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Polity

Threeyear Appointments to Union Bank of India and Central Bank of India Leadership

Introduction

- A significant leadership reshuffle has been announced in India's banking sector.
- The government has appointed new Managing Directors and Chief Executive Officers at Union Bank of India and Central Bank of India, each for a threeyear term.

Why in news?

- Approval by the ACC formalised the CEO appointments at Union Bank of India and Central Bank of India.

Background

- Asheesh Pandey: Previously Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra with experience in banking operations and credit management; now MD & CEO of Union Bank of India.
- Kalyan Kumar: Currently Executive Director at Punjab National Bank; to become MD & CEO of Central Bank of India, succeeding M.V. Rao upon his superannuation in July 2025.
- The Financial Services Institutions Bureau recommended these appointments on 30 May 2025; it is headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, with selection members Animesh Chauhan, Deepak Singhal and Shailendra Bhandari.

Significance

- Signals the government's emphasis on stronger governance and leadership within public sector banks.

Facts/General knowledge

- Union Bank of India is one of India's largest public sector banks.
- ACC stands for Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- FSIB identifies leadership talent for public sector financial institutions.

Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025

Introduction

- Aims to amend certain enactments to decriminalise and rationalise offences.
- Seeks to enhance trustbased governance for ease of living and doing business.
- Advances process reforms to streamline procedures and promote efficient compliance.

Why in news?

- Recently introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- Builds on the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023, and expands reforms to 16 Central Acts across 10 Ministries/Departments.
- Exemplifies process reforms by replacing rigid, punitive compliances with rationalised, trustbased mechanisms to streamline procedures.

Background

- The Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 decriminalised 183 provisions in 42 Central Acts administered by 19 Ministries and Departments.
- Process reforms are "nuts and bolts" changes to specific rules or procedures, distinct from structural reforms that alter underlying architectures (e.g., GST, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, monetary policy committee).
- They are microlevel, targeted interventions to improve operational efficiency in specific sectors or activities.
- The Economic Survey 202021 advocated simpler regulations and smoother processes over overregulation and opacity in administrative and legal systems.

Significance

- Sustaining economic growth: Provides ongoing, incremental improvements that keep momentum between major structural changes.
- Ease of doing business, living, and science: Removes daytoday irritations; e.g., new procurement rules for scientific institutions enable scientists to work efficiently.
- Unblocking bottlenecks and delays: Addresses legacy inefficiencies such as cumbersome paperwork, unnecessary approvals, and slow service delivery.
- Enhancing sectoral competitiveness: e.g., Liberalisation of telecom rules for Other Service Providers (OSP) fuelled growth in ITenabled and BPO sectors.
- Reducing corruption and rentseeking: Increases transparency and limits arbitrary enforcement by removing unnecessary steps.
- Institutionalising a problemsolving mindset: Embeds continual problemsolving, making institutions agile and responsive.
- For this Bill specifically: Streamlines procedures, reduces judicial burden, and creates an enabling environment for citizens and businesses.

Facts/General knowledge

- Firsttime contraventions: For 76 offences under 10 different Acts, only an advisory or warning will apply for firsttime violations.
- Decriminalisation of minor offences: Imprisonment clauses are removed and replaced with monetary penalties or warnings for minor, technical, and procedural defaults (e.g., Tea Act, 1953; Legal Metrology Act, 2009 further decriminalised).
- Rationalisation of penalties: Fines are made proportionate with incremental penalties for repeat offences.
- Adjudication mechanism: Designated officers may impose

penalties through administrative processes to ensure quicker resolution of cases.
- Automatic revision of fines: A 10 per cent increase in fines and penalties every three years maintains deterrence without frequent legislative amendments.

Topic: Article 371 Proposal for Ladakh and Statehood Debate

Introduction
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed an Article 371like provision for Ladakh during talks with the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA).
- The proposal emerges amid demands for statehood and stronger constitutional safeguards for land, culture, and political representation.

Why in news?
- Violent protests in Ladakh resulted in four deaths, including a Kargil war veteran, intensifying calls for statehood and tribal protection.
- The MHA's outreach to LAB and KDA signals a policy shift towards special provisions under Article 371 for Ladakh.

Background
- Since the 2019 reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh has functioned as a Union Territory without a legislature.
- Initial support for Union Territory status has given way to dissatisfaction over land rights, cultural identity, and limited representation.
- A united LAB–KDA platform is pressing for:
- Full statehood for Ladakh
- Sixth Schedule status for tribal rights and land protection
- Release of detained activists, including climate activist Sonam Wangchuk
- Compensation for victims of police action during protests

Significance
- Article 371 offers cultural and administrative flexibility to states but retains significant powers with the Union government.
- Activists and Ladakh leaders argue the Sixth Schedule, framed under Article 244, provides stronger safeguards through Autonomous District Councils with control over land, forests, and community laws.
- The debate centres on whether an Article 371like provision can adequately protect Ladakh's tribal and ecological identity compared to the legislative autonomy under the Sixth Schedule.
- The Centre's offer indicates movement, but Ladakh's leadership remains firm on the dual demand of statehood and Sixth Schedule protection to ensure selfgovernance and legal safeguards.
- A calibrated decision is vital for peace and trust in this strategically important Himalayan region.

Facts/General knowledge
- Article 371 provisions were first introduced in 1950 to address administrative and cultural concerns of individual Indian states after independence.
- Article 371 is applicable to 12 states, including Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Assam.
- Article 371(A) specifically protects Nagaland's customary laws and land ownership from central interference.
- The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution protects the tribal way of life in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- Ladakh shares borders with China (Aksai Chin) and Pakistan (GilgitBaltistan), making it one of India's most sensitive border zones.

Economic

RBI recognises FIDC as SRO for the NBFC sector

Introduction
- Overview of the Reserve Bank of India's recognition of the Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) as the SelfRegulatory Organisation (SRO) for the nonbanking financial company (NBFC) sector
- Outline of what SROs are and the eligibility norms set by the RBI

Why in news?
- The RBI has officially recognised FIDC as the SRO for the NBFC sector

Background
- Under the RBI's Omnibus Framework, an SRO is a nongovernmental organisation authorised by a regulator to regulate and oversee a particular industry or sector
- Such organisations derive authority from membership agreements
- They operate within the boundaries defined by law

Significance
- Establishes FIDC as the NBFC sector's selfregulatory body

Facts/General knowledge
- RBI eligibility norms for an SRO include:
- Must be a Section 8 notforprofit company
- Must have diversified shareholding, with no entity holding more than 10% of capital
- Must maintain sufficient net worth

Kerala to Be Declared India's First Extreme PovertyFree State

Introduction

- Kerala is set to be officially declared free of extreme poverty.
- The declaration will be made by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on 1 November 2025 at Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram.
- This milestone reflects sustained focus on inclusive growth and targeted welfare programmes, setting a precedent for other states.

Why in news?

- The formal announcement is scheduled for 1 November 2025 during a public event in Thiruvananthapuram.
- It marks the culmination of a stateled initiative focused on eradicating extreme poverty.

Background

- The extreme poverty eradication programme was launched in 2021, shortly after the LDF government began its second term.
- It was one of the first Cabinet decisions post2021 elections, as stated by Minister for Local SelfGovernments M.B. Rajesh.
- Core aims:
  Identify and uplift families in severe economic distress.
- Integrate state and local resources for housing, food, health, and income support.
- Enable longterm rehabilitation through employment, education, and asset creation.
- The multisectoral approach ensured families received not just aid but a pathway out of chronic poverty.

Significance

- Highlights Kerala's sustained commitment to inclusive growth and targeted welfare.
- Sets a precedent for other states to follow through a comprehensive, multisectoral model.

Facts/General knowledge

- 'Extreme poverty' generally refers to households that:
- Lack access to basic income, shelter, food, and health.
- Are often excluded from social welfare schemes due to documentation or isolation.
- Face multigenerational poverty with little upward mobility.
- Kerala's poverty mapping relied on:
- Social surveys.
- Panchayatlevel data.
- Groundlevel interventions by local bodies and NGOs.

Geography and environment

Philippines Coral Larvae Cryobank and the Coral Triangle

Introduction

- The Philippines is pioneering a coral larvae cryobank to protect threatened reefs within the Coral Triangle.
- This initiative addresses escalating reef degradation by preserving coral larvae for future restoration.

Why in news?

- Southeast Asia's first coral larvae cryobank is being established in the Philippines, led by the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute.
- The project forms part of a regional initiative involving research institutions from multiple countries.
- It is supported by the Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform.
- Dr. Chiahsin Lin is guiding the establishment of necessary facilities across participating countries.

Background

- The Coral Triangle is a vital marine ecosystem spanning parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and TimorLeste.
- Coral reefs there face threats from carbon emissions, destructive fishing practices, and pollution, which drive coral bleaching and habitat loss.
- Without drastic measures, live coral cover faces severe decline.

Significance

- Cryopreserving coral larvae aims to restore and protect reefs by safeguarding genetic material for future use.
- Vitrification prevents ice crystal formation during freezing, and rapid laser thawing helps maintain larvae viability for reef restoration.
- The effort serves as a genetic insurance policy while protocols for coral husbandry are refined.
- Local awareness and community involvement are crucial for longterm conservation.
- Stronger cooperation among scientists, governments, universities, and communities is pivotal to sustain reefs for future generations.

Facts/General knowledge

- The Coral Triangle covers about 5.7 million sq. km across six countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and TimorLeste.
- It contains over 75% of the world's coral species, a third of all reef fish, vast mangrove forests, and six of the seven marine turtle species.
- The ecosystem underpins food security and livelihoods for more than 120 million people.
- A 2020 report recorded a 14% global loss of corals from 2009 to 2018.

- Scientists project that, without drastic measures, 70–90% of live coral could be lost by 2050.

Blue Flag Beaches in India – 2025

Introduction

- The Blue Flag is a globally recognised ecolabel for beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators.
- It is awarded to sites that meet stringent standards of environmental quality, safety, and management.

Why in news?

- Five beaches in Maharashtra — Shrivardhan, Nagaon, Parnaka, Guhagar, and Ladghar — have received the international Blue Flag certification in 2025.

Background

- The certification is granted by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Denmark, an international nonprofit organisation promoting sustainable environmental practices through education and certification.
- India officially joined the Blue Flag Programme in 2018.

Significance

- Promotes sustainable coastal tourism.
- Protects marine ecosystems.
- Ensures safe, clean, and ecofriendly recreation spaces for visitors and local communities.

Facts/General knowledge

- Criteria span six key areas:
- Environmental education and engagement: local ecosystem awareness and community participation.
- Climate action: energyefficient infrastructure and resilience to coastal erosion and sealevel rise.
- Biodiversity management: protection of wildlife habitats and responsible management of coastal vegetation.
- Pollution and water quality: topgrade water testing, waste segregation, and control of plastic and oil pollution.
- Accessibility: inclusive facilities and services for all, including persons with disabilities.
- Safety and services: lifeguards, firstaid, and emergency plans.
- Current India status (2025): 18 Blue Flag beaches (13 existing + 5 newly certified in Maharashtra).

NCMC Cyclone Preparedness and the Odisha Model

Introduction

- India's disaster management approach prioritises protection of life, with "zero casualty" as a guiding objective.
- Cyclone Montha serves as a live test of integrated preparedness, combining central coordination, rapid evacuation, and targeted support for vulnerable populations.
- Odisha's longterm reforms exemplify a proactive, institutionalised model of cyclone resilience.

Why in news?

- Cyclone Montha intensified into a Severe Cyclonic Storm over the Bay of Bengal by 28 October 2025.
- Coastal districts in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu are under red alert as authorities brace for impact.

Background

- The 1999 Super Cyclone, which claimed over 10,000 lives, catalysed a fundamental shift in Odisha's disaster governance.
- Odisha established the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) in late 1999, becoming India's first dedicated statelevel disaster agency.
- Core elements of Odisha's system include integrated early warning, resilient multipurpose shelters, specialised response capacity through ODRAF, and communitybased preparedness embedded in local governance.

Significance

- The national response to Montha reflects matured, integrated disaster management—centralised decisionmaking, synchronised agency action, and local execution.
- Proactive evacuation, prepositioned rescue assets (NDRF/SDRF), and accessible shelters underpin efforts to minimise casualties and infrastructure damage.
- Odisha's track record sets a benchmark, demonstrating how institutional reforms, resilient infrastructure, and community ownership translate into effective largescale evacuations and reliable outcomes.

Facts/General knowledge

- Cyclone Montha began as a lowpressure system over the westcentral Bay of Bengal and rapidly intensified into a Severe Cyclonic Storm by 28 October 2025.
- Authorities issued red alerts across multiple districts in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu.
- The Cabinet Secretary convened the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) with coordination from the Union Home Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- Andhra Pradesh prepared 3,174 rehabilitation centres across 22 districts and evacuated approximately 10,000 people from highimpact zones of Kakinada and Konaseema.
- Strategic deployment positioned National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams with emergency equipment across

coastal areas.
- Odisha's resilient infrastructure includes 824 multipurpose cyclone and flood shelters, which were also used as quarantine centres during the COVID19 pandemic.
- ODRAF complements national NDRF capabilities, enhancing Odisha's rapid response.
- CommunityBased Disaster Preparedness integrates Panchayati Raj institutions into planning and response.
- Proven outcomes in Odisha include evacuations of nearly 1 million people during Cyclone Phailin (2013) and approximately 1.2 million ahead of Cyclone Fani (2019).

Gaj Rakshak App for Elephant Monitoring in Bandhavgarh

Introduction
- Authorities at Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh are adopting technology to address the growing challenge of human–elephant conflict.
- The Gaj Rakshak App has been introduced to monitor elephants and enhance conservation efforts in the reserve.

Why in news?
- The app was inaugurated by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on World Tiger Day in Bhopal.
- It is now being deployed in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve to strengthen onground protection measures.

Background
- Human–elephant conflict has been rising alongside a steady increase in elephant numbers in the reserve.
- A herd of 40 elephants settled permanently in 2018; their numbers have grown to around 65, with movements observed across Umaria, Shahdol, and Anuppur districts.
- Elephants have chosen Bandhavgarh due to yearround water, rich food (including bamboo and forest produce), and a safe habitat with dense forest cover and hilly terrain.
- Officials underwent training on the app from 26–29 September to ensure smooth implementation.

Significance
- The app is expected to transform elephant conservation and protection measures in the region.
- It helps prevent human–elephant conflict by improving preparedness when elephants approach villages.
- It strengthens monitoring through uptodate information sharing among stakeholders.

Facts/General knowledge
- Developed in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, the Wildlife Conservation Trust, and Kalpvag Company.
- Provides realtime location data on elephants, including their movement and behaviour.
- Sends alerts via SMS, push notifications, voice calls, and sirens when elephants approach villages.
- Works offline to maintain functionality in remote areas.
- Enables elephant monitors to upload photos, update locations, and indicate whether elephants are solitary or in herds.
- Instantly shares information with app users within a 10 km radius of an elephant's location.
- A group of 19 elephants has been living near the Bansagar backwaters in the Byawari region for several months, benefitting from bamboo forests, hills, and abundant water.

International relation

India–Bhutan CrossBorder Rail Links

Introduction
- India has announced the firstever railway links with Bhutan: Kokrajhar–Gelephu (Assam) and Banarhat–Samtse (West Bengal).
- The two lines total 89 km, marking a milestone in bilateral connectivity and regional integration.

Why in news?
- Formal announcement of India's first crossborder rail links with Bhutan.
- Inauguration of an integrated check post at Darranga, Assam, to facilitate movement of thirdcountry nationals, including those from Bhutan.
- Bhutan set to benefit from the Jogighopha Inland Waterways Transport Terminal.

Background
- Gelephu and Samtse are key export–import hubs along the 700km India–Bhutan border.
- Gelephu is being developed as 'Mindfulness City'; Samtse is being developed as an industrial town by the Government of Bhutan.
- India is Bhutan's largest trading partner, handling 80% of Bhutan's total trade.
- India has pledged Rs 10,000 crore for Bhutan's 13th FiveYear Plan (2024–2029), double the 12th Plan.

Significance
- Reinforces India's Neighbourhood First Policy, counters China's growing influence in South Asia, and deepens a trustbased partnership.
- Offers Bhutan seamless rail connectivity to India, providing access to 1.5 lakh km of the Indian Railways network.
- Enhances Bhutan's access to global markets via Indian ports.
- Expected to boost trade, tourism, industrial growth, peopletopeople ties, and the smooth movement of goods

through improved links to Bhutan's key hubs.

Facts/General knowledge

- India and Bhutan have collaborated on five major hydropower projects: Chukha, Tala, Mangdechhu, Kurichhu, and Punatsangchhu II.

France PM Sebastien Lecornu Resignation After Cabinet Formation

Introduction

- France is facing acute political uncertainty following Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu's sudden resignation soon after forming his cabinet.

Why in news?

- Lecornu resigned just 14 hours after appointing his cabinet.
- His cabinet lineup drew backlash across the political spectrum, seen as either too rightwing or not rightwing enough, leaving him without broad support.
- Anticipating a noconfidence motion, he submitted his resignation to President Emmanuel Macron early Monday.
- The Élysée Palace confirmed that Macron accepted the resignation.

Background

- Since President Macron's reelection in 2022, his centrist alliance has failed to secure a parliamentary majority.
- A snap election called in 2024 backfired, producing an even more divided legislature.

Significance

- The abrupt exit deepens the governance gridlock now gripping France.
- It has prompted renewed calls for snap elections.
- The development rattled the French stock market and the euro, highlighting the fragility of the political landscape.

Facts/General knowledge

- Any government is vulnerable to collapse in the current parliamentary configuration.
- Lecornu is a close ally of President Macron and was appointed prime minister only last month.
- He is the fifth prime minister in two years.

Madagascar: Military Takeover and Country Overview

Introduction

- Madagascar is an island nation in the Indian Ocean and the world's fourthlargest island.

Why in news?

- The armed forces have taken control of the government, ousting the incumbent President.
- This followed a Gen Zled rebellion over economic crises and governance failures.

Background

- The country has experienced frequent militarybacked power shifts since 1960.
- The last major unrest occurred in 2009.
- France invaded in 1883, making Madagascar a colony in 1896.
- After the 1947 Malagasy Uprising, the island gained independence in 1960.

Significance

- The takeover is notable for its youthdriven mobilisation.
- It underscores acute economic and governance challenges.

Facts/General knowledge

- Location and geography:
  Bordered by the Mozambique Channel to the west and neighbouring Comoros, Réunion islands, and Mauritius.
- Landscapes include lush rainforests, dry deserts, grassy plains, coastal coral reefs, and mangrove forests.
- Nature and wildlife:
  Nearly 90% of flora and fauna are endemic due to ocean isolation.
- Famous species include lemurs (such as silky sifakas and ayeayes), giant leaftailed geckos, spider tortoises, Dumeril's boas, and Madagascan plovers.
- Marine life features humpback whales and pygmy blue whales along the coasts.
- The national tree is the baobab, known for its waterstoring trunk.
- People and culture:
  About 80% of the population depends on agriculture, growing coffee, vanilla, and sugarcane, with rice as the staple food.
- Music is important in its culture, with the valiha, a tube zither made from bamboo, as the national instrument.

India–UK Joint Statement: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Reaffirmed

Introduction

- The Prime Ministers of India and the United Kingdom reaffirmed the India–UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- A Joint Statement during the recent official visit of the UK Prime Minister to India outlined agreements to strengthen economic growth and expand defence and security cooperation, among other areas.

Why in news?

- The developments stem from the UK Prime Minister's

recent official visit to India.
- The Joint Statement details new initiatives and commitments across technology, trade, defence, climate, education, and multilateral cooperation.

Background
- The partnership has been reaffirmed through the latest highlevel engagement.
- Cooperation in technology builds on the existing Technology Security Initiative (TSI).

Significance
- Advances economic growth through accelerated progress on trade and investment commitments.
- Deepens defence and security cooperation and enhances maritime collaboration.
- Supports joint action on climate, energy, health, and research.
- Broadens educational ties and institutional presence.
- Reinforces shared approach to regional and multilateral cooperation, including global governance reform.

Facts/General knowledge
- Technology and innovation: Building on TSI; establishments include the India–UK Connectivity and Innovation Centre; UKIndia Critical Minerals Supply Chain Observatory; UK–India Critical Minerals Processing and Downstream Collaboration Guild.
- Growth, trade, and investment: Ratification of the India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) as early as possible.
- Defence and security: Commitment to robust maritime security collaboration in the IndoPacific, including establishment of a Regional Maritime Security Centre of Excellence (RMSCE) under the IndoPacific Oceans Initiative.
- Defence and security: Agreement to proceed via a G2G route for an initial supply of Lightweight Multirole Missile (LMM) systems to support India's air defence capabilities.
- Climate, energy, health, and research: New joint investment for the Climate Tech Startup Fund, a strategic initiative under an MoU between the UK Government and the State Bank of India.
- Education, culture, and peopletopeople: Queens University of Belfast and Coventry University were authorised to open branches in GIFT City.
- Regional and multilateral cooperation: Commitment to work closely on reformed multilateralism, including reform of the UN Security Council; the UK reiterated its longstanding support for India's legitimate aspirations for permanent membership in a reformed UNSC.

Rodrigo Paz's Election as President of Bolivia

Introduction
- Bolivia has entered a new political phase with the election of Rodrigo Paz, a 58yearold senator and advocate of economic liberalisation.
- His ascent signals a shift from longstanding leftwing governance towards a marketoriented approach aimed at stabilising a crisishit economy.

Why in news?
- Rodrigo Paz won the presidency with 54.5% of the vote, defeating former President Jorge Quiroga.
- The result marks the end of two decades of socialist rule initiated by Evo Morales and reflects a clear public mandate for change.

Background
- Since 2006, Bolivia was governed by leftwing administrations led by Evo Morales and his successors, defined by statedriven policies, nationalisation, and extensive social welfare schemes.
- Mounting economic distress—fuel shortages, rapid inflation over 20%, and declining foreign exchange reserves—fuelled public disillusionment.
- Paz campaigned on "capitalism for all," promising stability, investment, and job creation without discarding the social safety nets built in recent years.

Significance
- Ideological shift: Paz's victory represents a paradigm change from stateled to more liberal economic policies.
- Governance challenge: A fragmented Parliament necessitates coalitionbuilding to advance reforms and avert legislative gridlock.
- Social stability: Any perceived rollback of benefits or rising inequality could trigger protests; effective communication and a fair transition are vital to sustain public trust.
- Foreign policy recalibration: Expected pivot from close ties with Venezuela, Cuba, and China towards stronger engagement with Western nations for trade and investment, potentially reinvigorating relations with the United States, seeking IMF or World Bank assistance, and attracting Western private sector investment in lithium and natural gas, while cautiously balancing perceptions around neoliberal institutions.

End of Kafala System in Saudi Arabia

Introduction
- Saudi Arabia has abolished its longstanding Kafala labour sponsorship system.
- The change targets improved protections and flexibility for migrant workers.
- It is a major shift affecting millions of foreign employees, including a large Indian workforce.

Why in news?

- The reform was unveiled in June 2025.
- It is expected to benefit around 13 million foreign workers.
- Over 2.6 million Indian migrants are included in the beneficiaries.

Background

- The Kafala system required a local employer (Kafeel) to take legal responsibility for a foreign worker's visa and residency.
- Introduced in the 1950s during the oil boom to manage the influx of foreign labour.
- Over time, it enabled exploitative practices: passport confiscation, delayed wages, and restricted travel.
- Workers were unable to change jobs or leave the country without sponsor consent.
- Human rights groups likened it to "modernday slavery," particularly impacting domestic workers.

Significance

- The decision follows international scrutiny and regional shifts, influenced by Qatar's labour reforms and Vision 2030 to modernise society and diversify the economy.
- A new contractbased system replaces Kafala.
- Workers can switch jobs without employer approval and leave the country without exit visas.
- There is expanded access to labour courts and complaint platforms for reporting abuse.
- For Indian workers, this could transform employment experiences in sectors such as construction and healthcare.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs is working with Saudi authorities to safeguard Indian workers' rights.

Facts/General knowledge

- About 42% of Saudi Arabia's workforce comprises migrants.
- The majority of migrant workers come from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines.
- "Kafala" means "sponsorship" in Arabic.

East Timor Joins ASEAN as 11th Member

Introduction

- East Timor (TimorLeste) has officially become the 11th member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- The formal induction took place at a ceremony in Kuala Lumpur.

Why in news?

- East Timor applied for ASEAN membership in 2011, was granted observer status in 2022, and achieved full membership in 2025 after a 14year wait.
- This marks ASEAN's first expansion since the 1990s; the last country to join was Cambodia in 1999.

Background

- Geography: Bounded by the Timor Sea to the southeast, the Wetar Strait to the north, the Ombai Strait to the northwest, and western Timor (part of Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara) to the southwest; comprises the eastern half of Timor Island, while the western half is part of Indonesia.
- History: Colonised by Portugal in the 18th century; annexed by Indonesia in 1975 after Portugal withdrew, leading to a long struggle for independence; in a 1999 UNsupervised referendum, it voted for independence, followed by violence until peacekeeping forces intervened; officially recognised by the UN in 2002.

Significance

- Enables participation in ASEAN's free trade agreements.
- Provides access to investment opportunities within the bloc.
- Expands East Timor's presence in a broader regional market.

Facts/General knowledge

- ASEAN was founded in 1967 by signing the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).
- Founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
- Secretariat: Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Chairmanship: Rotates annually (currently Malaysia).
- ASEAN Summit meetings occur biannually.

Catherine Connolly elected as Ireland's 10th President

Introduction

- Left- wing politician Catherine Connolly has been elected as Ireland's 10th President in a striking result.
- The outcome signals a notable shift in Ireland's political landscape.

Why in news?

- Presidential election held on 24 October 2025.
- Connolly won around 63% of first- preference votes; main rival Heather Humphreys received close to 29%.
- Turnout was approximately 46%, with a record number of spoiled ballots.

Background

- Politician from Galway.
- Teachta Dála (TD) for the Galway West constituency since 2016.
- Previously served as Deputy Speaker (Leas- Ceann Comhairle) in the Irish Parliament.

Significance

- Becomes the third woman to hold the office.
- Although largely ceremonial, the result is read by many as a rebuke of the centre- right establishment.
- Reflects an appetite among voters for a different voice.

Facts/General knowledge

- Advocated social justice, addressing inequalities in housing, health and opportunity.
- Emphasised Ireland's neutrality, criticising NATO and EU defence/militarisation trends.
- Promoted inclusivity and diversity, pledging to be "a president for all" and to represent younger voters and disenchanted citizens.
- Background as a barrister and long- time advocate for grassroots concerns gave her credibility among progressive voters.

Science and technology

Vyommitra – ISRO's Space Humanoid for Gaganyaan

Introduction

- Vyommitra is a halfhumanoid robot developed by ISRO to simulate human functions in space before astronauts are onboarded.
- It performs simple tasks, monitors environmental parameters, and communicates with mission control.

Why in news?

- ISRO will soon send Vyommitra aboard an uncrewed Gaganyaan test flight under India's Human Spaceflight Programme.
- This mission will precede India's first manned space mission.

Background

- The Gaganyaan vehicle in its crewed phase is designed to carry three astronauts to Low Earth Orbit at about 400 km for roughly three days.
- Humanrating ensures spacecraft meet safety standards for human flight, using robots before astronauts.
- Anthropomorphic testing uses humanshaped dummies or robots to simulate crew presence for realistic validation.
- A microgravity environment enables assessment of how spacecraft systems behave in nearweightlessness.

Significance

- Strengthens India's indigenous human spaceflight capability under ISRO and the Department of Space.
- Aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by advancing frontier technologies.
- Reflects an ethical shift towards robotic testing over animal testing in space research.

Facts/General knowledge

- Name: Vyommitra (Sanskrit: Vyoma – space; Mitra – friend).
- Structure: Upper torso humanoid with head and arms; no legs.
- Material: Lightweight aluminium alloy to withstand launch conditions.
- Role in testing: Evaluates Environmental Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS), cabin pressure, microgravity effects, and crew interfaces.
- Mission deployment: Will fly on an uncrewed Gaganyaan vehicle as part of precrew validation.

Mission Drishti – MultiSensor EO Satellite

Introduction

- Mission Drishti is the world's first satellite integrating multiple sensing technologies—Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and Optical sensors—on a single platform, enabling realtime, allweather Earth Observation (EO).

Why in news?

- Announcement of Mission Drishti's launch, scheduled for the first quarter of 2026.

Background

- Developed by GalaxEye Space, a Bengalurubased private space startup founded by alumni of IIT Madras.
- Aims to provide multisource geospatial intelligence for applications in defence, disaster management, infrastructure, utilities, agriculture, and financial risk assessment.
- Seeks to strengthen India's datadriven governance and security capabilities.

Significance

- Positions India as a global leader in private EO technology, enhancing its strategic and commercial space footprint.
- Boosts Atmanirbhar Bharat and SpaceTech innovation, reducing dependence on foreign EO data.
- Strengthens national capabilities in border surveillance, disaster prediction, and climate monitoring.

Facts/General knowledge

- Highresolution imaging with 1.5metre resolution, among the highest in its category.
- Weighs 160 kg, India's largest privatelybuilt satellite to date.
- AIdriven analytics enable advanced data fusion and geospatial insights for precision planning.
- Constellation plan of 8–10 satellites to be launched over four years, forming an integrated global observation network.

Military and defence

Top10 Most Powerful Militaries of the World by 2025 (Global Firepower Index)

Introduction
- The Global Firepower Index 2025 identifies the world's top10 most powerful militaries.
- It focuses on military strength, defence capabilities, and global influence.

Why in news?
- The 2025 Global Firepower Index ranks the top10 militaries, reflecting current power balances.

Background
- This is an annual ranking assessing each nation's overall power.
- It draws on more than 60 factors, including manpower, equipment, technology, and defence budgets.

Significance
- The 2025 list shows how nations are modernising and reshaping global military power.
- It provides a clear comparison of military readiness and strategic strength.

Facts/General knowledge
- Rank 1: United States — PwrIndx 0.0744
- Rank 2: Russia — PwrIndx 0.0788
- Rank 3: China — PwrIndx 0.0788
- Rank 4: India — PwrIndx 0.1184
- Rank 5: South Korea — PwrIndx 0.1656
- Rank 6: United Kingdom — PwrIndx 0.1785
- Rank 7: France — PwrIndx 0.1878
- Rank 8: Japan — PwrIndx 0.1839
- Rank 9: Turkey — PwrIndx 0.1902
- Rank 10: Italy — PwrIndx 0.2164

Exercise KONKAN25

Introduction
- A bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the UK Royal Navy.
- Conducted off India's western coast.

Why in news?
- The exercise has commenced, marking two decades of growing naval interoperability.

Background
- Exercise Konkan was first held in 2004.
- It is an annual bilateral maritime exercise.

Significance
- Reinforces the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership under the India–UK Vision 2035.
- Demonstrates commitment to a free, open, and secure IndoPacific.
- Consolidates strategic ties, enhances interoperability, and underscores a shared commitment to maritime security.

Facts/General knowledge
- The 2025 edition is the first to feature both nations' Carrier Strike Groups: HMS Prince of Wales and INS Vikrant.
- The Harbour Phase includes professional exchanges and visits.
- The Sea Phase features antiair, antisurface, and antisubmarine drills with flying operations.
- Other bilateral exercises include Exercise Cobra Warrior, Exercise Indradhanush (Air Force), and AJEYA WARRIOR (Indian Army).

NATPOLREXX: Indian Coast Guard's National Oil Spill Response Exercise

Introduction
- The Indian Coast Guard successfully conducted the 10th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREXX) off the Chennai coast.
- NATPOLREX is a biennial exercise and a key component of India's marine environmental protection framework.

Why in news?
- The 10th edition featured the firstever shoreline cleanup drill at Marina Beach, involving multiple state agencies in a simulated incident.

Background
- NATPOLREX aims to strengthen national preparedness, interagency coordination, and response to marine oil spills under the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP).
- Implementation of the NOSDCP is supported by dedicated pollution response infrastructure across key maritime locations.

Significance
- Enhances India's selfreliance in maritime technology and showcases Make in India initiatives.
- Strengthens multilayered pollution response mechanisms spanning offshore and shoreline environments.
- Supports the strategic need to protect sea lines and ports, with over 75% of India's energy arriving via seaborne oil.

Facts/General knowledge

- Central Coordinating Authority: The Indian Coast Guard has led national oil spill response since March 1986.
- National Policy Framework: The NOSDCP, drafted by the Indian Coast Guard and approved in 1993, underpins national oil spill preparedness and response.
- Operational Infrastructure: Four Pollution Response Centres are located at Mumbai, Chennai, Port Blair, and Vadinar.

AUSTRAHIND 2025

Introduction
- India–Australia joint military exercise highlighting growing defence cooperation between the two nations.

Why in news?
- An Indian Army contingent has departed for Australia to participate in the fourth edition of the exercise, 'AUSTRAHIND 2025'.

Background
- Exercise instituted in 2022; the first edition was conducted in Mahajan, Rajasthan.
- Planned as an annual training event conducted alternately in India and Australia.

Significance
- Aims to foster collaborative partnership and share best practices between the two sides.
- Promotes interoperability while undertaking multidomain operations in Urban and SemiUrban terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations on peace keeping operations.

Facts/General knowledge
- India and Australia became Comprehensive Strategic Partners in 2020 and signed a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement in 2021.
- Both countries also participate in multilateral exercises such as Malabar, Talisman Sabre, and Cope India, reflecting their shared commitment to regional security and interoperability in the IndoPacific.

Samudra Shakti–2025 IndoIndonesian Naval Exercise

Introduction
- Bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy.
- Designed to conduct complex atsea operations and enhance operational interoperability.

Why in news?
- The Indian Navy is hosting the 5th edition of "Samudra Shakti–2025" at Visakhapatnam.

Background
- Initiated in 2018 as a bilateral naval exercise.
- Launched under India's Act East Policy to deepen regional engagement with Indonesia.

Significance
- Improves coordination in maritime operations between the two navies.
- Strengthens defence cooperation.
- Reaffirms a shared commitment to peace and stability in the IndoPacific region.

Facts/General knowledge
- Focus areas: Military Interdiction Operations (MIO), Cross Deck Landings, and Air Defence drills.
- Additional drills: Practice Weapon Firings, Replenishment Approaches, and Tactical Manoeuvres.
- Related India–Indonesia exercises:
- Garuda Shakti: Army exercise focused on counterterrorism and jungle warfare training.
- INDINDO CORPAT: Coordinated naval patrol for security and surveillance in the Andaman Sea and the Malacca Strait.

JAIMEX25 – INS Sahyadri's participation in the JapanIndia Maritime Exercise

Introduction
- JAIMEX25 is the JapanIndia Maritime Exercise that reinforces the 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.
- It comprises Sea and Harbour Phases involving Indian and Japanese naval units.
- INS Sahyadri participated as part of its Long Range Deployment in the IndoPacific.

Why in news?
- INS Sahyadri took part in the Sea Phase from 16–18 October 2025.
- The Harbour Phase was conducted at Yokosuka, Japan, on 21 October 2025.

Background
- The exercise reflects the partnership established in 2014 between India and Japan.
- It aims to promote peace, stability, and security in the IndoPacific.
- It embodies a shared vision of a free, open, and inclusive maritime region.

Significance
- Enhances interoperability through advanced drills and coordinated operations.
- Strengthens professional and cultural ties via structured exchanges ashore.
- Showcases India's indigenous defence capability,

aligning with 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Contributes to regional stability by deepening practical naval cooperation.

Facts/General knowledge

- Sea Phase activities included:
- Advanced AntiSubmarine Warfare exercises.
- Missile defence drills.
- Flying operations.
- Underway replenishment.
- Participating units at sea:
- INS Sahyadri.
- JMSDF ships Asahi and Oumi.
- JMSDF submarine Jinryu.
- Harbour Phase at Yokosuka featured:
- Crossdeck visits.
- Operational planning.
- Sharing of best practices.
- A combined Yoga session.
- Other bilateral exercises between India and Japan:
- Malabar (Naval).
- Veer Guardian (Air Force).
- Dharma Guardian (Army).
- About INS Sahyadri:
- An indigenously built Shivalikclass Guided Missile Stealth Frigate, commissioned in 2012.
- Represents India's advancement in indigenous defence technology.
- A multirole stealth frigate that has participated in numerous operational deployments as well as bilateral and multilateral naval exercises.

Exercise Ocean Sky 2025

Introduction

- A multinational air combat exercise in Spain involving friendly nations' air forces.
- Designed to provide a dynamic setting for realistic simulations and multidomain air operations.

Why in news?

- The Indian Air Force recently participated to enhance cooperation and operational synergy.
- This follows the IAF's induction of 16 Airbus C295 transport aircraft, boosting its airlift capabilities.

Background

- Hosted by the Spanish Air Force at Gando Air Base, Spain.
- Scheduled from 20 to 31 October.
- Objective: train for air superiority through defensive counterair (DCA) and offensive counterair (OCA) missions, simulating large combined air force engagements.
- Key focus areas include knowledge exchange, tactical refinement, interoperability enhancement, sharing operational doctrines, networkcentric warfare training, and multidomain air operations.

Significance

- Builds joint readiness for air superiority missions through complex, largeforce scenarios.
- Advances tactics and procedures via structured doctrine sharing in a highfidelity training environment.
- Deepens defence cooperation among participating air forces.

Facts/General knowledge

- Participants include Spain (host), Germany, Greece, Portugal, the United States, and India.
- Involves more than fifty aircraft, including F18M, Eurofighter, F16 variants, F15E, and Su30MKI fighters.
- The Indian contingent comprises fighter aircraft, flight crews, technical specialists, and mission analysts.
- Indian tasks include air combat, strike coordination, aerial refuelling, and electronic warfare practices.

Trishul2025

Introduction

- Trishul2025 is a TriServices Exercise to strengthen integrated operations across land, air, and sea.
- It is designed as a major joint activity to test capabilities across multiple domains and enhance cohesive operational readiness.

Why in news?

- India has begun the TriServices Exercise "Trishul2025".

Background

- Coordinated by Headquarters Western Naval Command (Mumbai).
- Involves Southern Command (Army), Western Naval Command (Navy), and South Western Air Command (IAF).
- "Trinetra" and "Mahagujarat" function as subexercises under the larger annual TriServices Exercise Trishul2025.

Significance

- Validates joint procedures and strengthens network integration.
- Enhances interservice interoperability through coordinated multidomain operations.
- Verifies joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Cyber Warfare plans.
- Demonstrates effective employment of indigenous systems and absorption of the tenets of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Highlights strong interagency and multidomain integration.

Facts/General knowledge

- Conducted across the Sir Creek and desert sectors of Rajasthan–Gujarat, extending into the northern Arabian Sea.
- Supported by the Coast Guard, Border Security Force, and other agencies.
- Tests joint capabilities across land, air, sea, cyber, and space.

Topic: Drone Kavach Exercise 2025

Introduction

- Exercise Drone Kavach was conducted in the forward areas of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh from 25 to 28 September 2025.
- It centred on nextgeneration drone warfare and counterdrone technologies.

Why in news?

- A joint exercise featuring the Indian Army and the IndoTibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- Designed to demonstrate readiness in modern multidomain battlefields.

Background

- Organised by the Spear Corps under the Eastern Command of the Indian Army.
- Objective: validate stateoftheart drone technologies and counterdrone systems.

Significance

- Showcased the Army's combat preparedness for contemporary operational environments.
- Provided valuable insights into drone warfare, enabling refinement of strategies for future battlefield scenarios.

Facts/General knowledge

- Focus areas included:
- Tactical manoeuvres and combat simulations.
- Target acquisition and neutralisation.
- Active and passive counterdrone measures.
- Development of unitlevel tactics and techniques.

Scheme and initiatives

UDAN / Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)

Introduction

- A Central Sector Scheme to enable air operations on underserved and unserved routes, promote balanced regional growth, and make flying affordable for the masses.
- Objective: Improve unserved air routes in underserved regions and fulfil the aspirations of common citizens.
- Implementing agency: Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- Support includes Viability Gap Funding (VGF) alongside other facilitative measures.

Why in news?

- UDAN 5.3: Airfare capped at ₹3828 for distances of 501–525 km on subsidised seats.
- UDAN 5.0: The 600 km cap has been removed, introducing no distance restrictions.
- UDAN 4.0: Prioritised connectivity to the NorthEast, hilly states, and islands using helicopters and seaplanes.

Background

- Launched under the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) of 2016 to improve regional connectivity through fiscal support and infrastructure development.

Significance

- Enhances regional air connectivity for underserved and unserved areas.
- Makes air travel more affordable for the general public through fare caps and targeted support.
- Promotes balanced regional development across the country.
- Improves access to remote regions via helicopters and seaplanes.
- Boosts farmers' value realisation and market access through Krishi UDAN, focusing on the NorthEast and tribal districts.
- Enables states to establish international links through the International Air Connectivity Scheme (IACS).

Facts/General knowledge

- Type: Central Sector Scheme.
- Demand and marketbased model: States/airports provide concessions such as free security and fire services, utilities at reduced rates, and land for RCS airports.
- Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF): Finances VGF via a levy on certain domestic flights; targets 30 crore domestic ticketing by 2022 and 50 crore by 2027.
- Key initiatives: Krishi UDAN; International Air Connectivity Scheme (IACS).

Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) Scheme – Enhanced Flexibility for Localised Water Management

Introduction

- The Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) scheme promotes microirrigation and efficient onfarm water management to achieve "more crop per drop".
- It advances localised, sustainable water storage to strengthen irrigation reliability and ensure sustainable water availability.

- The scheme aims to enhance farm productivity and income by optimising water resources.

Why in news?

- The Union Agriculture Ministry has introduced greater flexibility under PDMC to promote microlevel water storage and conservation.
- States and Union Territories can design localised water management projects to enhance irrigation efficiency and ensure sustainable water availability.
- The flexibility enables project planning based on local needs for both individual farmers and communitylevel systems.

Background

- PDMC is part of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), launched in 2015 to achieve "Har Khet Ko Pani" and improve wateruse efficiency in agriculture.
- The nodal ministry is the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Its primary objective is to promote microirrigation technologies (drip and sprinkler systems) and efficient onfarm water management practices.

Significance

- Promotes microirrigation and wateruse efficiency across agriculture.
- Supports localised, sustainable water storage, strengthening irrigation reliability.
- Enhances farm productivity and income by optimising water resources.
- Empowers states and UTs to address specific regional water requirements through tailored projects.

Facts/General knowledge

- Revised guidelines expand "other interventions" to include microlevel water management activities, such as:
- Diggi (small reservoir) construction
- Water harvesting systems
- Projects for both individual farmers and communitylevel systems based on local needs
- Increased funding flexibility:
- Earlier cap for such activities: 20% of total allocation for each state/UT; 40% for Northeastern and Himalayan states, and UTs of J&K and Ladakh.
- Now, states/UTs can exceed these limits depending on their regional water requirements.

NAKSHA urban land records initiative

Introduction

- NAKSHA is a centrally funded initiative under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) to update urban land records.
- Its core objective is to create accurate geospatial maps of urban areas and establish a comprehensive digital database.

Why in news?

- Launched by the Union Rural Development Minister to address outdated or nonexistent land records in urban areas.
- Currently being piloted in selected urban local bodies.

Background

- Operates under DILRMP and is led by the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- The Union Finance Minister, in the 2024 and 2025 Union Budgets, stressed urban land digitisation, GIS mapping, and ITbased property administration to bolster municipal finances and urban reforms.

Significance

- Tackles inefficient governance, tax collection gaps, land disputes, and poor urban planning arising from inaccurate records.
- Addresses the widespread lack of updated maps or structured land records in most Indian cities, with exceptions in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa.

Facts/General knowledge

- Pilot coverage: 152 urban local bodies across 26 states.
- Pilot criteria: cities with area less than 35 sq km and population under 2 lakhs.
- Timeline: pilot to be completed within a year.
- Expansion plan: postevaluation rollout to 4,912 urban local bodies nationwide.
- Methodology: drone surveys and ground verification to produce accurate geospatial maps.

Mappls endorsed as India's alternative to Google Maps

Introduction

- In a major push toward digital selfreliance, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw endorsed Mappls as a viable alternative to Google Maps.
- The move aligns with India's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" goals, promoting indigenous technology solutions.

Why in news?

- A public demonstration by the minister triggered a surge in the app's popularity.
- Following this:
  Mappls became the #2 navigation app on the Apple App Store, just behind Google Maps.
- On Google Play, it crossed 1 crore (10 million) downloads.
- Daily downloads rose tenfold within two weeks.
- Indian Railways is preparing to sign an MoU with Mappls

to integrate its mapping services.

Background
- Mappls is an Indianmade navigation app developed by MapmyIndia.

Significance
- Rapid user growth and appstore visibility indicate mainstream acceptance of an indigenous alternative.
- Institutional adoption is advancing, with Indian Railways preparing an MoU to integrate Mappls' mapping services.
- The tech community, including Zoho's Sridhar Vembu, praised Mappls as the result of "decades of R&D".
- Investor sentiment strengthened, with parent company CE Info Systems' stock rising by 8%.
- The company is lobbying for preinstallation of apps on smartphones made under the PLI scheme, giving it an edge in domestic adoption.

Facts/General knowledge
- Developer: MapmyIndia.
- Indiaspecific features:
- 3D junction views for better realtime decisions.
- Traffic signal countdowns in supported cities.
- Indoor navigation for malls and buildings.
- Alerts for speed breakers, sharp turns, and accident zones.
- Support for 12+ Indian languages.
- Unique Mappls PIN for accurate geolocation.

Prime Minister DhanDhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

Introduction
- A scheme to make farming easier, modern, and more profitable across agriculture and allied sectors.
- Designed to enhance productivity, incomes, diversification, storage, value addition, irrigation, and access to agricultural credit.

Why in news?
- The Centre has announced 100 Aspirational Agriculture Districts under PMDDKY to boost farm productivity and rural prosperity.

Background
- Announced in the Union Budget 2025.
- Modelled after NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme, focused exclusively on agriculture and allied sectors.
- No separate budgetary allocation; converges budgets of 36 existing schemes from 11 departments, including Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (cash transfers), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (crop insurance), and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (irrigation).
- Annual outlay of Rs 24,000 crore from 202526 to 203031, totalling Rs 1.44 lakh crore.

Significance
- Enhance agricultural productivity and farmer income.
- Promote crop diversification and sustainable farming practices.
- Expand postharvest storage and value addition.
- Support women, youth, and allied sectors (e.g., dairy, fisheries, poultry) to diversify income sources.
- Achieve selfsufficiency in foodgrains, pulses, and oilseeds to reduce India's dependence on imports.
- Strengthen irrigation infrastructure and improve access to both longterm and shortterm agricultural credit.
- Expected to directly benefit 1.7 crore farmers and integrate allied sectors like livestock, dairy, and fisheries.

Facts/General knowledge
- Budget composition: around 40% for subsidies, 30% for infrastructure, 20% for loans, and 10% for training and market support.
- District selection criteria:
- Low crop productivity (e.g., wheat below 3.5 tonnes/hectare or rice below 2.7 tonnes/hectare).
- Moderate cropping intensity (fewer than 1.55 crop cycles per year).
- Low credit access (limited penetration of bank loans or Kisan Credit Cards, often below 30% of farmers).
- Geographic representation considering share of Net Cropped Area and operational holdings.
- A minimum of one district will be selected from each state/union territory for balanced regional development.
- Implementation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare through a District DhanDhaanya Krishi Yojana (DDKY) Samiti, chaired by the District Collector, to implement the District Agriculture Development Plan (DADP).
- Coordination by local administrations and agriculture departments with 100 appointed Central Nodal Officers (mostly joint secretaries) to monitor performance.
- Coverage and timeline: 100 districts; 202526 to 203031.

Sugamya Bharat and the Sugamya Bharat Mobile Application

Introduction
- Sugamya Bharat (Accessible India Campaign) is a national initiative to improve accessibility across public spaces, transport, and digital platforms for persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- The Sugamya Bharat mobile application complements this effort by enabling users, including PwDs and the elderly, to report accessibility barriers.

Why in news?

- The Sugamya Bharat app has resolved 75% of over 1,400 accessibility complaints.

Background

- Sugamya Bharat Mobile Application:
  Launched in 2021 by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Empowers users to report accessibility issues in public infrastructure, transportation, and buildings.
- Available in 10 languages with options to upload photos and use geotagging.
- Open to anyone facing accessibilityrelated difficulties to register concerns or grievances.
- Sugamya Bharat (Accessible India Campaign):
- Launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Seeks to ensure:
  Government buildings become more accessible.
- Governmentoperated public transport is more adaptable for disabled users.
- Government websites and media content are more accessible through texttospeech technology and sign language interpreters.
- Aligned with Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; India has been a signatory since 2007.

Significance

- Enhances participation of PwDs and the elderly by enabling direct reporting of accessibility gaps.
- Supports tangible improvements across physical and digital domains in government spaces and services.
- Facilitates grievance redressal through multilingual access and geotagged evidence.
- Reinforces India's commitment to international accessibility standards under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Facts/General knowledge

- Legal framework and rights:
  The People with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 provided a legal foundation for empowerment in education, employment, and accessibility.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 replaced the 1995 Act, expanding disability categories from 7 to 21 and increasing reservation quotas to 4% in government jobs and 5% in higher education institutions.
- Education and scholarships:
  Inclusive education supported through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).
- National scholarships help students with disabilities pursue higher education, covering expenses such as tuition fees and books.
- Skill development and employment:
  The National Action Plan for Skill Training of Persons with Disabilities (2015) aims to boost employability through targeted skill development, vocational training, and collaborations with industries.
- Social security and welfare:
  The Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme) provides financial assistance for necessary aids and appliances.
- The Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) supports voluntary organisations with grants for setting up and maintaining rehabilitation centres.

Integrated PMAASHA Scheme

Introduction

- Provides price assurance to farmers.
- Helps control price volatility of essential commodities.

Why in news?

- For 2024–25, the Government has allowed procurement of tur, urad and masur under PSS equivalent to 100% of the State's production.

Background

- Integrated scheme comprising:
- Price Support Scheme (PSS)
- Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)
- Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)

Significance

- Supports farmers through MSPbased procurement or deficiency payments.
- Helps manage price volatility across eligible and perishable commodities.

Facts/General knowledge

- Tenure: Till 2025–26.
- Crops coverage: Pulses, oilseeds and copra.
- Price Support Scheme (PSS):
- Covers pulses, oilseeds and copra meeting Fair Average Quality standards.
- Procurement agencies: National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) and Food Corporation of India (FCI).
- Beneficiaries: Preregistered farmers sell directly at Minimum Support Price (MSP) through state agencies.
- Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):
  Covers all oilseeds for which MSP is notified.
- Direct payment of the difference between MSP and the selling/modal price, up to 15% of MSP value.
- States/UTs can choose PSS or PDPS for oilseeds each year/season.
- Market Intervention Scheme (MIS):
  For procurement of perishable commodities not covered

under MSP, such as tomato, onion and potato.
- Implemented on State/UT request when market prices fall by at least 10% from the previous season.

National Pulses Mission (2025–31)

Introduction
- Central programme under the Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
- Designed to achieve Aatmanirbharta in pulses, ensuring food and nutritional security.

Background
- Baseline domestic pulse production: 242 lakh tonnes in 2024–25.
- Targeted domestic pulse production: 350 lakh tonnes by 2030–31.

Significance
- Food and nutritional security: Pulses are a vital protein source in Indian diets.
- Import reduction: Cuts 15–20% import dependency, saving foreign exchange.
- Farmer welfare: Ensures MSPbased income stability and strengthens the valuechain.

Facts/General knowledge
- Term: 2025–26 to 2030–31 (six years).
- Budget allocation: ₹11,440 crore.
- Production boost: Expand area to 310 lakh hectares with a yield target of 1,130 kg/ha.
- Seed security: Distribution of 126 lakh quintals of certified seeds and 88 lakh free seed kits; monitoring through the SATHI portal.
- Assured procurement: 100% procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masoor at MSP for four years.
- Infrastructure support: 1,000 postharvest processing units with subsidy up to ₹25 lakh each.
- Research and innovation: Multilocation trials for climateresilient and pestresistant pulse varieties.
- Farmer training: Capacitybuilding programmes for adoption of modern techniques.

We Rise Initiative

Introduction
- We Rise stands for Women Entrepreneurs Reimagining Inclusive Sustainable Enterprises.
- A significant institutional effort to promote womenled enterprises in the global market.

Why in news?
- Recently launched.
- Initiated by NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) in partnership with DP World under the Award to Reward (ATR) programme.

Background
- Aims to enhance the global presence of women entrepreneurs and womenled MSMEs.
- Focuses on integrating womenled enterprises into global markets and competition.

Significance
- Provides structural support to women entrepreneurship in India.
- Increases women's participation in the MSME sector.
- Strengthens the 'Vocal for Local to Global' approach.
- Promotes womenled economic development in India.
- Enhances the role of women in exports and integrates them into global competition.

Facts/General knowledge
- Objectives:
  Access to global business opportunities.
- Development of export capabilities.
- Mentorship, capacity building, and training.
- Facilitation of strategic partnerships.
- Technical and financial support for business expansion.
- Key features:
  Assistance to women entrepreneurs in market access and supply chain integration.
- International connectivity through DP World's business network.
- Support for product quality, packaging, and export standards.
- Skilling, networking, and knowledgesharing through WEP's digital platform.
- Steps to make the MSME sector exportoriented.

PMSHRI Scheme and Related Education Initiatives

Introduction
- The Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PMSHRI) Scheme, launched in 2022, is a centrally sponsored initiative to upgrade over 14,500 existing schools as model institutions implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- The scheme runs from 2022–23 to 2026–27, after which maintenance rests with the respective states and Union Territories.

Why in news?
- The Kerala Government has sought financial assistance under PMSHRI to support the State's cashstrapped education sector.
- Some states, including Punjab and West Bengal, have refused to sign the MoU, while Tamil Nadu and Kerala have shown conditional willingness.

- The central government has stopped funding under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to states that have not signed an MoU to participate in the PMSHRI scheme.

Background

- Selection follows a competitive Challenge Mode in three stages.
- First, states and Union Territories sign an MoU with the central government.
- Second, eligible schools are identified using a minimum benchmark based on UDISE+ data.
- Third, a challengebased selection requires schools to meet specific criteria, verified through physical inspection before final selection by an expert committee.
- Monitoring is ensured through the School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF) for accountability and continuous quality improvement.

Significance

- Strengthens competencybased learning and reallife application.
- Emphasises experiential, inquirydriven, and learnercentred pedagogy.
- Upgrades infrastructure with Smart Classrooms, Computer Labs, Integrated Science Labs, and Atal Tinkering Labs.
- Promotes green practices, including water conservation, solar energy use, and waste recycling.

Facts/General knowledge

- Funding pattern:
  General States/UTs with legislature: 60:40 (Centre: State/UT)
- Northeastern and Himalayan States, and J&K: 90:10
- UTs without legislature: 100% Centre funding
- Other key government initiatives related to education:
  National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Aims to make India a global knowledge superpower; third major revamp after 1968 and 1986; features universal access, quality early childhood care (ages 3–6), a 5+3+3+4 structure, multidisciplinary learning, multilingualism, holistic assessment via PARAKH, and support for disadvantaged groups through the Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones.
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): Integrated school education programme from preschool to class XII; merges Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, and Teacher Education; focuses on Teacher and Technology.
- MidDay Meal Scheme: Provides free lunches in government and governmentaided schools; aims to improve nutrition, increase school enrolment, and reduce dropout rates; supports inclusive education for disadvantaged children.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): Promotes girls' education and gender equality; works to prevent gender discrimination, improve enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes; encourages community awareness and valuing the girl child.
- PM eVIDYA: Launched in 2020 to facilitate multimode access to digital/online teachinglearning content for students and teachers.
- SWAYAM: A MOOC platform designed to achieve Access, Equity, and Quality.

NMIA Inauguration and Development Projects in Mumbai

Introduction

On 8 October 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase I of the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) and launched multiple development projects in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister inaugurated and dedicated:
- Navi Mumbai International Airport (Phase I)
- Mumbai One Application
- Mumbai Metro Line3 (Phase 2B)
- STEP programme by the Government of Maharashtra

Background

- NMIA is India's largest Greenfield airport project with a budget outlay of Rs 19,650 crores.
- It will serve as the second international airport for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region alongside Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA).
- Developed under a PublicPrivate Partnership by Adani Airports Holdings Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Limited) and CIDCO, aligning with the Government of India's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.
- The airport's design is inspired by the lotus flower, symbolising purity, sustainability, and Indian cultural heritage.

Significance

- Scalable capacity: around 20 million passengers annually in Phase I, rising to up to 90 million upon full completion.
- Multimodal connectivity: India's first water taxi service linking Mumbai with the airport, and integration with metro and suburban rail for direct terminal access.
- Seamless internal movement: an Automated People Mover connecting terminals and parking zones.
- Sustainability focus: rainwater harvesting and 47 MW solar power, with a target of 4star GRIHA rating for sustainability and energy efficiency.

Facts/General knowledge

- Airside infrastructure: two parallel runways, with one operational initially.
- Cargo: a dedicated terminal capable of handling 1 tonnes of cargo annually.

- Ecofriendly operations: electric bus services and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) infrastructure being developed.

Rank report and awards

Henley Passport Index 2025

Introduction

- The Henley Passport Index ranks the world's most powerful passports based on visafree travel.
- The 2025 rankings feature notable shifts in positions across several countries.

Why in news?

- The United States has fallen out of the top 10 for the first time in nearly two decades.
- India's ranking has declined from 80th to 85th.
- The United Kingdom has dropped from 6th to 8th.
- China has made substantial gains, rising to 64th from its earlier low standing.

Background

- The United States topped the index in 2014, but subsequent policy changes have reduced its ranking.
- The United Kingdom was ranked first in 2015 but has since slipped to 8th in 2025.
- China has advanced from 94th in 2015 to 64th in 2025, adding 37 more visafree destinations.
- India had reached the 77th position earlier in 2025 before dropping to 85th.

Significance

- The decline of the US passport reflects shifting global mobility and soft power dynamics.
- The changes underscore the growing importance of openness and international cooperation in visa policies.

Facts/General knowledge

- Top passports:
- Singapore: visafree access to 193 destinations.
- South Korea: 190 destinations.
- Japan: 189 destinations.
- United States:
  Now ranks outside the top 10.
- Tied with Malaysia at 180 destinations.
- Contributing factors include:
  Brazil ending visafree travel for US citizens due to lack of reciprocity.
- China expanding visa exemptions for European nations while excluding the US.
- Policy changes in Papua New Guinea and Myanmar.
- New eVisa systems and visa policies in countries such as Somalia and Vietnam.
- United Kingdom:
  Fell from 6th to 8th, marking its lowest position since topping in 2015.
- China:
  Climbed to 64th, gaining visafree access to 37 additional destinations since 2015.
- India:
  Ranked 85th with visafree access to 57 countries.
- Additional rankings:
  Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland: 188 destinations.
- Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands: 187 destinations.
- Greece, Hungary, New Zealand, and others: between 186 and 184 destinations.

Nobel Prize 2025 – Peripheral Immune Tolerance

Introduction

- Mary E. Brunkow, Fred Ramsdell, and Shimon Sakaguchi won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2025.
- The award recognises their discoveries concerning peripheral immune tolerance.

Why in news?

- The 2025 Nobel announcement highlights how their work explains the body's protection against selfattack through mechanisms of peripheral tolerance.

Background

- The immune system protects the body from harmful pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi.
- It must also avoid attacking the body's own cells to maintain healthy function.
- The immune system employs two types of tolerance: central tolerance and peripheral tolerance.
- Central tolerance occurs in the thymus, which produces and trains T cells (a type of white blood cell).
- The thymus removes selfreactive T cells, but the process is imperfect and some escape into the body's circulation and tissues (the periphery).
- Peripheral tolerance provides additional control to stop escaped selfreactive T cells from attacking the body.
- Regulatory T cells (Treg cells), discovered by Shimon Sakaguchi, play a key role by identifying selfreactive T cells and preventing them from damaging tissues, acting like a security guard.

Significance

- Their discoveries clarify how the body balances defence against pathogens while preventing attacks on its own tissues.
- They show the central role of Treg cells in restraining overactive immune responses in the periphery.

- They establish that the FOXP3 gene governs the development and function of Treg cells, and that its disruption leads to the immune system targeting the body's own tissues.

Facts/General knowledge

- The thymus is a small gland in the lymphatic system that produces and trains T cells.
- Some selfreactive T cells escape central tolerance and enter the periphery (the body's circulation and tissues).
- Regulatory T cells (Treg cells) patrol the periphery to restrain selfreactive T cells.
- Mary E. Brunkow and Fred Ramsdell discovered the FOXP3 gene, which controls Treg cell development and function.
- Mutation in the FOXP3 gene prevents proper formation of Treg cells and causes a rare autoimmune disease called IPEX.

Nobel Prize in Physics 2025 — Macroscopic Quantum Tunnelling in Superconducting Circuits

Introduction

- Discovery: Macroscopic quantum mechanical tunnelling and energy quantisation in an electric circuit.
- Impact: Paved the way for superconducting circuits that could form the backbone of practical quantum computers and sensors, marking a major milestone in quantum technology.

Why in news?

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has awarded the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics to John Clarke, Michel Devoret, and John Martinis for this discovery.

Background

- Extension of quantum effects: Demonstrated that macroscopic systems, such as superconducting circuits, can exhibit quantum behaviours like tunnelling and energy quantisation.
- Experimental realisation: Employed superconducting materials to create a Josephson junction (superconducting system), where billions of Cooper pairs acted as a collective quantum object.
- Key observation: When cooled to near absolute zero, the system's electrical state could tunnel through energy barriers, showing abrupt transitions that confirmed quantum behaviour over classical expectations.

Significance

- Quantum computing: Enabled the development of superconducting qubits and advanced quantum sensing and simulation.
- Cryptography implications: Quantum computers could break encryption systems that rely on classical computation limits.
- Global relevance: Countries, including India, are investing heavily in quantum technology; India's National Quantum Computing Mission aims to develop functional quantum computers by 2031.

Facts/General knowledge

- What is quantum tunnelling?
  Phenomenon where particles pass through barriers that would be impassable under classical physics.
- Arises from wave–particle duality: the particle's wave function extends beyond a barrier, creating a probability of appearing on the other side.
- Applications of quantum tunnelling:
  Scanning Tunnelling Microscope (STM): Maps surfaces at the atomic level.
- Flash memory: Uses electrons tunnelling onto or off floatinggate transistors in USB drives and SSDs.
- Josephson junctions: Two superconductors separated by a thin insulator, allowing electron tunnelling and precise current–voltage relationships.
- Uses of Josephson junctions: Superconducting quantum computers and Superconducting Quantum Interference Devices (SQUIDs) for ultrasensitive measurements.
- Quantum computing: Enables qubits to exist in multiple states and transition between them, essential for specific algorithms.
- Nuclear fusion: Allows atomic nuclei to overcome repulsive forces and fuse in stars and experimental reactors.
- Understanding quantum tunnelling (analogy):
  Classical view: A ball without enough energy rolls back and cannot cross a hill.
- Quantum view: There is a small probability the ball appears on the other side, as if it "tunnelled" through.
- What's really happening?
- Particles act as both particles and waves.
- When a wave meets a barrier, part of it can "leak" through if the barrier is thin or low enough.
- This leakage creates a probability of the particle being found on the far side without "climbing over" the barrier.

Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2025 — Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs)

Introduction

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2025 to Susumu Kitagawa (Japan), Richard Robson (Australia), and Omar Yaghi (US) for their groundbreaking work in creating Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs).
- MOFs are a class of crystalline materials made by linking metal ions with organic molecules, forming porous, spongelike structures with tiny, wellorganised pores that can trap, store, or filter gases and chemicals.

Why in news?

- The decision recognises the creation of MOFs and the foundational advances that enabled their design and application.

Background

- Richard Robson:
  Designed 3D structures by combining metal ions (like copper) with organic molecules to form strong, interconnected frameworks.
- Demonstrated materials with large internal spaces capable of trapping molecules, laying the groundwork for porous materials.
- Susumu Kitagawa:
- Built on Robson's work to show that porous structures could remain stable.
- Discovered that these structures could expand and contract based on surrounding gases or chemicals, enabling gas capture (e.g., carbon dioxide) and energy storage.
- Omar Yaghi:
  Coined the term Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs) for these porous structures.
- Developed reticular chemistry, a systematic approach to assembling metal ions and organic molecules into large, ordered structures.
- Demonstrated that MOFs could be rationally designed for new properties.

Significance

- Water harvesting: MOFs can extract water from desert air.
- Carbon capture: Certain MOFs can selectively attract and store carbon dioxide, helping combat climate change.
- Storage of toxic gases: MOFs can safely trap harmful chemicals for later use or disposal.
- Customdesigned chemical processes: MOFs can be engineered for specific chemical reactions or storage needs, thanks to their highly customisable structures.

Facts/General knowledge

- Indian Nobel Laureate in Chemistry: In 2009, Venkatraman Ramakrishnan (India), along with Thomas A. Steitz (US) and Ada E. Yonath (Israel), was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry "for studies of the structure and function of the ribosome."

Nobel Prize in Literature 2025 – László Krasznahorkai

Introduction

- László Krasznahorkai is a Hungarian novelist and screenwriter known for difficult, demanding novels often described as postmodern, dystopian, and melancholic.

Why in news?

- The Nobel Prize in Literature for 2025 is awarded to the Hungarian author László Krasznahorkai, for his compelling and visionary oeuvre that, in the midst of apocalyptic terror, reaffirms the power of art.

Background

- Famous works: Satantango; The Melancholy of Resistance; War & War; Seiobo There Below; The Last Wolf; The World Goes On.
- Major achievements and awards: Winner of the Man Booker International Prize 2015; shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize 2018 (The World Goes On).
- Literary recognition: Praised for labyrinthine prose, singlesentence paragraphs, and philosophical depth.

Significance

- His works explore apocalyptic visions, human delusion, moral collapse, and the interplay of despair and beauty.
- The Melancholy of Resistance was described by 2015 Man Booker judges as a "satirical and prophetic vision of Western Civilisation."

Facts/General knowledge

- India's celebrated novelist Amitav Ghosh was among the contenders for the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Amitav Ghosh, born in Kolkata in 1956, is the winner of the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honour, and one of the country's leading contemporary writers.
- Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature 1913 for his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, which he expressed in his own English words and made a part of the literature of the West.
- Notable literary contributions by Rabindranath Tagore: Manasi; Gitanjali; Sâdhanâ: The Realisation of Life; Chitra: a Play in One Act.

Nobel Peace Prize 2025 – María Corina Machado

Introduction

- María Corina Machado is a Venezuelan politician and prodemocracy activist, widely known as the "Iron Lady of Venezuela" for her courageous stand against authoritarianism.
- She has championed democratic rights and a peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy in Venezuela.

Why in news?

- The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2025 to María Corina Machado for her tireless efforts to promote democratic rights and a just, peaceful transition in Venezuela.

Background

- Since 1999, Venezuela has shifted from a relatively stable democracy to a deeply entrenched authoritarian state, with citizens facing poverty and limited freedoms while the opposition operates under constant threats.
- Contributions by María Corina Machado:
- Founded the Atenea Foundation in 1992 to support street children.
- Cofounded Súmate to monitor elections and promote free and fair voting.
- Mobilised citizens and opposition groups by advocating "ballots over bullets," encouraging peaceful civic participation over violent resistance.
- Remained in Venezuela under threats, working to unify the prodemocracy movement and stand firmly against authoritarian rule.

Significance

- The 2025 award highlights that democracy is the foundation of peace, both within countries and internationally.

Facts/General knowledge

- India has two Nobel Peace Prize laureates:
- Mother Teresa (1979): Awarded for her work for bringing help to suffering humanity.
- Kailash Satyarthi (2014): Shared the prize with Malala Yousafzai for work against the suppression of children and for the right of all children to education; founded the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement).
- Nobel Peace Prize:
  Awarded since 1901 to individuals or organisations promoting fraternity between nations, reducing standing armies, or advancing peace.
- Initially recognised pioneers of the peace movement, later shifting to politicians, diplomats, and humanitarian work.
- Since World War II, the focus has been on arms control, peace negotiation, democracy and human rights, and creating a more peaceful world.
- In the 21st century, efforts addressing climate change and environmental threats are also considered.

Nobel Prize in Economics 2025

Introduction

- The 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences was jointly awarded to Joel Mokyr (Netherlands), Philippe Aghion (Paris), and Peter Howitt (Canada) for explaining innovationdriven economic growth and how societies must counter stagnation to sustain development.

Why in news?

- Joel Mokyr received onehalf of the prize for identifying prerequisites for sustained growth through technological progress, using historical data to show why sustained technological innovation is vital for continuous economic growth.
- Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt shared the other half for developing a mathematical model of "creative destruction," where new products and technologies replace outdated ones, propelling economic expansion.

Background

- In 1968, Sweden's central bank, Sveriges Riksbank, established the Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel on its 300th anniversary, funded through a donation to the Nobel Foundation.
- Awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, it follows the same principles as the original Nobel Prizes and carries equal monetary value.

Significance

- The research explains why the past two centuries experienced consistent global economic growth, improving living standards and wellbeing worldwide.
- It challenges the assumption that growth is automatic, emphasising the fragility of progress and the need to maintain innovationdriven mechanisms.
- It highlights the importance for regions like Europe to integrate competition with proactive industrial policy, learning from examples like the US and China.
- It underscores the need for economies to encourage continuous innovation and adaptation for sustained prosperity.

Facts/General knowledge

- Amartya Sen (1998): Awarded for work on welfare economics, poverty, and human development, emphasising that growth alone is insufficient and development must focus on capabilities, rights, and freedoms.
- Abhijit Banerjee (2019): Shared the prize with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for pioneering experimental approaches to alleviating global poverty, introducing randomised controlled trials to evaluate social and economic interventions.

70th Filmfare Awards 2025

Introduction

- The 70th Hyundai Filmfare Awards 2025 were held on 11 October 2025 at EKA Arena, Ahmedabad, in collaboration with Gujarat Tourism.
- The ceremony marked a distinguished celebration of excellence in Hindi cinema and seven decades of cinematic excellence.

Why in news?

- Hosted by Shah Rukh Khan and Karan Johar, who reunited on the Filmfare stage after 18 years.
- The evening celebrated the best films of 2024, honouring excellence across multiple categories.

Background
- The ceremony blended glitz and nostalgia in its presentation.
- It focused on recognising outstanding cinematic achievements from the 2024 film year.

Significance
- 'Laapataa Ladies' emerged as the biggest winner with 13 trophies, including Best Film, equalling the record previously set by 'Gully Boy' (2019) starring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt.
- In the acting categories, Abhishek Bachchan and Kartik Aaryan shared the Best Actor (Male) award for their performances, while Alia Bhatt won Best Actress.
- Lifetime Achievement Awards were conferred on Zeenat Aman and Shyam Benegal (posthumously), honouring unparalleled contributions to Indian cinema.

Facts/General knowledge
- Best Director: Kiran Rao – 'Laapataa Ladies'
- Critics' Award for Best Film: Shoojit Sircar – 'I Want To Talk'
- Best Screenplay and Best Dialogue: Sneha Desai – 'Laapataa Ladies'
- Best Music Album and Best Background Score: Ram Sampath – 'Laapataa Ladies'
- RD Burman Award (Upcoming Talent in Music): Achint Thakkar – 'Jigra', 'Mr & Mrs Mahi'
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Zeenat Aman; Shyam Benegal (Posthumously) – Honoured for unparalleled contributions to Indian cinema

Global Firepower Index 2025

Introduction
- Ranks countries by military strength, defence capabilities, and global influence.
- Assesses overall power using a composite index (PwrIndx).

Why in news?
- The 2025 rankings identify the top 10 most powerful militaries based on strength, technology, manpower, and defence spending.

Background
- Compiled annually to compare nations' military readiness and strategic strength.
- Considers more than 60 factors, including manpower, equipment, technology, and defence budgets.

Significance
- Provides a clear picture of how nations compare in military readiness and strategic strength.
- Shows how countries are modernising and reshaping global military power.

Facts/General knowledge
- 1. United States — PwrIndx: 0.0744
- 2. Russia — PwrIndx: 0.0788
- 3. China — PwrIndx: 0.0788
- 4. India — PwrIndx: 0.1184
- 5. South Korea — PwrIndx: 0.1656
- 6. United Kingdom — PwrIndx: 0.1785
- 7. France — PwrIndx: 0.1878
- 8. Japan — PwrIndx: 0.1839
- 9. Turkey — PwrIndx: 0.1902
- 10. Italy — PwrIndx: 0.2164

Meeting and submits

National Conference on Land Administration and Disaster Management, Gandhinagar

Introduction
- A twoday national conference focused on Land Administration and Disaster Management.
- Centred on modernising land governance, strengthening disaster resilience, and ensuring citizens' land rights through digitisation and innovation.

Why in news?
- Began on 3 October 2025 at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar.
- Inaugural address by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel emphasised digitising land records, leveraging indigenous technology, and adopting a citizencentric approach.
- Provides a platform for states to share best practices and innovations in land and disaster management.

Background
- Organised by the Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development) in collaboration with Gujarat's Revenue Department.
- Aligned with a nationwide push to upgrade land governance systems and disaster preparedness.

Significance
- Advances secure land rights at grassroots levels through digitised, citizenfocused processes.
- Expands institutional reach with newly inaugurated revenue offices.
- Enhances efficiency via the Revenue Diary and Integrated Land Administration (ILA) System, streamlining land record keeping, registration, court case management, and resurvey workflows in a unified digital interface.
- Strengthens property rights for families from nomadic

tribes through distribution of SVAMITVA cards.
- Promotes resilient development by integrating disaster risk considerations into land use planning and infrastructure.
- Builds capacity and skills within land administration through focused human resource development.

Facts/General knowledge

- Duration and venue: Twoday conference starting 3 October 2025 at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar.
- Key launches and inaugurations:
- New revenue offices to reinforce institutional reach.
- Launch of Revenue Diary and the Integrated Land Administration (ILA) System.
- Distribution of SVAMITVA cards to families from nomadic tribes.
- Participants: Revenue officers and domain experts from across India contributing to panels and thematic discussions.
- Themes and focus areas:
- Modernising revenue laws to align with new land governance goals.
- Upgrading registration and land record systems, including paperless and online workflows.
- Urban land record mapping and resurveying, integrating GIS and remote sensing.
- Process reforms in revenue courts and land acquisition.
- Disaster risk management best practices, particularly in land use planning and resilient infrastructure.
- Human resource and capacity building in land administration.

India at the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)

Introduction

- An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla is participating in the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC).
- The delegation spans both Houses of Parliament, alongside representatives from State and Union Territory Legislatures.

Why in news?

- India's leadership presence includes the Lok Sabha Speaker addressing the General Assembly and chairing a workshop on digital democracy.
- Indian parliamentarians are engaging in CPA Executive Committee deliberations and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) sessions.

Background

- The CPC is organised annually by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to convene presiding officers, parliamentarians, and secretaries from member nations to exchange ideas and best practices on governance.
- The 68th edition focuses on the theme: "The Commonwealth – A Global Partner."

Significance

- Serves as a vital platform for dialogue among lawmakers of Commonwealth nations.
- Fosters the strengthening of democratic institutions, technological transformation, and inclusive governance.
- Emphasises legislatures' roles in promoting democracy, sustainable development, and digital inclusion.
- Highlights empowerment of women legislators and inclusive participation in policymaking.
- Encourages the use of digital tools for citizen engagement and legislative transparency, alongside strategies to bridge digital inequalities.

Facts/General knowledge

- Venue and dates: Bridgetown, Barbados; 5–12 October 2025.
- Composition of the Indian delegation:
- Shri Om Birla, Speaker, Lok Sabha (Leader of Delegation)
- Shri Harivansh, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha
- Shri Anurag Sharma, MP (Lok Sabha) & CPA Executive Committee Member
- Dr. D. Purandeswari, MP (Lok Sabha) & CWP Steering Committee Member
- Dr. K. Sudhakar, MP (Lok Sabha)
- Smt. Rekha Sharma, MP (Rajya Sabha)
- Dr. Ajeet Madhavrao Gopchade, MP (Rajya Sabha)
- Shri Utpal Kumar Singh, SecretaryGeneral, Lok Sabha
- Shri P. C. Mody, SecretaryGeneral, Rajya Sabha
- Additionally, 36 Presiding Officers and 16 Secretaries from 24 State and UT Legislatures will participate.
- Key agendas and participation:
- Shri Om Birla will address the General Assembly on the conference theme.
- He will chair a workshop titled "Leveraging Technology: Enhancing Democracy through Digital Transformations and Tackling the Digital Divide."
- Shri Anurag Sharma will attend as Treasurer of the CPA.
- Shri Bishwajit Daimary, Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, will join as one of the Regional Representatives from the Indian Region.
- Dr. D. Purandeswari will represent India in the CWP Steering Committee and serve as a panellist on "Good Practices and Strategies for Realising GenderSensitive Parliaments across the Commonwealth."

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 – Abu Dhabi Outcomes

Introduction

- The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025 concluded

in Abu Dhabi, shedding light on evolving global environmental governance.
- Delegates addressed the planet's most pressing environmental issues through decisions shaping conservation and sustainability agendas.

Why in news?

- Held for the first time in the United Arab Emirates and concluded on 15 October.
- IUCN Members adopted a 20year Vision and a 2026–2029 Programme for the Union.
- Outcomes were anchored by the Abu Dhabi Call to Action and 148 adopted motions setting new standards for biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and inclusive governance.
- The Congress secured ISO 20121:2024 certification, demonstrating compliance with rigorous sustainability standards across economic, environmental, social, and governance dimensions.

Background

- The Abu Dhabi Call to Action served as the definitive declaration, articulating five principles for transformation:
- Reaffirming Nature as Foundation: protect all ecosystems; recognise nature's role in health, culture, and development; defend Indigenous custodians of nature.
- Strengthening Multilateralism: align all sectors and policies with naturebased goals; ensure accountability through collective global action.
- Ensuring Justice and Inclusive Participation: adopt a rightsbased approach empowering women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and environmental defenders in shared decisionmaking.
- Advancing Science, Knowledge, and Innovation: integrate scientific, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge; invest in research, citizen science, and sustainable technologies.
- Scaling Up and Aligning Resources: redirect finance toward a climateresilient economy; eliminate harmful subsidies driving environmental degradation.
- A 20year Strategic Vision commits the Union to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.
- The framework integrates three interconnected aims: conserving biodiversity effectively; addressing connections between biodiversity, water, food, health, and climate change; and advancing a more just and equitable society, formalising integration required for crosscutting mandates like 'One Health'.
- The Quadrennial Programme for 2026–2029 provides concrete outputs and measurable deliverables aligned with critical 2030 global deadlines.
- IUCN's strategic framework outlines four focus areas, including scaling up conservation action, transforming response, and mobilising and managing key resources.

Significance

- Establishes a comprehensive direction for conservation by linking biodiversity with geodiversity, water, food systems, and public health under an integrated approach.
- Provides an actionable pathway to 2030 through measurable deliverables, supporting timely implementation of global commitments.
- Sets a sustainability benchmark for future global conservation events through ISO 20121:2024 certification.

Facts/General knowledge

- Participation: over 10,000 delegates from 189 countries.
- Programme: 2026–2029 "Nature 2030: One nature, one future".
- Strategic Vision: "Unite for Nature on the path to 2045: A 20year Strategic Vision".
- Alignment with 2030 milestones: Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Gaza Peace Summit and 20Point Peace Plan

Introduction

- The Gaza Peace Summit was cohosted by the USA and Egypt in Sharm ElSheikh to advance peace in Gaza and stability in the Middle East.
- India's Minister of State for External Affairs attended and appreciated the efforts towards a lasting peace in the region.

Why in news?

- Four ceasefire mediators—the United States, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey—signed a declaration inaugurating the USA's 20point peace plan, known as the Trump Declaration for Enduring Peace and Prosperity.

Background

- The plan commits to resolving future disputes through diplomatic engagement and negotiation rather than force or protracted conflict.
- It calls for Hamas's disarmament and an internationally supervised reconstruction of Gaza.
- It stipulates that no Palestinians will be militarily forced to leave Gaza.
- Israel will agree not to occupy or annex the Gaza Strip.
- The plan does not guarantee a twostate solution or the creation of the state of Palestine.

Significance

- Regional prosperity: could aid the expansion of the Abraham Accords and unlock broader peace and prosperity.
- Strategic location: the region's oil and gas resources and position at the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz, and Suez

Canal are critical for global lines of communication.
- Contemporary geopolitics: great power competitions risk regional fragmentation in the absence of peace, with Russia showing security interest and China having economic interests.
- Global trade and markets: one of the youngest, fastestgrowing populations, projected to reach around 580 million by 2030, offers a significant market in times of peace.
- Importance for India: energy security and remittances are vital; India imports nearly 70% of its annual oil from the region and is engaging through initiatives/groupings like the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor and I2U2.

Facts/General knowledge
- Abraham Accords: a feature of U.S. Middle Eastern diplomacy involving peace agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, etc.

UNFCCC COP30 (Belém, Brazil)

Introduction
- The 30th Conference of Parties (COP30) to the UNFCCC was held in Belém, Brazil.
- It coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

Why in news?
- COP30 aligned with the 2025 deadline for countries to submit updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0).
- It concluded with adoption of the Belém Package by 195 Parties, covering just transition, adaptation finance, trade, gender, and technology.

Background
- Hosted in the Amazon region, the summit was framed as the “COP of Implementation”, “COP of Truth”, and the “Forest COP”.
- Key meetings included COP 30 (UNFCCC), CMP 20 (Kyoto Protocol), and CMA 7 (Paris Agreement).
- Outcomes were organised across implementation, forests and nature, finance and economy, energy and infrastructure, social and health, and emergency action, with work linked to the COP29–COP31 troika.

Significance
- Shift from pledges to delivery through actionoriented platforms to implement NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).
- Major scaling of climate finance with clear pathways and investmentreadiness support, especially for adaptation.
- Strong emphasis on forests and land restoration, including direct flows to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- Acceleration of energy transitions via power grid expansion, coal transition planning, and sustainable fuels uptake.
- Integration of social dimensions, including health resilience, gender equality, information integrity, and peoplecentred action.
- Enhanced preparedness and cooperation on early warning systems and wildfire resilience.

Facts/General knowledge
- [Implementation] Implementation Work Programme (Mutirão Decision) – Belém Mission to 1.5°C: An actionoriented platform under the COP29–COP31 troika to foster enhanced ambition and international cooperation across mitigation, adaptation, and investment; launched by the COP29–COP31 Troika (UAE, Azerbaijan, Brazil).
- [Implementation] Global Implementation Accelerator: A voluntary initiative to support countries in implementing their NDCs and NAPs; launched by the COP30 and COP31 Presidencies.
- [Implementation] NAPs Implementation Alliance: A new PAS (Plan to Accelerate Solutions) under the COP30 Action Agenda to support NAP implementation and mobilise public and private investment for national adaptation priorities; launched by UNDP, Italy, Germany, NAP Global Network, and NDC Partnership.
- [Forests & Nature] Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF): Establishes a $125 billion Tropical Forest Investment Fund to pay tropical forest nations for maintaining and expanding tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests, mandating at least 20% of all payments flow directly to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; supported by Brazil, Indonesia, DRC, China, etc.; India has joined as an Observer; Trustee and Interim host: World Bank.
- [Forests & Nature] Resilient Agriculture Investment for netZero land degradation (RAIZ) Accelerator: A project to restore 3 million hectares of degraded farmland using blended finance and private capital, based on “Green Way and Eco Invest in Brazil”; coordinated by FAO, FOLU, CGIAR, G20 Land Restoration Initiative, World Bank; Brazil and 10 partner nations; hosted by Brazil’s Ministry of Agriculture under the FAO FAST Partnership.
- [Forests & Nature] Scaling JREDD+ Coalition: A new coalition of governments, Indigenous Peoples, investors, intermediaries, standard setters, and civil society offering a pathway to mobilise $3–6 billion per year by 2030 to halt and reverse tropical deforestation; participants include the UK, Singapore, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, etc.
- [Finance & Economy] Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T: The official pathway to mobilise the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of $1.3 trillion per year by 2035; led by the COP29 and COP30 Presidencies.
- [Finance & Economy] Tripling of adaptation finance: Increase adaptation finance to $120 billion per year, as part of the broader $300 billion per year in climate finance

(NCQG) agreed at COP29.
- [Finance & Economy] Baku Adaptation Roadmap: Approves and establishes the work for 2026–2028, until the next Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement.
- [Finance & Economy] FINI (Fostering Investible National Implementation): Makes NAPs investible and implementationready, developing $1 trillion in adaptation investment pipelines by 2028, with 20% from private investors; led by Atlantic Council's Climate Resilience Center and Natural Resources Defense Council; supported by the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
- [Finance & Economy] Open Coalition on Compliance Carbon Markets: Harmonises carbon pricing and integrity standards across borders and collaborates on best practices for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV); participants include Brazil, China, EU, UK, Canada, Germany, Singapore, etc.
- [Finance & Economy] Belem Declaration for Green Industrialization: Accelerates decarbonisation of heavy emitting industries and promotes green industrialisation to advance climate and development goals; endorsed by 35 countries and organisations (such as UNDP, UNIDO).
- [Energy & Infrastructure] Plan to Accelerate the Expansion and Resilience of Power Grids: Coordinates stakeholders towards grid expansion and a renewablespowered future; under the Green Grids Initiative (GGI).
- [Energy & Infrastructure] Plan to Accelerate Coal Transitions (PACT): A roadmap to fasttrack the transition from coal to clean energy while ensuring energy security; under the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA).
- [Energy & Infrastructure] Belém 4x Pledge on Sustainable Fuels: Quadruples the use of sustainable fuels (hydrogen, biofuels, efuels) by 2035 compared to 2024 levels; participants include Italy, Japan, India, and Brazil; the International Energy Agency will track progress.
- [Social & Health] Belém Health Action Plan: The world's first international climate adaptation plan dedicated to health, with $300 million in initial funding to build climateresilient health sectors, especially in the Global South; supported by over 30 countries and 50 organisations.
- [Social & Health] Belém Gender Action Plan (GAP): Designed to implement the Lima Work Programme on gender; adopted by Parties at COP30 for 2026–2034.
- [Social & Health] Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change: Establishes shared international commitments to address climate disinformation and promote accurate, evidencebased information; first inclusion of information integrity in the COP Action Agenda; treats "information pollution" as a structural barrier and aims to protect public trust in climate science; advanced by the Global Initiative for Information Integrity on Climate Change; endorsed by Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, etc.
- [Social & Health] Belém Declaration on Hunger, Poverty, and PeopleCentred Climate Action: Promotes actions addressing the unequal impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations; signed by 43 countries and the European Union.
- [Emergency Action] 2030 Strategy: Enables climate- vulnerable nations to build early warning systems; under Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS).
- [Emergency Action] Call to Action on Integrated Fire Management and Wildfire Resilience: Acknowledges international cooperation for integrated fire management; led by Brazil.

India AI Mission: Relaxed AI Compute Procurement Norms

Introduction
- India's AI Mission is an ambitious national effort led by the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) to catalyse AI innovation and deployment across priority sectors.
- MeitY has eased provisions in its norms for procuring AI computing capacity to better accommodate startups and smaller companies.

Why in news?
- Under the India AI Mission, MeitY has relaxed certain AI compute procurement norms to address concerns from smaller companies and enable greater participation by startups.

Background
- The Prime Minister announced the launch of an artificial intelligence mission at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023 in New Delhi.
- Implementation will be carried out by the 'IndiaAI' Independent Business Division under the Digital India Corporation.
- The Mission targets establishing computing capacity of more than 10,000 graphics processing units (GPUs) and developing foundational models trained on datasets covering major Indian languages for sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and governance.
- AI Curation Units will be developed in 50 line ministries, and an AI marketplace will offer AI as a service and pretrained models for developers and users.
- The AI compute infrastructure will be implemented via a public–private partnership model with 50% viability gap funding.
- Of the total outlay of Rs 10,372 crore, Rs 4,564 crore is earmarked for building computing infrastructure.

Significance
- Advances the vision of "Making AI in India" and "Making AI Work for India".
- Demonstrates positive, societyfocused applications of AI

to the international community, boosting India's global competitiveness.
- Builds a comprehensive ecosystem that catalyses AI innovation through strategic public–private programmes and partnerships.
- Enhances creativity and internal capabilities, safeguarding technological autonomy.
- Generates employment opportunities requiring advanced skills, leveraging India's demographic advantage.

Facts/General knowledge
- 7 Key Features of India AI Mission:
- India AI Compute Capacity: Establish a highend, scalable AI computing ecosystem for growing demands from startups and researchers.
- India AI Innovation Centre: Develop and deploy indigenous Large Multimodal Models and domainspecific foundational models in critical sectors.
- India AI Datasets Platform: Streamline access to quality nonpersonal datasets for AI innovation.
- India AI Application Development Initiative: Promote AI applications for problem statements sourced from Central Ministries, State Departments, and others.
- India AI FutureSkills: Mitigate barriers to entry into AI programmes by expanding AI courses at undergraduate, Masters, and Ph.D. levels.
- India AI Startup Financing: Support and accelerate deeptech AI startups with streamlined access to funding for futuristic AI projects.
- Safe & Trusted AI: Implement responsible AI through indigenous tools and frameworks.
- A graphics processing unit (GPU) is an electronic circuit that processes images and accelerates the rendering of 3D computer graphics.

Sports current

Men's Cricket Asia Cup 2025

Introduction
- A continental men's cricket championship organised biennially to determine Asia's top team.
- Matches are accorded official ODI or T20I status by the ICC.
- Conducted under the aegis of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), established in 1983 to promote goodwill and cooperation through cricket.

Why in news?
- India clinched a record ninth Asia Cup title by defeating Pakistan in the 2025 final at Dubai.
- Tilak Varma anchored the chase with an unbeaten 69 off 53, earning Man of the Match in the final.
- India won by five wickets and remained undefeated against Pakistan during the 2025 tournament.

Background
- Inaugurated in 1984, the Asia Cup is the only continental cricket tournament.
- Hosted on a rotational basis across participating nations.
- Since 2016, the tournament has alternated between ODI and T20I formats.
- Political tensions have occasionally led to boycotts.

Significance
- The 2025 edition was hosted in the UAE due to India–Pakistan tensions.
- India is the most successful team with nine titles (seven ODI, two T20I), followed by Sri Lanka (six) and Pakistan (two).

Facts/General knowledge
- Edition: 17th (2025).
- Format: T20I; eight teams including ACC full members.
- Mascot: "Sheru", symbolising strength, courage, and unity of Asian cricket.
- Man of the Series: Abhishek Sharma.

Morocco's Historic U20 World Cup Triumph

Introduction
- Morocco defeated Argentina 20 in the Under20 FIFA World Cup final in Chile on 19 October 2025.
- The victory delivered Morocco's first World Cup title at any level.

Why in news?
- A landmark win over a traditional powerhouse, achieved with a commanding performance in the final.
- First African team since Ghana in 2009 to lift the U20 World Cup.

Background
- Tournament path:
- Round of 16: Beat South Korea.
- Quarterfinals: Outplayed the United States.
- Semifinals: Overcame France.
- Final: Defeated Argentina.
- Final match flow:
- Yassir Zabiri scored twice in the first half, establishing control.
- Morocco maintained tactical discipline and defended resolutely after the interval.
- Context:
  Argentina entered as favourites, reflecting their dominant youth football tradition.
- Their campaign was affected by the absence of key U20 talents.

Significance

- Confirms Morocco's emergence as a global football force and a rising leader in youth development.
- Reflects the technical evolution, defensive strength, and attacking flair now associated with Moroccan football, following the senior team's 2022 Qatar World Cup semifinal run.
- Despite the defeat, Argentina's depth and legacy at youth level were evident, with many players expected to progress to the senior national team.

Facts/General knowledge

- Competition: Under20 FIFA World Cup.
- Star performer: Yassir Zabiri (brace in the final).
- Club detail: Zabiri plays for FC Famalicão in Portugal's Primeira Liga.
- Argentina's status: Sixtime U20 champions; entered the final undefeated.
- Notable absentees for Argentina: Claudio Echeverri (Bayer Leverkusen) and Franco Mastantuono (Real Madrid).

India to Host the 2030 Commonwealth Games

Introduction

- The Commonwealth Games (CWG) is a multisport event featuring athletes from 71 nations and territories.
- It is the world's secondlargest multisport event after the Olympics.
- Most participating nations and territories are former British colonies.

Why in news?

- India has won the bid to host the Centenary Commonwealth Games in 2030.
- Ahmedabad (also known as Amdavad) in Gujarat is set to be the host city.
- The Prime Minister of India congratulated the nation on securing the bid.

Background

- The CWG was conceived by Canadian sportswriter Melville Marks Robinson.
- The idea originated from the 1911 InterEmpire Championships in London, held during the Festival of Empire for King George V's coronation.
- The first official Games, then called the British Empire Games, were held in 1930 with Hamilton, Canada, as hosts.
- Canadian athlete Gordon Smallacombe won the first Commonwealth Games gold medal in the triple jump.
- The Games have been held every four years since inception, except in 1942 and 1946.
- They were formally renamed the Commonwealth Games in 1978.

Significance

- Hosting the 2030 edition marks the centenary of the Commonwealth Games.
- India last hosted the Games in 2010 in New Delhi, achieving its bestever performance with 101 medals, including 38 golds, and finishing second overall.
- India's nextbest tally was 69 medals, including 30 golds, at Manchester 2002.

Facts/General knowledge

- The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is responsible for the direction and control of the Games.

5th Khelo India University Games, Rajasthan 2025

Introduction

- The 5th edition of the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) was inaugurated with grandeur at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur, on 24 November 2025.
- Chief Minister of Rajasthan Bhajan Lal Sharma and Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya lit the ceremonial lamp to commence the Games.
- The opening featured a drone show and cultural performances reflecting Rajasthan's traditions, celebrating youth sporting talent and the state's rich heritage.

Why in news?

- The Games have officially begun, marking the start of a statewide celebration of universitylevel sport in Rajasthan.

Background

- The Khelo India University Games were launched in 2020 to strengthen the sports ecosystem at the university level and encourage wider participation.
- The platform promotes excellence, sportsmanship, and healthy competition among studentathletes.

Significance

- The initiative advances the national vision of positioning India as a global sporting powerhouse.
- Khelo India serves as a key pathway for scouting and nurturing emerging talent, with athletes from previous editions representing India in major international competitions.
- This is the first time Rajasthan is hosting the Games, highlighting decentralisation of sports infrastructure and opportunities across India.
- The Chief Minister praised the potential of India's youth and encouraged dedication and hard work to achieve success in sport.

Facts/General knowledge

- Dates: 24 November – 5 December 2025
- Host State: Rajasthan
- Host Cities: Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kota, Bharatpur
- Participants: Around 7,000 total, including nearly 5,000 athletes from over 230 universities
- Disciplines: 23 competitive sports; KhoKho showcased as a demonstration event
- Jaipur as main host: Athletics, shooting, archery, badminton, and hockey; additional competitions hosted across other cities

ICC Player of the Month October 2025 — Abhishek Sharma and Smriti Mandhana

Introduction

- Indian cricket celebrated a proud moment in September 2025 as Abhishek Sharma and Smriti Mandhana were named ICC Players of the Month for exceptional international performances.
- Both are lefthanded openers whose matchwinning knocks and career milestones resonated across global rankings and fan votes.

Why in news?

- Abhishek Sharma and Smriti Mandhana received ICC Players of the Month honours.
- The recognition followed standout performances in international cricket during the period.

Background

- Abhishek Sharma:
  Dominated the Asia Cup T20I tournament for India and was named Player of the Tournament.
- Smriti Mandhana:
  As vicecaptain, led from the front in India's ODI series against Australia.

Significance

- Abhishek Sharma:
  Attained 931 rating points in the ICC Men's T20I Batting Rankings, the highest ever by any player at the end of the Super Fours stage.
- Demonstrated an ability to perform under pressure, making him a rising figure in India's T20 setup.
- Smriti Mandhana:
  Recorded the fastest century by an Indian batter in women's ODIs, reaching the mark in 50 balls.
- Her contributions were pivotal during India's ongoing ICC Women's World Cup 2025 campaign.

Facts/General knowledge

- Abhishek Sharma:
- Age: 25.
- Asia Cup T20I returns: 314 runs in 7 matches; average 44.85; strike rate 200.
- Won both expert panel and fan votes, edging Kuldeep Yadav (India) and Brian Bennett (Zimbabwe) for the ICC monthly honour.
- Smriti Mandhana:
- ODI scores vs Australia: 58, 117, 125 across three innings.
- Month's aggregate: 308 runs in four matches; average 77; strike rate 135.68.
- Beat Tazmin Brits (South Africa) and Sidra Amin (Pakistan) to claim the ICC Women's Player of the Month award.

Launch of 'TEN x You' by Sachin Tendulkar

Introduction

- 'TEN x You' is a sportswear and athleisure brand launched to promote fitness and sports in India.

Why in news?

- The brand was launched on 10 October 2025.

Background

- The brand is by former Indian cricketer and Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar.
- It is his first sportswear and athleisure brand.

Significance

- The launch aims to encourage fitness and sports across India.

Books and author

Mahatma Gandhi and the Environment

Introduction

- A book that presents Mahatma Gandhi's approach to the environment and its ethical and societal dimensions.

Why in news?

- Draws attention for aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Resonates with environmental ethics.
- Relevant to sustainable policies.

Background

- Authored by T. N. Khoshoo.
- Foreword by Dr R. K. Pachauri (TERI & IPCC).

Significance

- Interweaves Gandhian environmental thought with Satyagraha.
- Engages with Dalit empowerment as a connected social theme.

- Offers a critique of Western industrialism through a Gandhian lens.

Facts/General knowledge

- Key concepts: ecological living.
- Key concepts: resource minimalism.
- Key concepts: village economy.
- Key concepts: decentralisation.

Modi's Mission — Book Release

Introduction

- "Modi's Mission" is a book authored by Berjis Desai.

Why in news?

- On 24 October 2025, the Governor of Maharashtra, Acharya Devvrat, released the book in Mumbai.

Background

- Berjis Desai is a renowned lawyer and former journalist.

Facts/General knowledge

- Publisher: Rupa Publications India Private Limited.

Miscellaneous

Unmesha International Literature Festival 2025, Patna

Introduction

- The Unmesha International Literature Festival convened an extraordinary confluence of writers, poets, translators, publishers, and scholars.
- It served as a platform for diverse literary communities to engage and collaborate across cultures.

Why in news?

- The third edition was held in Patna, Bihar, from 25 to 28 September 2025.
- The valedictory session was graced by the VicePresident of India, Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan, as Chief Guest, marking his first official visit to Bihar since assuming office.

Background

- Bihar is recognised as a land of dharma, culture, and knowledge.
- Its spiritual and historical legacy makes it an ideal host for an event celebrating global literature.
- The state stands as a historic intellectual powerhouse.

Significance

- Participation from 15 countries and over 100 languages underscored the festival's international scale.
- The event highlighted the unifying power of literature in shaping societies and fostering dialogue across cultures.
- Bihar acts as a bridge between spiritual traditions and knowledge systems, aligning with the festival's ethos.

Facts/General knowledge

- Bodh Gaya: Site where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment; a global centre of peace and meditation.
- Vaishali: Birthplace of Lord Mahavira, reflecting Jain values of nonviolence and truth.
- Ancient universities: Nalanda and Vikramshila attracted scholars from across Asia.
- Political legacy: Empires of Magadha and Maurya shaped the subcontinent's history.
- Early democracy: Vaishali practised participatory governance over 2,500 years ago.
- Freedom struggle: Bihar's key role included the Champaran Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Great leaders: Dr. Rajendra Prasad (India's first President) and Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan (champion of democracy and social reform).

Balod becomes India's first officially child marriagefree district

Introduction

- Balod district in Chhattisgarh has been officially declared a child marriagefree district.
- The milestone reflects a coordinated effort by the administration, panchayats, urban bodies, Anganwadi workers, and community members.

Why in news?

- It is the first district in India to receive official child marriagefree certification.
- The recognition comes under the nationwide "Child Marriage Free India" campaign, launched on 27 August 2024.

Background

- Zero cases of child marriage were reported in Balod over the past two years.
- Following document checks and legal processes, all 436 gram panchayats and nine urban bodies in the district were certified child marriagefree.
- Local representatives and families actively spread awareness and ensured compliance.
- District Collector Divya Umesh Mishra noted the district's success as a model for the entire country.

Significance

- Marks India's first officially certified child marriagefree district.
- Sets a national benchmark for social reform.
- Demonstrates that grassroots participation supported by government action can eradicate harmful practices.
- Paves the way for achieving a child marriagefree

Chhattisgarh by 2028–29.

Facts/General knowledge

- Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hailed the development as a "historic achievement towards social reform".
- Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Rajwade highlighted that the practice can be eradicated when society and government work together.
- On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday, 75 gram panchayats in Surajpur district were declared child marriagefree.
- UNICEF provided technical support, awareness programmes, and monitoring mechanisms, accelerating progress.
- Momentum is spreading across Chhattisgarh, with campaigns being expedited in other districts.

Kerala's Underwater Tunnel between Vypin and Fort Kochi

Introduction

- Kerala is set to construct an underwater tunnel linking Vypin and Fort Kochi beneath the Arabian Sea as part of the state's coastal highway development project.
- The initiative aims to redefine connectivity in Kochi, one of India's busiest port cities.

Why in news?

- Announced as a firstofitskind subsea tunnel in Kerala.
- To be developed by Kerala Rail Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL) at an estimated cost of ₹2,672 crore.

Background

- Current travel depends on congested ferry crossings or a 16 km detour via the Goshree Bridge.
- The tunnel will replace this with a 3 km subsea journey between Vypin and Fort Kochi.

Significance

- Expected to cut travel time from over 2 hours to about 30 minutes, transforming daily commutes.
- Commuters are projected to pay ₹50–₹100 for the tunnel trip, compared with an average of ₹300 currently.
- Users could save nearly ₹1,500 per month, providing economic and logistical relief for residents and tourists.
- Establishes a landmark for Kerala's transport infrastructure, comparable only to Kolkata's Hooghly River Metro Tunnel.

Facts/General knowledge

- Total length: 2.75 km, comprising a 1.75 km bored section and a 1 km cutandcover section.
- Configuration: twintube structure with separate tunnels for each direction.
- Dimensions: 12.5 m outer diameter and 11.25 m inner width.
- Depth: 35 metres below sea level.
- Safety features: emergency stops every 250 m, escape passages every 500 m, and advanced ventilation and fire safety systems.

Mera Hou Chongba – Hill–Valley Unity Festival, Manipur

Introduction

- Mera Hou Chongba is an annual festival symbolising unity between hill tribes and valley dwellers in Manipur.
- Observed on the 15th lunar day of the Mera month in the traditional Meitei calendar.
- Showcases communal harmony, indigenous identity, and cultural togetherness.

Why in news?

- This year, tribal village chiefs from the hill districts gathered at the Manipur Royal Palace (Sana Konung) in Imphal.
- They were ceremoniously received by Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba, the titular King of Manipur and a Rajya Sabha MP.
- The day began with sacred rituals at Sana Konung, followed by a ritual march led by the king and tribal leaders to Kangla.

Background

- The roots of Mera Hou Chongba are believed to trace back to the era of Nongda Lairen Pakhangba, one of the earliest known rulers of Manipur.

Significance

- It is the only festival in Manipur that sees participation from all indigenous communities, regardless of region or tribe.
- Serves as a platform for peacebuilding and solidarity in a state that has experienced inter- community tensions.
- Reinforces a collective identity rooted in tradition and coexistence across ethnic and geographical diversity.
- Rituals highlight mutual respect and brotherhood among the communities.

Facts/General knowledge

- Key rituals and events include:
  Mera Men Tongba – a ritual drink offering.
- Yenkhong Tamba – symbolic enactments of unity.
- Gift exchange between hill village chiefs and valley representatives.
- Cultural showcase:
  Performances of tribal and valley dance forms and folk music.
- A communal feast concluding the celebrations, reaffirming

social harmony and shared heritage.

Bathukamma Festival, Telangana

Why in news?

- In Telangana, the state government–organised celebrations of the Bathukamma Festival have recently set two new Guinness World Records.

Introduction

- Bathukamma is a floral festival celebrated by the women folk of Telangana.
- It has been declared as the Telangana State Festival.

Background

- The term "Bathukamma" translates to "Mother Goddess Come Alive", reflecting the divine feminine energy and protection.
- Folklore connects the festival to legends of Goddess Gauri and her miraculous survival, as well as King Dhramangada and Queen Satyavati of the Chola dynasty.
- Historically, the Kakatiya dynasty emphasised Bathukamma as a celebration of feminine strength and agricultural prosperity.

Significance

- Official recognition as the Telangana State Festival underscores its cultural importance.

Facts/General knowledge

- Celebrated annually, usually in September–October of the Gregorian calendar.
- Observed for nine days during Durga Navratri, culminating on "Saddula Bathukamma" or "Pedda Bathukamma".
- Followed by Boddemma, a sevenday festival.

Sherry Singh crowned Mrs Universe 2025 — India's first Mrs Universe title

Introduction

- Sherry Singh was crowned Mrs Universe 2025 at the prestigious finale in Manila, Philippines.
- She triumphed over 120 accomplished women from across the world.
- The win is a moment of pride, inspiration, and empowerment for India, celebrating Indian womanhood, resilience, and grace.

Why in news?

- It marks India's firstever Mrs Universe crown, a historic achievement on the global stage.
- Sherry Singh's poised presence, articulate speech, and advocacy centred on women's empowerment and mental health awareness stood out.

Background

- The 48th edition of Mrs Universe was held at the luxurious Okada in Manila.
- The event showcased confidence, elegance, and intellect among participants from around the world.

Significance

- India has reinforced its growing influence on international platforms celebrating women of substance.
- Sherry Singh's authenticity and poise captivated hearts, embodying leadership and compassion.

Facts/General knowledge

- Results:
- Winner: India – Sherry Singh
- 1st Runnerup: Saint Petersburg
- 2nd Runnerup: Philippines
- 3rd Runnerup: Asia
- 4th Runnerup: Russia
- Other finalists represented USA, Japan, Myanmar, Bulgaria, UAE, Africa, and Ukraine, reflecting the competition's global scale and diversity.
- Important Days
- Date Event/Observance
- 1 October 2025 International Day of the Older Persons
- 2 October 2025 Gandhi Jayanti & Lal Bahadur Shastri Jayanti
- 4 October 2025 World Animal Welfare Day
- 6 October 2025 World Cerebral Palsy Day, & World Habitat Day
- 7 October 2025 World Cotton Day, & Valmiki Jayanti
- 8 October 2025 Indian Air Force Day
- 10 October 2025 National Postal Day
- 10 October 2025 World Mental Health Day
- 13 October 2025 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction
- 14 October 2025 World Standards Day
- 16 October 2025 World Food Day, World Anaesthesia Day,
- 17 October 2025 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 21 October 2025 Police Commemoration Day
- 24 October 2025 United Nations Day, World Polio Day, World Development Information Day
- 24–30 October 2025
- Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2025
- Disarmament Week 2025
- 28 October 2025 International Animation Day
- 30 October 2025 World Thrift Day (India)
- 31 October 2025 Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day), Hallowee