

# THE IAS GAZETTE

A House Journal of **APTI PLUS**

NOVEMBER 2025



**APTI PLUS**

Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.  
CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION



TH EDITION

## Special Intensive Revision

[SIR]

### Other topics

- Preventive Detention and National Security Act, 1980
- USA's Comprehensive Plan to end Gaza Conflict
- National Policy on Geothermal Energy 2025
- Gas Emission Intensity (GEI) Target Rules, 2025

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## CONTENTS

### 1. POLITY & GOVERNANCE

PREVENTIVE DETENTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 1980	6
SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION	7
DRUGS REGULATION IN INDIA	8
GORKHALAND STATEHOOD DEMAND	10
LADAKH DEMANDS FOR STATEHOOD AND SIXTH SCHEDULE	11

### SHORT ARTICLES

NCRB RELEASED THE CRIME IN INDIA 2023 REPORT	12
--	----

### 2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### SHORT ARTICLES

INDIA-MONGOLIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	14
INDIA-QATAR JOINT COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION	14
USA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO END GAZA CONFLICT	15
INDIA- MERCOSUR PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENT	16
INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA)	16
UN CONVENTION ON CYBERCRIME	17
KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION	18
UN REPORT ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY	18
PEACEKEEPING CRISIS	19

### 3. ECONOMY

REMISSION OF DUTIES AND TAXES ON EXPORTED PRODUCTS (RoDTEP)	22
PAYMENTS REGULATORY BOARD (PRB)	23
LEAPS 2025	24

FOREIGN CURRENCY SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (FCSS)	25
AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR (AEO) PROGRAMME	27
SWAMIH FUND	28
DUTY-FREE TARIFF PREFERENCE (DFTP) SCHEME	29

### SHORT ARTICLES

INDIA-EFTA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT	30
CLEAN SLATE DOCTRINE UNDER THE INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE (IBC)	30
SEVILLA FORUM ON DEBT	31

### 4. DEFENCE & SECURITY

#### SHORT ARTICLES

EXERCISE KONKAN-25	32
NATPOLREX-X	32
AUSTRALIND 2025	32
SAMUDRA SHAKTI-2025	32
DEFENCE PROCUREMENT MANUAL (DPM) 2025	32
AYNI AIRBASE	32

### 5. ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (CAQM)	35
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION INTENSITY (GEI) TARGET RULES, 2025	36

### SHORT ARTICLES

AMAZON RAINFOREST	37
IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS	38

#### Sources



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IUCN'S WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS	38
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, NATIONAL PARK, TIGER RESERVE	39
SPECIES IN NEWS	39

## 6. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH

INTERSTELLAR MAPPING AND ACCELERATION PROBE (IMAP)	41
---	----

### SHORT ARTICLES

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CAREER PROGRAMME (BRCP) PHASE III	42
INDIAN RADIO SOFTWARE ARCHITECTURE (IRSA) STANDARD	42
AGRI ENICS PROGRAMME	42
DRAVYA PORTAL	43
CREW ESCAPE SYSTEM (CES)	43
MILITARY COMBAT PARACHUTE SYSTEM (MCPS)	43
DISEASES IN NEWS	44
DRUGS IN NEWS	45

## 7. CULTURE & HISTORY

### SHORT ARTICLES

BATHUKAMMA FESTIVAL	47
MEHA HOU CHONGBA FESTIVAL	47
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES (ICOMOS)	47
DILMUN CIVILIZATION	47

## 8. GEOGRAPHY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### SHORT ARTICLES

DESERT 'SOILIFICATION' TECHNOLOGY	49
CYCLONE SHAKHTI AND MONTHA	49
LIMESTONE RECLASSIFIED AS MAJOR MINERAL	50
NATIONAL POLICY ON GEOTHERMAL ENERGY 2025	50

## 8. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### SHORT ARTICLES

PRIME MINISTER DHAN-DHAANYA KRISHI YOJANA (PMDDKY)	53
SKILLING FOR AI READINESS (SOAR) PROGRAM	53
WE RISE INITIATIVE	54

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## निश्चय

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# 1. POLITY & GOVERNANCE

## 1.1 PREVENTIVE DETENTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 1980

### Context

- Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk detained under the National Security Act (NSA) 1980.

### What is Preventive Detention?

- It refers to the practice of detaining a person to **prevent possible future actions** that could endanger **public order, national security, or essential supplies**.
- It is **anticipatory** in nature—based on the likelihood of a threat—unlike **punitive detention**, which is imposed as punishment **after a conviction** through due legal process.

### Constitutional Provisions

- Article 22** of the Constitution authorizes preventive detention.
- A person can be detained for **up to three months** without the approval of an **Advisory Board** (comprising judges qualified to be High Court judges).
- For detention **beyond three months**, the approval of the Advisory Board is required.
- Parliament** can set conditions for extended detention, determine maximum periods, and lay down the procedures for the Advisory Board.
- The detainee must be **informed of the grounds** for detention, though specific details may be withheld **in the public interest**.
- The detained individual has the **right to make a representation** against the detention order at the earliest opportunity.

Preventive detention derives support from **Article 355**, which obligates the Union to **protect states from external aggression and internal disturbances** and to ensure that state governments function in accordance with the Constitution.

### Major Preventive Detention Laws in India

- National Security Act (NSA), 1980**: For matters concerning state security and public order.
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**: Targets terrorism and unlawful associations.
- Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (COFEPOSA) Act, 1974**: Aims to curb smuggling and foreign exchange violations.
- State Public Safety Acts**: Enacted by individual states to maintain internal security and public order.

### Judicial intervention on Preventive Detention

- Rekha vs State of Tamil Nadu (2011)**: Supreme Court held that preventive detention is an exception to Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) and must be applied rarely and cautiously.
- Ameena Begum vs State of Telangana (2023)**: Preventive detention is an exceptional measure meant for emergency situations and should not be used routinely.

### National Security Act (NSA), 1980

- The concept of preventive detention in India has colonial roots, initially used to suppress dissent during wartime.
- After Independence:
  - The **Preventive Detention Act, 1950** was enacted but lapsed in 1969.
  - The **Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), 1971**, was widely abused during the **Emergency (1975–77)** before being repealed in 1978.
  - The **NSA, 1980** was introduced, empowering the **Centre, states, District Magistrates, and Police Commissioners** to detain individuals to prevent acts deemed *prejudicial to India's defence, foreign*

relations, national security, public order, or essential supplies.

### Powers and Procedure

- A detention order under the NSA functions like an **arrest warrant**.
- The detainee can be **held in designated facilities**, transferred across states, and subjected to government-set conditions.
- The **grounds of detention** must be communicated **within 5 to 15 days**.
- The detainee can make a **representation** to the government.
- An **Advisory Board** of High Court judges must review the case **within three weeks**.
- If the Board finds *no sufficient cause* for detention, the detainee must be **released immediately**.
- The **maximum period** of detention is **12 months**, though it can be revoked earlier.

### Limitations and Concerns

- The detainee **cannot have legal representation** before the Advisory Board.
- The government can **withhold certain facts** in the “public interest.”
- The **broad and vague language** of “public order” gives wide discretion to authorities, increasing the risk of **arbitrary or politically motivated detentions**.

### **Way forward**

- Authorities must follow **Article 22 procedures in both letter and spirit**. Every detention order should be based on credible evidence, not on mere suspicion or administrative convenience.
- Regular judicial review can act as an effective check on arbitrary detentions.
- **Clear Definition of “Public Order” and “National Security”**, to reduce misuse and ensure consistent application.
- Governments should periodically publish **data on detentions under preventive laws**—including reasons, duration, and outcomes.
- Allowing limited or supervised **legal assistance** before the Advisory Board can help detainees present their case effectively, without compromising national security interests.
- Police and district authorities should undergo training on **constitutional rights, human rights law, and due process** to ensure balanced decision-making.
- The state should engage with activists and civil society through **consultation and dialogue** rather than resorting to pre-emptive detention.
- Laws like the NSA, UAPA, and COFEPOSA should be **reviewed by Parliament** at regular intervals to assess their relevance, impact, and misuse.

## **1.2 SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION**

### **Context**

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has launched the **second phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls across 12 States and Union Territories.

### **What is Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?**

- It is a **time-bound, door-to-door verification exercise** aimed at maintaining the integrity of electoral rolls. Its main objectives are to:
  - Enroll all newly eligible voters.
  - Remove duplicate, fake, or deceased entries.

- Correct errors and update voter information.
- Unlike the routine annual revision, SIR is a **more detailed and targeted drive**.

### Key Features of the 2025–26 SIR

- The initiative follows a successful pilot in Bihar, which achieved a **6% reduction in electors** without any appeals against deletions.
- The ongoing phase covers **12 States and UTs**—Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry,



Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal—targeting about **51 crore electors**.

- Assam remains excluded due to the ongoing **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** process and special provisions under the **Citizenship Act**.

#### Operational Mechanism

- Booth Level Officers (BLOs)** conduct household visits and distribute **Unique Enumeration Forms** to verify voter details and link family records.
- Citizens can also verify or update information online through the **Voters' Portal** or **Voter Helpline App**.

#### Significance of the SIR

- It ensures enrollment of all eligible voters, especially **first-time voters, women, and migrants**, enhancing democratic participation.
- By removing duplicate and invalid entries accumulated over two decades since the last major revision (2002–2005), the SIR strengthens the **purity of electoral rolls**.
- Under **Article 324** of the Constitution and **Section 21(3)** of the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**, the ECI has the authority to conduct such special revisions
- Clean and verified electoral rolls reduce disputes during elections and reinforce **public trust in electoral outcomes**.

#### Challenges in Implementation

- Risk of Disenfranchisement:** A hurried process or lack of awareness can lead to legitimate voters being left out, especially those without adequate documentation.

- Administrative Burden:** Nationwide door-to-door verification strains BLOs and registration officers, particularly in high-mobility urban areas.
- Digital Divide:** Although online facilities exist, only **38% of households** are digitally literate, limiting access to online verification tools. (Source: Oxfam)
- Transparency Concerns:** Unclear deletion criteria erode trust. Following a Supreme Court directive during the Bihar SIR, the ECI must publish **reasons for deletions** to ensure accountability.
- Aadhaar and Citizenship Verification:** While Aadhaar helps in identity verification, it **does not establish citizenship or domicile**, creating complications in voter eligibility checks.

#### Way Forward

- Strengthen Transparency and Communication:** ECI should release public data on additions and deletions along with justifications and appeals processes to maintain confidence.
- Empower Booth Level Officers:** Better training, resources, and data tools will help BLOs conduct more accurate verifications.
- Use Technology Responsibly:** Integrate voter rolls with government databases like **birth and death registries** to improve accuracy while protecting privacy.
- Promote Collaboration:** Engage political parties and civil society organizations to assist in awareness, claim submissions, and community outreach.
- Clarify Legal Provisions:** Establish a clear legal framework for identity verification to prevent misuse of Aadhaar or other documents.

## 1.3 DRUGS REGULATION IN INDIA

#### Context

- The deaths of more than 14 children in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan between August and October 2025, after consuming a contaminated cough syrup named *Coldrif*,

have exposed the serious flaws in the drug regulatory system.

#### Drug Regulation Framework in India

- Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** regulating the import, manufacture, sale, and distribution of

drugs and cosmetics. Its goal is to ensure that all medicines in India are safe, effective, and of standard quality.

- **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**, defining procedures for licensing, classification, labeling, storage, and clinical trials. They also outline *Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)* to ensure safety and efficacy.
- **Pharmacy Act, 1948**: Governs the profession of pharmacy.
- **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954**: Prohibits misleading drug advertisements.
- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985**: Controls narcotic and psychotropic substances for legitimate use.
- **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)** headed by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), regulates new drug approvals, clinical trials, quality control, and import/export of drugs.
- **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** ensures affordability by fixing and revising prices of essential drugs.
- **State Drug Regulatory Authorities (SDRAs)** implement central laws at the state level, granting manufacturing and sales licenses and conducting inspections.

#### India's Pharmaceutical Strength

India ranks **3rd globally** in pharmaceutical production by volume and exports to around **200 countries**.

- Supplies **20% of the world's generic drugs** and **40% of generics used in the US**.
  - Provides **over 70% of WHO's essential vaccines**, including DPT, BCG, and measles.
- However, these achievements are shadowed by weak regulatory enforcement that undermines both domestic safety and global trust.

#### Regulatory Processes

- **Licensing**: Manufacturers and sellers must obtain licenses after meeting GMP standards (Schedule M).
- **New Drug Approval**: Requires CDSCO clearance based on safety and efficacy data.

- **Clinical Trials**: Governed by the *New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019*.
- **Import/Export Regulation**: Overseen by CDSCO.
- **Post-market Surveillance**: Monitors adverse drug reactions and ensures recall of substandard products.

#### **Why Do Such Incidents Keep Repeating?**

- **Outdated Legal Framework**: The sector still operates under a pre-independence law from 1940, unsuited to modern challenges like biologics, clinical trials, and data integrity.
- **Fragmented and Weak Enforcement**: Drug regulation is divided between the Centre and States, leading to overlaps and inconsistent enforcement.
  - State regulators often lack staff, funding, and autonomy to conduct effective inspections.
- **Lack of Accountability and Transparency**: CDSCO's limited transparency has eroded public trust. Manufacturers involved in previous tragedies faced minimal penalties, creating a culture of impunity.

#### **Way Forward**

- **Update the Legal Framework**: Enact a new *Drugs, Medical Devices, and Cosmetics Act* with strong provisions for GMP, clinical trials, and classification of modern therapeutics.
- **Establish a Unified Regulator**: Create a single, autonomous, well-funded authority to eliminate duplication between Centre and States and ensure uniform enforcement nationwide.
- **Improve Transparency and Accountability**: Mandate public disclosure of all inspection reports, recalls, and regulatory actions. Enforce strict penalties for violations to deter negligence.
- **Strengthen Infrastructure and Surveillance**: Increase the number of drug inspectors, modernize testing laboratories, and build a digital database to track manufacturers' compliance records.

- **Encourage a Culture of Quality:** Encourage voluntary certification and independent quality audits. Regular training in global

standards and ethics for both manufacturers and regulators.

## 1.4 GORKHALAND STATEHOOD DEMAND

### Context

- The Union Government has appointed Pankaj Kumar Singh to lead talks with Gorkha representatives to find a “permanent political solution” to the long-standing demands, including statehood for Gorkhaland.

### What is Gorkhaland?

- It is the proposed state to be carved out of **northern West Bengal**, mainly including **Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and parts of the Dooars and Terai regions**.
- The demand is rooted in the aspiration of the **Nepali-speaking Gorkha community**, who seek recognition of their distinct linguistic and cultural identity within India.

### Government's Response So Far

- **Recognition of Language:** In 1992, Nepali was included in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution, affirming the cultural identity of the Gorkhas.
- **Creation of Autonomous Bodies**
  - **Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC)** – Formed in **1988** as a semi-autonomous body.
  - **Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)** – Established in **2012** with expanded powers

### Arguments in Favour of Gorkhaland

- A separate state would **safeguard the distinct Nepali-speaking identity and heritage** that the Gorkha community feels is marginalized in West Bengal.
- A smaller, hill-focused state could **prioritize tourism, tea, and horticulture** – sectors vital to the local economy – and address years of economic neglect.

- Statehood would **offer greater political representation and autonomy**, overcoming the numerical disadvantage of Gorkhas in the West Bengal Assembly.

### Arguments Against Gorkhaland

- The proposed state's dependence on tea and tourism makes it **economically fragile**, reliant on central grants for survival.
- The region falls within the **Siliguri Corridor** or “**Chicken's Neck**”, a narrow passage connecting India to its Northeast. Creating a new, under-resourced state here could raise strategic vulnerabilities near the Nepal and Bhutan borders.
- Approving Gorkhaland could inspire similar demands across India – from **Bodoland** to **Vidarbha** – complicating the federal structure.

### Way Forward

- **Strengthening Autonomy through GTA Reforms**
  - **Fiscal Devolution:** Grant greater financial powers and share state revenue.
  - **Administrative Empowerment:** Transfer control over policing, education, and land governance.
- Granting **Scheduled Tribe (ST)** status to specific Gorkha sub-communities could offer social and economic empowerment without altering state boundaries.
- A **central development plan** focused on tourism, organic farming, and higher education (such as a **Central University**) could generate sustainable livelihoods.
- Security imperatives of the Siliguri Corridor must guide any administrative restructuring, ensuring that regional aspirations do not compromise national integrity.



## 1.5 LADAKH DEMANDS FOR STATEHOOD AND SIXTH SCHEDULE

### Context

- Protests led by activist Sonam Wangchuk have drawn national attention, highlighting growing frustration over limited autonomy and fears of cultural and environmental erosion.

### Background

- On August 5, 2019, the Government of India reorganized the state of Jammu and Kashmir, creating Ladakh as a separate Union Territory.
- Governance through a Lieutenant Governor, without a legislative assembly, left citizens feeling politically powerless.

### Key Demands

- Full Statehood:** Restoration of an elected legislature and government to reintroduce democratic accountability and legislative authority.
- Inclusion under the Sixth Schedule:** Constitutional safeguards for land, culture, and resources through Autonomous District Councils (ADCs), protecting the rights of Ladakh's 97% tribal population.
- Establishment of a Public Service Commission (PSC):** A local recruitment body to address high unemployment and ensure fair representation for Ladakhis in government jobs.
- Separate Parliamentary Seats:** Distinct Lok Sabha constituencies for Leh and Kargil to ensure balanced political representation.

### Arguments Supporting Ladakh's Demands

- Democratic Deficit:** The shift from a full state (J&K) to a UT without a legislature reduced Ladakh's representation—from four MLAs and two MLCs to just one MP.
- Tribal and Cultural Protection:** With nearly the entire population belonging to Scheduled Tribes, there is a strong demand for constitutional protection of land ownership and cultural heritage.

- Environmental Safeguards:** Fragile Himalayan ecosystem faces risks from unregulated tourism and construction. Sixth Schedule-style councils could enforce sustainable land use.
- Employment Crisis:** Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023–24 data shows Ladakh's unemployment rate at 22.2%, with female unemployment at 38.3% and graduate unemployment at 26.5%—far above the national average. A local PSC could fill thousands of pending vacancies.
- Strategic Empowerment:** Empowering local governance within a state framework can improve public trust while retaining central oversight of security affairs in this sensitive border region.

### Arguments against the Demands

- National Security:** Given its proximity to China and Pakistan, the Centre prioritizes direct administrative control for swift security and infrastructure responses.
- Economic Viability:** With a small population (about 3 lakh) and limited revenue sources, creating a full-fledged state may not be financially sustainable.
- Legal Complexity:** Extending the Sixth Schedule beyond the Northeast would require a constitutional amendment—an intricate and politically sensitive process.

### Way Forward

- Strengthen the councils' authority over land, resources, and local development to give real meaning to self-governance.
- Introduce special legislative safeguards under Article 240**, mirroring the spirit of the Sixth Schedule but customized for Ladakh's unique context.
- Establish a permanent forum involving LAB, KDA, and the Ministry of Home Affairs for structured negotiations and policy planning.
- Create a local recruitment commission to prioritize youth employment.

- Adopt conservation-centric development inspired by Bhutan's model of balancing

environment and well-being.

## 1.6 SHORT ARTICLES

### NCRB released the Crime in India 2023 Report

#### Context

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the Crime in India 2023 report, showing a 7.2% rise in total registered crimes compared to 2022.

#### About National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

- **Established:** 1986, under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Mandate:** Acts as a central repository for crime and criminal data to support investigative and policy decisions.
- Manages the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS).
- Publishes annual reports such as Crime in India, Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India, and Prison Statistics India.
- Maintains a national fingerprint database to help identify offenders.

#### Key Findings of the Crime in India 2023 Report

##### Crime Trends

- Around 6.24 million cases were registered in 2023 – roughly one every five seconds.
- Crime rate rose from 422.2 per lakh population in 2022 to 448.3 in 2023.

- Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes increased by 5.7%, while offences under Special and Local Laws (SLL) rose by 9.5%.
- Cybercrime surged by 31.2%, Fastest-Growing Threat, with most cases involving fraud, extortion, and sexual exploitation.

#### Crimes Against Vulnerable Groups

- **Women:** Cases rose 0.7% to 4.48 lakh. The most common offences were cruelty by husband or relatives (29.8%) and kidnapping and abduction (20%).
- **Children:** Crimes increased 9.2%, with kidnapping (45%) and POCSO-related offences (38.2%) dominating.
- **Scheduled Castes (SCs):** Rise of 0.4%, with Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar topping the list.
- **Scheduled Tribes (STs):** Rise of 28.8%, mainly in Manipur and Madhya Pradesh.

#### Law Enforcement and Judicial Performance

- Charge-sheeting rate for IPC cases improved slightly, from 71.3% to 72.7%.
- Conviction rate remained unchanged at 54%, reflecting persistent gaps in investigation and prosecution.

## 1.7 SNIPPETS

Topics	Details
India Mobile Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 9th edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC 2025), Asia's largest telecom, media, and technology event, was organised in New Delhi.</li> <li>• India Mobile Congress was co-hosted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), under the theme 'Global Digital Innovation'. A new "Aspire" startup program was launched to connect startups, investors, and established businesses.</li> </ul>
8th Central Pay Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Cabinet announced the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the 8th Central Pay Commission.</li> <li>• The 8th Pay Commission, headed by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, will review and recommend new salaries, allowances, and pensions for Central government employees. It is established every 10 years by the Finance Ministry's Department of Expenditure, it considers inflation, cost of living, and fairness in benefits.</li> </ul>

## 1.8 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic Name	Date
Bodoland Territorial Council	6th October 2025
What Are The Various Electoral Forms? Explained	10th October 2025
Roadmap To Gender Equity In Judiciary Explained	16th October 2025
Domestic Workers In India: Status, Challenges, Way Forward	22nd October 2025
National Unity Day: Legacy Of Sardar Patel	31st October 2025



## 2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 2.1 SHORT ARTICLES

#### India-Mongolia Strategic Partnership

##### Context

- The President of Mongolia visited India to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations and the 10th anniversary of the Strategic Partnership between the two nations.



##### Key Outcomes of the Visit

- Defence and Security Cooperation:** India initiated a capacity-building program for Mongolia's border security forces and expanded defence training. A Defence Attaché was appointed to the Indian Embassy in Ulaanbaatar.
- Energy Security and Economic Partnership:** India committed \$1.7 billion line of credit for Mongolia's first oil refinery (operational by 2028). Deepen cooperation in critical minerals, rare earth elements, and coking coal.
- Cultural and Educational Cooperation:** India to send holy relics of Lord Buddha's disciples to Mongolia in 2026. MoU signed between Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and Mongolia's Arkhangai province for cultural exchange.
  - India will provide a Sanskrit teacher to Gandan Monastery and support digitization of one million ancient Mongolian manuscripts.

- Development and Skill Building:** Agreements cover cultural exchange, immigration cooperation, disaster management, and Bogd Khan Palace renovation.

##### India-Mongolia Relations

- Early Ties (1955-1990):** India was the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia and supported its UN membership.
- Post-1990s:** With Mongolia's democratic transition, ties grew stronger based on shared democratic and spiritual values.
- Strategic Partnership (2015):** Elevated during PM Modi's visit, focusing on security, energy, and culture.
- Joint military exercises, *Nomadic Elephant* and *Khaan Quest*.

#### India-Qatar Joint Commission on Economic and Commercial Cooperation

##### Context

- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry co-chaired the India-Qatar Joint Commission on Economic and Commercial Cooperation in Doha.

##### Key Outcomes

- Both sides agreed to double bilateral trade by 2030.
- Reaffirmed commitment to negotiate **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** to boost trade and investment flows.
- Launch of **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in Qatar, making cross-border payments seamless for both Indian residents and Qatari consumers.

##### India-Qatar Partnership

- Trade:** Bilateral trade reached **\$14.15 billion** in FY25, with India facing **\$10.78 billion** trade deficit largely due to hydrocarbon imports, which account for nearly **90%** of the total.

- **Investment:** Qatari investments in India total **\$1.5 billion**, mainly in infrastructure and real estate.
- **Energy:** LNG imports accounted for 50% of India's overall imports from Qatar.
- **Defense:** Cooperation under the **2008 Defence Agreement** includes training, naval exercises such as Za'ir-Al-Bahr, and participation in DIMDEX.
- **Cultural Ties:** Indian diaspora of **over 8 lakh** strengthens people-to-people relations.



- Regional players including **Qatar, Jordan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan**, have agreed to support the plan.

#### **Background of the Israel–Gaza Conflict**

- **Balfour Declaration (1917):** Britain's support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine deepened tensions between Jews and Arabs.
- **Creation of Israel (1948):** Following a UN partition plan, Israel declared independence. Arab nations rejected the move, leading to multiple wars.
- **1967 Six-Day War:** Israel captured the **West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem**.
- Recent Israel-Gaza war started in October 2023, when Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel.

#### **India's Policy on the Israel–Palestine Conflict**

- India recognized the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** in 1974 and the **State of Palestine** in 1988, backing the Palestinian cause in global forums.
- India supports a **two-state solution**, advocating for the creation of an independent Palestinian state coexisting peacefully with Israel within recognized borders.
- **India follows De-Hyphenation Policy;** maintains **independent bilateral relations** with both Israel and Palestine, ensuring that cooperation with one does not come at the expense of the other.
- India has backed Palestine in the **UN General Assembly**, while contributing over **\$160 million** in development aid. (Source: Ministry of External Affairs)
- India's national interests, including energy security, trade, and its diaspora, are closely linked to its engagement in the Middle East, making regional stability crucial.

## **USA's Comprehensive Plan to end Gaza Conflict**

### **Context**

- The US President has unveiled a 20-point peace proposal titled the "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict".

### **Key Highlights of the USA's Gaza Peace Plan**

- Completely disarm Hamas, **making Gaza a terror-free zone**. Hamas members will receive amnesty for peaceful reintegration or safe passage to Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and Iran.
- A temporary **International Stabilization Force** will be deployed to secure Gaza, train local police, and oversee law and order.
- Gaza will be administered by a **temporary technocratic Palestinian committee**, supported by an international **Board of Peace**—to be chaired by the US President.
- Increase in humanitarian aid and infrastructure rebuilding.

## India- Mercosur Preferential Trade Agreement

### Context

- India and Brazil have jointly announced plans to expand the India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).

### Key Highlights of the India-Brazil Joint Declaration

- Broader Scope:** Both countries agreed to expand the PTA to include tariff and non-tariff issues.
- Technical Dialogue:** A Joint Administration Committee to define the scope and modalities of the expansion.
- Trade Target:** Goal to increase bilateral trade between India and Brazil from \$12.2 billion to \$20 billion by 2030.

### About MERCOSUR

- Formation:** Established in 1991 under the Treaty of Asunción by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Venezuela and Bolivia later joined.
- Structure:** The Treaty of Ouro Preto (1994) gave MERCOSUR legal status as a customs union, enabling common external tariffs and coordinated trade policies.
- Headquarters:** Montevideo, Uruguay.
- Languages:** Portuguese and Spanish.
- Significance:** Fourth-largest integrated market globally, after the EU, NAFTA, and ASEAN.

#### India-MERCOSUR PTA

- India signed a Framework Agreement with MERCOSUR in 2003, followed by the PTA in 2004, which came into effect in 2009.
- The PTA provides reciprocal tariff preferences, unlike Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), which cover a broader range of goods and services.

### Significance of the India-MERCOSUR PTA

- South-South Cooperation:** Growing collaboration among emerging economies. India and Brazil, both part of BRICS, G20, and IBSA, are key players in promoting South-South cooperation.
- Market Access:** Wider tariff preferences will make Indian goods — especially

pharmaceuticals, engineering products, and IT services — more competitive in Latin America.

- Trade Balance:** In FY 2024-25, India's exports to MERCOSUR stood at \$8.12 billion, while imports were \$9.36 billion, mainly from Brazil.
- Diversification:** Strengthening ties with MERCOSUR complements India's ongoing trade negotiations with the EU, US, and Indo-Pacific partners.
- Energy and Agriculture:** Boost India's access to energy resources, fertilizers, and agricultural products, while providing Latin American countries a market for their raw materials.



## International Solar Alliance (ISA)

### Context

- President Droupadi Murmu addressed the 8th Session of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly in New Delhi.

### Key Highlights of the 8th ISA Assembly

- SUNRISE Network:** ISA launched the **Solar Upcycling Network for Recycling, Innovation & Stakeholder Engagement (SUNRISE)** to promote a circular economy in the solar sector.
  - The initiative focuses on solar waste recycling, innovation, and green job creation through sustainable solar management.
- One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG):** A dedicated OSOWOG programme was introduced to develop regional solar power grids across continents.



- It identifies transmission links connecting Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, with feasibility studies planned over the next two to three years
- **SIDS Solar Procurement Platform:** Sixteen Small Island Developing States (SIDS) signed an MoU with ISA and the World Bank to collaborate on joint solar procurement, digital integration, and capacity-building to enhance energy resilience.
- **Global Capability Centre and ISA Academy:** A Global Capability Centre will be set up in India as a “Solar Silicon Valley,” connecting global centres of excellence.
- The **ISA Academy**, an AI-based e-learning platform, will train professionals and strengthen solar skills worldwide.
- **Launch of ISA Reports:** The Assembly unveiled five flagship reports – Ease of Doing Solar 2025, Solar PV Skills and Jobs in Africa, Solar Compass, Global Floating Solar Framework, and Global Solar Trends & Outlook 2025.
  - Ease of Doing Solar 2025 reported that solar energy attracted \$521 billion in global investments in 2024, making it the leading renewable sector.

#### About the International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Formed in 2015 by India and France at COP21 in Paris, ISA is the first intergovernmental organisation headquartered in India. It currently includes **125 member and signatory countries**.
- ISA aims to expand access to affordable and reliable solar energy, enhance global energy security, and accelerate the clean energy transition.
- **Strategic Pillars:**
  - **Catalytic Finance Hub:** Mobilise: \$1 trillion in solar investments by 2030.
  - **Global Capability Centre & Digitisation:** Promote innovation and training.
  - **Regional & Country Engagement:** Design customised strategies for member nations.
  - **Technology & Policy Support:** Facilitate deployment of emerging solar technologies.

## UN Convention on Cybercrime

### Context

- The European Union, represented by the European Commission, signed the United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime in Hanoi, Vietnam.

### About United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime

- Adopted by the **UN General Assembly in December 2024**, to create a universal legal framework for addressing cyber threats that transcend national borders.
- It will **enter into force 90 days after 40 countries ratify it**.

### Key Provisions

- Mandates signatory states to criminalize a wide range of **cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes**, including: Misuse of devices, and Online child sexual abuse material.
  - It is the **first global treaty** to recognize the **non-consensual sharing of intimate images** as a criminal offense.
- Establishes a framework for **mutual legal assistance**, including: A **global 24/7 cooperation network** to support investigations across jurisdictions.
- **Technical support and resource sharing**, through: Financial aid, Technology transfer, and Law enforcement and judicial training programs.
- Requires all measures under its framework to **respect human rights and fundamental freedoms**, particularly **data protection and privacy** standards.
- Provides a global framework for the **collection and exchange of electronic evidence** for all *serious crimes*—defined as offenses punishable by at least **four years of imprisonment or more**.

As of **October 2025**, India has not signed the convention, despite participating in its drafting. New Delhi's concerns revolve around **privacy**, **data sovereignty**, and **legal alignment** with domestic frameworks.

## Kuala Lumpur Declaration

### Context

- The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Peace and Stability was adopted by leaders at the 20th East Asia Summit (EAS), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### What is the East Asia Summit (EAS)?

- Established in **2005** in **Kuala Lumpur**, Malaysia.
- Evolved from the **ASEAN Plus Three (APT)** process (ASEAN + China, Japan, South Korea).
- India has been a **founding member** since the first summit.
- The **US and Russia** joined in **2011**.
- **Timor-Leste**, admitted as ASEAN's 11th member in 2025, is expected to join the EAS next.
- Membership: **18 countries**:
  - **10 ASEAN members**: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
  - **8 Dialogue Partners**: Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the United States.

### Highlights of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration (2025)

- Emphasized adherence to the **UN Charter**, **international law**, and **peaceful dispute resolution**.
- Called for **collective cooperation** to preserve regional peace and inclusive growth.
- Maintaining peace and stability in the **South China Sea**, urged all parties to act in accordance with **UNCLOS (1982)** and accelerate efforts toward an **early Code of Conduct (COC)**.
- Promoted collaboration in **innovation, digital economy, energy transition, green growth, health security, and disaster resilience**.
- On the sidelines, **Thailand and Cambodia** signed a **Peace Accord**, resolving a long-standing border dispute.

## UN Report on Women, Peace and Security

### Context

- The 2025 UN Secretary-General's Report on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) warns that progress toward gender equality in conflict and peacebuilding is rapidly eroding.

### What is the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Framework?

- The **WPS agenda**, established through **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)**, recognizes the unique impact of armed conflict on women and the critical role they play in achieving sustainable peace.
- It rests on **four key pillars**:
  - **Participation**: Promotes women's inclusion at all levels of decision-making in peace and security processes.
  - **Protection**: Safeguards women and girls from gender-based and sexual violence in conflict settings.
  - **Prevention**: Integrates gender perspectives into efforts to prevent conflict and violence.
  - **Relief and Recovery**: Ensures post-conflict responses meet the specific needs of women and girls.

### Key Findings of the 2025 Report

- Around **676 million women** now live within 50 km of an active conflict zone—the highest figure in three decades.
- Deaths and injuries among women and children have **quadrupled** in the past two years.
- Conflict-related sexual violence has surged by **87%**, with rape increasingly used as a weapon of war.
- Over **123 million people** were displaced by the end of 2024, with women and girls facing severe risks of abuse and trafficking.
- **295 million people** across 53 countries faced acute hunger, disproportionately affecting pregnant and breastfeeding women in war-torn regions.

## Report Recommendations

- Ensure justice and reparations for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones.
- Allocate at least **15% of UN spending** to gender equality initiatives by 2026, prioritizing **direct funding for women-led organizations**.
- Adopt **binding targets and quotas** to ensure women's equal participation in peace negotiations, mediation, and post-conflict governance.
- Integrate gender-sensitive approaches into conflict prevention, addressing root causes and supporting local women's peace efforts.
- Invest in **sex-disaggregated data collection** to inform policies and hold institutions accountable.
- Incorporate gender perspectives into strategies addressing **climate change, digital violence, and arms control**.

## Peacekeeping Crisis

### Context

- The United Nations has announced a 25% reduction in its global peacekeeping forces.

### About UN Peacekeeping

- UN peacekeeping was launched in **1948** with the creation of the **UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)** in the Middle East to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and its Arab neighbors.
- **Cold War Era (1948–1989)**: Missions were focused on observing ceasefires between states.
- **Post-Cold War Era (1990s–Present)**: The scope expanded to include **nation-building, election support, human rights monitoring,**

and **protection of civilians** in complex internal conflicts.

- UN peacekeepers are deployed to:
  - Provide **security** and support **political processes**
  - Protect **civilians** and **human rights**
  - Assist in **disarmament, elections, and reconstruction**

### Key Principles

- **Consent of the parties** – Deployed only with the approval of all conflict parties.
- **Impartiality** – Peacekeepers do not take sides.
- **Non-use of force** – Except in self-defence or to defend the mission's mandate.
- Funded by **assessed contributions** from all UN member states.
- Troops are provided voluntarily, by member countries.

### Why the UN Is Cutting Forces?

- The **US**, the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping, has **reduced its funding** from nearly **\$1 billion to \$680 million** this year.

### India's Role in UN Peacekeeping

- India's participation reflects its belief in "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" – the idea that the world is one family – and draws from **Mahatma Gandhi's principles of non-violence and cooperation**.
- India has taken part in **over 50 UN missions**, deploying **more than 2,90,000 personnel** since 1953.
- Nearly **180 Indian peacekeepers** have lost their lives serving under the UN flag.
- In **2023**, India received the **Dag Hammarskjöld Medal**, the UN's highest peacekeeping honor.

## 2.2 SNIPPETS

Topics	Details
Wassenaar Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft faces protests over its Azure cloud services, accused of aiding Israeli military actions in Palestine and causing civilian deaths, exposing weaknesses in Wassenaar Arrangement.</li> <li>• The Wassenaar Arrangement was <b>established in 1996</b> in the Netherlands. It <b>comprises 42 nations, including India (since 2017), and regulates the export</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>of conventional weapons and dual-use items.</b> Participating countries meet annually in Vienna to build consensus, share intelligence, and update the Munitions List (military hardware) and Dual-Use List (technologies with military risks).</p>
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India re-elected to the Council of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the 2025–2028 term.</li> <li>ICAO, a <b>UN agency founded in 1944 via the Chicago Convention</b>, creates <b>global rules for safe and efficient air travel</b> among its 193 members, including India; its headquarters are in Montreal, Canada.</li> </ul>
Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has activated the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with Singapore to assist in the investigation of singer Zubeen Garg's death in Singapore.</li> <li>Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) are essential for <b>international cooperation against cross-border crime, facilitating evidence sharing and prosecutions</b>. India has <b>MLATs with 42 nations, coordinating through the Ministries of Home and External Affairs</b>. These treaties help overcome jurisdictional issues, as seen in the Zubeen Garg case, though real-time coordination for overseas incidents needs improvement.</li> </ul>
Moscow Format Talk on Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India joined regional powers at the 7th Moscow Format to discuss Afghanistan's stability.</li> <li>The Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan, <b>initiated by Russia in 2017</b>, is a <b>regional diplomatic platform</b> comprising Russia, India, Afghanistan, Iran, China, Pakistan, and Central Asian states. Its main goal is to <b>promote peace, stability, and development in Afghanistan</b>.</li> </ul>
Bagram Air Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the 7th Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan, India joined the Taliban, Pakistan, China, and Russia in rejecting the U.S. President Trump's proposal to reclaim Bagram air base.</li> <li>Bagram is <b>Afghanistan's largest air base</b>, once serving as the main hub for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Under the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2021, the base was vacated and subsequently came <b>under Taliban control</b>. Recently, the U.S. President said that the U.S. wants the base back, quoting strategic concerns — such as Afghanistan's geopolitical location, proximity to China, etc.</li> </ul>
Project Waterworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meta Platforms has chosen Mumbai and Visakhapatnam as the landing sites for the India leg of its multibillion-dollar undersea cable project Waterworth.</li> <li>Project Waterworth is a subsea cable initiative by Meta Platforms aimed at strengthening global internet connectivity, <b>linking the US, Brazil, South Africa and India</b> to create the world's longest such cable, spanning over 50,000 km. It uses AI to predict and mitigate disruptions and will establish three new ocean corridors to boost connectivity.</li> </ul>
Sharm el-Sheikh Summit for Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 50 world leaders gathered in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, for the 'Summit for Peace'.</li> <li>The Sharm el-Sheikh Summit for Peace, <b>co-chaired by U.S. President and Egyptian President in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt</b>, was an international diplomatic conference focused on solidifying a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and establishing a framework for lasting peace and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip and the Middle East.</li> </ul>



Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNESCO unveiled its Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects at MONDIACULT 2025 in Spain.</li> <li>A UNESCO digital platform, backed by 194 Member States, fights illicit artifact trafficking. It helps communities reclaim cultural narratives through AI-powered 3D models and exhibits, raising awareness, aiding recovery, and facilitating repatriation of items like India's Nataraja and Brahma sculptures.</li> </ul>
United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India elected Co-Chair of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) for the 2025–2028 term</li> <li>UN-GGIM is an intergovernmental initiative that provides a forum for member states to coordinate on global geospatial information. Its purpose is to <b>guide the production and use of geospatial data to inform policies</b> and address challenges related to sustainable development, such as poverty, environmental issues, and disaster management. UN-GGIM-AP, one of five regional UN-GGIM committees, represents 56 Asia-Pacific nations.</li> </ul>
UN Human Rights Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India was unanimously re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for 2026-2028.</li> <li>The UNHRC is an inter-governmental body within the UN framework. <b>Formed in 2006 by the UN General Assembly</b>, it tackles violations through recommendations and encourages dialogue on thematic issues like gender equality or country-specific crises such as conflict zones. Structured with <b>47 member states elected for three-year terms</b>—capped at two consecutive—seats are regionally balanced: 13 for African and Asia-Pacific states each, 8 for Latin American and Caribbean, 7 for Western European and others, and 6 for Eastern European. <b>Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.</b></li> </ul>

## 2.3 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic Name	Date
India-EFTA Free Trade Agreement	1st October 2025
Diaspora Diplomacy	7th October 2025
Polar Silk Road	8th October 2025
China Rare Earth Export Restrictions	10th October 2025
India and Canada Strategic Partnership	15th October 2025
India's Refugee Dilemma	16th October 2025
India–Brazil Relation	17th October 2025
India-Japan Relations	25th October 2025
India-Asean Relations	27th OCTOBER 2025
Pakistan's Revival Should Worry India	31st October 2025

## 3. ECONOMY

### 3.1 REMISSION OF DUTIES AND TAXES ON EXPORTED PRODUCTS (RoDTEP)

#### Context

- The Government of India has extended the RoDTEP scheme till March 31, 2026, to sustain export competitiveness by offsetting hidden taxes and duties.

#### About

- The RoDTEP Scheme is India's export incentive programme designed to **make Indian goods globally competitive by neutralising hidden taxes and duties that are not refunded** under other mechanisms. It ensures that exports leave the country free of domestic taxes, aligning with the principle that "taxes should not be exported."
- Introduced in **January 2021**, replacing the earlier **MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme)** to comply with **WTO (World Trade Organization)** norms.
- Nodal Ministry:** Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- Mode:** Fully digital; refunds issued as transferable e-scrips usable for basic customs duty.

#### Eligibility Criteria of RoDTEP Scheme

##### Eligible Exporters

- All exporters—including **manufacturer exporters, merchant exporters, and traders**—are eligible, provided the goods are exported **out of India** and duties/taxes are not already refunded under any other scheme.
- Exporters must have a **valid Import-Export Code (IEC)** and must file **Shipping Bills** electronically with RoDTEP claim details at the time of export.

##### Eligible Products

- Covers most **goods manufactured in India** and exported, where **embedded taxes and levies** (like electricity duty, fuel tax, mandi tax, etc.) remain unrebated.

- Products are notified under the **RoDTEP schedule** with specific **rates or value caps**.

##### Conditions for Eligibility

- Exported goods must be **of Indian origin** (not re-exported or imported for re-export).
- The claim must be made at the **time of export** through the customs automated system (no manual applications).
- Exporters must **not have availed double benefits** (i.e., reimbursement under any other scheme for the same taxes).
- Exporters must have been **paid through normal banking channels** and maintain proper documentation for verification.

##### Coverage

- It covers a **wide range of export sectors**, including **agriculture, textiles, chemicals, engineering goods, leather, gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals, and marine products**.
- The rates are determined to **offset embedded taxes and duties** such as electricity duty, VAT on fuel, mandi tax, and other state/central levies not refunded elsewhere.
- Applies to **exports through all modes** (sea, air, or land) via the **Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system**.

##### Significance

- Enhances Export Competitiveness:** By reimbursing hidden taxes and duties not refunded under GST or other schemes, RoDTEP helps Indian exporters **reduce production costs**.
- Ensures WTO Compliance:** The earlier MEIS scheme was found **inconsistent with WTO subsidy rules**. RoDTEP replaces it with a **rules-based, WTO-compliant framework**.
- Promotes Transparency and Automation:** The scheme operates through a **fully digital, customs-integrated system**, ensuring **speed**,

transparency, and minimal human intervention.

- **Supports Broad Export Base:** RoDTEP extends benefits to **all sectors and types of exporters**, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), thus **broadening the reach** of government export support.
- **Boosts Employment and Industrial Growth:** By improving export margins and competitiveness, the scheme encourages **production expansion, job creation, and industrial diversification**

### Performance of RoDTEP

- Since its inception (1 January 2021) until 31 March 2025, disbursements under RoDTEP exceeded **₹57,976 crore**.
- Annual budget allocations have remained strong, with around **₹15,000 crore** earmarked in 2023–24, showing the government's continued support for exporters.
- The scheme now covers **over 10,600 export product categories**.

### Challenges

- The reimbursement rates, ranging from about **0.3% to 4.3% of the export value**, are often viewed as **too low** to fully neutralize the hidden taxes and levies faced by exporters.
- While the scheme covers most export products, **several sectors and export**

categories remain excluded, such as certain units operating under **Special Economic Zones or Export Oriented Units**.

- Exporters face challenges in **submitting detailed documentation**, maintaining accurate records, and complying with new reporting formats like the **Annual RoDTEP Return**.
- Periodic **delays in reviewing rates and processing reimbursements** have led to liquidity issues for exporters, particularly small and medium enterprises.

### Way Forward

- Regularly update remission rates to **accurately reflect current tax burdens and input costs**, ensuring exporters are fully compensated for hidden domestic levies.
- Include **more industries and export categories**, especially **small and medium enterprises, special economic zone units, and labour-intensive sectors**, to make the scheme **inclusive and equitable**.
- Streamline digital procedures and **reduce documentation complexity** to make the scheme more user-friendly.
- Align the scheme with **national trade policy, logistics efficiency, and sustainable production practices** to enhance India's position in global value chains and support **green exports**.

## 3.2 PAYMENTS REGULATORY BOARD (PRB)

### Context

- The RBI has established a six-member Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) to enhance governance, transparency, and resilience in India's fast-growing digital payments ecosystem.

### Composition

- Headed by the **RBI Governor (Chairperson)**, it includes the **Deputy Governor and Executive Director** in charge of Payment and Settlement Systems, along with **three Central Government nominees**. The **Principal Legal**

**Adviser** of the RBI serves as a permanent invitee.

### Legal Backing

- The PRB operates under the **Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**, with the **Department of Payment and Settlement Systems (DPSS)** reporting to it. Decisions are made by majority vote, with the Chair having the casting vote in case of a tie.

## Significance

- **Strengthened Oversight and Governance:** The Payments Regulatory Board replaces earlier committee structures under the Reserve Bank of India, providing **clearer accountability and stronger supervision**.
- **Adaptability to Innovation:** With rapid growth in **UPI, fintech platforms, and cross-border payments**, the Board ensures regulation keeps pace with **technological change, competition, and security needs**.
- **Integrated and Inclusive Regulation:** The inclusion of experts from finance, IT, and telecom reflects an **interdisciplinary approach**.
- **Promotes Financial Inclusion and Stability:** By strengthening payment infrastructure and trust, the Board supports **financial inclusion, fraud prevention, and systemic stability**.

## Performance

- According to the Reserve Bank of India, digital payments rose by **10.7% year-on-year** by March 2025.
- The share of digital payments (in all transactions) has reached around **99.7% by volume** in 2024.

## Challenges

- As digital payments scale rapidly, the regulatory board must deal not only with

infrastructure and innovation but also with **trust, fraud prevention**. A survey by Business Standard found that **1 in 5 users of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in India had experienced fraud in the past three years, and 51% of them did not report the incident**.

- Regulatory board's challenge is to ensure that the payment system becomes **inclusive**, not just expansive. For e.g. despite growth, many rural and underserved populations still lack reliable internet access, digital literacy.
- The regulatory board must balance two conflicting priorities: **fostering innovation** and ensuring **risk control and consumer protection**.

## Way Forward

- Implement **real-time monitoring systems, AI-driven fraud detection, and tokenization** to reduce incidents.
- Expand access to **digital infrastructure and affordable devices** in rural and underserved areas.
- Develop and enforce **standards for interoperability** across platforms, banks, and fintech's to avoid fragmentation.
- Prioritize oversight of high-risk areas such as **cybersecurity, high-volume platforms, and emerging technologies**.

## 3.3 LEAPS 2025

### Context

- Launched by the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry to benchmark and recognize excellence in India's logistics sector.

### Details

- Flagship initiative under **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry**, promoting innovation, digitization and sustainability in logistics.

### Key Features

- It honours logistics players across sectors (air, road, rail, maritime), warehousing, MSMEs, startups, academic institutions.
- A major feature is emphasis on "green logistics", environmental, social & governance (ESG) practices, digital transformation, and operational excellence.
- The awards cover **13 categories**, including Green Logistics Champion, Digital Transformation Leader, and Regional Infrastructure Performer.
- It promotes alignment with PM Gati Shakti's vision of integrated, multimodal infrastructure,



governance coordination, and digital/logistics systems synergy.

driven by e-commerce, third-party logistics and manufacturing demand.

### Objectives

- The Logistics Excellence Awards **recognize outstanding performance** across freight, warehousing, startups, MSMEs, and academia; **promote digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence, and Internet of Things adoption**; **encourage green logistics and social responsibility**; **set national benchmarks** for efficiency and innovation; and **support the National Logistics Policy 2022 and Prime Minister's Gati Shakti vision** to reduce costs and enhance multimodal connectivity.
- **Sectors Covered:** Roads & Highways, Railways, Ports, Airports, Energy, Telecom, Urban Development, SEZs, Industrial Corridors

### Current Status of Logistics Sector in India

- The logistics sector is estimated to **have reached = USD 228 billion in 2024**, with projections of **USD 357 billion by 2030**.
- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, in a report estimated that India's logistics cost for 2023-24 was **7.97% of Gross Domestic Product**.
- Annual growth in industrial and logistics real-estate absorption exceeded **25% in 2024**,

### Challenges

- Many rural warehousing and freight operators remain underrepresented despite playing a crucial role in last-mile logistics.
- Evaluating **true operational and financial impact** of recognized practices is challenging due to fragmented data across sectors.
- Participation in awards may be skewed toward **urban-centric, well-established players**, leaving behind smaller enterprises, women-led logistics firms.
- Despite alignment with National Logistics Policy and PM Gati Shakti, **real infrastructure bottlenecks**, high logistics costs in certain regions, and lack of digital integration

### Way Forward

- Conduct targeted campaigns to include **MSMEs, startups, and rural logistics players**.
- Develop **standardized metrics** for logistics performance, sustainability, and digital adoption to enable **credible benchmarking**.
- Support adoption of **digital tools, AI, IoT, and automation** across the logistics ecosystem.
- Encourage **collaboration between industry, academia, and government** to institutionalize excellence.

## 3.4 FOREIGN CURRENCY SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (FCSS)

### Context

- The **Union Finance Minister** recently inaugurated the **Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS)** at the **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**, located in **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)**.

### Details

- **Purpose:** Enables local settlement of foreign currency transactions among banks in GIFT City IFSC.
- **Benefits:** Reduces reliance on correspondent banks, saving time and costs in cross-border settlements.

- **Legal Framework:** Established under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

### International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) is a statutory regulatory body established by the Government of India to regulate and promote financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India.

## Objective

- To develop a **world-class financial services hub** in India that can cater to **offshore and international financial markets** similar to those in Singapore, Dubai, and London.

## Functions

- Unified Regulator:** Consolidates RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA powers for IFSC entities.
- Ease of Doing Business:** Simplifies regulations for global financial institutions and fintechs.
- Global Financial Ecosystem:** Facilitates banking, capital markets, insurance, asset management, fintech, and aircraft leasing.
- Policy & Innovation:** Promotes competitive regulations, green finance, and cross-border financial trade.
- Sectors Covered:** Banking, capital markets, insurance, fund management, fintech, bullion exchange, sustainable finance.

## Significance

- The FCSS enables **direct settlement of foreign-currency transactions** within India, particularly through the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). Example: A transaction that earlier took 36–48 hours via foreign correspondent banks can now settle in **minutes** under FCSS.
- By settling transactions directly in foreign currency domestically, FCSS **minimizes counterparty risk** and exposure to exchange rate fluctuations. Case Study: Standard Chartered Bank (India unit) handled U.S. dollar clearances for GIFT City clients, demonstrating **reduced settlement risk and improved liquidity**.
- FCSS positions India among countries with **domestic infrastructure for foreign-currency settlement**.
- FCSS aligns with India's broader goal of **modernizing payment and settlement systems**.

## Performance

- The system reduces settlement times from **36–48 hours** (via traditional correspondent banks) to minutes or seconds, strengthening operational efficiency and liquidity management.
- The system initially supports U.S. dollar transactions and uses a designated settlement bank (Standard Chartered Bank (India)) for clearing.
- With FCSS operational, GIFT City positions itself among a select group of international financial centres (e.g., Hong Kong, Tokyo, Manila) with domestic foreign-currency settlement infrastructure.

## Challenges

- The settlement infrastructure exists, the challenge lies in scaling adoption, building supporting services, talent, and full participant commitment. For example, initial settlement under FCSS is limited (e.g., U.S. dollar transactions via a designated settlement bank).
- FCSS is operational for a limited set of currencies (initially U.S. dollars) and within a specific jurisdiction (IFSC at GIFT City).
- Transitioning from older correspondent-bank chains (which often had higher cost but established routines) to a new domestic settlement system involves cost, change management, training, and certainty of service.

## Way Forward

- Extend the system beyond the U.S. dollar to include major global currencies (euro, pound, yen, etc.)
- Enhance compliance, Know Your Customer processes, and operational risk management for cross-border settlements.
- Promote industry collaborations and partnerships to strengthen **financial, operational, and technological readiness**.
- Position India as a **regional hub for real-time foreign currency settlements**, similar to Hong Kong, Singapore, or London.

### 3.5 AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR (AEO) PROGRAMME

#### Context

- India's AEO Programme, developed under **World Customs Organization's SAFE Framework (2005)** and implemented by **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** since 2011 (revamped 2016), is praised by the World Trade Organization for boosting MSME participation in global trade.

#### Details

- The Authorized Economic Operator Programme is a **customs initiative** designed to **facilitate secure and efficient international trade**. It is part of the **World Customs Organization's (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards** was launched by **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** in 2011, aimed at enhancing global supply chain security while promoting trade facilitation.
- Objectives:** Enhance supply chain security, streamline global trade, simplify customs compliance, and support MSMEs as trusted international trade partners.

#### Key Features

- Certified importers, exporters, and logistics operators gain **recognition as compliant and reliable participants** in international trade.
- Customs inspections and procedures are **prioritized based on risk assessment**, allowing low-risk operators to enjoy faster clearance.
- Reduces **procedural delays, documentation requirements, and physical inspections**.
- Enhances protection against **fraud, smuggling, and illicit trade**.
- Promotes **integration into global supply chains**.

#### Performance

- The programme has been **praised by the World Trade Organization** for enabling more small exporters (MSMEs) to access international trade channels.

- According to a study by the World Customs Organization (WCO), AEO-certified operators in India enjoyed **faster release times**: e.g., average release time for AEO-facilitated Bills of Entry was 103 hours versus 144 hours for non-AEO.

#### Benefits of AEO Status

- Faster customs clearance for imports and exports.
- Deferred duty payments.
- Reduced inspections and document checks.
- Global recognition as secure and reliable trade partners.
- Enhanced credibility with foreign customs authorities and businesses.

#### Challenges

- Certification process itself is slow and bureaucratic, which reduces the attractiveness of the programme and may deter smaller firms from applying. **Example:** It is noted that applications routinely take **8–10 months or more**, undermining the “ease of doing business” aim.
- Lack of clarity regarding the impact of provisions invoked under show-cause notices.
- Certain sectors or smaller operators perceive that the cost (in compliance, investment) exceeds the benefit.
- AEO study flagged “no standardised CA certificate format”, and “online application file size limits affect information sharing”.

#### Way Forward

- Reduce processing timelines, adopt a fully digital application and approval workflow, other countries like **Singapore have reduced AEO processing to under 3 months** using integrated online systems.
- Issue clear guidelines for disqualifications, auditor certifications, and interpretation of past compliance issues. In **Europe, consistent criteria across member states led to higher**

- adoption and easier cross-border recognition of AEO status.
- Expand tangible benefits such as **reduced inspections, faster customs clearance, and financial incentives.**
- Provide **training, technical support, and financial guidance** to smaller firms to meet AEO standards.

#### **World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards**

The **SAFE Framework of Standards** is a global initiative developed by the **World Customs Organization (WCO)** to **secure and facilitate international trade**. It provides **minimum standards and best practices** for customs administrations and businesses, aiming to protect the international supply chain while ensuring the smooth flow of legitimate trade.

#### **Key Objectives**

- **Secure the international supply chain:** Reduce risks of terrorism, smuggling, and counterfeit goods in global trade.
- **Facilitate legitimate trade:** Streamline customs procedures to minimize delays for compliant traders.
- **Promote collaboration:** Encourage public-private partnerships between customs authorities and businesses.
- **Standardize processes:** Harmonize procedures across countries to simplify global trade operations.

#### **About WCO**

The **World Customs Organization (WCO)** is an **intergovernmental organization** established in 1952 to **enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of customs administrations globally**. It sets **standards, provides guidance, and promotes international cooperation** to facilitate trade, collect revenue, and ensure security. The WCO has **over 180 member countries**, covering more than 98% of global trade.

- **Mission:** To **enhance the efficiency, security, and reliability of customs administrations worldwide**.
- **Trade Facilitation:** Provides tools and guidelines to reduce clearance times and administrative burdens.
- **Capacity Building:** Offers training, workshops, and technical support to strengthen customs capabilities globally.
- **Revenue Collection:** Helps countries efficiently enforce tariffs and taxes on imports and exports.

### **3.6 SWAMIH FUND**

#### **Context**

- RBI exempts SWAMIH Fund from tightened Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) regulations to support stalled housing projects in the affordable and mid-income segment.
- **Details:** Launched in 2019, **SWAMIH Fund**, sponsored by the **Ministry of Finance** and managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd (SBI subsidiary), provides last-mile funding for stalled or delayed housing projects.
- **Purpose:** Revive stalled housing projects, ensure timely delivery, restore real estate liquidity, and boost stakeholder confidence.

#### **Eligibility**

- **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA)**-registered stalled or delayed projects, and financially distressed projects.
- It must also fall under the '**Affordable and Middle-Income Project**' category (any housing projects wherein housing units do not exceed 200 sq.m.).

#### **Significance**

- Provides **financial support to developers** facing liquidity issues, enabling them to complete unfinished housing projects.
- Protects homebuyers' interests and helps in bridging the **housing shortage** in urban India,



aligning with the government's **Housing for All** initiative. Recently, the fund announced the milestone of completing **50,000 homes** in stalled projects.

- Strengthens investor and developer confidence.
- The fund's intervention not only completes housing units but also creates value for developers, boosts demand-supply dynamics but also boosts demand-supply dynamics which triggers downstream economic activity in construction, materials, jobs and services. **For example**, a project in Gurgaon (ATS Marigold) revived with the fund's backing saw property prices more than double and early repayment of the loan.

### Performance

- Since its inception in 2019, the SWAMIH Fund has **completed over 50,000 housing units** installed affordable/mid-income residential projects.
- By early 2023, it had unlocked more than **₹35,000 crore in liquidity** for the real-estate sector, by completing over 20,000 homes and sanctioning 130 projects.

### Challenges

- **Huge Backlog of Stalled Projects:** According to the Indian Banks' Association, there are about **4.1 lakh housing units** worth

approximately **₹4.1 lakh crore** still stalled across India.

- **Project Identification and Eligibility Constraints:** Reports note difficulties in identifying projects that are truly viable (net-worth positive, sufficiently progressed, RERA-registered) and thus eligible for the fund.
- **Regulatory and Execution Delays:** Challenges cited include regulatory delays around land titles, approvals, state-level clearances and construction disruptions (labour shortages etc).
- **Funding scale vs Market need:** The size of the problem and number of stalled units far exceed the capacity of current funds: "stalled budget homes far exceed SWAMIH's target of 100,000 units" in some markets.

### Way Forward

- Increase corpus and leverage **private capital through blended finance models** to bridge the gap between fund resources and the large backlog of stalled projects.
- Use **data-driven project screening** to prioritize viable projects with high completion potential.
- Implement **real-time monitoring dashboards** for construction progress, fund disbursal, and milestone tracking.
- Collaborate closely with **state governments and urban local bodies** to resolve local infrastructure, land, and labour issues.

## 3.7 DUTY-FREE TARIFF PREFERENCE (DFTP) SCHEME

### Context

- Commended by WTO for boosting exports of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

### Launch & Administration

- Launched in 2008; administered by Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

### Objective

- Provide tariff preferences (zero/reduced duties) for Least Developed Countries (LDC) exports to India.

- Promote economic growth, export diversification, and South-South cooperation.

### Key Features

- **Duty-Free Access:** Preferential market entry for eligible LDC goods.
- **Eligible Countries:** All 48 UN-designated LDCs, including Bangladesh, Nepal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mozambique.
- **Eligible Products:** Agricultural goods, textiles & garments, handicrafts, leather products, minerals & metals.

## Performance

- The scheme covers approximately **94.1% of tariff lines** for exports from least developed countries (LDCs) to India.
- In 2024, exports from LDCs to India under the scheme amounted to around **US \$21.5 billion**, positioning India as the **5th largest export destination for LDCs**.
- The coverage of the tariff lines has **expanded from 85% in 2012 to 98% by 2014** for duty-free or preferential access.
- Some beneficiary countries had **extremely low utilisation rates** (e.g., Bangladesh with 0% on certain lines) despite the preferential access.

## Challenges

- **Very low utilisation rates:** Even though duty-free access is offered widely, the actual take-up is minimal. A report by the **World Trade Organization** shows that about **85% of the 11,000 tariff-lines** offered by India under the scheme had **zero utilisation** in 2020.
- **Non-tariff and procedural barriers reduce benefit:** Challenges such as **rules of origin, certificate requirements, logistics costs, documentation and low awareness** are cited as barriers, for e.g. many LDCs' exports to India under the scheme still enter via non-preferential (most-favoured-nation) routes despite large "preference margins".

- Despite large duty-free margins, exporters in LDCs may bypass the preference scheme perhaps due to complexity or lack of knowledge, while choosing standard route.
- **Data transparency and monitoring limitations:** Without reliable data on how many beneficiary countries truly used the scheme, what barriers they faced, and what trade-outcomes resulted, it is difficult to evaluate and refine the scheme.

## Way Forward

- Conduct **training programs, webinars, and outreach campaigns** for exporters in beneficiary least developed countries (LDCs).
- Streamline documentation, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and **introduce digital portals** for preference claims.
- Regularly track **scheme utilisation, trade volumes, and preferential margin use** for each beneficiary country.
- Promote **capacity building in LDCs for processing and value addition** so that exports are not limited to raw or low-value goods.
- Work with LDC governments, chambers of commerce, and international organizations (like WTO, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) to **align incentives, improve logistics, and ensure policy coherence**.

## 3.8 SHORT ARTICLES

### India-EFTA Free Trade Agreement

#### Context:

- The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between **India and the EFTA bloc**—comprising **Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein** has officially come into force.

#### Details:

- The agreement, formally known as the **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)**, signed in March 2024 and effective from October 1, 2025, strengthens India's trade outreach, following pacts with the UAE, Australia, and the UK.

#### Objective:

- Enhance market access for Indian exports, boost investments and job creation, supported by a dedicated EFTA Desk since February 2025.

### Clean Slate Doctrine under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

#### Context:

- The Delhi High Court recently reaffirmed the *Clean Slate Doctrine* under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

About:

What is the Clean Slate Doctrine?

- The **Clean Slate Doctrine** is a legal principle under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)**. It ensures that once a company goes through the **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)** and is acquired by a new promoter or buyer, the **new management is not liable** for any of the past **financial, legal, or regulatory liabilities** of the company.

Objective:

- To provide the revived company with a fresh start, free from: Past dues, Penalties, Criminal liabilities, Regulatory claims

## Sevilla Forum on Debt

Context:

- Launched at UNCTAD16 in Geneva to address global sovereign debt issues.

Led by:

- Government of Spain

Supported by:

- UNCTAD and UNDESA

Platform:

- Sevilla Platform for Action (from FfD4 outcomes)

Aim & Objectives:

- Facilitate global dialogue on sovereign debt reform, strengthen cooperation among stakeholders, and explore innovative solutions for debt sustainability in developing countries.

### 3.9 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic name	Date
Stable Coins: Meaning, Difference and Way Forward	04 <sup>th</sup> October
Reimagining Swadeshi: Local Manufacturing in a Globalised World	06 <sup>th</sup> October
Employment: A national Priority	06 <sup>th</sup> October
Domestic Investment and Inclusive Capital: Meaning, Challenges, and Way Forward	08 <sup>th</sup> October
GST cuts and advantages on exports	15 <sup>th</sup> October
Fall in FDI inflow	22 <sup>nd</sup> October
AI Governance in Indian Banking: Challenges and Solutions	28 <sup>th</sup> October
US Federal Reserve Rate Cuts: Implications for the Indian Economy	30 <sup>th</sup> October

## 4. DEFENSE & SECURITY

### 4.1 SHORT ARTICLES

#### Exercise KONKAN-25

##### Context

- Indian Navy and the UK Royal Navy conducted bilateral Exercise KONKAN-25 off India's western coast.

##### Details

- Exercise Konkan is an **annual bilateral maritime drill between India and the UK**, launched in 2004. The 2025 edition includes a Harbour Phase for professional exchanges, aligns with the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Roadmap 2030. Other Exercises Between India and UK: AJEYA WARRIOR (Army), Exercise Cobra Warrior, Exercise Indradhanush (Air Force),

location of the exercise alternates yearly between the two countries.

#### Samudra Shakti-2025

##### Context

- The 5th Indo-Indonesian bilateral maritime exercise conducted in Visakhapatnam.

##### Details

- Samudra Shakti, launched in 2018 **under Act East Policy**, is a naval exercise that boosts cooperation between India and Indonesia. Other bilateral initiatives include Garuda Shakti for army counter-terrorism and jungle warfare, and IND-INDO CORPAT for routine naval patrols to secure vital sea lanes.

#### NATPOLREX-X

##### Context

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted the 10th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-X) off Chennai coast.

##### Details

- NATPOLREX-X, a **biennial exercise**, enhances response for marine oil spill response, promoting inter-agency cooperation and aligning with the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP). The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG), the Central Coordinating Authority for oil spill response, developed the NOSDCP in 1993** and operates four Pollution Response Centres to safeguard India's energy supply, which is heavily reliant on seaborne oil.

#### Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2025

##### Context

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled the Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2025.

##### Details

- DPM guides the acquisition of goods, services, and equipment for the Armed Forces, to promote indigenisation and operational readiness. Key reforms include capping Liquidated Damages (LDs) for delays at 10%.
- To boost self-reliance, indigenous developments receive guaranteed orders for up to five years or more.

#### AUSTRAHIND 2025

##### Context

- India Army participated in the 'AUSTRAHIND 2025' in Riga, Queensland, Australia.

##### Details

- AustraHind is an annual military exercise between India and Australia, designed to enhance cooperation and interoperability. The

#### Ayni Airbase

##### Context

- India has ended its strategic presence in Central Asia by officially withdrawing from Tajikistan's Ayni Airbase.

##### Details

- Ayni Airbase, a Soviet-era outpost, marked India's second overseas military foothold after the short-lived Farkhor base (1998-2008). Its strategic proximity to Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor provided India with an advantage



over Pakistan and access to Central Asian resources, with India investing around \$100 million in upgrades. The **Bilateral agreement**

expired four years ago and was not renewed by Tajikistan.

## 4.2 SNIPPETS

### MISSILES IN NEWS

Missile	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)</b> has announced plans to <b>extend the range of the Astra Mark 2 air-to-air missile to over 200 kilometres</b></li> <li>The <b>Astra Mark 2</b> is an advanced <b>Beyond Visual Range (BVR)</b> air-to-air missile designed to engage enemy aircraft at long distances</li> </ul> <p><b>Developed by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)</b></li> <li>Collaboration with over <b>50 public and private industries</b>, including <b>Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)</b>.</li> <li><b>Objective:</b> To provide the <b>Indian Air Force (IAF)</b> with a superior indigenous weapon system capable of striking aerial targets at extended ranges and to promote <b>defence exports</b> to friendly nations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Astra Mark 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already <b>inducted</b> into the <b>Indian Air Force</b>.</li> <li>Integrated with <b>LCA Tejas</b> and <b>Su-30 MKI</b> fighter aircraft.</li> <li><b>Range:</b> 90–100 km.</li> <li><b>Propulsion:</b> Single-pulse smokeless solid-fuel motor.</li> </ul>
<b>Astra Mark 2 Missile</b>	<p><b>Astra Mark 2 (Upgraded Version):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Range:</b> Capable of reaching <b>150–180 km</b>, with ongoing efforts to <b>extend it beyond 200 km</b>.</li> <li><b>Speed:</b> Up to <b>Mach 4.5</b> (4.5 times the speed of sound).</li> <li><b>Propulsion:</b> Dual-pulse rocket motor (offers higher thrust and longer endurance).</li> <li><b>Guidance System:</b> Equipped with an <b>indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker</b> for precision targeting, integrated with the <b>Su-30 MKI platform</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Akash Missile System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has reportedly proposed the <b>export of the Akash Missile System</b> to <b>Brazil</b>, following high-level defence discussions between India's <b>Defence Minister</b> and <b>Brazilian Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin</b> in <b>New Delhi</b>.</li> <li>The <b>Akash Missile System</b> is a <b>short-range surface-to-air missile (SAM)</b> platform designed to defend key areas and assets from various <b>aerial threats</b>, such as fighter jets, helicopters, drones, and cruise missiles.</li> <li><b>Developer:</b> Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)</li> <li><b>Manufacturer:</b> Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Hyderabad</li> <li><b>Users:</b> Indian Army and Indian Air Force</li> </ul> <p><b>Operational Capabilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can <b>engage multiple aerial targets simultaneously</b> in both <b>Group Mode</b> and <b>Autonomous Mode</b>.</li> <li>Possesses a <b>kill probability of up to 99%</b> when fired in a <b>salvo of two missiles</b>.</li> </ul>



- **Rajendra Radar:** A multifunctional fire control radar that can **track multiple targets** and **guide several missiles** concurrently.
- **Integrated Control Centre:** Manages **mission guidance**, **fire control**, and **communication** through a **C4I (Command, Control, Communication & Intelligence)** system.
- **Digital Autopilot and Explosion Mechanism**

### 4.3 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic Name	Date
Left-Wing Extremism In India	4th October 2025
Disaster Resilience In India	6th October 2025
Cyber Frauds In Digital India	9th October 2025

## 5. ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### 5.1 COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (CAQM)

#### Context

- CAQM focuses on controlling stubble burning and winter air pollution in Delhi-NCR and adjoining states, addressing a major contributor to hazardous air quality.
- **About CAQM:** Statutory body under the 2021 Act, covering Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
- **Objectives:** Coordinate air quality management, support research and policy-making, and ensure inter-state cooperation for uniform pollution control.
- **Powers and Functions:** Regulate pollution, issue legally binding orders, conduct studies, and remain directly accountable to Parliament.

#### Composition

- Chair: Senior official (Secretary/Chief Secretary, 3-year term or until 70).
- Five members from state governments.
- Three full-time experts, three NGO representatives.
- Institutional experts from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), NITI Aayog.

#### Significance

- CAQM provides a **single authoritative body** to coordinate among central ministries, states, and local governments.
- Real-time air quality monitoring through **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS)** and use of **source apportionment studies** and **dispersion modelling**.
- Ensuring coordination in controlling **transboundary pollution sources**, especially **stubble burning**.
- Issues **directions** to states and industries and imposes **penalties** under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.

#### Performance

- CAQM has created a **unified decision-making platform** between Central Government, **National Capital Region (NCR)** states, **CPCB**, and **State Pollution Control Board (SPCBs)**.
- CAQM revised the **Graded Response Action Plan** into a **proactive, predictive model** using the *Decision Support System (DSS)* developed by IITM Pune.
- **Thermal power plants** around NCR mandated to adopt **Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) technology** or **shift to biomass co-firing**. For e.g. Closure of old polluting plants like **Badarpur Thermal Plant**.

#### Challenges

- **Overlapping Jurisdictions:** Multiple agencies (**CPCB, SPCBs, National Green Tribunal, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change**, State Govts, Urban Local Bodies) still operate parallelly, for e.g. Delhi government's construction dust and vehicular restrictions sometimes contradict CAQM orders.
- **Weak Enforcement Mechanism:** CAQM lacks its own enforcement arm and relies on **state pollution control boards and district administrations**. For e.g. stubble burning persists despite CAQM directives due to poor local enforcement in Punjab and Haryana.
- **Limited Jurisdiction:** CAQM's authority is confined to **NCR and adjoining districts**, while **air pollution is a regional and transboundary issue**. For e.g. Western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Punjab emissions still influence.
- **Technical and Data Constraints:** The **Decision Support System (DSS)** developed by IITM Pune helps forecasting, but its **resolution and accuracy** need improvement for local action planning.
- **Socio-Economic Barriers:** Despite schemes and incentives, **economic compulsions of farmers** continue to drive crop residue burning.

## Way Forward

- **Strengthen Institutional Capacity:** Establish an independent enforcement wing with on-ground inspection and penalty powers.
- **Expand Jurisdiction & Adopt Regional Airshed Approach:** Extend coverage beyond NCR to the entire Indo-Gangetic Plain, recognizing air pollution as a transboundary issue.
- **Enhance Cooperative Federalism:** Foster state-centre collaboration via joint action plans and performance-based grants.
- **Strengthen Technical & Data Infrastructure:** Upgrade the Decision Support System (DSS) for higher spatial resolution and real-time local forecasting.
- **Empower Local Institutions:** Involve Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and district air quality cells in implementation and monitoring.

## 5.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION INTENSITY (GEI) TARGET RULES, 2025

### Context

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has issued the first legally binding Greenhouse Gas Emission Intensity (GEI) Target Rules, 2025, aimed at curbing industrial emissions and promoting low-carbon manufacturing across key sectors.

### Background

- Notified under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), 2023, these rules mark India's first legally binding emission-reduction framework for industries.
- Implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power, they operationalize India's commitment to reduce emission intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels).

### Concept

- **Emission Intensity (GEI):** Refers to greenhouse gas emissions (in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) per unit of production output.
- The rules aim to decouple industrial growth from emissions, focusing on efficiency rather than capping production.

### Coverage

- Applicable to energy-intensive sectors in the first phase: Aluminium, Cement, Chlor-Alkali, and Pulp & Paper.
- Covers about 282 designated industrial units for compliance years 2025–26 and 2026–27.

### Mechanism

- Each unit will have: A baseline GEI (average from FY 2023–24) and annual reduction targets for subsequent years.
- **Performance-linked mechanism:**
  - Units achieving targets → earn carbon credits (issued by the BEE).
  - Units exceeding limits → purchase credits or pay penalties.
- **Trading Platform:** These credits can be traded under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), allowing companies to profit from sustainable practices.
- **Measurement Unit:** Emission intensity will be calculated in tCO<sub>2</sub>e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) — a unit that standardizes all greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, etc.) based on their global warming potential.

### Key Features of the GEI Rules

- **Strengthening India's Climate Commitments:** Helps India achieve its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to reduce emission intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels).
- **Transition from Voluntary to Binding Framework:** Marks a shift from earlier voluntary emission reduction programs (like PAT scheme) to legally enforceable, sector-specific targets.
- Strengthens India's domestic carbon market, promoting carbon pricing and green investments.



- **Enhances Global Competitiveness:** Lowers the carbon footprint of Indian exports, helping industries comply with emerging international mechanisms such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

### Current Status of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission

- According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *Emissions Gap Report*, current policies are likely to lead to warming of 2.3 °C to 2.8 °C by end of century—well above the 1.5 °C target of the Paris Agreement.
- India's per-capita emissions remain relatively low (2.9 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) compared to the global average (6.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) as of the last reported year.
- India made progress—emission intensity of GDP fell 36% between 2005-2020.

### Challenges

- Heavy reliance on coal-fired power plants keeps CO<sub>2</sub> emissions high despite renewable energy growth.
- **Energy-intensive sectors** (cement, steel, aluminium, chemicals) contribute a significant share of emissions.

- Practices like **stubble burning**, livestock emissions, and fertilizer use increase **methane and nitrous oxide emissions**.
- Lack of **real-time monitoring** and **high-resolution emissions data** hinders accurate tracking of GHGs.
- Fragmented policies across **central, state, and local agencies** can create **overlaps or enforcement gaps**.

### Way Forward

- Expand **mandatory emission reduction schemes** like GEI Target Rules to more sectors and set **long-term sectoral decarbonization roadmaps** aligned with **Net-Zero 2070**.
- Gradually **phase down coal dependence** in power generation with support for stranded asset management.
- Encourage **energy-efficient production processes** and **low-carbon technologies** in heavy industries.
- Implement **urban planning for low-carbon cities** and reduce congestion-related emissions.
- Use **Decision Support Systems (DSS)** and AI for predictive mitigation planning.
- Expand **green finance, climate bonds, and carbon markets** to fund decarbonization.

## 5.3 SHORT ARTICLES

### Amazon Rainforest

#### Context

- A Nature study shows Amazon Rainforest trees are growing larger as rising atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels triggers the carbon fertilisation effect, enhancing photosynthesis and plant growth.

#### Location

- **Brazil** (60% of the forest), **Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana.**

#### Climate Features:

- **High annual rainfall, High humidity levels, consistently warm temperatures**

- **"Lungs of the Earth":** Produces approximately **20% of global oxygen**, serves as a **major carbon sink**, absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> and regulating the global climate.

#### Positive impacts:

- Larger Amazon trees **store more carbon**, helping mitigate climate change.
- Increased tree size **enhances forest biomass and productivity**, supporting wildlife habitats.
- The Amazon acts as a **temporary climate buffer**, partially offsetting global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Limitations:

- Growth may be limited by **soil nutrient deficiencies** such as nitrogen and phosphorus.

- **Climate stress** from higher temperatures, droughts, and extreme events can reduce growth benefits.
- **Deforestation, fires, and human activities** diminish the positive effects.
- **Ecosystem imbalance** may occur as faster-growing species alter forest composition and biodiversity.

## IUCN World Conservation Congress

### Context:

- At the **IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025**, India launched its **National Red List Roadmap and Vision 2025–2030**, marking a major step in biodiversity documentation and conservation efforts.

### Details:

#### National Red List Roadmap and Vision 2025–2030:

##### Vision:

- **Assess 11,000 species** (=7,000 plants + 4,000 animals) by 2030.
- Publish **National Red Data Books** for flora and fauna.
- Provide a **science-based database** for conservation planning, policy-making, and biodiversity monitoring.
- Enhance **capacity-building** of **taxonomists, researchers, and institutions** involved in biodiversity assessments.

##### Methodology:

- Uses **IUCN Red List criteria**; integrates terrestrial and marine species; includes local and indigenous knowledge.

##### Institutional Coordination:

- Led by the **Botanical Survey of India** and the **Zoological Survey of India**, with support from the **Centre for Species Survival India** and other organizations.

##### IUCN World Conservation Congress:

- The **IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC)** is the **largest global gathering** of conservation experts, scientists, policymakers, civil society organizations, and industry leaders.

- Held **once every four years**, the Congress serves as a platform to discuss and shape **international priorities** on **biodiversity, nature conservation, and climate action** and recognized as **IUCN's highest decision-making body**.
- The 2025 edition is organized under the theme **"Powering Transformative Conservation"**.

## IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas

### Context:

- Recently, the **Director of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve** received the **Kenton R. Miller Award**, an international recognition instituted by the **IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**

#### About IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

- The **World Commission on Protected Areas** is one of the **six commissions** of the **International Union for Conservation of Nature**.
- It is a global network of **conservation professionals, scientists, policymakers, and practitioners** working to support and enhance protected areas worldwide.

### Objective

- Its objectives are to **improve management, advise on establishment, develop standards, build capacity, and support policy decisions** for protected areas worldwide.

### Key activities

- It includes **assessment and monitoring of protected areas, producing management guidelines, facilitating global initiatives, and fostering collaboration** among governments, organizations, and communities.

#### Kenton R. Miller Award

- The **Kenton R. Miller Award for Innovation in Protected Area Sustainability** is a **biennial international award** presented by the **IUCN-WCPA**. The recipient of the **Kenton R. Miller Award** receives a **cash prize of USD 5,000**.

## 5.4 SNIPPETS

### WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, NATIONAL PARK, TIGER RESERVE

Name	Details
Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Goa State Board for Wildlife</b> has proposal concerns <b>iron ore handling operations</b> at <b>Kalem railway station</b>, located within the <b>Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park</b>.</li> <li><b>Location:</b> Situated along the <b>eastern boundary of Goa</b>, near <b>Mollem village</b>. The <b>core zone</b> of about <b>170 sq. km</b> is designated as <b>Mollem National Park</b>.</li> <li><b>Landmarks:</b> Dudhsagar Waterfalls, Devil's Canyon, Tambdi Surla Temple, Tambdi Falls</li> <li><b>Wildlife:</b> Leopards, Indian Elephants, Deer species, Gaur (Indian Bison).</li> <li><b>Birds:</b> Home to nearly <b>200 bird species</b>, such as: <b>Malabar Pied Hornbill, Great Indian Hornbill, Indian Black Woodpecker, Kingfishers, Paradise Flycatchers, Shrikes, Grey Junglefowl</b></li> </ul>
Sundarbans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</b> has downgraded the <b>conservation outlook</b> of the <b>Sundarbans National Park</b> from "<b>Good with Some Concerns</b>" to "<b>Significant Concerns</b>."</li> <li><b>Location:</b> Southeastern West Bengal, near Kolkata</li> <li><b>Habitat:</b> Part of Sundarbans mangrove forest; formed by Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers</li> <li><b>Established:</b> 1973 under Project Tiger to protect the Royal Bengal Tiger</li> <li><b>UNESCO Status:</b> World Heritage Site (1987); World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2001)</li> <li><b>Biosphere Reserve:</b> Declared in 1989 for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.</li> </ul>

### SPECIES IN NEWS

Species	Details
Snow Leopard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Himachal Pradesh has recorded <b>83 snow leopards</b> in its latest survey, a significant rise from <b>51 in 2021</b>.</li> <li>About: Official state animal of <b>Ladakh</b> and <b>Himachal Pradesh</b>. Found across <b>12 countries</b>, including: India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.</li> <li><b>Conservation Status:</b> Listed as <b>Vulnerable</b> on the <b>IUCN Red List</b>.</li> </ul>
Green Sea Turtle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the <b>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</b>, the <b>Green Sea Turtle (Chelonia mydas)</b> has shown a remarkable recovery, with its <b>Red List status improving from "Endangered" to "Least Concern."</b></li> <li><b>Species:</b> Largest hard-shelled sea turtle</li> <li><b>Habitat:</b> Tropical &amp; subtropical oceans (Indian, Pacific, Atlantic)</li> <li><b>Ecological Role:</b> Keystone species; maintains seagrass beds and coral reefs</li> <li><b>Conservation Status:</b> IUCN Red List – Least Concern</li> </ul>
Indian Wolf	The <b>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</b> has, for the <b>first time</b> , assessed the <b>Indian Wolf (Canis lupus pallipes)</b> as a <b>distinct subspecies</b> of the Grey Wolf.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian Wolf is native to parts of <b>South Asia</b> and <b>Southwest Asia</b>, found across: <b>India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Iran, Turkey, Israel, and Syria.</b></li> <li>Indian Wolves inhabit <b>semi-arid grasslands, scrublands, and pastoral landscapes</b> where they coexist with human settlements and livestock.</li> </ul> <p><b>IUCN Red List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable</li> </ul> <p><b>CITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix I</li> </ul> <p><b>Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (India)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule I</li> </ul>
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## 5.5 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic name	Date
Clean Energy and Climate Finance	04 <sup>th</sup> October
From Giants to Small Menace: The Changing Face of Wildlife Conflict in Kerala	07 <sup>th</sup> October
Invasive Alien Species: Meaning, Challenges, and Way Forward	09 <sup>th</sup> October
Climate Models: Meaning, issues and way forward	14 <sup>th</sup> October
Microplastic Pollution and health issues	15 <sup>th</sup> October
Rising Carbon di-oxide levels	18 <sup>th</sup> October
Carbon free shipping: Meaning, challenges and way forward	21 <sup>st</sup> October
India's Expanding Green Footprint: Global Rankings, Achievements, and the Way Forward	25 <sup>th</sup> October
Disaster Preparedness in the Himalayan Region: Role of Early Warning Systems	29 <sup>th</sup> October

## 6. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH

### 6.1 INTERSTELLAR MAPPING AND ACCELERATION PROBE (IMAP)

#### Context

- NASA's IMAP mission studies how solar particles gain energy and how the heliosphere protects Earth from cosmic radiation, enhancing space weather prediction capabilities.

#### Mission Details

- Explores the heliosphere's outer edge, tracks energetic particles from the Sun and beyond, and provides data to improve space weather predictions impacting satellites, astronauts, and Earth's power systems.

#### Mission Objectives

- Study energetic particles from the Sun and interstellar space, map the local galactic environment, understand heliosphere's protective role, and improve prediction of solar wind disruptions and radiation hazards.

#### Location & Operations

- Stationed at Lagrange Point 1 (L1), ~1 million miles from Earth; continuously observes solar wind and space particles with near real-time data transmission.

#### Significance

- IMAP maps the **boundary of the heliosphere**, the region influenced by the Sun's magnetic field and solar wind,
- Measures **energetic neutral atoms** and **charged particles** from the Sun.
- Provides **real-time data on solar wind and particle flows**, improving forecasts of **space weather events**.
- Helps map the **interaction between the solar wind and interstellar gas**, improving our understanding of the **local galactic environment**.
- Offers insights into **particle acceleration, magnetism, and plasma physics** relevant across the universe.

- Enhances **capabilities for future deep-space exploration and protection of space-based infrastructure**.

#### Challenges

- Extreme Space Environment:** Must operate in deep space beyond Earth's magnetosphere, facing **high radiation, extreme temperatures, and cosmic particle exposure**.
- Instrument Sensitivity and Precision:** Requires **ultra-sensitive detectors** to capture energetic neutral atoms and cosmic rays with high accuracy.
- Long-Duration Mission:** Extended mission duration demands **robust spacecraft systems** for power, communication, and thermal management over years.
- Data Transmission:** Collecting vast amounts of data from **millions of kilometers away** poses challenges in **bandwidth and real-time analysis**.
- Complex Scientific Interpretation:** Mapping interactions between **solar wind and interstellar medium** involves **highly complex models**, requiring cross-validation with other missions.

#### Way Forward

- Enhanced Instrumentation:** Develop **next-generation detectors** for higher sensitivity and precision in measuring cosmic rays and energetic particles.
- Extended Mission Planning:** Plan for **longer-duration operations** with robust systems for power, thermal control, and communication to maximize scientific output.
- Collaborative Data Analysis:** Integrate IMAP data with missions like **Voyager, Interstellar Boundary Explorer, and future interstellar probes** for a comprehensive understanding of the heliosphere.
- Advanced Modelling:** Use **sophisticated simulations and artificial intelligence** to



interpret complex interactions between solar wind and interstellar medium.

- **Global Scientific Collaboration:** Encourage international partnerships to share insights,

technology, and mission costs for deeper exploration.

## 6.2 SHORT ARTICLES

### Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP) Phase III

#### Context:

- The Union Cabinet has recently given the green light to continue the Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP) into its third phase, aiming to further advance India's biomedical research capabilities.

#### About:

- BRCP, launched via DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance, supports top-tier biomedical research in India, bridging lab discoveries and real-world applications.
- Phase III focuses on nurturing elite scientific talent.
- **Implementing Agencies:** DBT, Wellcome Trust (UK), and India Alliance SPV.

#### Key Components:

- Early Career and Intermediate Fellowships,
- Career Development Grants and Catalytic Collaborative Grants,
- Mentorship and research networks,
- Public engagement with science,
- National and international partnerships for broader impact

### Indian Radio Software Architecture (IRSA) Standard

#### Context:

- Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in partnership with the Integrated Defence Staff and the Tri-Services, introduced the Indian Radio Software Architecture (IRSA) Standard 1.0.

#### Details:

- **Purpose:** Provides a unified software architecture for secure and efficient

interoperability across radio communication systems.

- **National Significance:** India's first standardized software framework for Software Defined Radios (SDRs).
- **Global Benchmarking:** Aligns India with international SDR frameworks such as US SCA, Europe's ESSOR, and NATO's STANAG SDR standards.

#### What is Software Defined Radio (SDR)?

- A **Software Defined Radio (SDR)** is a communication system that uses **software-based components** to process and convert digital signals, replacing conventional hardware components like mixers and filters.

### Agri Enlcs Programme

#### Context:

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** recently announced the **transfer of technology under the Agri Enlcs Programme**, marking a significant step towards advancing digital innovation in agriculture and environmental management.

#### Details:

- **Objective:** Standardize, digitize, and provide accessible verified information on medicinal substances in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and other AYUSH systems.
- **Implementing Agency:** Developed by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), under the Ministry of AYUSH.

#### C-DAC:

- The **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** is the **premier R&D organization** under MeitY, responsible for advancing India's technological capabilities in electronics and information technology.

## DRAVYA Portal

### Context:

- The **DRAVYA Portal** has been launched with the goal of cataloguing information on **100 key medicinal substances** in its first phase.

### Details:

- The main objective of the portal is to **standardize, digitize, and make accessible** verified information about medicinal substances used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and other AYUSH systems.
- The initiative has been developed by the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**, an autonomous body under the **Ministry of AYUSH**.

### Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS):

- The CCRAS is an **autonomous research organization** under the **Ministry of AYUSH**, Government of India. It is responsible for **formulating, coordinating, and promoting** research in the field of **Ayurveda and allied sciences**.

## Crew Escape System (CES)

### Context:

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully developed a **cost-efficient, single-stage test vehicle** powered by the **Vikas engine** to evaluate and validate the performance of the **Crew Escape System (CES)** – a crucial safety mechanism for India's **Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission**.

### About:

- The **Crew Escape System (CES)** is an emergency safety feature designed to **rapidly separate the crew module and astronauts** from the launch vehicle in case of a launch failure.

### Types of Crew Escape Systems:

- Puller-Type System:** The escape tower pulls the crew module away from the rocket using powerful motors. Used in **India's Gaganyaan mission**.
- Pusher-Type System:** Compact, high-thrust liquid-fuel engines **push** the crew module

away from the launch vehicle. Used in **SpaceX's Falcon 9**.

- Vikas Engine:** The **Vikas engine** is a **liquid-fuel rocket engine** developed by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- Type:** Liquid propellant engine, **Fuel:** UH25 (a mixture of 75% Unsymmetrical Dimethylhydrazine (UDMH) and 25% Hydrazine Hydrate), **Oxidizer:** Nitrogen Tetroxide (N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>)

### Applications in ISRO Missions

- PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle):** Used in the second stage.
- GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle):** Used in the second stage and as strap-on boosters.
- Gaganyaan Test Vehicle:** Powers the **Crew Escape System** tests to ensure astronaut safety during emergencies.

## Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS)

### Context:

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully conducted a high-altitude test of the **Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS)** from an altitude of **32,000 feet**.

### About:

- The **MCPS** is an **indigenously developed** parachute system designed to meet the operational requirements of the **Indian Armed Forces**.

### Developing Organisations

- Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra**
- Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory (DEBEL), Bengaluru**

### Key Features of the Military Combat Parachute System

- High-Altitude Capability:** Successfully tested at **32,000 feet**
- Enhanced Tactical Performance:** Features improved steering control and a **reduced descent rate**.

- **Navigation Integration:** Compatible with Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) for accurate positioning and navigation
- **Operational Reliability:** Designed for high-altitude combat jumps under extreme conditions.

### 6.3 SNIPPETS

## DISEASES IN NEWS

Disease	Details
<b>False Smut Disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The paddy crop, currently at the maturing and harvest stage, has been infested with false smut disease.</li> </ul> <p><b>Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>False smut (Haldi Rog) of rice, caused by <i>Ustilaginoidea virens</i>, infects flowers, appears on panicles, and reduces grain weight and germination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Favourable Condition for Infection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Warm and humid weather:</b> 25–30°C temperature and &gt;80% humidity.</li> <li><b>High nitrogen content in soil:</b> Excess nitrogen increases susceptibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Crohn's Disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recent study indicates that consuming large amounts of <b>ultra-processed foods (UPFs)</b> may <b>aggravate gut inflammation</b> and increase the likelihood of <b>flare-ups</b> in individuals with <b>Crohn's disease</b>.</li> <li><b>Definition:</b> Chronic inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) causing persistent inflammation of the digestive tract.</li> <li><b>Affected Areas:</b> Can involve any part of the gastrointestinal tract, most commonly the small intestine and beginning of the large intestine.</li> <li><b>Impact:</b> Leads to irritation, digestive issues, and potential complications if untreated.</li> <li><b>Symptoms of Crohn's Disease:</b> Persistent diarrhea, abdominal pain, fatigue, weight loss, reduced appetite, and in severe cases, fever or blood in stool.</li> </ul>
<b>Keratoconus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recent study has shown that individuals suffering from <b>keratoconus</b> — a degenerative condition of the eye — may continue to experience <b>worsening vision</b> even after undergoing treatment.</li> <li><b>Definition:</b> Progressive eye disorder where the cornea thins and bulges into a cone shape, distorting vision.</li> <li><b>Effect:</b> Prevents proper light focus on the retina, causing blurred or distorted vision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blurred or distorted vision</li> <li>Light and glare sensitivity</li> <li>Frequent changes in eyeglass prescriptions</li> <li>Difficulty seeing at night</li> <li>Double vision or ghost images, often in one eye</li> </ul>
<b>Gastroenteritis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recent study on India's <b>indigenous rotavirus vaccine</b> has shown a <b>significant decline in rotavirus-related gastroenteritis</b> cases across various regions of the country.</li> <li><b>Gastroenteritis</b> refers to the <b>inflammation of the stomach and intestinal lining</b>, often resulting in symptoms like diarrhoea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.</li> <li><b>Causes:</b> Viruses (including <b>rotavirus</b> and <b>norovirus</b>.), Bacteria, Parasites, Chemicals or Toxins, Medications and Food Reactions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treatment: Replenish fluids and electrolytes through oral rehydration solutions (ORS).</li> </ul>
Leprosy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has made remarkable progress in controlling <b>leprosy</b>, with the prevalence rate dropping from <b>57.2 per 10,000 in 1981</b> to <b>0.57 in 2025</b>, marking a <b>99% reduction</b>.</li> <li>Leprosy is a <b>chronic infectious disease</b> caused by the bacterium <b>Mycobacterium leprae</b>. It mainly affects the <b>skin, peripheral nerves, eyes, and respiratory tract</b>, and if untreated, can cause <b>ulcers, deformities, and permanent disability</b>.</li> <li><b>Mode of Transmission:</b> Through <b>nasal droplets or mouth secretions</b></li> </ul> <p><b>National Strategic Plan (2023–2027)</b> The <b>National Leprosy Eradication Programme</b> has aligned its goals with the <b>Global Leprosy Strategy (2021–2030)</b> and the <b>WHO NTD Roadmap</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Target:</b> Interrupt disease transmission by <b>2027</b> and achieve <b>zero indigenous cases by 2030</b>.</li> <li><b>Focus Areas:</b> Strengthen surveillance, promote early diagnosis, and reduce social stigma.</li> </ul> <p><b>National-Level Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nikusth 2.0 Portal:</b> A digital platform for <b>real-time tracking</b> of patients and district-level monitoring.</li> <li><b>National AMR Surveillance for Leprosy (2023):</b> Monitors <b>drug resistance patterns</b>.</li> <li><b>Integration with Health Schemes:</b> Screening integrated with <b>Ayushman Bharat, RBSK, and RSKS</b>.</li> <li><b>PVTG Inclusion:</b> Particularly <b>Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)</b> brought under <b>PM-JANMAN</b> for focused interventions.</li> <li><b>Special District Monitoring:</b> 121 districts with high prevalence are under enhanced surveillance.</li> </ul>

## DRUGS IN NEWS

Drug	Details
Trichloroethylene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-term exposure to the industrial solvent trichloroethylene (TCE) outdoors may be linked to an increased risk of Parkinson's disease,</li> <li><b>About:</b> Synthetic, colorless, volatile organic chemical; does not occur naturally.</li> <li><b>Uses:</b> Degreasing agent for metals, found in some cleaning products.</li> <li><b>Environmental Persistence:</b> Degrades slowly; remains in air, water, and soil for long periods.</li> <li><b>Health Impacts:</b> Linked to cancer, liver and immune system damage, reproductive and developmental issues, and possible neurological effects including Parkinson's disease.</li> </ul>
Sinapic Acid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researchers from <b>Nagaland University</b> have discovered that <b>Sinapic acid</b>, a naturally occurring plant compound, can significantly <b>accelerate wound healing</b> in people with <b>diabetes</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nature and Source:</b> Sinapic acid is a <b>natural phenolic acid</b> and a <b>derivative of cinnamic acid</b>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Occurrence:</b> It is commonly found in <b>spices, citrus fruits, berries, vegetables, cereals, and oilseeds.</b></li> <li>• <b>Properties:</b> It exhibits multiple biological effects, including <b>antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antitumor, and neuroprotective</b> actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mechanism of Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sinapic acid functions by <b>activating the SIRT1 pathway</b>, which is essential for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tissue repair and regeneration</li> <li>○ Formation of new blood vessels (angiogenesis)</li> <li>○ Inflammation control</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Diabetic Wounds:</b> Diabetic wounds are <b>slow-healing sores</b>, often seen on the feet (diabetic foot ulcers).</li> <li>• <b>Risks:</b> Such wounds can lead to <b>nerve damage (neuropathy), infections</b>, and in severe cases, <b>amputation</b> if untreated.</li> </ul>
<b>Nafithromycin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India has achieved a major milestone in medical research with the discovery of <b>Nafithromycin</b>, the <b>country's first indigenously developed antibiotic.</b></li> <li>• <b>Developed by:</b> Indian scientists with support from the <b>Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)</b>, under the <b>Department of Biotechnology (DBT).</b></li> <li>• <b>Trade Name:</b> Marketed as "<b>Mignaf.</b>"</li> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> Specifically designed to treat <b>Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP)</b> and other <b>resistant respiratory infections.</b></li> <li>• <b>Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP)</b> is a <b>lung infection</b> that develops <b>outside of hospitals or healthcare settings.</b> It is caused by bacteria that infect the lungs, leading to inflammation and fluid accumulation in the air sacs (alveoli).</li> </ul>

#### 6.4 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic	Date
The Burden of Influenza: Need for immunization	6 <sup>th</sup> October
AI transforming teaching and learning: Explained	06 <sup>th</sup> October
Nobel Prize in Medicine 2025 Awarded for Breakthrough Discovery in Immune Regulation	07 <sup>th</sup> October
Contaminated Medicine: Explained	8 <sup>th</sup> October
Chemistry Nobel 2025: Unlocking the Power of Metal–Organic Frameworks	09 <sup>th</sup> October
Anti-biotic resistance: Meaning, Issues and Way-forward	10 <sup>th</sup> October
Biotechnology ecosystem needs to be redefined	16 <sup>th</sup> October
Solar physics: Meaning, issue and way forward	23 <sup>rd</sup> October



## 7. CULTURE & HISTORY

### 7.1 SHORT ARTICLES

#### Bathukamma Festival

##### Context

- The **Bathukamma** festival celebrations in **Telangana**, organized by the **state government**, have recently earned **two Guinness World Records**, bringing global recognition to this vibrant cultural event.

##### About:

- **Bathukamma** is a **flower festival** predominantly celebrated by **women** in **Telangana**. The festival honours the **divine feminine energy** and celebrates **nature, culture, and womanhood**.

##### Celebration Time:

- Bathukamma, **Telangana's** official state festival, is celebrated annually during **Durga Navratri**, usually in **September–October**.

#### Mera Hou Chongba Festival

##### Context:

- The **Mera Hou Chongba Festival**, symbolizing **hill-valley unity**, was recently celebrated across **Manipur**.

##### Details:

- The **Mera Hou Chongba Festival** is **one of Manipur's oldest traditional celebrations**, observed every year on the **15th lunar day of the Mera month as per the Meitei lunar calendar**. It brings together communities from both the **hill and valley regions**, emphasizing **harmony and shared heritage**.

#### International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

##### Context:

- **Ahom era 'Moidams'**, resting place of royal families, in **Assam's Charaideo district** have been recommended for inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List** by its international advisory body **ICOMOS**.

##### About

- **Established:** 1965 in **Warsaw, Poland**, following the **Venice Charter of 1964**.
- **Type:** An **international non-governmental organization (NGO)**.
- **Purpose:** Dedicated to the **conservation and protection** of the world's **architectural, archaeological, and landscape heritage**.
- **Composition:** Comprises **heritage professionals, experts, local authorities, institutions, and organizations** working globally to safeguard cultural monuments and sites.
- **UNESCO Role:** Acts as an **advisory body to UNESCO**, particularly on matters related to **World Heritage Sites** — offering expert evaluations and guidance on cultural heritage preservation.

#### Dilmun Civilization

##### Context:

- Archaeologists in **Kuwait's Failaka Island** have uncovered a **4,000-year-old temple** linked to the **Bronze Age Dilmun Civilization**. This finding offers new insights into the cultural and religious life of one of the **oldest trading civilizations** of the ancient world.

##### Dilmun Civilization:

- An ancient civilization centered in **Bahrain and Failaka Island (Kuwait)**, extending its influence to parts of **Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and the Iranian coast** along the **Persian Gulf**, and less prominent compared to the major cradles of civilization like **Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China's Yellow River Civilization**.

##### Origin and Growth:

- Originated as a **trading hub**, rose to regional power by the **early 3rd millennium BCE**, and became a **key intermediary** in trade between **Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley**, dealing in

copper, pearls, timber, ivory, and precious stones.

#### Archaeological Findings

- Excavations in **Bahrain** and **Kuwait** have revealed **settlements, burial mounds, temples, and unique stamp seals**, which align with

descriptions of Dilmun found in ancient Mesopotamian records.

- These discoveries indicate that Dilmun was not only a **trading center** but also had a **distinct cultural and religious identity**.

## 7.2 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic	Date
Swadeshi: Meaning, Evolution, Current Status, Challenges and Way Forward	13 <sup>th</sup> October
Deobandi Movement	18 <sup>th</sup> October
Dogri and India's Linguistic Diversity: Issues and Way Forward	28 <sup>th</sup> October
1962 India-China War: Rezang La and Courage Against Odds	30 <sup>th</sup> October

## 8. GEOGRAPHY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### 8.1 SHORT ARTICLES

#### Desert 'Soilification' Technology

##### Context

- For the first time, wheat has been successfully cultivated in the arid desert regions of western Rajasthan using Desert Soilification Technology.

##### What is Desert Soilification Technology?

- It is a **biotechnological process** that transforms dry, sandy desert terrain into a soil-like medium suitable for crop cultivation.
- It uses a combination of **bioformulations and natural polymers** to bind loose sand particles, improve soil structure, and increase water-holding capacity.

##### Key Features

- Improved Crop Resilience:** It boosts crop tolerance to heat and drought, allowing crops like wheat, bajra, and guar gum to thrive in harsh desert climates.
- Enhanced Soil Structure:** Polymers create cross-links among sand particles, turning loose sand into a cohesive, soil-like substrate.
- Boosted Soil Health:** Bioformulation increases microbial activity, which improves nutrient cycling and overall soil fertility.
- Higher Crop Yields:** Field trials showed up to **54% higher yields** in bajra, guar gum, and chickpea when grown in bioformulation-treated sand compared to regular soil.
- Reduced Water Requirement:** Soilification process enhances water retention, cutting down irrigation needs and improving water-use efficiency.

This innovation demonstrates the potential of biotechnology to **reverse desertification trends** and make Indian deserts productive, resilient, and sustainable.

Desertification refers to the **degradation of land** in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid regions due to natural factors and human activities. It results in declining soil productivity, loss of vegetation cover, and ecological imbalance.

#### Cyclone Shakhti and Montha

##### Context

- October 2025 witnessed two major tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean – Cyclone Shakhti in the Arabian Sea and Cyclone Montha in the Bay of Bengal.

##### About Tropical Cyclones

- Tropical cyclones are intense low-pressure systems characterized by strong winds and heavy rainfall.
- They form over warm ocean waters above 26.5°C, where rising moist air and the Coriolis effect create a rotating system.
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) name cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region.
- The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) in New Delhi, operated by the IMD India Meteorological Department (IMD), assigns the names from a list contributed by 13 member countries, including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

##### Cyclone Shakhti (Arabian Sea, October 2025)

- Cyclone Shakhti**, named by Sri Lanka (meaning "power").
- Heavy rainfall** to parts of Maharashtra. Rough sea conditions along Gujarat coasts.
- Warming sea surface temperatures, linked to climate change, have increased storm frequency and intensity in the Arabian Sea.

##### Cyclone Montha (Bay of Bengal, October 2025)

- Cyclone Montha**, named for Thailand (meaning "fragrant flower"), developed in the **Bay of Bengal**.
- Heavy rainfall** in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and north Tamil Nadu.

## Limestone Reclassified as Major Mineral

### Context

- The Ministry of Mines has reclassified **all types of limestone as a major mineral**, removing the earlier distinction based on end use.

### About Limestone

- It is a **sedimentary rock** composed of **calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>)**, often mixed with minerals such as **dolomite, clay, iron carbonate, feldspar, pyrite, and quartz**.
- Has a **granular texture**, with grains ranging from fine particles to visible shell fragments.
- Rich in fossils**, important for understanding Earth's evolutionary history.
- Acts as a **source of phosphate**, essential for fertilizer production.
- When heated to about **900–1000°C**, limestone produces **lime (quicklime)**, which is used in **glass making, agriculture, construction, and chemical industries**.
- Certain decorative varieties of limestone used as **building stones** for flooring, facades, and monuments.

Major vs. Minor Minerals		
Category	Definition & Regulation	Examples
Major Minerals	Listed in the <b>Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act)</b> .	Calcite, Clay, Coal, Quartz, Iron Ore, Bauxite
Minor Minerals	Defined under the <b>Minor Mineral Concession Rules</b> framed by State Governments under the MMDR Act.	Building stones, gravel, sand, ordinary clay, decorative stones

The Central Government may also **notify any mineral** as a minor mineral based on its economic importance and scale of use.

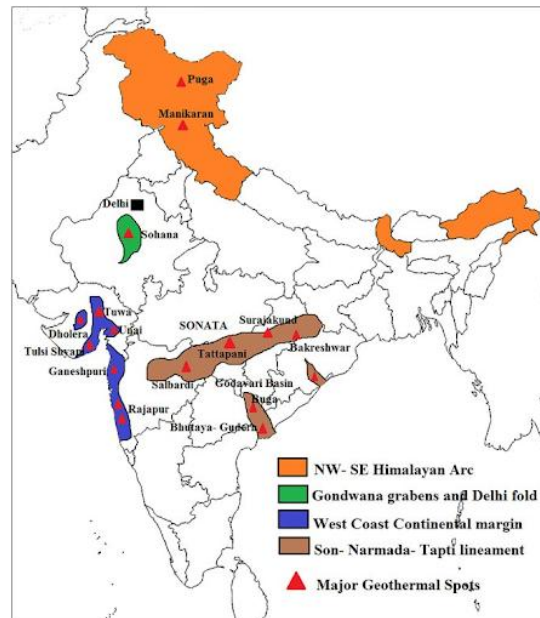
## National Policy on Geothermal Energy 2025

### Context

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has launched India's first National Policy on Geothermal Energy.

### What is Geothermal Energy?

- It is a clean, renewable, and consistent source of power derived from the Earth's internal heat—generated during planetary formation and through the decay of radioactive materials deep within the crust.
- Unlike solar or wind energy, **geothermal power is available 24/7**, providing reliable baseload electricity unaffected by weather or time of day.
- Engineers tap into underground heat reservoirs—such as hot springs, geysers, or steam fields—through drilled wells to generate electricity or supply direct heating for various applications.



### Key Features of the National Geothermal Energy Policy (2025)

- The policy extends beyond electricity generation to include **direct-use applications** such as heating and cooling for buildings,

- industrial processes, agriculture, aquaculture, and even tourism-related projects.
- A **national geothermal resource database** will be developed through collaboration among the **Ministry of Mines, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Geological Survey of India**, and the **National Data Repository** to guide project planning and investment.
  - The policy encourages deployment of advanced systems like:
    - **Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS)** and **Advanced Geothermal Systems (AGS)**
    - **Hybrid geothermal-solar plants**
    - **Geothermal energy storage**
    - **Offshore geothermal exploration**
    - It also promotes the **reuse of abandoned oil and gas wells** for geothermal purposes.
  - To attract private participation and improve project viability, the policy provides:
    - **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** and **long-term concessional loans**
    - Access to **Sovereign Green Bonds**
    - **Tax holidays, GST and import duty exemptions**, and eligibility under the **Indian Carbon Credit Trading Scheme**
  - The **MNRE** will act as the **nodal ministry**, establishing a **single-window clearance system** for all approvals to ensure faster implementation.
  - The policy proposes incorporating **ground source heat pumps and geothermal heating/cooling systems** into the **National Building Code**, promoting energy-efficient infrastructure across urban and industrial sectors.

## 8.2 SNIPPETS

Topics	Details
<b>Carbon Fertilisation Effect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Nature study reveals that Amazon Rainforest trees grow larger as rising atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels trigger the carbon fertilisation effect.</li> <li>• Carbon fertilization effect is the process where <b>increased atmospheric carbon dioxide enhances plant photosynthesis, leading to faster growth, increased biomass</b>, and higher crop yields. However, the benefits can be limited by factors like nutrient availability, water stress, and temperature, and the long-term effects are debated due to potential negative impacts of climate change.</li> </ul>
<b>Port of Pasni</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan offered the United States a proposal to develop a port at Pasni.</li> <li>• The <b>Port of Pasni</b>, a small deep-water harbour on the <b>Arabian Sea</b>, lies in Balochistan's <b>Gwadar district</b>. Pasni sits close to the <b>Iran-Pakistan border</b>, east of <b>China-backed Gwadar Port</b>, and within range of <b>India's Chabahar Port</b> in Iran. The region around Pasni is rich in <b>rare earth elements and critical minerals</b>, making it attractive for both economic and strategic reasons.</li> </ul>
<b>Seneca Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientists discovered craters on Seneca Lake's floor.</li> <li>• Seneca Lake is the <b>deepest of the Finger Lakes, located in New York, USA</b>. It has numerous large, crater-like depressions, resembling the surface of the moon. The lake's U-shaped trough, which gives the lake its depth, was <b>carved by glaciers during the Pleistocene Ice Age through a process of glacial scouring</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Maitri II Research Station in Antarctica</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Finance has granted in-principle approval for Maitri II, the nation's fourth Antarctic research station, set for completion by January 2029.</li> <li>• Maitri II, a new research base in East Antarctica (Schirmacher Oasis), will replace the aging Maitri station. Managed by the <b>National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences</b>. It will enhance India's Antarctic Programme, which includes the stations Dakshin Gangotri and Bharti. <b>Operating under the Antarctic Treaty System</b>, the new base will support advanced research</li> </ul>



<b>HURRICANE MELISSA</b>	<p>and environmentally friendly facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hurricane Melissa made landfall over the Caribbean island of Jamaica.</li> <li>Hurricane Melissa, a powerful Category 5 storm with winds of nearly 300 km/hr, is an example of a rotating storm system known by various names globally: <b>hurricanes in the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, typhoons in the Northwest Pacific, and cyclones in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean.</b></li> </ul>
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### 8.3 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic Name	Date
River Sand Mining: Meaning, Consequences And Way Forward	4th October 2025
Landslides: Causes, Impact, And Mitigation Strategy	6th October 2025
Cloud Seeding For Delhi's Air Pollution	25th October 2025
Disaster Preparedness In The Himalayan Region	29th October 2025

## 9. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### 9.1 SHORT ARTICLES

#### Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

##### Context

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY).

##### What is PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)?

- It focuses exclusively on agriculture and its allied sectors, including livestock, dairy, and fisheries.
- It was announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, to boost growth in 100 agri-districts, with an outlay of ₹24,000 crore for a period of six years.
- It draws inspiration from NITI Aayog's highly successful Aspirational Districts Programme, and is projected to benefit 1.7 crore small and marginal farmers.
- Objectives:** Address agricultural challenges, reduce disparities, promote sustainable practices, build infrastructure, expand water access, and enhance financial inclusion.

##### District Selection Criteria

- Indicators:** Low productivity, low cropping intensity, and poor credit flow.
- Geographic Spread:** At least one district from each state and Union Territory.
- Allocation:** Based on each state's **net cropped area** and **number of operational landholdings**.

##### Implementation Model

- PMDDKY brings together **36 central schemes** from **11 ministries**, along with state-level initiatives and private sector partnerships, to create an integrated agricultural development framework.
  - Major schemes like **PM-KISAN** and **PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** will be **subsumed** under PMDDKY.
- Committees:** Established at **District, State, and National levels** for coordination.
- District Dhan Dhaanya Samiti:**

- Chaired by the **District Collector or Panchayat head**.
- Prepares a **District Agriculture and Allied Activities Plan** aligned with national goals.
- Technical Partners:** Agricultural Universities will support planning and capacity building.
- Role of NITI Aayog:** Provide policy guidance, capacity support, and performance reviews.

##### Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monthly Monitoring:** Progress tracked against **117 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**.
- Digital Dashboard:** Real-time progress tracking and district performance ranking.
- Field Reviews:** Central Nodal Officers to conduct regular site visits for assessment.

#### Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) Program

##### Context

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) program.

##### What is the SOAR Program?

- A national initiative to introduce structured AI learning for students from **Classes 6 to 12**, along with a dedicated module for teachers.
- It promotes AI literacy, creativity, and responsible technology use, ensuring equitable access to digital skills across diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

##### Key Features and Objectives

- The program includes **three structured modules** of 15 hours each:
  - AI to be Aware:** Introduces basic AI concepts and examples from everyday life.
  - AI to Acquire:** Focuses on practical applications, programming fundamentals, and hands-on experience with AI tools.
  - AI to Aspire:** Encourages reflection on ethical AI, its social implications, and career opportunities in emerging technologies.

- A **45-hour independent module** helps teachers build foundational knowledge of AI and integrate it effectively into classroom learning.
- To ensure accessibility, SOAR leverages digital platforms like the **Skill India Digital Hub**, helping bridge the urban-rural divide and extend AI learning to schools nationwide.
- The modules align with national education standards, covering **AI fundamentals, generative AI, ethics, cybersecurity, and digital careers**, ensuring a strong foundation for future learning.

#### Why AI Readiness Matters for India?

- AI could contribute nearly **\$967 billion to India's GDP by 2035** (NASSCOM), and around **\$500 billion by 2025** (WEF).
- AI will transform the job market, creating millions of new opportunities. Reports suggest AI could generate **up to 4 million jobs by 2030** (NITI Aayog) and **2.3 million jobs by 2027** (Bain & Company).

## WE Rise Initiative

### Context

- The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog, in collaboration with DP World, has launched the 'WE Rise - Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive and Sustainable Enterprises' initiative.

### What is the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)?

- Launched in 2017, WEP serves as a **one-stop digital platform** that provides information,

mentorship, and support for women entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey.

- It is built on **three foundational pillars**:
  - **Ichha Shakti (Aspiration)**: Inspiring women to take the first step toward entrepreneurship.
  - **Gyaan Shakti (Knowledge)**: Offering resources, training, and knowledge-sharing opportunities.
  - **Karma Shakti (Action)**: Providing practical support to launch and scale businesses.
- It focuses on **six key areas**: Access to finance, Market linkages, Training and skilling, Mentoring and networking, Compliance and legal support, Business development services

### What is the 'WE Rise' Initiative?

- 'WE Rise' is a **public-private initiative** under WEP's 'Award to Reward (ATR)' framework, which was launched in **2023** to encourage innovative programs and celebrate the achievements of women entrepreneurs.

### Key Objectives and Features

- Support women-led enterprises in entering and expanding within international markets.
- Identify and mentor **100 promising women entrepreneurs**, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for export readiness.
- Utilize **DP World's global logistics and trade expertise** to assist women in navigating international trade processes.
- Offer selected entrepreneurs a platform to **showcase their products at Bharat Mart in Dubai**, giving them visibility among global buyers and investors.

## 9.2 SNIPPETS

Topics	Details
PRATIBHA Setu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPSC launched PRATIBHA Setu in June 2025 to connect non-recommended candidates from major exams to employers, replacing the 2018 Public Disclosure Scheme.</li> <li>• PRATIBHA Setu is an <b>online repository where candidates who clear prelims, mains, and interviews but miss final selection opt-in to share biodata</b>. Employers—government ministries, PSUs, academics, and private firms—register for secure dashboards to search profiles by exam and skills, shortlist candidates,</li> </ul>

	and contact them directly.
<b>Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ECMS attracts \$13 billion in investment proposals, with MSMEs driving 60% of participation.</li> <li>ECMS was launched in April 2025 as a complement to <b>the India Semiconductor Mission</b>, fortifying the electronics supply and chip-making. It spans six years—from FY2025-26 to FY2031-32. It offers turnover-based, capital-expenditure-based, or mixed fiscal incentives, and links part of these rewards directly to new hires. Eligible companies <b>claim incentives on a first-come, first-served basis</b> once they gear up for quick output.</li> </ul>
<b>RoDTEP Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government extends the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme until March 2026.</li> <li>The Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched the RoDTEP scheme in <b>2021 to refund embedded taxes, duties, and levies on production and distribution of exported goods</b>. It aligns with WTO rules through a fully digital platform that boosts transparency. Eligible players include Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) units, Advance Authorization (AA) holders, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) units, and Export-Oriented Units (EOUs).</li> </ul>
<b>Model Youth Gram Sabha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Panchayati Raj with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) Initiative.</li> <li>The MYGS program <b>engages students in mock Gram Sabha meetings to provide practical experience in grassroots democracy</b>. This initiative, implemented in over 1,000 schools nationwide, to promote civic awareness, leadership abilities, and community participation. Schools get Rs. 20,000 aid for logistics, students earn certificates, and top teams win cash prizes for development.</li> </ul>
<b>People's Plan Campaign (PPC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) 2025-26 under the theme "Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas".</li> <li>Launched on October 2, 2018, as "Jan Yojana Abhiyan," this initiative strengthens decentralized governance by <b>enabling citizens to create transparent and inclusive Panchayat Development Plans (PDPs) at Gram, Block, and District levels</b>. It focuses on developing localized, bottom-up plans that integrate the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a specific focus on nine Localized SDGs (LSDGs) themes.</li> </ul>
<b>NAVYA Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Union Government has launched Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls (NAVYA).</li> <li>NAVYA is a joint effort <b>by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)</b>. Aim to provide vocational training to adolescent girls between the ages of 16 and 18, who have completed at least Class 10. <b>Girls identified by the MWCD will receive training</b> through short-term skill development courses under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and PM Vishwakarma Yojana.</li> </ul>
<b>Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Education, in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission (NITI Aayog), organized the Viksit Bharat Buildathon 2025.</li> <li>It is a nationwide innovation initiative designed to <b>promote a culture of creativity and problem-solving among students of classes 6 to 12</b>, aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It is <b>centered around four themes: Atmanirbhar Bharat, Swadeshi, Vocal for Local, and Samridh Bharat</b>. It offers</li> </ul>

	an awards pool of Rs. 1 Crore to National Level winners, State level winners and District level winners.
<b>Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Union Cabinet has approved Phase-III of the Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP).</li> <li>The Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP) is a <b>joint Indo-UK initiative</b> by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Wellcome Trust to build a world-class biomedical research ecosystem in India. <b>Launched in 2008-09, it supports researchers at all career stages through fellowships and grants</b> to encourage interdisciplinary and translational research in basic, clinical, and public health fields. The recently approved Phase III will extend from 2025-26 to 2030-31, with a total approved cost of ₹1,500 crore.</li> </ul>
<b>DRAVYA Portal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Ayush launched the DRAVYA Portal.</li> <li>The DRAVYA Portal is a digital, open-access database for Ayush medicinal substances, <b>developed by the Ministry of Ayush and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)</b>. It consolidates information from classical Ayurvedic texts and modern scientific research, providing details on pharmacotherapeutics, botany, chemistry, pharmacology, and safety for various medicinal ingredients and products.</li> </ul>
<b>Bharat Taxi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National e-Governance Division (NeGD) has teamed up with Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Ltd. to launch Bharat Taxi in December 2025.</li> <li>Bharat Taxi is a transparent platform where drivers are shareholders and pay low membership fees instead of commissions. It uses government-supervised <b>fixed fares, avoiding surge pricing, and integrates with DigiLocker and UMANG for identity verification</b> and service delivery, ensuring data protection and strong cybersecurity.</li> </ul>
<b>"Fare Se Fursat" Fixed Airfare Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Civil Aviation Minister launched "Fare Se Fursat," a fixed-fare scheme by state-owned Alliance Air, targeting affordable regional flights.</li> <li>"Fare Se Fursat" aimed at <b>stabilizing airfares on regional routes to prevent price surges</b>, making air travel more affordable for middle and lower-middle-class families.</li> </ul>
<b>PM-SHRI Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kerala has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union Ministry of Education to join the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme.</li> <li>PM-SHRI Scheme was launched in 2022, is a <b>centrally sponsored program</b> aimed at upgrading over 14,500 existing schools across India into model educational institutions. Eligible schools include those run by Central, State, and Union Territory governments, as well as local bodies, such as Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas.</li> </ul>
<b>PM-SETU SCHEME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prime Minister launched the PM-SETU scheme, a ₹60,000 crore initiative to revolutionize youth skilling.</li> <li>PM-SETU, or Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs, aims to <b>upgrade 1,000 government-owned Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) into advanced vocational training centers</b>. It utilizes a hub-and-spoke model and industry-led operations to offer demand-driven training in fields such as AI and renewable energy. Co-financed by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, PM-SETU was initially launched in Patna and Darbhanga.</li> </ul>



### 9.3 ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR READING FROM IASGYAN WEBSITE

Topic Name	Date
Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)	17th October 2025
Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (ABHIM)	25th October 2025
Naksha Programme: Urban Land Record Reforms	27th October 2025
Jal Jeevan Mission: Status, Challenges Way Forward	27th October 2025
Soil Health Card Scheme	29th October 2025