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NATIONAL

TOTAL FERTILITY RATE -

Category	State/UT	TFR
Highest TFR	Bihar	3.0
	Assam	2.1
	Gujarat / Haryana	2.0
Lowest TFR	West Bengal	1.4
	Delhi	1.4
	Kerala / Maharashtra / TN / AP / J&K / Punjab	1.5

Global Total Fertility Rate Trends		
Country/Region	TFR (births per woman)	Source
India	1.975 (2023)	World Bank
United States	1.84 (2025)	World Bank
Japan	1.2 (2023)	World Bank
European Union	1.38 (2023)	Eurostat
Global Average	2.3 (2022)	World Bank

CCS FULL FORM, KNOW ABOUT ITS ROLE, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS -

- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is one of the most important decision-making bodies of the Government of India. It takes care of matters related to the country's safety and security.
- This committee makes final decisions on defense policies, key appointments in security forces and big security-related expenses.



Full Form of CCS

- The full form of CCS is Cabinet Committee on Security. It is a top-level committee of the Indian government that takes final decisions on national security, defense and related matters. It includes the Prime Minister and key ministers, and helps keep the country safe from both internal and external threats.

Role of the Cabinet Committee on Security

- The CCS talks about and decides on many important topics related to India's national security. It looks under defense planning, law and order, internal security and how to deal with threats. It also discusses deals with other countries that affect India's safety.

Members of the ICS

The Cabinet Committee on Security has five main members:

- The Prime Minister
- The Minister of Defense
- The Minister of Home Affairs
- The Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs
- The Minister of External Affairs

GANGA EXPRESSWAY NIGHT LANDING -

- In a landmark event, Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India to enable night landings for fighter jets on an expressway. This achievement was marked by the Indian Air Force (IAF) conducting trials on a newly constructed 3.5-kilometre airstrip along the Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur. This airstrip is strategically important for defence preparedness, particularly during times of national emergencies.



Ganga Expressway

- Ganga Expressway is a greenfield expressway project in Uttar Pradesh, aiming to connect Western UP (Meerut) with Eastern UP (Prayagraj).
- **Total Length:** 594 km
- The expressway passes through 12 districts: Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Raebareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj

Strategic Importance:

- Improves East-West connectivity in UP
- Links with other expressways: Yamuna Expressway, Agra-Lucknow Expressway, and Purvanchal Expressway

- Boosts connectivity to Delhi from Eastern UP
- Facilitates last-mile access to rural areas

WAVES 2025 SUMMIT AND ORANGE ECONOMY -

- On May 1, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the WAVES 2025 Summit in Mumbai, highlighting India's emerging leadership in the 'orange economy'.
- WAVES 2025 covered diverse sectors: Films, TV, Radio, Broadcasting, Animation, Gaming, Comics, Advertising, and emerging technologies such as Generative AI, AR/VR/XR, and digital media platforms.
- **Launch of WAVES Bazaar:** WAVES Bazaar is a global e-marketplace launched to connect Indian content creators with international markets, enabling project pitching, funding access, and global collaboration.
- **Funds for Creators Economy:** Ahead of the Summit, the Centre last month announced a \$1 billion fund to give a boost to India's emerging creator economy.



INDIA SET TO BECOME FASTEST-GROWING MAJOR AVIATION MARKET BY 2026 -

- India is poised to become the world's fastest-growing large aviation market by 2026, according to Airports Council International (ACI). While China remains significantly ahead in overall aviation market size, India's growth is being fuelled by increasing demand for air travel among its vast population, where per capita air travel remains low.
- The rapid pace of infrastructure development, policy reforms, and growing middle-class aspirations are contributing factors. Over the next three decades, India is projected to maintain its third-largest aviation market position globally but lead in terms of growth rate.



Key Highlights

- India's Growth to Surpass China (2026)

- India's air passenger traffic expected to grow 10.5% in 2026 vs China's 8.9%.
- **In 2027:** India – 10.3%, China – 7.2%.
- India's CAGR (2023–2027) pegged at 9.5%, higher than China's 8.8%.

2025 Projection

- **China:** 12% growth
- **India:** 10.1%

ELECTION COMMISSION UNVEILED THREE NEW VOTER-CENTRIC REFORMS -

- On May 1, 2025, the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced three new initiatives to improve electoral roll accuracy, streamline voter information, and enhance the credibility of Booth Level Officers (BLOs).
- These measures align with the vision laid out by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar during the Conference of Chief Electoral Officers earlier this year.

Electronic Death Registration Data Integration

- The ECI will now electronically obtain death data from the Registrar General of India.

Legal basis,

- Rule 9 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960
- Section 3(5)(b) of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (amended 2023)
- This allows timely deletion of deceased voters from electoral rolls, reducing errors.
- BLOs will re-verify this information on the ground—no need to wait for Form 7 submissions.

More Voter-Friendly Voter Information Slips (VIS)

- VIS design updated to highlight serial and part numbers in larger fonts.
- This helps voters easily find their polling stations and locate their names in the voter list.
- Also aids polling officials in quick identification, saving time on election day.

Photo Identity Cards for BLOs

- BLOs will now be issued standard photo ID cards under Section 13B(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

- This ensures BLOs are recognizable, improving citizen trust and engagement during voter verification and house-to-house drives.

Significance of the Reforms

- **Accuracy:** Reduces chances of duplication and presence of deceased voters in electoral rolls.
- **Transparency:** Citizens will be more confident in the system due to visible and identifiable BLOs.
- **Efficiency:** Faster voter identification and better coordination on polling days.

PM INAUGURATES VIZHINJAM INTERNATIONAL SEAPORT -

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vizhinjam International Seaport (VIS) in Kerala, marking a significant milestone in India's maritime infrastructure. 
- **Vizhinjam International Seaport:** It is India's first deep-water transshipment port, designed for container and multi-purpose cargo.
- The port is developed under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) basis.
- **Strategic Location:** VIS, positioned just 10 nautical miles from major international shipping routes connecting Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the Far East, enhances accessibility for large vessels (depth of 18 to 20 meters).
- **Technological Advancement:** Vizhinjam seaport, India's first semi-automated port, is equipped with an AI-driven control room and the country's first Indigenous Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS).
- It reduces vessel turnaround times, optimizes traffic flow, and enhances capacity for large ships with real-time updates.
- **Economic Impact:** The port aims to reduce India's reliance on international facilities, as 75% of transshipment cargo is currently handled abroad.
- By handling transshipment domestically, the port is expected to save India USD 200-220 million in potential revenue loss annually.

INDIA TO ALLOW 49% FOREIGN STAKE INVESTMENT IN NUCLEAR POWER -

- India is considering allowing foreign companies to take up to a 49% stake in its nuclear power plants a major policy shift for one of the country's most protected sectors. 
- This initiative is part of a larger strategy to boost clean energy production, lessen dependence on coal, and achieve ambitious carbon emission reduction goals.
- **To support this move, the government is working on amending key nuclear legislations, with the objective of opening the sector to both foreign investors and domestic private firms by the monsoon session of Parliament in July 2025.**

KAILASH MANSAROVAR YATRA 2025: RESUMPTION AFTER FIVE YEARS -

- The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra (KMY) is a significant annual pilgrimage symbolizing deep religious and cultural ties between India and China. It holds immense importance for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and followers of the Bon religion. 
- **Circumambulating Mount Kailash is believed to bring spiritual merit, and bathing in Lake Mansarovar is thought to cleanse one's sins. The pilgrimage was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and border tensions.**
- Its resumption after five years marks a positive development in religious tourism and bilateral cooperation.

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK COWARD ATTACK BY TERRORISTS ON TOURISTS -

- On April 22, 2025, a deadly terrorist attack in Baisaran, Pahalgam, shook the heart of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector. 
- **The attack, which killed at least 28 and injured several others, targeted a popular tourist meadow during peak travel season. As the valley was beginning to**

experience a revival in economic and tourism activity post-COVID and post-conflict normalization efforts, this incident has reignited fears and insecurity, potentially derailing the region’s hard-earned gains.

Key Details of the Terror Attack

- **Date & Location:** April 22, 2025, in Baisaran, Pahalgam (Anantnag district), South Kashmir.
- **Casualties:** 28 people killed, several injured; two critically wounded.
- **Target:** Tourists at the meadow of Baisaran, accessible only by foot.
- **Method:** Two to three terrorists opened indiscriminate fire.
- **Response:** Police, Army, and paramilitary forces launched a search and evacuation operation.
- **Nature of Site:** Baisaran is a scenic off-road meadow, heavily frequented during peak tourist seasons.

Impact on Tourism Sector

- **Massive Setback:** Industry stakeholders call it a “huge blow” to J&K’s tourism, which had shown steady growth post-2018.
- **Cancellations Rising:** Travel agents are already reporting cancellations and panic among tourists and business partners.
- **Sector-Wide Impact:** Thousands of locals who rely on tourism — from hotel staff to shikara operators — will feel the economic shockwaves.
- **Historical Significance:** Pahalgam is not only a tourist hub but also one of the Amarnath Yatra routes.

E-ZERO FIR INITIATIVE -

- India took step in combating cybercrime with the launch of the e-Zero FIR initiative. This initiative was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah as part of the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C).
- The primary aim is to expedite the process of registering First Information Reports (FIRs) for high-value cyber financial fraud cases. The pilot project commenced in Delhi and is set to expand nationwide.



Overview of e-Zero FIR Initiative

- The e-Zero FIR initiative allows victims of cyber financial crimes to report incidents without visiting a police station. If the financial fraud exceeds Rs 10 lakh, the complaint filed through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) or the helpline 1930 is automatically converted into an FIR. This innovation is designed to reduce the response time for law enforcement agencies.

SUPREME COURT ORDERS MORE POCSO COURTS FOR SPEEDY CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCE TRIALS -

- Recently, the Supreme Court ordered the Centre to urgently establish dedicated POCSO courts across states to ensure timely trial of child sexual offence cases.
- The Court had earlier mandated one special court in each district with over 100 FIRs, and now requires two courts where pendency exceeds 300 cases.

What is a POCSO Court?

- A POCSO Court is a designated court exclusively tasked with trying cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
- These courts aim to provide a child-friendly, sensitive environment for speedy justice.
- As of Jan 2025 there are 754 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including 404 exclusive POCSO Courts are functional in 30 States/UTs, which have disposed of more than 3,06,000 cases.

About the POCSO Act, 2012

- The POCSO Act was enacted in 2012 to protect children from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and pornography.
- It ensures child-friendly procedures at every stage of the legal process, from investigation to trial.
- The Act covers both contact and non-contact sexual offences against children below 18 years.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL ENROLMENT DROPS IN 23 STATES: MOE SEEKS URGENT PROBE -

- The Ministry of Education has expressed “deep concern” over significant declines in student enrolment in

government and government-aided schools across 23 states.

- **The issue surfaced during an April 2025 review of the PM-POSHAN scheme, revealing a potential reversal of post-pandemic trends and raising questions about student data accuracy and school choice shifts.**



Key Observations from the PM-POSHAN Meetings

- Enrolment dropped in 23 states/UTs, with 8 states witnessing over 1 lakh decrease.

Major declines

- Uttar Pradesh: -21.83 lakh
- Bihar: -6.14 lakh
- Rajasthan: -5.63 lakh
- West Bengal: -4.01 lakh
- Karnataka: -2 lakh
- Assam: -1.68 lakh
- Tamil Nadu: -1.65 lakh
- Delhi: -1.05 lakh

Probable Reasons Cited by Officials

- **Data Cleansing:** Transition from school-wise to student-wise enrolment tracking (with Aadhaar verification) eliminated fake or duplicate “ghost” entries.
- **Shift to Private Schools:** Post-Covid migration back to private schooling, reversing earlier government school preference.

INDIA ELIMINATES TRACHOMA AS PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM, RECOGNISED BY WHO -

- India has officially received recognition from the World Health Organisation for successfully eliminating trachoma, a leading cause of preventable blindness.
- **The announcement was made on May 19, 2025, during the inauguration of the 78th World Health Assembly. This recognition validates India’s sustained efforts in public health and its broader commitment to global health cooperation.**



What is Trachoma-

- Trachoma is a neglected tropical disease (NTD) caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- It is a leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide, especially in areas with poor sanitation.
- It spreads through contact with eye or nasal discharge of infected individuals, or through flies.

HOOCH TRAGEDIES IN INDIA -

- A major hooch tragedy in Punjab’s Amritsar district has claimed 21 lives and left several hospitalised after the consumption of spurious liquor suspected to contain methanol, a highly toxic chemical.
- **Hooch refers to poor-quality, often illicitly produced alcohol, a term derived from the Hoochinoo tribe of Alaska known for brewing strong liquor.**
- It is typically made in unregulated and unhygienic conditions. Sometimes, hooch contains a high quantity of methanol (an industrial alcohol along with ethanol), which is highly toxic and can be fatal when consumed.



What are the Causes of Hooch Tragedies in India ?

- **Economic Vulnerability and Poverty:** People from economically weaker sections often resort to cheap, locally brewed alcohol (hooch) as they cannot afford licensed, quality liquor. The cost of hooch is significantly lower than legal alcohol due to evasion of excise duty and taxes.
- **Widespread Misuse of Methanol:** Methanol, an inexpensive industrial chemical, is often stolen and illegally added to illicit liquor to increase potency, despite its extreme toxicity. Bootleggers frequently use methanol to produce deadly hooch, as seen in several mass poisoning cases.
- **Lack of Regulation and Enforcement:** Despite the Excise Act, 1944 and local regulations, enforcement is often weak, allowing illegal brewing and distribution to flourish. In states with alcohol prohibition (e.g., Bihar, Gujarat), hooch networks expand underground, exploiting weak enforcement.

ISRO SATELLITES FORECAST INDIA'S WHEAT PRODUCTION FOR 2024-25 -

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has used satellite technology to estimate India's wheat production for the 2024-25 Rabi season.
- ISRO Monitored Wheat Crops using a system called Comprehensive Remote Sensing Observation on Crop Progress (CROP).
- **Output Forecast:** The forecast predicts a total output of 122.724 million tonnes from eight major wheat-growing states.
- **Wheat Sown Area:** Satellite data shows 330.8 lakh hectares under wheat cultivation by March 31, 2025.
- **Major Wheat-Producing States:** The eight states contributing to the estimated production are:



- Uttar Pradesh
- Madhya Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Punjab
- Haryana
- Bihar
- Gujarat
- Maharashtra

INDIA IS NOT A DHARMSHALA: SC ON DEPORTATION OF SRI LANKAN TAMIL UNDER UAPA -

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India upheld the deportation of a Sri Lankan Tamil national, reiterating that India cannot be a "dharamshala" for foreign nationals.
- **Current Deportation Issue:** The Case of Subaskaran
- **Background:** Subaskaran was convicted under Section 38(1) of UAPA for being associated with the banned LTTE.
- Originally sentenced to 10 years, reduced to 7 years by the Madras High Court in 2022.
- **Plea Rejected:** Despite claims of threat to life in Sri Lanka and familial ties in India, the Court refused to intervene in the deportation process.

**Supreme Court Observation**

- The right to reside and settle in India is exclusively available to Indian citizens under Article 19(1)(e).
- While Articles 14 and 21 apply to all persons, they do not create a right to stay in India for foreign nationals.
- The Court reaffirmed that foreign nationals have no automatic right to stay in India and that their continued presence must comply with national laws.

What is Deportation?

- Deportation is the forced removal of a foreign national from a country due to violations of immigration laws or national security concerns.

CEASEFIRE DECLARED BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN AMID ESCALATING TENSIONS -

- **The National Technology Day 2025 is in the spotlight as the country marks 27 years since the Pokhran-II nuclear tests, which placed India on the global map as a nuclear power.**
- With the 2025 theme focusing on sustainability through innovation, the day reinforces India's commitment to becoming a global leader in responsible technological progress.

**Background and Historical Significance**

- **Date of Observance:** May 11, annually.
- **Established:** Declared in 1999 by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **Historical Event:** Commemorates the Pokhran-II nuclear tests conducted on May 11 and 13, 1998, under the leadership of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- **Operation Name:** Operation Shakti.
- **Warhead:** 200 to 300 kg conventional warhead, capable of high explosive or semi-armour-piercing strikes.

CASTE CENSUS IN INDIA: NEED AND CHALLENGES -

- The Indian government has approved the inclusion of caste enumeration in the delayed Census 2021, reviving a practice discontinued after independence. Triggered by growing political and social demands, this

move is expected to significantly impact governance, affirmative action, and social justice efforts.

What is a Caste Census-

- **Definition:** A caste census is a systematic collection of data on individuals' caste identities during a nationwide population census.
- The word "caste" comes from the Spanish word 'casta', meaning 'race' or 'hereditary group'. The Portuguese used it to denote 'Jati' in India.
- M. N. Srinivas (Indian sociologist) defines caste as a hereditary, endogamous, and usually localized group, linked to a specific occupation, and occupying a certain position in the social hierarchy.
- **Objective:** It aims to understand the socio-economic distribution of various caste groups to inform policies on social justice, reservations, and welfare.
- **Historical Context of Caste Enumeration:** Caste enumeration was a regular feature of census exercises during British rule from 1881 to 1931, while the 1941 Census also collected caste information but did not publish it due to the onset of World War II.
- **Since the 1951 Census, caste enumeration was discontinued for all except Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), leaving no reliable national data on Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other caste groups.**
- In 1961, the central government allowed states to conduct surveys and compile state-specific lists of OBCs.
- The last national caste data collection was in 2011 through the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), aimed at



assessing households' socio-economic conditions along with caste information.

PUNJAB OPPOSES THE BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (BBMB)'S DECISION TO RELEASE AN ADDITIONAL 4,500 CUSECS OF WATER TO HARYANA -

- Meanwhile, Haryana has threatened to move the Supreme Court to secure its share, escalating a decades-old dispute over sharing the water of Bhakra Nangal Dam.



What are the Key Facts Regarding the Punjab-Haryana Water Sharing Dispute?

- **Current Crisis:** Haryana demanded 8,500 cusecs from the Bhakra-Nangal project—4,500 cusecs more than its current allocation. Punjab refused, forcing the BBMB to intervene.
- **In a BBMB meeting, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Delhi voted in favor of releasing extra water.**
- Punjab has refused to open additional sluice gates, leading Haryana to approach the Supreme Court.
- **Role of BBMB:** Before the division of Punjab in 1956, the Bhakra-Nangal project was managed by Punjab. In 1966, the Bhakra Management Board (BMB) was formed under the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1956 to oversee the project, ensuring it benefited Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.
- **BMB was renamed BBMB in 1976,** it now manages Bhakra Nangal Dam (Himachal), Nangal Dam (Punjab), Beas-Satluj Link Project (Pandoh Dam), and Pong Dam.

INTERNATIONAL

PAKISTAN SUSPENDS SIMLA AGREEMENT AND CLOSES BORDER, AIRSPACE, TRADE WITH INDIA -

Suspension of Simla Agreement (1972)-

- Pakistan has put the agreement in abeyance, citing India's alleged involvement in terrorism and violations of international law in Kashmir.
- The Simla Agreement had upheld the sanctity of the Line of Control (LoC).



Closure of Wagah Border Crossing

- The border is closed with immediate effect.
- All cross-border movement through Wagah is suspended.
- Deadline of April 30 set for those with valid travel endorsements to return.

Suspension of All Trade with India

- Bilateral trade has been completely paused.
- Trade via land routes, sea, and air are impacted.
- Airspace Closure
- Indian airlines are now banned from using Pakistani airspace.
- This affects major commercial flight routes over Pakistan.
- All Bilateral Agreements Suspended
- Apart from Simla Agreement, all other agreements are under review and suspension.

TRUMP ANNOUNCES REMOVAL OF ALL U.S. SANCTIONS ON SYRIA, SIGNALING NEW DIPLOMATIC CHAPTER -

- **This announcement is highly relevant as it signals a major policy change by the U.S. regarding Syria, potentially impacting regional geopolitics, humanitarian aid, and economic recovery. It also follows the recent overthrow of the Assad regime and the establishment of a new government, offering hope for Syria's reconstruction and reintegration into the global community.**



Aim and Objectives

- To give Syria a chance at economic recovery and political stability.
- To encourage the new transitional government to maintain peace and rebuild the nation.
- To lift economic and trade restrictions that have hindered Syria's growth and humanitarian relief.

Background

- Syria has been designated a state sponsor of terrorism by the U.S. since 1979.
- U.S. sanctions were imposed in 2004 and tightened after 2011 due to Assad's crackdown on uprisings.
- The country suffered a devastating civil war, extremist insurgencies, and foreign military interventions over the past decade.
- In December 2024, anti-Assad militia toppled the regime, leading to a new government led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, a former al-Qaeda member claiming reform.

CHINA'S RENAMING OF PLACES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH -

- **Recently, India rejected the cartographic aggression of China over attempts to rename Arunachal Pradesh names in its own dialect.**
- India reaffirmed that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.
- **This is not a new strategy;** China has periodically released lists with "standardised" Chinese names for places in Arunachal Pradesh since 2017.
- The Arunachal Pradesh Cabinet approved five mega hydropower projects with a combined capacity of 2,626 megawatts (MW) near the China border namely:
- Heo, Tato I, Tato II, Naying, and Hirong.
- The Heo and Tato I projects, both located on the Yarjep River
- Historical Background of the Dispute
- **The Simla Convention (1914) and the McMahon Line:** Held between British India, Tibet, and China in



Simla (now Shimla), British India.

- The McMahon Line was drawn as the boundary between British India and Tibet, placing Arunachal Pradesh (then NEFA) within British India.
- **China’s Stand:** The Chinese plenipotentiary initiated but later rejected the agreement.
- China claims Tibet lacked sovereignty, hence had no legal authority to sign treaties.
- **India’s Position:** Recognizes the McMahon Line as the legal boundary.

INDIA OPENS NUCLEAR ENERGY SECTOR TO PRIVATE OPERATORS WITH LIABILITY REFORM -

- The government is preparing to revamp its nuclear energy regulations to permit private operators, reducing liability risks that have long been a deterrent for private and foreign participation.
- **This comes shortly after the U.S. government’s decision to allow its nuclear firms to collaborate with India — a strategic move that will strengthen India’s civil nuclear capabilities and energy security.**



Private Participation

- For the first time, private companies will be allowed to operate nuclear power plants in India.
- This move aligns with global best practices and aims to meet India’s growing energy demands.

INDIA CHARTS NEW SEA ROUTE FOR NORTH-EAST VIA MYANMAR, SKIPPING BANGLADESH -

- On April 30, 2025, the Union Cabinet approved a Rs 22,864 crore project for a 166.8-k m highway from Mawlyngkhung (Meghalaya) to Panchgram (Assam).
- **This road will become a crucial land segment of a new multi-modal sea route connecting the North-East to Kolkata through**



Myanmar, thus bypassing the dependence on Bangladesh for maritime access. This project is seen as a strategic response to recent diplomatic tensions and regional assertions made by Bangladeshi leadership.

Key Highlights

- **Project Name:** Shillong to Silchar High-Speed Corridor (NH-6)
- **Length:** 166.8 km (144.8 km in Meghalaya, 22 km in Assam)
- **Estimated Cost:** ₹22,864 crore
- **Expected Completion:** By 2030
- **Mode of Implementation:** Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) under Public-Private Partnership (PPP)
- **Executing Agency:** National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)

SHINKANSEN TRAINS AND BULLET TRAIN PROJECT -

- Japan is set to provide India with two Shinkansen train sets (E5 and E3 series) at no cost in 2026.
- **Shinkansen Trains (E5 Series):** It has been operational since 2011. With a speed of 320 km/h, it was initially chosen for India’s first bullet train line.
- Known for its aerodynamic design, advanced safety systems, and smooth ride quality, it represents the cutting edge of high-speed rail technology.
- **Shinkansen Trains (E3 Series):** A slightly slow and older model primarily used for mini-shinkansen services, it shares similar features to the E5 series, such as safety mechanisms.
- **Bullet Train Project (Mumbai-Ahmedabad):** Implemented by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd. (NHSRCL), the project incorporates Japanese Shinkansen technology.
- The project is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), covering about 80% of the costs.
- The Project was initially scheduled for completion by 2022, but the revised deadline is now 2028.



- The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor is part of India's National Rail Plan (NRP) 2030.

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK AND SUSPENSION OF THE INDUS WATERS TREATY -

- **The Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a 5-point action plan against Pakistan following the deadly terrorist attack in Baisaran valley (Pahalgam), Jammu and Kashmir, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians.**
- The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack.
- **Note:** The TRF surfaced in 2020. It was declared a terrorist organisation by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2023 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 for its involvement in terror recruitment, infiltration, and smuggling from Pakistan into J&K.
- **TRF's rise followed two key developments: the decapitation of LeT's top leadership in 2018 and the revocation of J&K's special status in 2019.**



What is the 5-Point Action Plan Announced by India After the Pahalgam Terror Attack?

- **Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty:** India has suspended the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) until Pakistan ceases its support for cross-border terrorism.
- It reflects a shift in India's strategic calculus, using hydrological leverage as a pressure tool.
- **Closure of the Attari-Wagah Border Check Post:** India has shut down the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Attari, Punjab suspending all movement of people and goods.
- Only individuals who have crossed over with valid documents will be permitted to return by 1st May 2025.

- **Cancellation of SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme for Pakistan: India has revoked the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) for Pakistani nationals.**

All SVES visas already issued are considered void.

- **Expulsion of Pakistani Military Advisors:** Pakistan's Defence, Naval, and Air advisors in New Delhi have been declared persona non grata and must exit India. India will also withdraw its own advisors from Islamabad.
- **Reduction of Diplomatic Personnel:** India will reduce the staff strength at its High Commission in Islamabad to 30, down from 55, by 1st May 2025.

US-CHINA AGREE TO SLASH TARIFFS AMID TRADE WAR DE-ESCALATION -

- **This agreement comes after years of escalating trade tensions between the US and China, which had led to hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs, supply chain disruptions, and global economic uncertainty. The 115% reduction in reciprocal tariffs signals a shift toward cooperation and economic diplomacy.**



Agreement Details

- Reciprocal tariffs reduced by 115%.
- A 90-day freeze on additional tariff measures.
- China to set tariffs on US goods at 10%.
- China suspends additional 24% tariffs and cancels 91% extra duties.

Background of Trade War

- US imposed 145% tariffs on Chinese goods.
- China retaliated with 125% tariffs on US imports and restrictions on rare earth exports.
- The conflict disrupted global trade and caused inflationary pressures

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SARVAM TO BUILD INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS AI MODEL -

- The Indian government has selected Bengaluru-based start-up Sarvam to develop the country's first homegrown Artificial Intelligence (AI) Large Language Model (LLM) under the IndiaAI Mission.
- **The company is developing three model variants: Sarvam-Large (advanced reasoning), Sarvam-Small (real-time applications), and Sarvam-Edge (compact on-device tasks).**
- Sarvam will receive 4,000 Graphic Processing Units (GPUs) for six months under the IndiaAI Mission to build a 70 billion parameter AI model.
- The AI model is not expected to be open-sourced, but aims for population-scale deployment, designed to reason and be fluent in Indian languages.
- This comes at a time when China's Deep Seek model known for its low-cost and open-source nature, has significantly disrupted global AI markets, highlighting the urgency for India to establish its own AI infrastructure.
- **IndiaAI Mission:** Approved in 2024 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the IndiaAI Mission seeks to drive responsible and inclusive growth of India's AI ecosystem.
- IndiaAI Mission includes democratizing computer access, enhancing data quality, developing indigenous AI models, nurturing AI talent, fostering industry collaboration, supporting startup funding, and promoting ethical, socially impactful AI.



- Instead, it uses advanced fusion techniques such as magnesium hydride-based fusion, raising serious concerns about arms control, international law, and global security.
- This advancement could potentially redefine how nuclear weapons are perceived and regulated in modern warfare.

ISRO-NASA NISAR MISSION LIKELY TO LAUNCH IN JUNE 2025 -

- The much-anticipated NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite mission a unique collaborative project between India's ISRO and NASA is now expected to be launched in June 2025.
- **This milestone comes after several delays, particularly during the assembly and testing stages. ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan updated Union Science Minister Jitendra Singh on the upcoming space initiatives, including NISAR and other key missions planned for May.**
- NISAR is designed to revolutionize Earth observation by offering highly detailed, repetitive insights into dynamic environmental processes.



Key Highlights of the NISAR Mission

- **Mission Name:** NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)
- **Launch Window:** Expected in June 2025
- **Launch Vehicle:** GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle)
- **Mission Type:** Earth Observation using dual-frequency SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar)
- **Agencies Involved:** NASA and ISRO

CHINA HAS TESTED A REVOLUTIONARY TYPE OF HYDROGEN BOMB -

- China has tested a revolutionary type of hydrogen bomb that functions without traditional fissile materials like uranium or plutonium.



ISRO'S POLAR SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (PSLV-C61) MISSION FAILED TO PLACE THE EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE-09 (EOS-09) INTO ITS INTENDED SUN-SYNCHRONOUS POLAR

ORBIT DUE TO A GLITCH IN THE ROCKET'S THIRD STAGE -

- This was ISRO's 101st mission and the 63rd using the PSLV. The EOS-09 satellite carried a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) payload designed to capture all-weather Earth images.



What is PSLV-

- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is a highly reliable and cost-effective launch vehicle developed by ISRO.**
- It is used to transport satellites into various orbits, including sun-synchronous, geostationary, and navigation orbits.
- Function:** It carries satellites (payloads) into space, overcoming Earth's gravity through powerful propulsion systems. Once the desired orbit is reached, satellites are deployed from the vehicle.
- Structure:** PSLV has 4 stages:
- PS1:** Solid rocket motor with 6 strap-on boosters.
- PS2:** Liquid engine (Vikas engine).
- PS3:** Solid rocket motor for high thrust post-atmospheric phase.
- PS4:** Two liquid-fuel engines for final orbital insertion.
- Variants:** PSLV-XL (with extended strap-ons), PSLV-DL, PSLV-QL, etc., are selected based on payload weight and target orbit.
- Significance:** Known as ISRO's "workhorse" due to its versatility and high success rate.
- Used in major missions like Chandrayaan-1 (2008) and Mars Orbiter Mission (2013).
- Achieved global recognition by launching 104 satellites in a single mission (PSLV-C37, 2017).
- Earlier Failure:** The PSLV has failed twice in its history. The first failure was in 1993 (PSLV-D1) due to software issues, causing the IRS-1E satellite to crash into the ocean.
- The second was in 2017 (PSLV-C39), when a heat shield separation failure trapped the IRNSS-1H satellite, preventing its deployment into orbit.

ARYABHATA: INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS SATELLITE -

- April 19, 2025 marked the 50th anniversary of the launch of Aryabhata, India's first indigenously built satellite.
- It laid the foundation of India's space communication, scientific research, and satellite technology ecosystem.
- As of 2025, ISRO has launched 131 satellites, with 51 currently operational in orbit.**



About Aryabhata Satellite

- Name:** Aryabhata, after the ancient Indian astronomer (Aryabhata I – 476 to 550 CE).
- Developed by:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Launch Date:** April 19, 1975.

Launch Vehicle & Site:

- Launched using Soviet Kosmos-3M rocket
- From Kapustin Yar, USSR (present-day Russia)

ISRO TESTS SEMICRYOGENIC ENGINE -

- Recently, ISRO successfully conducted the second short-duration hot test of its semicryogenic engine at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil-nadu validating engine start-up sequence and stable ignition.



About ISRO's Semicryogenic Engine

- ISRO's semicryogenic engine uses liquid oxygen (LOX) as the oxidizer and refined kerosene (RP-1) as fuel, operating at extremely high pressures and temperatures.**
- Features:** It offers higher thrust, better efficiency, reusability potential, and simpler handling compared to full cryogenic systems, operating partly under cryogenic conditions.
- Significance:** It will enhance ISRO's launch vehicle capabilities, making them more powerful, cost-effective, and globally competitive for heavier payloads.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

INDIA REMAINS 4TH LARGEST ECONOMY IN WORLD, US AT NO. 1 -

Rank	Country	GDP (USD)
1	United States	\$ 30.34 trillion
2	China	\$ 19.53 trillion
3	Germany	\$ 4.92 trillion
4	India	\$ 4.39 trillion
5	Japan	\$ 4.27 trillion
6	United Kingdom	\$ 3.73 trillion
7	France	\$ 3.28 trillion
8	Italy	\$ 2.46 trillion
9	Canada	\$ 2.33 trillion
10	Brazil	\$ 2.31 trillion

HOW DID INDIA'S ECONOMY RESPOND TO PAST CONFLICTS WITH PAKISTAN? -

Economic Impact of Past India-Pakistan Conflicts 1. The

1999 Kargil War

- **Trigger:** Pakistani intrusion into Indian territory (Jammu & Kashmir).



Market Reaction

- BSE Sensex dropped 5% in May 1999 due to fear of escalation and post-nuclear test sanctions.
- Pakistan's KSE-100 fell 7% amid political instability.

GDP Impact

- India's fiscal deficit rose to 5.1% of GDP.
- Pakistan's GDP slowed to 4.2%.

Recovery

- Sensex rebounded 20% by year-end, driven by IT boom.
- Pakistan's recovery was slower due to coup & sanctions.
- Lesson: Short-term volatility, long-term recovery, with India bouncing back faster.

2. The 2001 Parliament Attack

- **Trigger:** Attack on Indian Parliament by terror outfits.
- **Military Response:** 1 million troops deployed along the border.

Market Reaction

- Sensex fell 7% in December 2001.
- FIIs withdrew \$200 million.

GDP Impact

- **India:** Growth dipped to 4.8% (2001–02).
- **Pakistan:** Growth fell to 3.1%.

Bilateral Disruption

- Trade halted (~\$250 million).
- Pakistan lost \$50 million in overflight revenue.
- **Lesson:** Economic shocks are amplified by global recessionary trends; diplomacy helped recovery.

3. The 2008 Mumbai Attacks

- **Trigger:** 26/11 terror attack by Lashkar-e-Taiba; 166 killed.

Market Reaction

- Sensex dropped 4% to ~8,700 points.
- FIIs pulled out \$13 billion in 2008.

Sectoral Impact

- Hospitality, real estate, tourism hit hardest.
- Tourism revenue fell 15%, costing \$2 billion.

GDP Impact

- **India:** 6.7% growth in 2008–09.
- **Pakistan:** Growth slowed to 1.7% amid IMF bailout.

Recovery

- Sensex rebounded 80% in 2009 with stimulus.
- KSE-100 up 35%, but recovery slower.
- **Lesson:** Terror shocks are sharp but short-lived; India's domestic demand aids resilience.

4. The 2019 Pulwama–Balakot Crisis

- **Trigger:** Pulwama attack (40 CRPF personnel killed); Balakot airstrike followed.

Market Reaction

- Sensex dipped 2%, tourism/aviation down 5%.

GDP Impact

- **India:** Growth slowed to 6.1% in 2019–20.
- **Pakistan:** Down to 0.5%, impacted by FATF scrutiny.

Trade

- Bilateral trade, already low, shrank further.

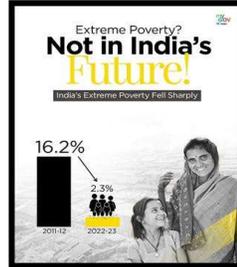
Recovery

- **India:** Sensex up 10% by year-end.
- **Pakistan:** KSE-100 up 15%, but underlying fragility persisted.

- **Lesson:** India's market depth cushions shocks, Pakistan's structural weaknesses magnify them.

WORLD BANK'S POVERTY & EQUITY BRIEF REPORT -

- The World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief report praised India for lifting 171 million people out of extreme poverty from 2011-12 to 2022-23, lowering the extreme poverty rate from 16.2% to 2.3%.



What are Poverty and Equity Briefs (PEBs)?

- **About:** The PEBs, published biannually during the Spring and Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- **Key Development Indicators:** Cover various aspects of poverty, using both national poverty lines and international benchmarks (USD 2.15 for extreme poverty, USD 3.65 for lower-middle-income, and USD 6.85 for upper-middle-income).
- **Methodology for India:** The World Bank's poverty estimates for India are based on the 2011-12 Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) and the 2022-23 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey.

What are the Key Highlights of the Poverty and Equity Briefs Report by the World Bank?

- **Rural and Urban Poverty Reduction:** Extreme poverty in India fell significantly, from 18.4% to 2.8% in rural areas and from 10.7% to 1.1% in urban areas between 2011-12 and 2022-23.
- **Statewise Contribution:** In 2011-12, the five most populous states- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh accounted for 65% of India's extreme poor. By 2022-23, these states contributed to two-thirds of the overall decline in extreme poverty.
- **Decline in Multidimensional Poverty:** The report highlighted a decline in non-monetary poverty, with India's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) dropping from 53.8% in 2005-06 to 16.4% in 2019-21.

INDIA'S ECONOMY TO GROW BY 6.5% IN 2025 AS PER UNCTAD FORECAST -

- India is set to maintain its position as the fastest-growing major economy in 2025 with an impressive 6.5% GDP growth, according to the latest "Trade and Development Foresights 2025" report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- While global economic momentum shows signs of slowing, India stands out for its resilience, fueled by increased public spending and proactive monetary policies.

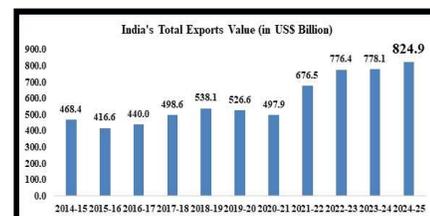


Key Highlights

- India's Economic Performance
- India is projected to grow at 6.5% in 2025, sustaining its title as the fastest-growing major economy globally.
- The report attributes this growth to robust government expenditure, including infrastructure projects and social sector investments.
- A supportive monetary policy stance by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has also played a key role in stimulating demand and economic activity.

INDIA'S EXPORTS HIT RECORD \$824.9 BILLION IN FY 2024-25: RBI DATA -

- India's total exports for FY 2024-25 have reached a record high, as per RBI data released on May 2, 2025, making it a landmark year for the Indian economy.
- **This development is crucial as India aims to position itself as a global trade powerhouse, especially through non-oil merchandise and services sectors in alignment with policy initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat and Foreign Trade Policy 2023.**



Export Performance in FY 2024–25

- **Total Exports:** \$824.9 billion (up 6.01% from \$778.1 billion in FY 2023–24)
- **Services Exports:** \$387.5 billion (up 13.6% from \$341.1 billion)
- **Merchandise Exports (excluding petroleum):** \$374.1 billion (up 6.0% from \$352.9 billion)

March 2025 Snapshot

- **Services Exports in March 2025:** \$35.6 billion
- **Growth over March 2024:** 18.6%
- **March 2024 Services Exports:** \$30.0 billion

GIG ECONOMY -

- **The gig workers' meeting on "Current Developments, Challenges, and the Way Forward," organized by the Gig Workers Association, highlighted critical issues within India's gig economy and recommended the establishment of minimum wages, social security, and legal protections for gig and platform workers.**
- It also called for the establishment of tripartite welfare boards at both state and national levels, including representatives of workers, employers, and the government.



What is the Gig Economy-

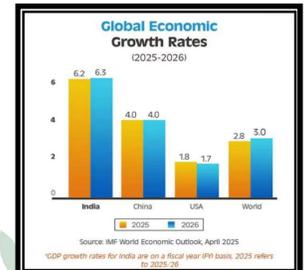
- The new Labour Codes of 2019 defines a gig worker as "A person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationship".
- It is a labor market of short-term, flexible jobs often enabled by digital platforms.
- **Workers, as freelancers or independent contractors, are paid per task rather than through full-time contracts. Common activities include freelance services, food delivery, and digital work.**
- **Status of India's Gig Economy:** A NITI Aayog report estimates 7.7 million gig workers in India in 2020–21, projected to reach 23.5 million by 2029–30, mostly in medium-skilled jobs.

IMF WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: HIGH ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY SURPASSING COVID-ERA LEVELS -

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently published its World Economic Outlook (WEO).

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- The IMF is a global organization that promotes economic stability and cooperation among its 190 member countries
- It was established in 1944 in the aftermath of the Great Depression of the 1930s



- **Key Reports:** Global Financial Stability Report and World Economic Outlook

About World Economic Outlook (WEO)

- The World Economic Outlook (WEO) is the flagship report of the International Monetary Fund that analyzes global economic developments, prospects, and policy challenges.
- It offers economic forecasts and serves as a key tool for global economic surveillance and policy coordination.
- **It is usually published twice a year in the months of April and October, with updates in between.**

GOVERNMENT CLARIFIES NO GST ON UPI TRANSACTIONS ABOVE ₹2,000 -

- In response to circulating media reports, the Finance Ministry of India has categorically denied any plans to impose Goods and Services Tax (GST) on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions over ₹2,000.
- **The Ministry termed such claims as false, baseless, and misleading. Reinforcing the government's commitment to promoting digital payments, the clarification emphasizes that no MDR (Merchant Discount Rate) is charged on person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI transactions, and thus no GST applies to such transactions either.**



INDIA’S EXPORTS TO THE US HIT A RECORD USD 86.51 BILLION, BOOSTED BY FRONT-LOADING SHIPMENTS AMID TARIFF FEARS, WHILE IMPORTS FROM CHINA SURGED TO USD 113.45 BILLION, SIGNALING GROWING RELIANCE ON CHINA AND SHIFTING GLOBAL TRADE DYNAMICS -

What are the Key Factors Driving India’s Trade Performance-

- **Front-Loading Strategy:** The sharp increase in exports can largely be attributed to exporters rushing to dispatch shipments ahead of the anticipated reciprocal tariff hikes that came into effect in April.
- **Demand and Market Penetration:** India's export share in key markets such as the US and the UK rose by 13.73% and 14.31%, respectively, indicating stronger demand and improved market penetration.
- **Sectoral Rise in Export:** A major contributor to this growth was the electronics sector, which saw a 32% rise in exports driven primarily by booming smartphone shipments taking the total to USD 38 billion.
- **Coffee exports surged by 40% to reach \$1.8 billion.** This sharp rise was supported by global supply disruptions caused by drought and high temperatures in Brazil, one of the world’s top coffee producers.
- **Services Exports:** It grew by 12.45%, reaching USD 383.51 billion during FY25. With services imports standing at USD 195.95 billion, India maintained a healthy surplus in its services trade.



GOLD’S RISING SHARE IN INDIA’S FOREX RESERVE -

- **As per the World Gold Council (WGC), India's gold share in foreign exchange reserves has nearly doubled from 6.7% in 2019 to 12% by February 2025.**
- India's forex reserves rose to USD 677.84 billion in April 2025, led by an increase of USD 892 million in FCA and a USD 638



million rise in gold reserves, while SDRs fell by USD 6 million.

Foreign Exchange Reserves (Forex Reserves):

- About: Forex are reserve assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies. It may include foreign currencies, bonds, treasury bills and other government securities, typically denominated in US dollars.
- They are an important component of the Balance of Payment (BoP)
- **The RBI is the custodian of India's foreign exchange reserves, deriving its authority from the provisions of the RBI Act, 1934.**

DECARBONISING INDIA’S LOGISTICS SECTOR -

- India’s logistics sector, vital for economic growth and Vision India@2047, is among the most carbon-intensive. With a net-zero target by 2070, greening logistics is key to sustainable and inclusive development.



What is the Current Emissions Profile of India’s Logistics Sector-

- India’s logistics sector contributes about 13.5% of the country’s total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Road transport dominates, managing nearly 90% of passenger and 70% of freight movement, and accounts for over 88% of sectoral emissions, trucks alone contribute around 38% of CO₂ emissions (IEA, 2023).

What are the Major Challenges in the Decarbonising Logistics Sector-

- **Heavy Reliance on Road Transport:** In India, roads dominate logistics due to inadequate rail and multimodal linkages. Roads carry 64.5% of freight and serve 90% of passenger traffic in India.
- This high dependence on diesel-fueled trucks makes rapid decarbonization technologically and economically challenging.
- **Fragmented and Unorganized Sector:** India’s logistics sector is largely unorganized, with over 85% of trucks owned by individuals or small operators, which hinders coordinated adoption of green technologies, emission

tracking, and data sharing, making large-scale decarbonization efforts difficult.

- **High Transition Costs & Limited Infrastructure:** Transitioning to EVs or hydrogen vehicles requires significant upfront investment, with EVs costing 20-50% more than comparable Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles.
- Small fleet operators face limited access to green finance, and low-carbon fuels are more expensive than diesel, especially in emerging economies.
- **Limited Adoption of Public Transport:** The underdeveloped public transport infrastructure and infrequent services in many areas limit the potential for using public transport for freight, leading to continued reliance on carbon-intensive private vehicles leading to emissions and inefficiency in logistics operations.

INDIA IMPOSES 12% TARIFF ON STEEL IMPORTS -

- In a decisive step to protect its domestic steel industry, the Government of India has announced the imposition of a 12% provisional safeguard duty on select categories of steel imports.
- **The decision, which came into effect on April 21, 2025, is aimed at countering a surge in low-cost steel imports, especially from China, South Korea, and Japan. The move is being seen as a response to growing concerns within the industry about unfair competition and market distortion.**



ONE STATE-ONE RRB -

- The 4th phase of Regional Rural Bank (RRB) consolidation under the 'One State-One RRB' (OS-OR) plan has been rolled out in 10 states and one Union Territory, further shrinking the number of RRBs in India.
- This move aims to boost operational viability and efficiency, but concerns persist around staffing, technology integration, and regional risks.

What is the One State-One RRB Policy-

- **About:** OS-OR Policy is a reform initiative by the Department of Financial Services aimed at consolidating multiple RRBs within a state into a single unified entity.
- The consolidation of RRBs began in 2005, following the recommendations of the Dr. Vyas Committee (2001), which was constituted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- **Phases of Consolidation:** Implemented under Section 23A(1) of the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, which allows mergers in the public interest.
- **Phase 1 (FY 2006 – FY 2010):** RRBs sponsored by the same bank within a state were amalgamated. RRBs were reduced from 196 to 82.
- **Phase 2 (FY 2013– FY 2015):** RRBs across different sponsor banks within a state were amalgamated. RRBs were reduced from 82 to 56.
- **Phase 3 (FY 2019– FY 2021):** The 3rd phase focused on the OS-OR principle, reducing RRBs in larger states and consolidating them in smaller ones.



INDIA'S INFLATION EASES IN APRIL 2025 AMID DECLINING FOOD PRICES -

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) data for April 2025, released on May 13, 2025, shows a marked decrease in inflation rates across rural, urban, and combined segments.
- **The year-on-year CPI inflation stood at 3.16%, and food inflation plummeted to 1.78% — the lowest since October 2021 — signaling a crucial improvement in India's price stability.**



Key Highlights

- Headline Inflation (CPI)
- **April 2025:** 3.16% (provisional)
- **March 2025:** 3.34%
- Lowest YoY inflation since July 2019

IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD WAR II -

- On 9th May 2025, Russia marked the 80th anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat in World War II, with President Vladimir Putin leading a grand military parade featuring tanks, missiles, and troops through Red Square. 
- Nazi Germany surrendered on 7th May 1945, with the act of military surrender taking effect on 8th May 1945, following the Battle of Berlin (20th April – 2nd May 1945).
- Russia celebrates Victory Day on 9th May instead of 8th May (like Western nations) due to differences in time zones.
- World War II (1939–1945) was the most widespread and devastating conflict in history, fought between the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) and the Allied powers (including the US, France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China).

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SIKKIM'S STATEHOOD: A JOURNEY FROM MONARCHY TO DEMOCRACY -

- May 16, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of Sikkim's merger with India and its formal recognition as the 22nd state of the Indian Union through the Constitution (36th Amendment) Act, 1975. This moment is historically significant as it ended centuries of monarchical rule and integrated the strategically located Himalayan kingdom into India's democratic and federal framework. 

The Constitutional Pathway to Statehood

- Sikkim's integration into India involved a two-step constitutional process.

- 35th Constitutional Amendment (1974):** Granted Sikkim the status of an associate state, a temporary arrangement.
- 36th Constitutional Amendment (1975):** Officially made Sikkim the 22nd full-fledged state of India, retrospectively from April 26, 1975.

WORLD MALARIA DAY 2025 DATE, THEME, SIGNIFICANCE -

- World Malaria Day is observed annually on April 25 to raise awareness and rally global efforts toward eliminating malaria one of the deadliest yet preventable parasitic diseases. 
- Malaria remains a major global health issue, with 263 million cases and nearly 6 lakh deaths reported in 2023 alone, as per WHO.
- Despite being both preventable and curable, the disease disproportionately affects tropical and low-income regions. This day aims to highlight progress, challenges, and the urgent need for reinvestment and innovation in the fight against malaria.

17TH NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICES DAY -

- The Prime Minister addressed civil servants on the occasion of the 17th National Civil Services Day (21st April 2025) and honored the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration (PMAEPA). 
- On National Civil Services Day, the historic representation of women in civil services was highlighted, with 74 women officers comprising 41% of the 2023 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) batch.
- National Civil Services Day:** It is observed on 21st April each year to honor the dedication of civil servants. First celebrated in 2006, it commemorates Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's address to the probationers of Administrative

Services Officers at Metcalf House in Delhi, where he referred to the civil servants as the “steel frame of India” on 21st April 1947.

WORLD EARTH DAY 2025: DATE, HISTORY, THEME, AND SIGNIFICANCE -

- World Earth Day is a global event dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues and promoting actions to protect our planet. Celebrated annually, it serves as a reminder of the importance of sustainable living and environmental stewardship.



- **Earth Day 2025 will be observed on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. This date has been consistently recognized worldwide since the event’s inception.**

History of Earth Day

- The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, initiated by Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. Motivated by the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill and growing public concern over environmental degradation, Nelson envisioned a national teach-in to educate citizens about environmental issues.

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY 2025: CELEBRATING INDIA’S SCIENTIFIC AND STRATEGIC TRIUMPHS -

- **The National Technology Day 2025 is in the spotlight as the country marks 27 years since the Pokhran-II nuclear tests, which placed India on the global map as a nuclear power.**



- With the 2025 theme focusing on sustainability through innovation, the day reinforces India’s commitment to becoming a global leader in responsible technological progress.

Background and Historical Significance

- **Date of Observance:** May 11, annually.
- **Established:** Declared in 1999 by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **Historical Event:** Commemorates the Pokhran-II nuclear tests conducted on May 11 and 13, 1998, under the leadership of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- **Operation Name:** Operation Shakti.
- **Warhead:** 200 to 300 kg conventional warhead, capable of high explosive or semi-armour-piercing strikes.

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

FROM EARTH TO ORBIT: SHUBHANSHU SHUKLA'S JOURNEY TO THE ISS BEGINS MAY 29 -

- India is set to mark a historic milestone in its space journey as Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla will be the first Indian astronaut to fly to the International Space Station (ISS) and the first Indian to enter space in over 40 years.
- He will serve as the pilot of Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4), a commercial mission organized by Axiom Space and launched via SpaceX. This mission will also carry out scientific experiments, including seven Indian microgravity research projects, and represents a major step in international collaboration and human spaceflight by India.



Why in the News?

- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, an Indian Air Force officer and one of ISRO's Gaganyaan astronaut-designates, is set to become the first Indian to travel to the International Space Station (ISS) aboard Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4).

Launch & Crew

- **Scheduled launch:** May 29, 2025, no earlier than 1:03 p.m. EDT.
- **Launch site:** NASA Kennedy Space Center, Florida (USA).
- **Spacecraft:** SpaceX Dragon.
- **Duration:** Up to 14 days aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

58TH JNANPITH AWARD -

- The President conferred the 58th Jnanpith Award for the year 2023 upon Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya and renowned poet-lyricist Gulzar.
- **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya:** He is a revered Sanskrit scholar and Hindu spiritual leader, has held the title of



Jagadguru Ramanandacharya since 1982. He is the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot (MP), a prominent religious and literary institution.

- A prolific author of over 240 works, he has penned four Sanskrit epics (Bhargava Raghavam, Sri Ramayanam, Dasavatara Tirtham, and Ramanandacharya Tirtham). He was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan in 2015.
- **Gulzar:** Sampooran Singh Kalra (Gulzar) is a celebrated Urdu poet, lyricist, author, and filmmaker.
- He pioneered the Triveni poetic form and made lasting contributions to Hindi cinema with films like Maachis, Aandhi, and Koshish.
- He is recipient of the Padma Bhushan (2004), Sahitya Akademi Award (2002), Dadasaheb Phalke Award (2013), an Oscar (2009), a Grammy (2010) and five National Film Awards.
- **Jnanpith Award:** The Jnanpith Award, established in 1961 and first presented in 1965, is India's oldest and highest literary honour.

US VICE PRESIDENT JD VANCE RECEIVES GUARD OF HONOUR DURING FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO INDIA -

- In a significant diplomatic development, United States Vice President JD Vance began his first official visit to India on April 21, 2025, with a ceremonial Guard of Honour at Palam Airport, New Delhi.
- Accompanied by Second Lady Usha Vance and their children, he was warmly welcomed by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.
- The four-day visit aims to deepen strategic cooperation across key areas like trade, defence, and economic partnership.
- **Scheduled high-level meetings, including one with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, underline the growing momentum in India-US bilateral ties.**



PADMA AWARDS 2025 -

• Recently, President Droupadi Murmu presented Padma awards to 71 eminent individuals during the Civil Investiture Ceremony-I held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About Padma Awards



- The Padma Awards are among India's highest civilian honors, given in three categories:
- **Padma Vibhushan:** Awarded for exceptional and distinguished service.
- **Padma Bhushan:** Awarded for distinguished service of a high order.
- **Padma Shri:** Awarded for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards are announced annually on January 26, Republic Day.
- **Instituted in 1954, the Padma Awards recognize distinguished contributions in various fields of public life.**
- The awards were not presented in the years 1978, 1979, and from 1993 to 1997.
- **Objective:** To acknowledge exceptional and distinguished service across various disciplines and activities.
- **Disciplines:** Padma Awards are conferred across disciplines like art, literature, education, science, engineering, sports, social work, public affairs, medicine, trade and industry, civil service, etc.

POSHAN TRACKER APPLICATION WINS PM'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 2024 -

- The PoshanTracker Application, developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), has been awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2024 under the Innovation (Centre) category.
- **This recognition was announced during the 17th Civil Services Day held on April 21, 2025, in New Delhi. The**



award was received by Secretary Shri Anil Malik on behalf of the Ministry.

- The PoshanTracker has become an essential tool in advancing nutrition outcomes through tech-driven, data-centric governance under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0.

DR. K KASTURIRANGAN, FORMER INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO) CHAIRMAN (1994 TO 2003), PASSED AWAY IN BENGALURU -

What were the Contributions of Dr. K. Kasturirangan ?

- **Leadership in ISRO:** He played a pivotal role in the development of Chandrayaan-1 (2008), India's first lunar mission, marking India's entry into space exploration.
- He oversaw the successful operationalisation of key satellites such as the IRS (Indian Remote Sensing) series, INSAT (Indian National Satellite), and the launch of PSLV and GSLV.
- He was the Project Director for India's first two experimental earth observation satellites, BHASKARA-I & II.
- **Role in Remote Sensing and National Development:** He played a key role in the National Natural Resource Management System (NNRMS), enabling satellite-based services for sectors like agriculture, water management, forestry, and health.
- **Pioneering Space Applications:** He initiated thematic space missions like EDUSAT (for tele-education), INSAT/GSAT (for telemedicine and communication), OCEANSAT (for oceanography), and CARTOSAT (for cartography), which directly impacted India's social and economic development.
- **Policy Contributions Beyond Science:** After his tenure at ISRO, he served as a Rajya Sabha member and later, a member of the Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog).
- He chaired the committee that drafted the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- He chaired the committee responsible for reviewing the Western Ghats Ecology report.



52ND CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA -

- Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna has officially recommended Justice B.R. Gavai as his successor.



About Justice B.R. Gavai

- He is currently the second-most senior judge of the Supreme Court, and has been nominated to the Union Law Ministry.

About Chief Justice of India

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) is the head of the Supreme Court and Indian judiciary, appointed under Article 124 of the Constitution.
- Appointing Authority:** The President of India appoints the Chief Justice of India.
- Recommendation Process:** The senior-most Supreme Court judge is usually chosen.
- The outgoing CJI plays a crucial role in recommending a successor.
- Oath of Office:** The President of India administers the oath to the Chief Justice.
- The oath signifies a commitment to uphold the Constitution, perform duties faithfully, and maintain judicial integrity.

NEW MILITARY LEADERSHIP TAKES CHARGE: KEY APPOINTMENTS IN INDIAN DEFENCE FORCES -

- On 01 May 2025, Air Marshal Tejinder Singh assumed charge as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Training Command of the Indian Air Force. On the same day, Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit took over as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC), and Lt Gen Pratik Sharma assumed command as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command of the Indian Army.**
- Air Marshal Tejinder Singh – AOC-in-C, Training Command, IAF**
- Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit – Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC)**



- Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar – Relinquished Command, Northern Command**
- Lt Gen Pratik Sharma – New GOC-in-C, Northern Command**

AJAY KUMAR APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF UPSC -

- Dr. Ajay Kumar, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre, has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- The appointment is made under Article 316(1) of the Constitution of India.



Eligibility for UPSC Chairmanship

- Appointing Authority:** The President of India.
- Tenure:** Up to six years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

A person must have:

- Served as a member of the UPSC, or
- Held significant experience in public service (as in the case of Dr. Ajay Kumar, a former Defence Secretary).

GOVERNMENT RE-APPOINTS T. RABI SANKAR AS RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR -

- The Indian government has re-appointed T. Rabi Sankar as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a period of one year, effective from May 3, 2025.
- This marks his second term extension. As a Deputy Governor, Mr. Sankar holds key responsibilities including overseeing the foreign exchange, currency management, and government accounts departments at the RBI.
- Appointed initially in May 2021, Mr. Sankar has played a crucial role in the RBI's financial operations and has contributed significantly to India's economic stability. This re-appointment highlights the government's confidence in his leadership and the continuity in the RBI's policies and operations.**



POPE FRANCIS DIES AT 88 -

- **In a solemn moment for the Roman Catholic Church and the global community, Pope Francis, the first Latin American and Jesuit pope in history, passed away at the age of 88, the Vatican announced.**
- His death follows a prolonged illness, with reports indicating he had recently battled a serious case of double pneumonia. Pope Francis leaves behind a legacy that was marked by reform, compassion, controversy, and an unwavering commitment to social justice.

Early Life and Historic Election as Pope

- Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he was the son of Italian immigrants. Known for his humble lifestyle and deep empathy for the poor, Bergoglio's ascension to the papacy on March 13, 2013, was a historic moment.
- At the age of 76, he was elected following the unprecedented resignation of Pope Benedict XVI—a decision that surprised the world and set a modern precedent.

Francis's election was groundbreaking in many ways-

- He was the first pope from the Americas
- The first Jesuit pope
- And the first non-European pope in over 1,200 years

JUSTICE DINESH MAHESHWARI APPOINTED CHAIRPERSON OF THE 23RD LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA -

- **In a significant development in the Indian legal landscape, Justice (Retd.) Dinesh Maheshwari, a former Supreme Court judge, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the 23rd Law Commission of India in April 2025. The announcement marks a crucial step in the government's ongoing efforts to review and recommend reforms in various aspects of Indian law, particularly the long-debated Uniform Civil Code (UCC).**

Tenure and Composition of the 23rd Law Commission

- The 23rd Law Commission was formally constituted on September 1, 2024, with its term extending until August 31, 2027. It comprises a total of seven members, including:

- **One Chairperson:** Justice (Retd.) Dinesh Maheshwari
- **Four full-time members:** Including Hitesh Jain (a lawyer) and P. Verma (an academician who was also part of the 22nd Law Commission)
- **Two ex-officio members:** From the Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department
- In addition, the government may appoint up to five part-time members, and serving judges, if included, will function as full-time members until their retirement or end of the Commission's term.

CANADA PM MARK CARNEY -

- Mark Carney's recent election as Prime Minister of Canada marks shift in the political landscape. He assumes leadership amid ongoing tensions with the United States under President Donald Trump.
- **Carney, an economist with a history of crisis management, aims to strengthen Canada's position on the global stage.**
- Carney, 60, previously served as the Governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England. His experience includes navigating the 2008 financial crisis and the Brexit referendum.
- **Uniquely, he is the first Canadian Prime Minister without prior Cabinet experience. His educational background includes prestigious institutions like Harvard and Oxford.**

TENURE OF 'SUPERSPY' TAPAN KUMAR DEKA EXTENDED AS INTELLIGENCE BUREAU CHIEF -

- **Tapan Kumar Deka, a veteran Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, has been granted a one-year extension as Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), India's premier domestic intelligence agency.**
- The extension, effective until June 2026, was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet and comes in recognition of his critical contributions to national security.
- His continued leadership has been sanctioned under a special provision allowing service extensions in the public interest beyond the typical retirement age of 60 years.

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PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

5 YEARS OF SVAMITVA SCHEME -

About SVAMITVA Scheme

- SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) is a Central Sector Scheme.
- Launch: It was launched nationwide on National Panchayati Raj Day (24th April), 2021 as a reformative step to provide rural households with legal ownership of residential properties.
- **Nodal Ministry and Implementing Partners:** The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in collaboration with State Revenue and Panchayati Raj Departments, Survey of India, and National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICSI) for technology support.



Objectives

- Create accurate land records to aid rural planning and reduce disputes.
- Enable rural citizens to monetize their property and access formal credit.
- Support property tax determination for Gram Panchayats or State exchequers.
- **Develop GIS-based maps for multi-sectoral usage and better Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP).**

GYAN BHARATAM MISSION: A NEW ERA FOR INDIA'S MANUSCRIPT HERITAGE -

- **The revival and relaunch of the National Manuscripts Mission has been scheduled for June 9, as announced in the 2025 Union Budget. The increased budgetary allocation and efforts to make the mission autonomous mark a major step forward in safeguarding India's ancient intellectual treasures.**

Key Objectives

- Survey, document, digitize, and conserve India's manuscript heritage.
- Expand the reach to over one crore manuscripts across the country.

- Establish a clear access policy to encourage sharing of privately held manuscripts.
- Make the National Manuscripts Mission autonomous to ensure greater efficiency.

INDIA'S BATTLE AGAINST POVERTY: 171 MILLION LIFTED FROM EXTREME POVERTY IN A DECADE -

- In a remarkable display of progress, India has successfully lifted 171 million people from extreme poverty between 2011-12 and 2022-23.
- **According to the World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief, the proportion of people living on less than \$2.15 a day fell dramatically from 16.2% to just 2.3% during this period.**
- The reduction in poverty across both rural and urban areas reflects the success of government-led initiatives and economic reforms designed to empower the marginalized sections of society.



UDAN SCHEME COMPLETES 8 YEARS OF SUCCESS -

- India's aviation sector has traditionally been dominated by large cities, with air travel often being a luxury only accessible to the elite. However, with the launch of the UDAN scheme in 2016, this narrative has changed.
- **UDAN, an abbreviation of "Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik," aims to democratize aviation and make air travel affordable for the common man.**
- This initiative aims to connect Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and underserved regions of India with major cities, boosting regional connectivity and economic development.



INDIA'S TRANSITION TO POWER SUFFICIENCY BY 2025 -

- India has made strides to become a power-sufficient nation by 2025. The Union Minister of Power, Shripad Naik, announced that the country has added 238 gigawatts (GW) in generation capacity since 2014.
- **This achievement has drastically reduced the gap between energy demand and supply. The installed capacity has risen to 470 GW, with a remarkable increase in renewable energy contributions.**
- Since April 2014, India's power generation capacity has expanded by 238 GW. This growth includes a vast network of 2,01,088 circuit kilometres of transmission lines. The total energy produced has reached 15,46,229 million units (MU) in 2024-25. Thermal energy remains the primary source but renewable energy is on the rise.



10 YEARS OF JAN SURAKSHA SCHEMES (2015-2025) -

- The three flagship social security schemes — PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), PM Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) — are in the news because they have completed 10 years since their launch on 9th May 2015. To mark this milestone, the Government of India highlighted their achievements, with over 82 crore enrollments recorded as of April 23, 2025. This anniversary showcases the schemes' impact in providing financial protection and pension benefits to India's economically vulnerable and unorganised workforce.



Background

- The three Jan Suraksha Schemes — PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), PM Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) — were launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 9th May 2015, as part of a national initiative to extend

affordable insurance and pension benefits to underserved sections of society.

- The schemes were envisioned to protect individuals from life's uncertainties, such as accidents, death, and old age, by providing financial security.
- Over the last decade, these schemes have achieved significant milestones in terms of enrollments, claims settled, and financial inclusion, improving the lives of millions across India.

PM MITRA TEXTILE PARK PROJECT -

- Madhya Pradesh has received formal approval for the ₹2,100 crore PM MITRA textile park project in Bhainsola village, Dhar district, aiming to revolutionize the state's textile industry.



More on the Textile Park

- The PM MITRA Park in Madhya Pradesh will span an area of 2,100 acres and is expected to attract massive investments and generate significant employment opportunities.
- The project site in Dhar district is strategically near Indore, Pithampur industrial cluster, and the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.
- It will include advanced infrastructure like a 20 MLD Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) plant, a solar-powered energy facility, and plug-and-play units.

About PM MITRA Scheme

- The PM MITRA (Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) Scheme aims to transform India into a global textile manufacturing and export powerhouse.
- **Origin:** The scheme is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 5F vision: Farm to Fiber to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.

INDIA HAS SET AN AMBITIOUS TARGET OF INSTALLING 500 GW OF NON-FOSSIL FUEL CAPACITY BY 2030, WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON RENEWABLE ENERGY (RE) SOURCES LIKE SOLAR AND WIND -

What is Renewable Energy-

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- Renewable energy is energy derived from natural, constantly replenished sources like sunlight, wind, water (hydropower), and biomass.
- Unlike fossil fuels, it is sustainable, helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promotes a cleaner environment.



India’s Renewable Energy Goals

- 2030 Goal: Achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity.
- Short-Term Milestone: Generate 50% of total energy capacity from renewable sources by 2030.
- **Current Progress:** Reached 217.62 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity as of January 2025.
- **Net-Zero Commitment:** Attain net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.
- However, a closer analysis reveals that these targets may not be enough to meet the country’s rapidly growing electricity demand while ensuring grid stability and reducing reliance on coal.

CHEETAH CORRIDOR PROJECT -

- A Cheetah Corridor is being set up as part of India’s wildlife conservation efforts. The initiative is designed to facilitate the movement of cheetahs across regions, thereby expanding their natural habitat.



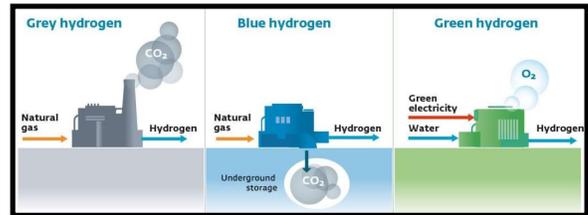
Project Details

- The Cheetah Corridor will cover 17,000 square kilometres.
- It will stretch across 27 districts in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **This planned corridor includes 13 districts in Rajasthan, 2 in Uttar Pradesh, and 12 in Madhya Pradesh, aiming to create a continuous path for cheetahs to move freely.**
- It will interlink several protected areas, including Shahabad Conservation Reserve, Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Mukundra Wildlife Sanctuary, Gandhi Sagar

Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhav National Park and Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve.

NATURAL HYDROGEN -

- Natural hydrogen, a potentially clean, abundant, and low-cost energy source, is gaining global attention as a game-changer in the transition to green energy.



What are Key Facts About Natural Hydrogen-

- **About:** Natural hydrogen, also called geologic hydrogen or white hydrogen, refers to hydrogen gas (H₂) that is naturally produced and stored in the Earth's crust.
- **Unlike manufactured hydrogen (from fossil fuels or renewables), natural hydrogen is produced geologically—raising hopes for a sustainable energy revolution.**
- **Formation:** Natural hydrogen exists freely underground, and formed through natural geological processes like-
- **Serpentinisation:** Reaction of water with iron-rich rocks.
- **Radiolysis:** Splitting of water by radioactive rocks.
- **Organic Decomposition:** From deep burial of organic matter.

WHERE AND WHEN SHIRUI LILY FESTIVAL IS CELEBRATED ? -

- **The 5th State-Level Shirui Lily Fest ival 2025 is drawing national and international attention as it returns after a two-year hiatus, aiming to promote responsible tourism and raise global awareness about the conservation of the endangered**



Shirui Lily. This year’s edition is particularly special, as it commemorates 75 years since the flower’s discovery and brings a renewed focus on ecological preservation, cultural pride, and community participation.

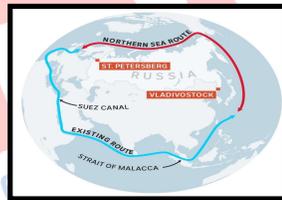
- **Held annually in May, the Shirui Lily Festival is more than a floral celebration;** it is a platform that bridges the region’s ecological significance with its cultural richness.
- The centerpiece of this festival is the Shirui Lily, a delicate pinkish-white bell-shaped flower that blooms exclusively in the Shirui Hills, located at 8,500 feet above sea level in the Ukhrul district.
- Named after Jean Macklin, the wife of British botanist Frank Kingdon Ward, the flower was first discovered in 1946 and awarded global acclaim at the 1950 London Flower Show.

THE MELTING OF ARCTIC ICE IS OPENING UP THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE (NSR) , PROVIDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION ALONG WITH THE THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT -

Climate Impact and Changing Arctic Sea

Breaching of Climate

Thresholds: In 2024, global temperatures temporarily exceeded the 1.5°C limit above pre-industrial levels, a possible long-term breach of the Paris Agreement goals.



- **Accelerated Ice Loss:** Arctic sea ice is shrinking at a rate of 12.2% per decade (September data) compared to 1981–2010 averages as per NASA, signaling an urgent environmental transformation.
- **Climate Feedback on India:** Arctic ice melt has cascading effects on India’s climate patterns, particularly the monsoon, with implications for agriculture and food security.
- **Opening of NSR:** It is seen as a critical shortcut for shipping between Europe and Asia, potentially reshaping global trade flows.
- It will allow faster cargo movement and reduce freight costs, posing strategic and economic advantages.

India’s Potential in the Arctic Region

- Global Trade Realignment: Rising geopolitical tensions, especially with the U.S.-China friction is prompting nations to diversify trade routes.
- The Arctic has emerged as a strategic alternative.

SIMILIPAL OFFICIALLY ACCORDED AS NATIONAL PARK’S STATUS -

Similipal, a unique and ecologically rich region in Odisha, has officially been accorded national park status by the Odisha government. After decades of anticipation, this significant move places Similipal as the 107th national park in India and the second in Odisha, after Bhitarkanika.



- **The formal notification was issued on April 24, 2025, marking an important milestone in the state’s conservation efforts and a major step towards the vision of a developed Odisha.**
- **Similipal National Park now spans 845.70 sq km, divided into 11 ranges across Similipal south and Similipal north divisions.**
- The area comprises parts of Pithabata north, Pithabata south, Nawana, Jenabil, Upper Barahkamuda, Bhanjabasa, Barehipani, Chahala, Nawana North, and Talabandha ranges.

MONSOON & FOOD INFLATION IN INDIA -

- The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) in its first forecast for 2025 has forecasted an above-normal monsoon for 2025 which will support agricultural output and aid the government’s efforts to contain food inflation, which is highly sensitive to rainfall variability.



What is IMD's Forecast on Monsoons for 2025-

Rainfall Prediction:

- IMD has forecast an “above normal” southwest monsoon in 2025, with rainfall likely at 105% of the Long Period Average (87 cm), ±5% margin.

- **IMD classifies monsoon rainfall as:** Deficient (<90% of LPA), Below Normal (90–95%), Normal (96–104%), Above Normal (105–110%), and Excess (>110%).
- This is backed by neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions and below-normal snow cover over Eurasia, which supports stronger monsoons.
- **IMD’s forecast accuracy has improved, with average deviation reducing to 2.27% (2021–25) from 7.5% (2017–20).**

AMARAVATI: WORLD’S FIRST FULLY RENEWABLE-POWERED CITY IN THE MAKING -

- In a landmark step towards sustainable urban development, Amaravati, the planned capital of Andhra Pradesh, is on track to become the world’s first city powered entirely by renewable energy.
- **Envisioned by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, this ambitious project aligns with India’s commitment to clean energy and climate-conscious urbanization. Located between Vijayawada and Guntur, Amaravati is being designed as a modern, eco-friendly “people’s capital”, setting a global benchmark in sustainable city planning.**
- **The foundation of this monumental initiative is expected to be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, symbolizing national support for green development. The new capital city will cover 217 square kilometres along the banks of the Krishna River, forming part of the larger Andhra Pradesh Capital Region, which spans 8,352 sq km.**
- With a project cost estimated at ₹65,000 crore, Amaravati is being developed as an eco-conscious urban center focused on clean energy, efficient infrastructure, and smart planning.

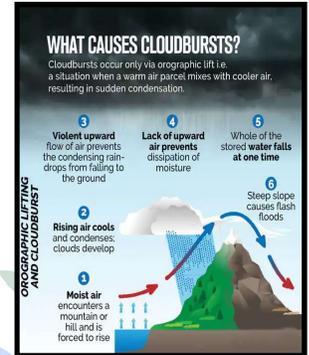
CLOUDBURST, LANDSLIDE, AND FLASH FLOOD -

- **Torrential rain in Ramban tehsil of Jammu and Kashmir has caused casualties, significant**

infrastructure damage, and forced emergency relocations. Officials have cited cloud-bursts, land slides and flash floods as the main triggers of the widespread destruction.

What is a Cloudburst-

- **Definition:** A cloudburst is a sudden, intense rainstorm that results in more than 10 cm of rain in less than an hour over a small area (approximately 10 km²).
- It can also be accompanied by hail and thunder. Cloudbursts are common in mountainous areas, especially in the Himalayas.
- Due to their localised nature, cloudbursts are hard to predict or detect but can unleash sudden, devastating rainfall, leading to flash floods and landslides.



What is a Landslide-

- **Definition:** A landslide is the downward movement of rock, soil, or debris on a slope due to gravity.
- It is a form of mass wasting, where earth materials move down a slope under the influence of gravity.

What is a Flash Flood-

- **Definition:** Flash floods are sudden increases in water levels during or immediately after intense rainfall. They are highly localized and short-lived events, typically occurring within 6 hours of rainfall.
- **Causes:** Flash floods are primarily caused by intense rainfall that overwhelms the soil’s absorption capacity and drainage systems.

OPERATION OLIVIA: A MARINE CONSERVATION SUCCESS BY THE INDIAN COAST GUARD -

- **The Indian Coast Guard announced on May 19, 2025, that its initiative Operation Olivia had recorded the protection of 6.98 lakh Olive Ridley turtles during the nesting season at the Rushikulya river mouth in Odisha. This marks a record achievement in marine conservation under the initiative.**

Aim and Objective

- **Primary Goal:** To ensure safe nesting of Olive Ridley turtles by minimizing threats such as illegal fishing and habitat destruction.
- Promote community participation, NGO collaboration, and the use of sustainable fishing tools like Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs).
- **Background and Implementation**
- Launched in the early 1980s, Operation Olivia is conducted annually from November to May.
- Focuses on nesting beaches in Gahirmatha, Rushikulya river mouth, and other coastal Odisha regions—key breeding grounds for the Olive Ridley turtle.



GREEN HYDROGEN CERTIFICATION SCHEME OF INDIA (GHCI) -

- Recently, India took step in its clean energy transition with the launch of the Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI). The scheme will create a clear system to certify green hydrogen production, making the process more transparent, easy to track, and trusted by the market.



Importance of Green Hydrogen

- Green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy sources. It is seen as a clean alternative to fossil fuels. The use of green hydrogen can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It also supports energy security by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.

THE SUPREME COURT (SC) OF INDIA HAS DIRECTED THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE (NEERI) TO ASSESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF NEARBY GLASS INDUSTRIAL UNITS ON THE TAJ MAHAL -

- The directive comes amid growing concerns over industrial pollution in the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ), a sensitive area surrounding the world heritage site.

What are the Key Facts About Taj Mahal-

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- **Historical Background:** Taj Mahal was commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, and Ustad-Ahmad Lahori is credited as the chief architect.
- Construction started in 1632 AD and completed in 1648 AD; ancillary structures were completed by 1653 AD. It was built by artisans from across the Mughal Empire, Central Asia, and Iran.
- **Location & Layout:** Taj Mahal is situated on the right bank of Yamuna in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. It is enclosed within a 17-hectare Mughal garden which follows the Timurid-Persian Charbagh layout with four subdivided quarters.
- **Materials Used:** Constructed with brick-in-lime mortar, red sandstone, and white marble (quarried from Makrana (Rajasthan) for the main structure).
- Extensive inlay work was done using gemstones like jade, crystal, turquoise, lapis lazuli, etc.



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THE DELHI CABINET HAS APPROVED A PROJECT TO CONDUCT CLOUD SEEDING TRIALS AIMED AT ADDRESSING AIR POLLUTION AND WATER SCARCITY -

- **Cloud Seeding:** It is a weather modification technique that enhances precipitation by dispersing chemicals like silver iodide, potassium iodide, or dry ice into clouds, serving as nuclei for water droplet formation, leading to rainfall.
- It can help combat air pollution, especially during periods of high Air Quality Index (AQI) readings.
- Cloud seeding may increase water availability and result in economic, environmental, and human health benefits.
- **Types of Cloud Seeding:** Static cloud seeding, which involves introducing ice nuclei into cold clouds to form ice crystals or snowflakes.
- Dynamic cloud seeding, which stimulates rainfall by enhancing vertical air currents and promoting rain cloud growth.
- Hygroscopic cloud seeding, which uses fine particles of salts to increase cloud droplet size.
- **Glaciogenic cloud seeding, which induces ice formation in supercooled clouds to trigger precipitation. It is used for enhancing snowfall, increasing mountain snowpack, inducing rain in drought-hit areas, and reducing air pollution.**



BRICS ADOPTS DECLARATION ON AI, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND EMPLOYMENT AT 2025 LABOUR MINISTERS 'MEETING -

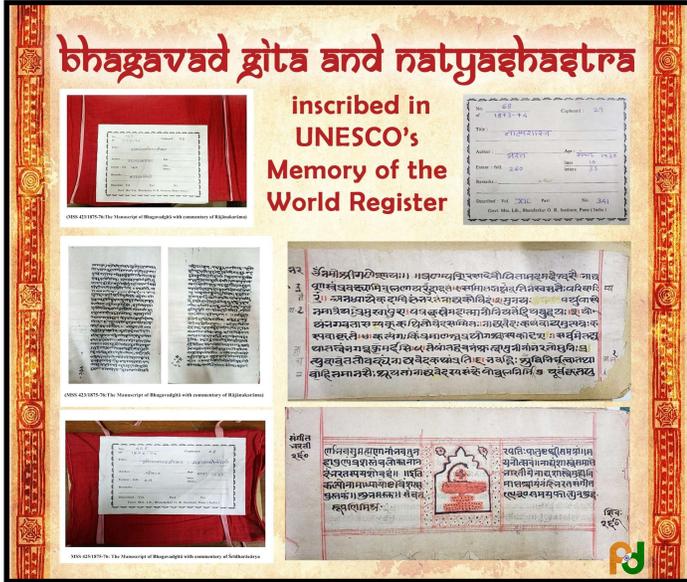


- The 11th BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting, held on April 25, 2025, in Brasília under Brazil's Presidency, has garnered significant attention for addressing crucial issues related to the future of work.
- **With the theme "Strengthening the Cooperation of the Global South for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance," the meeting emphasized two key areas: the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the workforce and the effects of climate change on the world of work, advocating for a just and equitable transition for workers.**

REPORTS & INDICES

GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF BHAGAVAD GITA AND NATYASHASTRA -

- Recently Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra have been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.



About UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

- The UNESCO Memory of the World Register Programme is a global initiative that seeks to preserve and provide access to the world's documentary heritage.
- **Origin:** It was launched by UNESCO in 1992 in response to increasing threats to documentary heritage, including war, neglect, and natural disasters.
- It was created to support efforts in preserving historically significant documents and manuscripts across the globe.
- **Objectives:** To ensure universal access to the heritages without cultural or political barriers.
- To raise public awareness about the importance and relevance of documentary materials in shaping civilisations, identities, and histories.
- **Significance:** It emphasizes that documentary heritage is a shared legacy of humanity and must be protected and made accessible for current and future generations.

- It celebrates documents of outstanding universal value, including texts, manuscripts, oral traditions, audio-visual materials, and more.

INDIA'S TOTAL FERTILITY RATE TRENDS -

- The Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report of 2021 has revealed that India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) remains stable at 2.0, which is below the replacement level of 2.1. However, regional variations are stark. Bihar reports the highest TFR at 3.0, while West Bengal and Delhi have the lowest at 1.4. This report marks ongoing demographic trends and challenges across different states.

About Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

- **Total Fertility Rate is a demographic measure. It estimates the average number of children a woman will have during her reproductive years, typically aged 15 to 49.**
- The TFR is derived from age-specific fertility rates, which assess the number of children born to women in specific age groups. The SRS survey is the largest demographic study in India, involving about 84 lakh individuals across various states and Union Territories.

TOP MILITARY SPENDERS OF 2024-25: INDIA'S POSITION IN THE GLOBAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE RACE -

Detailed Breakdown of Global Military Expenditure in 2024

1. United States

- As the world's largest military spender, the U.S. accounted for 37% of global military expenditure in 2024, with a spending of \$997 billion. This reflects its ongoing military dominance and strategic investments in defense technologies.



2. China

- The second-largest spender, China, allocated \$314 billion, making up 12% of global defense expenditure. China's rising military budget is indicative of its expanding geopolitical ambitions, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

3. Russia

- Despite economic challenges, Russia's military spending reached \$149 billion, contributing 5.5% to global military expenditure. The country's defense budget has grown in response to ongoing conflicts, most notably the war in Ukraine.

4. Germany

- Germany saw a 28% increase in its defense budget, rising to \$88.5 billion, placing it as the fourth-largest spender globally. Its increased military expenditure is attributed to the heightened security concerns in Europe, following Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

5. India

- India spent \$86.1 billion, placing it as the fifth-largest military spender. India's defense budget has grown by

1.6% year-on-year, reflecting its need for modernization and preparedness in an increasingly complex security environment. India's military spending is now nine times larger than that of Pakistan, underscoring the defense disparity between the two nations.

INDIA'S TOTAL FERTILITY RATE REMAINS AT 2.0: SRS 2021 REPORT -

- The SRS 2021 report, released on May 7, 2025, provides updated demographic estimates at the national and state levels, a crucial resource in the absence of the 2021 Census, which has been delayed.
- The report gains added relevance amid the announcement in the 2024 interim budget regarding a high-power committee to address population growth and demographic shifts in India.

Key Highlights of the SRS 2021 Report Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

- **National average:** 2.0, same as 2020.
- **Bihar:** Highest TFR at 3.0.
- **Delhi & West Bengal:** Lowest TFR at 1.4.

DEFENCE

STRATEGIC DEFENCE TECHNOLOGIES IN INDIA -

• India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the BrahMos Integration and Testing Centre in Lucknow, underscoring the significance of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.



• In a separate development, India's growing defence ties and the effectiveness of the S-400 Triumph system were highlighted as it successfully intercepted missile and Asisguard Songar drone attacks launched by Pakistan, showcasing a swift and decisive kinetic response.

What are Key Facts About BrahMos and S400 Triumph?

BrahMos

- **Name Origin:** "BrahMos" is derived from Brahmaputra (India) and Moskva (Russia) rivers.
- **Developed By:** BrahMos Aerospace a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) (50.5%) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM) (49.5%).
- **First Test:** BrahMos was successfully tested in 2001, from Chandipur, Odisha.
- **Type:** BrahMos is a two-stage supersonic cruise missile designed for high precision and speed. It features a solid-propellant booster in the first stage, followed by a liquid-fuelled ramjet in the second stage that sustains a cruise speed of Mach 3 (three times the speed of sound), making it one of the fastest cruise missiles in the world.
- **Range:** BrahMos' range has evolved from 290 km to 350 km, with future versions aiming for up to 800 km and hypersonic speeds (Mach 5+).
- BrahMos is three times faster, 2.5 times longer in range, and has a higher seeker range than subsonic missiles, resulting in greater accuracy and nine times more kinetic energy.

S400 Triumph

- **About:** The S-400 Triumph, developed by Russia, it is one of the world's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems.
- It is dubbed SA-21 Growler by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it was inducted into service in 2007.
- It is designed for multi-layered air defence, it can intercept a wide range of aerial threats including aircraft, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, and stealth targets.
- **Range:** Engages targets up to 400 km away and at altitudes up to 30 km.
- **Speed:** Can intercept targets flying at speeds of up to Mach 14 (~17,000 km/h).
- **Radar Reach:** Detects targets up to 600 km using advanced radar systems.
- **Target Handling:** Tracks up to 300 targets and engages up to 36 simultaneously.
- **India's Role with the S-400:** In 2018, India signed a USD 5.4 billion deal with Russia for five S-400 air defence squadrons.
- **Three are currently operational, with two more due by 2026. Known as Sudarshan Chakra in India, the S-400 was used by the IAF to counter a Pakistani aerial attack, highlighting its strategic significance.**

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD (NSAB) -

- The Government has reorganised the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) amid rising tensions with Pakistan, particularly after the Pahalgam terror attack.



As part of the reorganization

- Alok Joshi, former Chief of Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), has been appointed as the new Chairman of the NSAB.
- Seven new members have been inducted into the board.

About the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)**Constitution and Background**

- **Established:** It was established in December 1998 as an advisory body composed of eminent persons outside the government.
- **Composition:** The board draws experts from diverse fields such as industry, media, and civil society, offering independent perspectives on national security matters.

Primary Function

- **Long-term Analysis and Perspectives:** The NSAB provides long-term strategic analysis and perspectives on national security issues.
- **Advisory Role to NSC:** It advises the National Security Council (NSC) and recommends solutions and policy options for the issues referred to it by the NSC.

DRDO DEVELOPS INDIGENOUS POLYMERIC MEMBRANE FOR DESALINATION -

- The news is significant as it showcases India's growing capability in indigenous defence and marine technology. The development was achieved in a record time of eight months, and trials have proven the system's safety and performance.
- **This aligns with the government's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and strengthens maritime infrastructure.**

**Key Highlights**

- **Developer:** DMSRDE, Kanpur (a DRDO lab)
- **Purpose:** High-pressure sea water desalination
- **Beneficiary:** Indian Coast Guard (ICG)
- **Membrane Type:** Nanoporous multilayered polymeric membrane
- **Development Time:** Completed in 8 months
- **Trial Status:** Successfully tested onboard ICG's Offshore Patrolling Vessel
- **Next Step:** Awaiting final operational clearance after 500 hours of testing

INDIAN AIR FORCE JOINS MULTI-NATIONAL EXERCISE DESERT FLAG-10 IN UAE -

- **The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed a contingent to the Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates to participate in Exercise Desert Flag-10, a prestigious multinational air combat exercise.**



- This strategic engagement, scheduled to take place from April 21 to May 8, 2025, represents India's continued commitment to enhancing its military cooperation with global partners and strengthening its operational capabilities through international collaboration.
- **The Indian contingent has brought its combat-proven aircraft to the exercise, featuring the versatile MiG-29 fighter jets and Jaguar strike aircraft. These platforms offer complementary capabilities, with the MiG-29 excelling in air superiority roles while the Jaguar provides ground attack expertise.**
- The deployment of these specific aircraft reflects the IAF's strategic approach to maximizing training benefits while showcasing its operational readiness and technical proficiency in different combat scenarios.

EXERCISE 'AAKRAMAN 'INDIAN AIR FORCE DRILLS WITH RAFALES AND SU-30S -

- **Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted major military drills, named Exercise 'Aakraman,' simulating attacks on both mountain and ground targets. The exercise, which involved India's most advanced fighter jets, including the Rafale and Su-30MKI aircraft, aimed to test and enhance the IAF's capabilities in complex combat scenarios.**
- With rising tensions between India and Pakistan, particularly after the Pahalgam terror attack, this exercise demonstrates the IAF's readiness to defend India's airspace and respond to any potential threats.



- The drills also emphasize the strategic advantage gained by the Indian Air Force through the induction of cutting-edge technologies like the Rafale jets and the S-400 air defense system.

DRDO MAKES PROGRESS IN HYPERSONIC TECHNOLOGY -

- Recently, DRDO successfully conducted a ground test of an Active Cooled Scramjet Subscale Combustor for over 1,000 seconds, marking a major step toward developing indigenous hypersonic cruise missiles.



About Hypersonic Technology

- **Hypersonic vehicles travel at speeds greater than Mach 5, meaning they exceed 6,100 km/h, enabling rapid global reach and tactical superiority.**
- **Scramjet Engines:** Supersonic Combustion Ramjet (Scramjet) engines enable sustained hypersonic flight by using atmospheric air, making the system lighter and more efficient than traditional rockets.
- The Active Cooled Combustor technology uses advanced cooling techniques to endure extreme thermal loads during hypersonic flight, ensuring longer operational durations.
- **Global Race in Hypersonic Systems:** Nations like China, Russia, and the United States are actively developing hypersonic weapons, highlighting the strategic urgency for India to advance its own capabilities.

WHAT IS FIELD MARSHAL RANK? -

- The Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army, General Asim Munir has been promoted to the rank of Field Marshal by the Pakistan government recently.
- **He will be the second person after Field Marshal Ayub Khan in 1959 to hold this rank.**

About Field Marshal Rank

- **5 Star Rank Officer:** A Field Marshal or FM is a five-star officer rank, and is the highest attainable rank, above the general.

- A Field Marshal rank is typically bestowed on generals for ceremonial reasons or during wartime.

Equivalent Ranks	Indian Army	Indian Navy	Indian Air Force
1	*Field Marshal	*Admiral of the Fleet	*Marshal of the Air Force
2	General	Admiral	Air Chief Marshal
3	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	Air Marshal
4	Major General	Rear Admiral	Air Vice Marshal
5	Brigadier	Commodore	Air Commodore
6	Colonel	Captain	Group Captain

Entitlements:

- A Field Marshal is entitled to wear his uniform at any event he deems fit
- He is considered to be on 'active list' until his death although he does not hold any office in official capacity beyond his date of retirement
- He wears special badges of rank, He has five stars displayed on his vehicle
- **Salute:** Salutes with the special Field Marshal's baton is raised to the forehead and not the hand as is the norm in a military salute.
- **Indian Field Marshal:** India has had two FMs as of now ie,
- Sam Manekshaw was the first FM ascending to the rank in January 1973. KM Cariappa was the second Field Marshal and was promoted in January 1986.
- **Marshal of the Air Force:** Arjan Singh was elevated to the rank in 2002.

BRAHMOS MISSILE – MANUFACTURER, COST, RANGE AND SPEED -

- The BrahMos Missile is a supersonic cruise missile developed under a joint project between India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Russia's plays a vital role in India's defense.
- **It is launched from different platforms like ships, submarines, aircraft and land-based systems.**



Origin and Development of BrahMos Missile

- The BrahMos Missile was made together by India's DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya. Its name comes from two rivers – India's Brahmaputra and Russia's Moskva. It first joined the Indian Navy in 2005, then the Army in 2007 and later the Air Force in 2019, becoming a key part of India's defense.

BrahMos Missile – Key Features and Specifications

- **Type:** Supersonic cruise missile
- **Length:** About 8.2 meters (varies with different variants)
- **Speed:** Mach 2.8 to Mach 3.5
- **Range:** Initially 290 km, with extended variants reaching up to 500 km and future models may extend up to 800 km.
- **Guidance System:** It uses inertial navigation combined with satellite navigation, along with an active radar homing system for terminal guidance.
- **Warhead:** 200 to 300 kg conventional warhead, capable of high explosive or semi-armour-piercing strikes.

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS BHARGAVASTRA: INDIGENOUS SYSTEM TO COUNTER DRONE SWARMS -

- **The test firing of Bhargavastra comes at a crucial time when drone swarms are becoming a dominant feature in battlefield strategies worldwide. With recent hostile drone incursions reported near India's borders, especially from Pakistani-operated drones, India's indigenous solution reflects its readiness to tackle evolving aerial threats.**



- The successful trial demonstrates India's technological edge and commitment to strengthening national security.

Aim and Objectives

- To develop an indigenous system capable of detecting, targeting, and neutralizing hostile drone swarms.
- To integrate hard-kill and soft-kill methods to ensure versatile defence against drones.
- To provide a mobile, adaptable system deployable across varied terrains, including high-altitude regions.

- To enhance India's network-centric warfare capabilities by enabling near-simultaneous engagements.

INDIA'S NEW ANTI-TERROR DOCTRINE -

- In a national address, the Prime Minister of India articulated a new strategic and military doctrine against cross-border terrorism, reflecting India's zero tolerance policy towards terrorism.
- It also embedded India's fight within the broader global war on terror, directly referencing international attacks and alliances.
- **India launched Operation Sindoor, following the Pahalgam terror attack (April 22, 2025), a decisive retaliatory strike on nine key terror-linked targets in Pakistan.**
- This operation marks the most intense military engagement with Pakistan since the Kargil conflict (1999) and represents the evolution of India's Security Doctrine.

**INDIA SIGNS \$7.4 BILLION DEAL WITH FRANCE FOR RAFALE FIGHTER JETS -**

- **India signed a landmark agreement with France for the purchase of 26 Rafale fighter aircraft worth approximately 630 billion rupees (\$7.4 billion).**
- This deal, which includes both single-seater and twin-seater versions of the fighter jets, aims to bolster India's naval air power and strengthen its defence ties with France.
- **The delivery of these aircraft is expected to be completed by 2030, with the deal providing both military and economic benefits, including the generation of jobs and business opportunities.**



SPORTS

INDIA SHINES AT 2025 ISSF WORLD CUP LIMA WITH 7 MEDALS, FINISHES THIRD OVERALL -

- India's shooting squad wrapped up a strong performance at the 2025 ISSF World Cup held in Lima, Peru, securing a total of seven medals—two gold, four silver, and one bronze—to finish third in the overall medal tally, just behind China and the United States.



- The competition, hosted from April 13 to 22, featured over 400 shooters from 43 countries. India's 42-member squad was one of the largest at the event. Key performers like Suruchi Singh and Saurabh Chaudhary helped India qualify for the ISSF World Cup Final 2025 to be held in Doha, Qatar, in December.

Highlights of India's Campaign

- Location:** Lima, Peru
- Dates:** April 13–22, 2025
- Participants:** Over 400 shooters from 43 nations
- India's Squad:** 42-member team, second largest after China
- India's Medal Tally:** 2 Gold, 4 Silver, 1 Bronze – Total 7 medals
- India's Rank:** 3rd on the medal table
- Significance:** Gold medalists qualify for 2025 ISSF World Cup Final in Doha (Dec 4–9)

NEERAJ CHOPRA HONOURED WITH HONORARY LT. COLONEL RANK IN TERRITORIAL ARMY -

- The Ministry of Defence's Department of Military Affairs issued a notification on May 13, 2025, announcing that

Ex-Subedar Major Neeraj Chopra will receive the honorary Lieutenant Colonel rank in the Territorial Army, effective April 16, 2025. This comes as part of the government's effort to honour distinguished civilians and service members for their national contributions.



Who is Neeraj Chopra?

- Born in Khandra village, Panipat, Haryana.
- Olympic Gold Medalist in Tokyo 2020 (held in 2021).
- Silver Medalist at the Paris Olympics 2024.
- World Champion in 2023 (Budapest World Athletics Championships).
- Formerly held the post of Subedar Major in the Indian Army.

About the Honorary Rank

- Conferred under Para-31 of the Territorial Army Regulations, 1948.
- Recognizes exceptional individuals contributing to national pride.
- The honorary title allows limited ceremonial participation in military events.

Territorial Army (TA) Overview

- Established on October 9, 1949.
- Functions as a part-time volunteer force supporting the regular Indian Army.
- Involved in war support, disaster relief, and nation-building.
- Celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2024.

IMPORTANT MCQ FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMS

- Q1. Balikatan is a bilateral military exercise between which two countries ?
a) Philippines and the United States
b) France and Russia
c) China and India
d) Australia and India
- Q2. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) is established under which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Law and Justice
b) Ministry of Home Affairs
c) Ministry of Finance
d) Ministry of Science and Technology
- Q3. PM MITRA Scheme was implemented by which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Textiles
b) Ministry of Agriculture
c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
d) Ministry of Urban Development
- Q4. High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) is developed by which country ?
a) United States b) France
c) Israel d) Russia
- Q5. Which glacier in Nepal is believed to be the first glacier to be declared “dead” due to significant shrinkage and retreat ?
a) Khumbu Glacier b) Yala Glacier
c) Imja Glacier d) Ngozumpa Glacier
- Q6. Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project Dam is built on which river ?
a) Chenab b) Sutluj
c) Narmada d) Godavari
- Q7. The term “Double Contribution Convention” in the context of the India–UK FTA refers to:
a) Double taxation of export-related profits in both countries
b) Exemption from simultaneous social security contributions in host and home countries
c) Requirement for joint investment from public and private sectors
d) Tax rebates for businesses operating in both nations
- Q8. Songar drones are armed Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) developed by which country ?
a) Israel b) Turkey
c) Russia d) India
- Q9. What is India’s global rank in vehicle manufacturing as per Ministry of Road Transport and Highways ?
a) First b) Second
c) Third d) Fifth
- Q10. The Jenu Kuruba tribe is primarily found in which state ?
a) Andhra Pradesh b) Karnataka
c) Kerala d) Odisha
- Q11. What is the IUCN status of “Snow Leopard” that was recently seen in news ?
a) Endangered
b) Critically Endangered
c) Vulnerable
d) Least Concern
- Q12. What is the rank of India in the Human Development Index (HDI) 2025 ?
a) 128th b) 130th
c) 135th d) 139th
- Q13. What is the name of the digital platform being developed by the Election Commission of India to streamline electoral services ?
a) eElector b) OneVote
c) ECINET d) None of the Above
- Q14. Which of the following statements about National Education Policy 2020 is not correct ?
a) It mandates implementation of the three-language formula nationwide
b) It promotes instruction in the mother tongue till at least Grade 5
c) It proposes a 5+3+3+4 pedagogical structure
d) It sets a target of 50% Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education

- Q15. The term “Double Contribution Convention” in the context of the India–UK FTA refers to:
a) Double taxation of export-related profits in both countries
b) Exemption from simultaneous social security contributions in host and home countries
c) Requirement for joint investment from public and private sectors
d) Tax rebates for businesses operating in both nations
- Q16. The Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme was introduced by amending which act ?
a) Foreigners Act, 1946 b) Citizenship Act, 1955
c) Emigration Act, 1983 d) None of the Above
- Q17. What is the name of the initiative launched by government to promote gender equity in India’s maritime sector ?
a) Nari Shakti b) Sagar Mein Samman
c) Sagar Shakti d) None of the Above
- Q18. Which state government has launched India’s first Vistadome jungle safari train ?
a) Maharashtra b) Karnataka
c) Uttar Pradesh d) Madhya Pradesh
- Q19. PM MITRA Scheme was implemented by which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Textiles
b) Ministry of Agriculture
c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
d) Ministry of Urban Development
- Q20. Which organization conducted the ground test of the Scramjet Engine in India?
a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
d) Indian Army Research Centre (IARC)
- Q21. Which state is the host of Bharat Summit 2025 ?
a) Telangana b) Gujarat
c) Tamil Nadu d) Kerala
- Q22. INS Chennai, that was recently seen in news, is part of which class of Indian Navy ships ?
a) Talwar-class b) Kolkata-class
c) Shivalik-class d) Rajput-class
- Q23. Which country has introduced the world’s highest bridge, called the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge ?
a) Japan b) South Korea c) China d) Thailand
- Q24. Which Indian state has officially approved DPS Flamingo Lake as a conservation reserve ?
a) Maharashtra b) Madhya Pradesh
c) Odisha d) Karnataka
- Q25. Who was recently awarded the ‘Companion of the Order of Fiji’, the highest civilian honor in Fiji ?
a) Kailash Satyarthi b) Madhusudan Sai
c) Dr. Devi Shetty d) Mukesh Ambani
- Q26. What is the total value of the Rafale fighter jet deal between India and France ?
a) ₹450 billion b) ₹630 billion
c) ₹500 billion d) ₹700 billion
- Q27. Recently, India’s shooting squad delivered an impressive performance at the 2025 ISSF World Cup in Lima, Peru. What position did India finish in the overall medal tally at the 2025 ISSF World Cup ?
a) First b) Second c) Third d) Fourth
- Q28. Former Indian Space Research Organisation chairman K Kasturirangan passed away at 84. Which major satellites did Dr K Kasturirangan oversee the launch of during his tenure as ISRO Chairman ?
a) Mars Orbiter and Chandrayaan-1
b) INSAT-2 series and IRS-1A/1B satellites
c) GSAT-7 and NavIC
d) GSLV Mark III and Cartosat series
- Q29. Which of the following statements is correct about the Rafale Marine (Rafale M) aircraft ?
a) It is a twin-engine, 5th-generation stealth fighter
b) It is designed specifically for land-based operations only
c) It is a carrier-capable 4.5-generation fighter jet
d) It has no commonality with the Indian Air Force variant
- Q30. Multi Agency Centre (MAC) operates under which organization ?
a) Intelligence Bureau (IB)
b) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)
c) National Investigation Agency (NIA)
d) Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)

- Q45. SpaDeX (Space Docking Experiment) is a technology demonstration mission developed by which organization ?
a) CNSA (China National Space Administration)
b) JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency)
c) ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation)
d) NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
- Q46. Which country is the host of Exercise Desert Flag-10 ?
a) Japan
b) United States
c) India
d) United Arab Emirates
- Q47. What is "K2-18b" that was recently seen in news ?
a) Asteroid
b) Exoplanet
c) Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV)
d) Newly discovered invasive weed
- Q48. Which two classical Indian texts were recently inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in April 2025 ?
a) Vedas and Ramayana
b) Arthashastra and Manusmriti
c) Mahabharata and Upanishads
d) Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra
- Q49. Who is the current Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ?
a) Christine Lagarde
b) Kristalina Georgieva
c) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
d) Gita Gopinath
- Q50. Which state is the host of Bharat Summit 2025 ?
a) Telangana
b) Gujarat
c) Tamil Nadu
d) Kerala
- Q51. Which protected area of Odisha has been declared the 107th National Park of India ?
a) Nandankanan
b) Satkosia
c) Simlipal
d) Gahirmatha
- Q52. What is the name of the military exercise conducted by the Indian Air Force following the Pahalgam terror attack ?
a) Exercise Vayu Shakti
b) Exercise Aakraman
c) Exercise Shourya
d) Exercise Thunder Strike
- Q53. Which of the following best explains the strategic impact of India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty in April 2025 ?
a) It allows Pakistan to claim water rights under the International Court of Justice
b) It completely revokes the Treaty's legal validity
c) It enables India to reconfigure its river usage without legal exit
d) It initiates a UN-mandated water-sharing framework in South Asia
- Q54. The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) comes under the administrative control of which ministry ?
a) Ministry of Science and Technology
b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
c) Ministry of Textiles
d) Ministry of Agriculture
- Q55. What was the unemployment rate in India in April 2025, as per the first monthly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) ?
a) 5.1%
b) 4.5%
c) 6.3%
d) 7.3%
- Q56. Which DRDO laboratory developed the indigenous nanoporous multilayered polymeric membrane for seawater desalination ?
a) Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory (DEBEL)
b) Defence Materials Stores and Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE)
c) Defence Electronics Research Laboratory (DLRL)
d) Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL)
- Q57. Madku Dweep, that was recently seen in new, is located in which state ?
a) Odisha
b) Andhra Pradesh
c) Madhya Pradesh
d) Chhattisgarh
- Q58. Which organization has developed a high-pressure nanoporous multilayered polymeric membrane for seawater desalination ?
a) Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
c) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
d) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)

- Q59. Centralised Information Management System (CIMS) portal was introduced by which institution ?
 a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
 b) NITI Aayog
 c) State Bank of India (SBI)
 d) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- Q60. Which is the nodal ministry for the National Medical Register (NMR), a centralized digital database ?
 a) Ministry of Education
 b) Ministry of Science and Technology
 c) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
 d) Ministry of Social Justice
- Q61. Which ministry has launched the Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI) ?
 a) Ministry of Power
 b) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
 c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
 d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Q62. Ayushman Bharat Diwas is observed annually on which day ?
 a) April 29 b) April 30 c) May 1 d) May 2
- Q63. Which traditional Indian musical instrument was recently granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag ?
 a) Pakhawaj b) Tabla
 c) Veena d) Banaras Shehnai
- Q64. Which organization releases the Global Financial Stability Report ?
 a) Asian Development Bank (ADB)
 b) World Bank
 c) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 d) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Q65. The Yimkhiung tribe is primarily found in which state ?
 a) Assam b) Sikkim
 c) Nagaland d) Tripura
- Q66. Why is the Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) system considered a transformative technology in defense ?
 a) It replaces tanks and artillery in ground combat operations
 b) It allows silent, precise, and low-cost neutralization of airborne threats
 c) It enables satellite-based control over missile launchers
 d) It eliminates the need for any conventional air defense systems
- Q67. Which Indian city has issued India's first Certified Green Municipal Bond ?
 a) Pune b) Indore
 c) Ghaziabad d) Bengaluru
- Q68. Which two organizations jointly developed the Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MR-SAM) ?
 a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
 b) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)
 c) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems
 d) National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- Q69. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) is established under which ministry ?
 a) Ministry of Law and Justice
 b) Ministry of Home Affairs
 c) Ministry of Finance
 d) Ministry of Science and Technology
- Q70. What percentage safeguard duty has the Indian government imposed on certain steel imports ?
 a) 8% b) 10% c) 12% d) 15%

ANSWERS

1- a	2- b	3- a	4- a	5- b	6- a	7- b	8- b	9- c	10- b
11- c	12- b	13- c	14- a	15- b	16- b	17- b	18- c	19- a	20- b
21- a	22- b	23- c	24- a	25- b	26- b	27- c	28- b	29- c	30- a
31- a	32- a	33- c	34- a	35- a	36- a	37- a	38- b	39- b	40- c
41- b	42- d	43- b	44- c	45- c	46- d	47- b	48- d	49- c	50- a
51- c	52- b	53- c	54- c	55- a	56- b	57- d	58- b	59- a	60- c
61- c	62- b	63- d	64- c	65- c	66- b	67- c	68- b	69- b	70- c