen forest** and **shola forest**.
- **Characteristics:**
  - It is a rare frog with a **slender, elongated body** of uniform width.
  - This species is **terrestrial** and **associated** with leaf-litter, rocks and another ground cover of moist evergreen tropical forests.
- **IUCN status:** Vulnerable

# Access and Benefit Sharing

National Biodiversity Authority disbursed ₹45 lakh to red sanders farmers from Andhra Pradesh under Access and Benefit Sharing.

## About Red Sanders

- It is an **Indian endemic tree species**, with a restricted geographic range in the Eastern Ghats specifically to the forest in the state of **Andhra Pradesh**.
- **IUCN: Endangered**

## About Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)

- A framework under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)** and **Nagoya Protocol (2010)** for fair benefit sharing from genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
- **In India:** governed by the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** and **2025 Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations**.

# White-bellied heron



Union Environment Ministry panel has recommended environmental clearance for Kalai-II hydroelectric project on Lohit River in Arunachal Pradesh despite protest to conserve white-bellied heron bird.

## About White-bellied heron

- **Other names:** Imperial Heron, Great White-bellied Heron
- **Features:** Second-largest living heron species with distinct white belly,
  - Non-migratory but shows local/post-breeding dispersal.
- **Habitat:** Undisturbed rivers and wetlands in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas
- **Distribution:** Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia (India (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam), Bhutan, Bangladesh etc.)
- **Conservation Status**
  - IUCN Red List: Critically Endangered
  - India: Placed in Schedule I under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972

# Urban Wastewater Management in India



Mixing of sewage with drinking water highlights the concern related to urban wastewater management in India and its potential to turn into a health crisis.

## Urban Wastewater Management (UWM) in India

- **Status:** The estimated wastewater generation is approx. **72,368 Million Litres per Day (MLD) in urban areas** for the year 2020-21 (NITI Ayog).
  - **72% of this wastewater remains untreated** and is disposed of in rivers / lakes / groundwater.
- **Potential Health Impacts:** Cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio etc.
- **Treatment Systems:**
  - **On-site systems:** It retains wastewater in the vicinity of the toilet in a pit or tank, and the produced sludge is removed periodically.
  - **Off-site systems:** It comprises a sewerage network to transport sewage to a sewage treatment plant (STP).

## Challenges faced by UWM in India

- **Institutional:** Government departments operate in silos, often duplicating efforts and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) primarily responsible for wastewater management lack capacity.
- **Archaic Infrastructure:** Lack of periodic maintenance and rehabilitation, limited land availability for setting up new treatment plants etc.
- **Economic:** Most urban water service providers face financial challenges due to high non-revenue water, unrealistic tariffs, low tariff collection rate, and inadequate cost recovery.
- **Technological:** Absence of new affordable and efficient technologies, and lack of mapping of connectivity of sewage drainage systems.

## Solutions for Sustainable UWM

- **Decentralized Treatment Systems:** From an ecological perspective, treating wastewater as close as possible to its source is beneficial.
- **Urban and Industrial Waste Reforms:** Mandate Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD), regulate landfills, and enforce penalties for illegal discharges.
- **Modernize Monitoring:** Integrate water quality data with health surveillance systems like Health Management Information System (HMIS) for early detection.
- **Nature Based Solutions:** Include constructed wetlands, green roofs, living walls, waste stabilization ponds, vermifiltration etc.

# Dhruv-NG Helicopters

Dhruv-NG (New Generation) recently completed its inaugural flight in Bengaluru.



## About Dhruv-NG Helicopters

- **Platform:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's ALH Dhruv is an indigenously developed, **twin-engine multi-role helicopter**.
- **Variant:** Dhruv-NG is the new-generation **civilian version** with **modern avionics and systems**.
- **Roles:** Designed for transport, air ambulance, disaster relief, tourism, and utility missions.

# Pralay Missiles

DRDO conducts launch of two Pralay missiles from the Odisha coast.

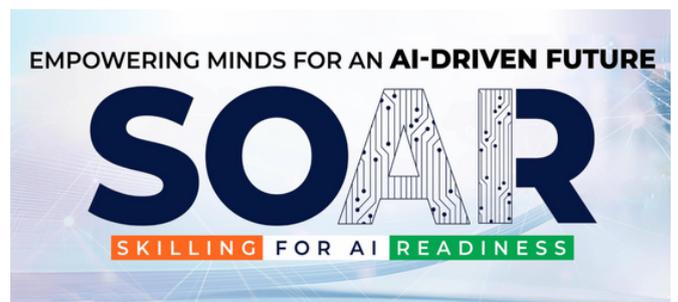


## About Pralay Missile

- It is an indigenous, short-range, surface-to-surface quasi ballistic missile designed to carry various types of warheads and engage multiple target profiles.
- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Armed Forces.
- **Range:** 150 to 500 km

# Skilling for AI Readiness

President of India to Grace SOAR Programme and Confer AI Certificates.

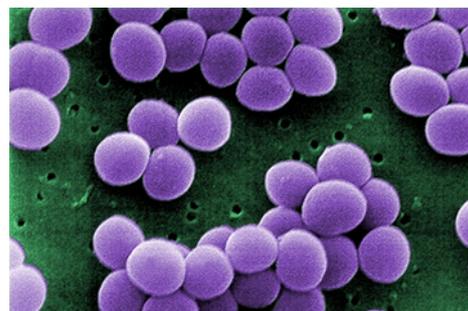


## About Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR)

- It is a national skilling initiative **launched in July 2025** under skill India Mission.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- **Objective:** Integrate **Artificial Intelligence competencies** into India's education and skilling ecosystem.
- **Target Groups:** **School Students** from classes 6 to 12 and **educators** from government and private schools.

# Staphylococci

Researchers found high levels of antibiotic-resistant staphylococci in both the indoor and outdoor environment in parts of Delhi.



## About Staphylococcus

- They are gram positive cocci (spherical-shaped bacterium) that occur in groups in clusters.
- It was first observed in humans by Von Recklinghausen.
- They showed tolerance to penicillin and resistances to all clinical useful antibiotics like erythromycin, tetracycline, aminoglycosides
- **Types:** Staphylococcus aureus and Staphylococcus epidermidis.

# World Health Organization's Pharmacovigilance Database

India has moved to 8th position (in 2025) from 123rd (in 2014) in contributions to the World Health Organization's pharmacovigilance database under the WHO Programme for International Drug Monitoring (WHO PIDM).



## World Health Organization

- The improvement in rankings has been attributed to the **Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI)**.
- Launched in 2010, **PvPI** is Government of India's **flagship drug safety monitoring programme**, which analyses drug-related adverse events and sends recommendations to CDSCO for taking appropriate regulatory actions.

## About WHO Programme for International Drug Monitoring (WHO PIDM)

- **Established:** in 1968
- **Aim:** to put medicines and vaccine safety at the heart of global healthcare.
- **VigiBase:** WHO global database of adverse event reports for medicines and vaccines.

# Suryastra

Indian Army has signed a ₹293 crore contract with private defence manufacturer NIBE Limited, in collaboration with Israel, for the supply of an advanced long-range rocket launcher system Suryastra.



## About Suryastra

- It is India's first Made in India universal multi-calibre rocket launcher,
- Capable of executing precision surface-to-surface strikes at ranges extending up to 300 km.
- Capabilities
  - Can engage multiple targets simultaneously at varying ranges.
  - Can integrate multiple rocket types.
  - Accuracy of less than 5 meters.
  - Can fire loitering munitions up to 100 km.

# OSIRIS-REx and Asteroid Bennu

Analysis of samples returned by NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission from asteroid Bennu shows the presence of Sugars, Amino acids, all five nucleobases of DNA & RNA, etc., signalling complete molecular inventory needed for life.



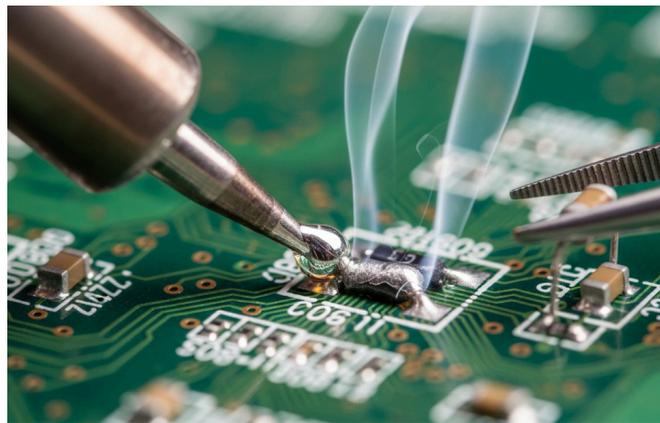
## About OSIRIS-REx (Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification and Security-Regolith Explorer)

- It is the first US mission to collect a sample from an asteroid.
- **Returned:** Sep 24, 2023, to drop off a capsule with material from asteroid Bennu.
- **New Mission:** Spacecraft was renamed OSIRIS-APEX and sent to explore asteroid Apophis in 2029.

## About Asteroid Bennu

- **Origin:** The rocks composing Bennu formed ~4.6 billion years ago, during the early formation of the Solar System; part of a primeval parent body that was later destroyed by a massive collision.
- **Formation zone:** Likely formed in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter and later drifted towards earth.
- **Orbital proximity:** Bennu makes its closest approach to Earth every 6 years.

# Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme



These approvals include manufacturing of segment products with cross sectoral applications such as mobile manufacturing, telecom, consumer electronics, strategic electronics, automotive and IT hardware products.

## About ECMS

- **Genesis:** Notified in April 2025 with a total outlay of ₹22,919 crore.
- **Tenure:** Six years with an optional one-year gestation period.
- **Objective:** To develop robust **electronics component manufacturing ecosystem** by attracting investments (global/domestic) across the value chain by integrating its domestic electronic industry with the Global Value Chains (GVCs).
- **Target Segments:**
  - A - Sub-Assemblies (Display Module and Camera Module),
  - B - Bare Components (Electro-mechanicals, PCBs, Li-ion Cells etc.)
  - C - Selected Bare Components (HDI/Flexible PCB),
  - D - Supply Chain Ecosystem and Capital Equipment, and
  - E - Sub-Assembly – Telecom.
- **Types of Incentives:** Provides differentiated fiscal incentive on target segment products in terms of turnover:
  - **Turnover Linked Incentive:** On incremental turnover/sales for segment A, B and E.
    - Tenure of 6 years with an optional one-year gestation period.
  - **Capex Incentive:** On eligible capital investment for segment D.
    - Tenure of 5 years.
  - **Hybrid Incentive:** Both incentives based on industry needs for segment C.

## India's Electronics Industry

- **Production:** India's electronics production has grown from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹11.3 lakh crore in 2024–25, marking a six-fold increase.
  - India is now the world's second largest mobile phone manufacturer.
- **Export:** Electronics have emerged as **India's third largest and fastest growing export category** in 2024–25, with exports rising from ₹38,000 crore in 2014-15 to ₹3.27 lakh crore in 2024–25.
- **Vision:** Building a \$500 billion domestic electronics manufacturing ecosystem by 2030–31.

# Centre relaxes norms for deep-tech



Government has removed condition of 3-year existence for deep-tech startups to qualify for recognition and avail financial aid under Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR)'s Industrial R&D Promotion Program (IRDPP)

- **IRDPP objectives** are to strengthen R&D infrastructure in industry and Scientific and Industrial Research Organizations (SIROs).
  - Entities recognized under the IRDPP scheme are eligible for several fiscal incentives and support measures.

## What is DeepTech?

- It refers to the **cutting-edge** and often **disruptive technologies** that are built on profound scientific discoveries, engineering innovations, or advancements in research areas.
- **E.g.** AI, quantum computing, nano-tech, blockchain, robotics, advanced material sciences etc.
- **DeepTech startups** utilize existing advanced technologies to create novel-to-market solutions for complex and often unresolved problems or to invent even more advanced technologies.

## Deep Tech Startup Ecosystem in India

- **India** is home to over **3,600 startups (2024)** and is expected to reach **10,000** by 2030 in the deeptech space, ranking **sixth** in the global deeptech ecosystem.
- **Challenges:** India's venture capital (VC) landscape prioritises quick returns over patient capital, Long Gestation Period, Limited Academia-Industry Collaboration etc.

## Initiatives taken for DeepTech Startup in india

- **Draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP),2023:**To address the challenges confronting deep tech startups through definitive policy interventions to create a conducive ecosystem.
- **NECTAR:** Autonomous society under DST aims to harness and leverage niche frontier technologies.
- **Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme:** It enables acquisition of strategically important technologies, and promotes the creation of a Deep-Tech Fund of Funds.
- **Indo-Israel Deep Tech & Life Sciences Mission:** This mission was launched in 2021 to promote collaboration between India and Israel in deep tech and life sciences.

# Design Linked Incentive Scheme

Projects supported under DLI scheme are scaling rapidly, with 16 tape-outs, 6 ASIC chips, 10 patents and over 3x private investment leveraged.



## About DLI Scheme

- **Launched in:** 2021 by MeitY under the Semicon India Programme.
- **Nodal Agency for implementation:** C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing).
- **Objective:** To catalyze a strong, self-reliant chip design ecosystem by providing financial incentives and access to advanced design infrastructure for domestic startups and MSMEs.
- **Benefits of the scheme:**
  - **Provides financial incentives in 2 categories:** Product Design Linked Incentive and Deployment Linked Incentive.
  - **Provides Design Infrastructure Support:** through the ChipIN Centre to approved companies.
    - This includes remote access to a National EDA Tool Grid, a repository of IP Cores, and fiscal support for prototyping (MPW) and post-silicon validation.
- **Eligibility under the DLI Scheme:**
  - **Start-ups and MSMEs** are eligible for **financial incentives** and **design infrastructure support** for semiconductor product design & deployment.
  - And **other domestic companies** are **eligible for financial incentives** for deploying semiconductor designs.

# Rani Velu Nachiyar

Prime Minister Pays Tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar on Her Birth Anniversary.



## About Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730-96)

- **Born:** In 1730 as the princess of Ramnad (Ramanathapuram), Tamil Nadu.
- **Skills:** Trained extensively in warfare, including horse riding, archery, and martial arts like Silambam and Valari.
- **Key Contributions:**
  - Forged an alliance with **Hyder Ali** of Mysore.
- **Established the "Udaiyaal" battalion:** one of the first all-women army units in world history.
- **Pioneer of Suicide Tactics:** Her loyal commander, Kuyili, is credited with the first recorded suicide attack in Indian history by setting herself on fire to destroy a British ammunition depot in 1780.
- In 1780, she successfully **recaptured Sivaganga, defeating the British** nearly 77 years before the 1857 Revolt.

# Savitribai Phule

Recently PM Paid Tribute to Savitribai Phule on Her Birth Anniversary

## About Savitribai Phule (1831 - 1897)

- Born in Satara district (**Maharashtra**).
- **First headmistress** of the country's first school for girls in Pune.

### Key Contributions

- **Women's Right-**
  - Started **Mahila Seva Mandal** to advocated women's right
  - Set up **Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha** for refuge to pregnant women at risk
  - Established education trust called **Native Female School, pune.**
  - **Promoted Satyashodhak marriage** (marriage without dowry)
- **Social inclusion:** By promoting education among communities such as Mahars, Mangs etc.
- **Publications** - Authored influential poetry collections i.e. Kavyaphule

And Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar.

**Values:** Equality, justice, compassion, Courage of Conviction, etc.



# Piprahwa Relics

While inaugurating the Grand International Exposition titled “The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One”, the Prime Minister also highlighted that the wisdom and path shown by Bhagwan Buddha belong to all of humanity.



- This historic event marks the **reunification** of the Piprahwa gem relics of Lord Buddha, repatriated after 127 years.

## About Piprahwa Relics

- **Discovery:** Unearthed in 1898 by British Civil Engineer **William Claxton Peppé**.
- **Location:** An ancient Buddhist stupa at **Piprahwa (Uttar Pradesh)**, near the **India-Nepal border**.
- **Significance:** Archaeological evidence **associates the Piprahwa site with ancient Kapilavastu**, widely identified as the place where Bhagwan Buddha spent his early life prior to renunciation.
  - The relics are believed to be **associated with the mortal remains of Gautama Buddha**.

## Contemporary relevance of Buddha’s teachings

- **Governance and political integrity:** By applying the concepts of **Right Speech, conduct, and livelihood to public administration** Buddhist principles can promote citizen-centric governance.
- **Social equity and justice:** Gautama Buddha opened the institution of the Sangha to all individuals regardless of status, which provides a modern basis for **eliminating discrimination against vulnerable groups**, including women, transgender individuals, and sex workers.
- **Environmental sustainability and Consumerism:** The teaching of middle-path advocates for a life of moderation between extreme luxury and austerity, offering a solution to **over-exploitation of resources** and climate change.
- **Ethics in Technology and Science:** By applying principles of **simplicity and reverence for all life**, society can ensure **technological progress does not come at the cost of moral values**.
  - Additionally, the emphasis on **mindfulness and right understanding** fosters a **scientific temper and a spirit of inquiry**.

# Somnath Temple

**Prime Minister paid tribute to Somnath Temple marking the historic milestone of 1000 years since the first attack on Somnath in 1026 AD.**



## About Somnath Temple

- **Location:** Along the coastline in **Prabhas Patan, Veraval, Saurashtra region of Gujarat**.
- **Religious significance:** **One of the 12 holy Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva** is here in Somnath.
- **History:** It was reconstructed several times in the past after repeated destruction starting with an attack by Mahmud Ghazni in the 11th century (also recorded by **Al Biruni**).
- **Reconstruction:** The then **Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel** ordered the reconstruction of the Somnath temple on November 12, 1947.
  - On May 11, 1951, **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**, the President of India **performed the installation ceremony for the temple**.

# Battery Pack Aadhaar Number

Government releases draft guidelines for Battery Pack Aadhaar System.



## About Battery Pack Aadhaar System

- It is an indigenous **digital identification and data storage system** developed to ensure **end-to-end traceability of batteries throughout their entire lifecycle**.
- It includes a **unique identification number for each battery pack, capturing and storing vital information from extraction to final disposal**.
- Battery categories that are required to maintain a Battery Pack Aadhaar as an electronic record include Electric Vehicle Batteries and Industrial Batteries with capacity greater than 2kWh.
- **Significance:** Enabling **second-life usage, regulatory compliance, and efficient recycling**.

# PRAGATI

Prime Minister chaired 50<sup>th</sup> meeting of Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI).



- The system has accelerated the implementation of mega projects and key welfare schemes.

## About PRAGATI

- **Launched: In 2015.**
- **Overview:** It is a three-tier system (Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States)
- **Objectives:**
  - **Programme Implementation** (coordination between agencies)
  - **Project Monitoring** (technology-based platform)
  - **Grievance Redressal** (CPGRAMS).

# Task Force Report on Capacity Building of Sports Administrators

Task Force chaired by Olympic medalist Abhinav Bindra has submitted its report that provides a roadmap to transform India's sports governance into a professional, accountable, and athlete-centric ecosystem.

## Problems in India's Sports Administration

- Lack of Professional Knowledge
  - Many sports bodies are run by general government officers or temporary staff who do not have proper training in sports management. Because of this, decisions are often random and not well planned.
- Poor and Irregular Training
  - Training programs for sports administrators are rare, old-fashioned, and not continuous. There is no system for regular skill upgradation.
- Difficulty for Athletes to Shift to Administration
  - There is no clear system to help sportspersons move from playing careers to administrative or leadership roles. As a result, their experience is wasted.
- Weak Governance in Sports Bodies
  - Most National Sports Federations do not clearly separate policy-making and day-to-day work. Too much power is concentrated in a few hands, reducing transparency and accountability.

## Suggested Reform Framework

- Include Sports Governance in IAS Training
  - Basic knowledge of sports administration should be added to the training of IAS officers at LBSNAA, so future officers understand the importance of sports in nation-building.
- Performance-Based Evaluation
  - A national system should be created to measure the work of sports administrators. Their performance should affect promotions and postings.
- Create a National Apex Body
  - A National Council for Sports Education and Capacity Building (NCSECB) should be set up to approve, regulate, and certify sports administration courses in India.
- Set Up an Implementation Unit
  - A National Training and Development Cell should work under the NCSECB to conduct training programs, coordinate institutions, and check results.
- India-Focused Training Content
  - Training courses should be designed according to India's needs, sports culture, and administrative challenges instead of copying foreign models.

## NOTE

## Steps taken for reforming sports governance in India

- National Sports Governance Act, 2025: Establishes independent oversight bodies, dispute resolution mechanisms, and transparent election systems for sports federations.
- Khelo Bharat Niti, 2025: Focuses on rural and tribal talent scouting and upgrading local-level sports infrastructure.
- Khelo India Programme: Promotes grassroots sports participation and early athlete development nationwide.