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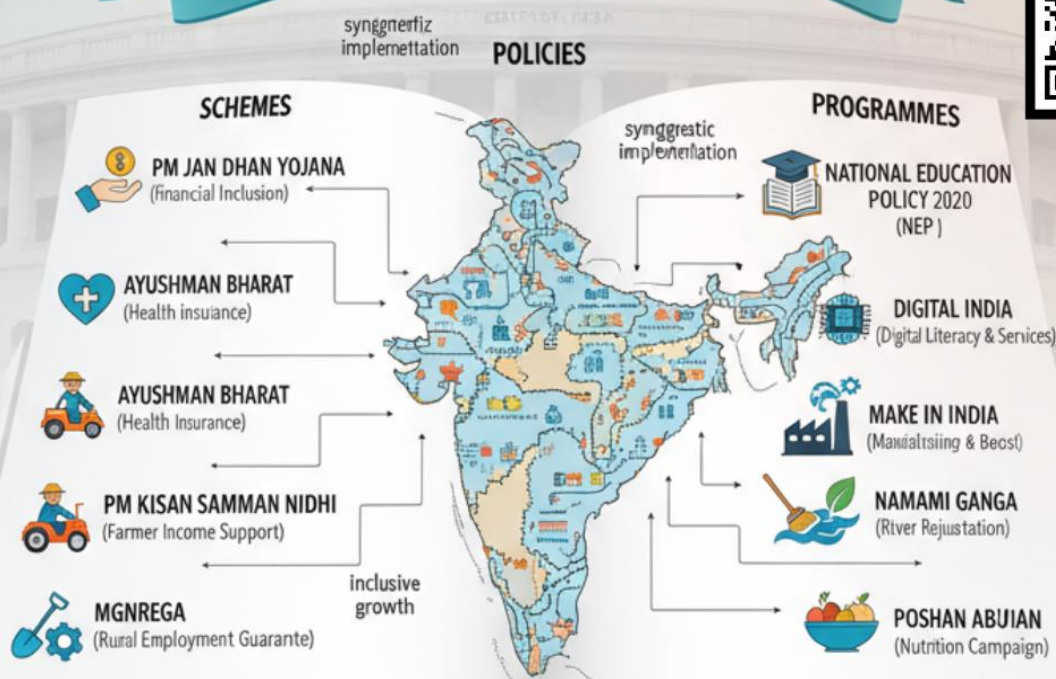
SCHEMES/ POLICIES/ PROGRAMMES

Volume - I

Current Affairs for Prelims 2026
(April 2025- September 2025)

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PREFACE

Concise Prelims Current Affairs 2026

Current Affairs-Sine QuaNon of UPSC Preparation

Proficiency in Current affairs is sine non qua for UPSC preparation. It is the basic foundation of any aspirant 's preparation. Knowledge and skill to relate current news with UPSC syllabus is quintessential part of the preparation.

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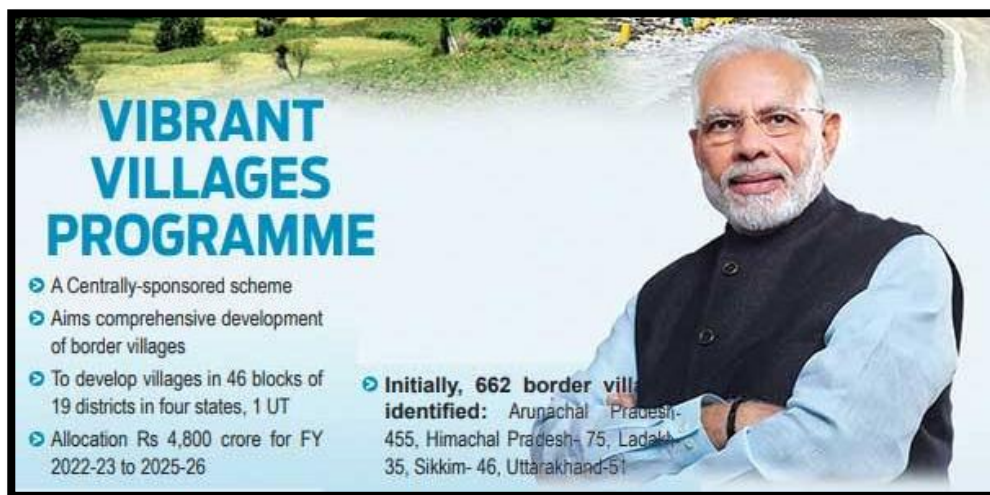
Vibrant Village Programme

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approved Vibrant Villages Programme Phase-2 for developing border villages, with ₹6,839 crore outlay, enhancing security, livelihood, and infrastructure by 2028-29.

Description:

- **Vibrant Village Programme (VVP)** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched for the period 2022–23 to 2025–26.
- Its goal is to ensure **holistic development** of villages situated along **India's northern borders**, aiming to **enhance living standards** and **curb migration** from these areas.
- The scheme seeks to **strengthen border security** by **encouraging people to remain** in their native border villages.
- It targets **2,967 villages** in **46 border blocks** of **19 districts** across **Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and the Union Territory of Ladakh**.
- VVP supports building **basic infrastructure** and generating **livelihoods** through avenues like:
 - **Tourism promotion**
 - **Preservation of cultural heritage**
 - **Skill training and entrepreneurship**
 - **Formation of cooperatives**, especially in **agriculture, horticulture, and medicinal plant cultivation**
- The programme also includes **infrastructure development** like:
 - **Road connectivity** to remote villages
 - **Housing, village infrastructure**, and access to **renewable energy, television, and telecom services**



- **Village-level action plans** will be prepared by **district authorities** with **Gram Panchayats**, ensuring **full coverage** of **central and state schemes**.
- **No duplication** will occur with the existing **Border Area Development Programme (BADP)**.

Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act

Why in News?

The Registrar-General of India flagged delays by hospitals in reporting births and deaths, stressing mandatory registration within 21 days under the RBD Act to ensure universal civil registration.

Description:

- **Enactment:** The RBD Act, 1969, came into force on 1st April 1970 to provide a uniform law for the registration of births and deaths across India.
- **Authority:** The Registrar General of India (RGI) under the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for coordinating and unifying the registration activities across the country.
- **Mandatory Registration:** The Act makes it compulsory to register births and deaths within a prescribed period (generally 21 days) with the concerned local authority.
- **Data Sharing (Proposed Amendment):** The recent amendment proposes that States must share birth and death data with the RGI via an Application Programming Interface (API).
- **Aadhaar Integration (2023):** The new bill seeks to make Aadhaar mandatory for the registration of births and deaths, and to link this data with other national databases like NPR, electoral rolls, and government welfare schemes.

Space for Notes:

Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Amendment Act	
Aspect	Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Amendment Act
	The RBD Amendment Act, 2023 aims to create digital birth certificates for various purposes, eliminating the need for multiple documents. It amends the 1969 Act
Aim	To eliminate the need for multiple documents to prove date and place of birth.
Key Features	Introduces amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 Appoints a Registrar-General, India for issuing general directions for registration. Establishes National and State-level databases for registered births and deaths. Mandates States to register births and deaths digitally on a centralized portal (Centre's CRS). Requires medical institutions to provide a cause of death certificate to the Registrar.
Applicability	Digital/ birth certificate to be used for admission, licenses, jobs, passports, Aadhaar, voting, marriage.
Benefits	Facilitates efficient and transparent delivery of public services and social benefits. Updates National Population Register , ration cards, property registration records. Simplifies registration process for adopted, orphaned, abandoned, surrendered, surrogate children.

Genome India Project
Why in News?

Preliminary findings of the GenomeIndia project revealed 180 million genetic variants from sequencing 9,772 Indian genomes, aiding disease diagnosis, drug response prediction, and precision medicine development.

Description:
About Genome India Project:

- Launched in January 2020 to map the genetic diversity of India's population.
- National initiative supported and funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.
- A multi-institution consortium project involving various research institutes.
- Aims to decode genetic diversity through large-scale genome sequencing.

Aims of the Genome India Project:

- Create a comprehensive catalog of genetic variations (common, rare, SNPs, structural).
- Develop a reference haplotype structure for Indians.
- Design genome-wide arrays for affordable research and diagnostics.
- Establish a biobank for storing DNA and plasma samples for future research.

Key Highlights:

- Genome sequencing of 10,000+ individuals from 99 ethnic groups completed.
- Genetic database stored at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC), Faridabad.
- Identified unique genetic variations, aiding in precision medicine.
- Phase 1 analysis (5,750 samples): Revealed rare genetic variations specific to Indian populations.

Significance:

- Facilitates better understanding and treatment of genetic and infectious diseases.
- Provides a reference database for global researchers.
- Boosts personalized healthcare and precision medicine in India.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)
Why in News?

PM Modi said 52 crore loans worth ₹33 lakh crore were disbursed under MUDRA Yojana in 10 years, empowering marginalized groups and boosting jobs, income, and economic growth.

Description:

- **Launched:** 2015
- **Objective:** To "fund the unfunded" by providing affordable credit to micro and small enterprises and integrating them into the formal financial system.
- **Loan Categories:**

Category	Loan Amount	Target Group
Shishu	Up to ₹50,000	Start-ups/new businesses
Kishore	₹50,000 – ₹5 lakh	Growing businesses
Tarun	₹5 lakh – ₹10 lakh (Now ₹20 lakh)	Expansion-ready businesses

- Tarun category limit raised to ₹20 lakh in Union Budget 2024.

Eligibility:

- Indian citizens with viable non-farm business plans needing credit up to ₹10 lakh.

Key Features:

- Offered through banks (PSBs, RRBs, Coop Banks, Pvt Banks), NBFCs, MFIs.
- No direct subsidy, but loans can be linked to schemes offering capital subsidies.

Impact of PMMY (MUDRA 1.0):

- **Total Disbursed:** ₹27.75 lakh crore
- **Beneficiaries:** 47 crore small/new entrepreneurs
- **Inclusivity:**
 - 69% loans to women
 - 51% to SC/ST/OBC entrepreneurs
- **Employment:** Significant role in job creation, especially in rural/semi-urban areas.

Vision for MUDRA 2.0:

- **Wider Outreach:** More focus on rural/semi-urban areas.
- **Financial Literacy:** On budgeting, saving, digital literacy, etc.
- **Enhanced Credit Guarantee Scheme (ECGS):** To reduce lender risk.
- **Monitoring Framework:** Real-time tracking of disbursements and repayment.
- **Beneficiary assessments** to guide better policy decisions.

ASEEM Portal (Related Info):

- **Full Form:** Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employees Employer Mapping
- **Purpose:** Matches skilled workers with employers via NSDC
- **Goal:** Boost livelihood opportunities and reduce skill mismatch


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Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Scheme

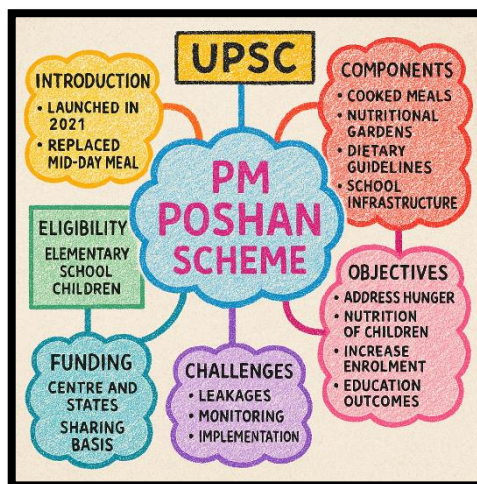
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Why in News?

The Centre increased the PM-POSHAN scheme's material cost by 9.5% from May 1, 2025, to address inflation, adding ₹954 crore burden to enhance student nutrition in government schools.

Description:

- **Renaming of the Scheme:** The scheme was originally called the National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in schools and was renamed to **Pradhan Mantri POSHAN Scheme** in September 2021.
- **Objective:** The scheme aims to improve the **nutritional status** of children and enhance **school participation** among disadvantaged children, especially those from poor families.
- **Target Audience:** It targets children studying in **Government and Government-aided schools** from Balvatika to Class VIII.
- **Nutritional Support in Crisis Areas:** The scheme also provides nutritional support to children in **drought-affected and disaster-prone areas**, including during **summer vacations**.
- **Ministry Involved:** The **Ministry of Education**, Government of India, is the nodal ministry responsible for the implementation of the scheme.



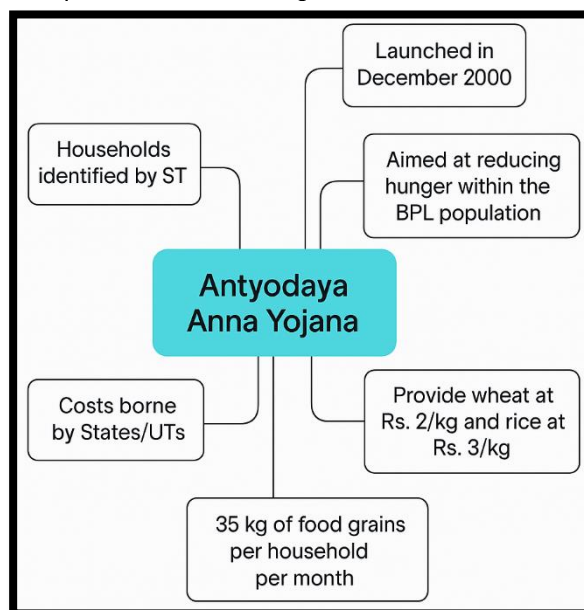
Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme

Why in News?

Haryana government flagged 6.84 lakh families for allegedly giving false income details in Parivar Pehchan Patra to wrongly claim BPL and AAY benefits; deadline to rectify: April 20.

Description:

- **Launch & Objective:** Launched in December 2000, the scheme aims to provide highly subsidized food grains to the poorest of the poor under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- **Subsidy Rate:** Under AAY, beneficiaries receive 35 kg of food grains per month at Rs. 2/kg for wheat, Rs. 3/kg for rice, and Re. 1/kg for coarse grains.
- **Eligibility:** Priority is given to landless agricultural laborers, marginal farmers, rural artisans, daily wage earners, destitutes, primitive tribal groups, and households headed by widows/disabled/elderly/terminally ill with no means of support.
- **Cost Sharing:** While the Central Government supplies food grains, the States/UTs bear the cost of distribution, transportation, and dealer margins.
- **Expansion:** Initially covering 1 crore families, AAY was expanded in 2003-04 and 2004-05 to include 2.5 crore households, targeting around 23% of BPL families.



Below Poverty Line (BPL) in India

Why in News?

Haryana government flagged 6.84 lakh families for allegedly giving false income details in Parivar Pehchan Patra to wrongly claim BPL and AAY benefits; deadline to rectify: April 20.

Description:

- **Definition:** BPL refers to households or individuals whose income or consumption expenditure falls below a certain threshold, making them unable to meet basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education, and healthcare.
- **Estimation Basis:** In India, the poverty line is primarily estimated based on **consumption expenditure**, not income, due to the difficulty of measuring income accurately, especially in rural and informal sectors.
- **Poverty Line Basket (PLB):** The BPL threshold is determined by a **basket of goods and services (PLB)** required to satisfy basic human needs. This includes food, clothing, shelter, and some essential non-food items.
- **Committees for BPL Estimation:** Various committees like **Alagh (1979)**, **Tendulkar (2009)**, and **Rangarajan (2014)** have recommended different methods and thresholds for estimating the BPL population.
- **Usage in Welfare Schemes:** BPL identification is crucial for **targeted delivery of government schemes** like the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**, **MGNREGA**, and **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana**, among others. The **SECC 2011** data has been widely used for this purpose.

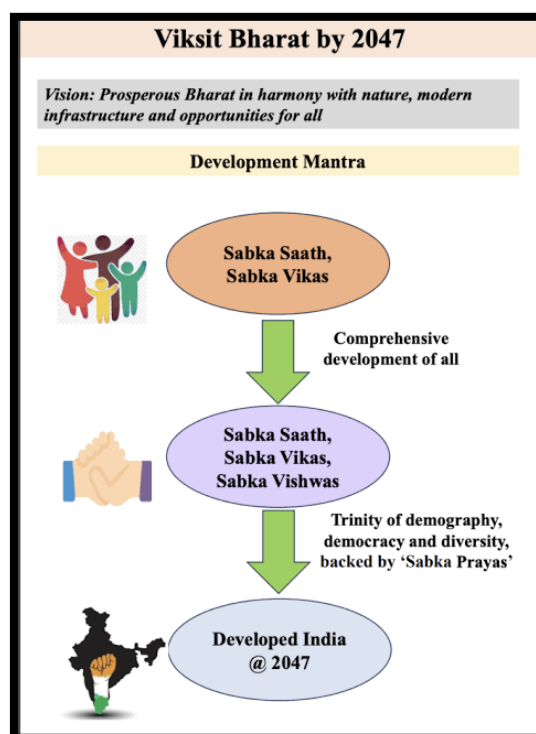
Viksit Bharat:

Why in News?

The Centre's "Viksit Bharat" blueprint focuses on providing safe drinking water directly from taps by improving water treatment, enhancing sustainability, public health, and rejuvenating water bodies across India by 2047.

Description:

- **Vision for 2047:** Viksit Bharat aims to make India a fully developed nation by 2047, when the country celebrates 100 years of independence, driven by modernization, innovation, and technology across all sectors.
- **Collective Responsibility:** The development of Bharat relies on the collective resolve and participation of 140 crore citizens, promoting unity and shared progress.
- **Annual Reforms Target:** PM Modi proposed mandating at least two reforms every year in each of the 3 lakh institutions across India, leading to about **25–30 lakh reforms annually**, accelerating governance and institutional efficiency.
- **Minimizing Government Interference:** A key principle of Viksit Bharat is to **reduce government interference** in people's lives, encouraging self-reliance and individual empowerment.
- **Public Confidence and Swarnim Bharat:** The continuous reforms and empowerment measures aim to build public trust, ultimately realizing the dream of '**Swarnim Bharat**' (Golden India) by 2047.



National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

Why in News?

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been notified as an authority under the Income Tax Act, granting it tax exemption and easing its ₹243.74 crore tax burden.

Description:

- **Establishment:** The NMCG was registered as a society on **12th August 2011** under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and acts as the implementation arm of the **National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)**.
- **Objective:** Its **primary objective** is to **reduce pollution** and **rejuvenate the Ganga River**, covering the **entire Ganges Basin** and all the states through which the river flows, including **Delhi**.
- **Organisational Structure:** It operates under a **two-tier structure**: a **Governing Council** and an **Executive Committee**, headed by the **Director General** (who is an **Additional Secretary** rank officer in the Government of India).
- **Major Initiative - Namami Gange Programme:** Launched in **June 2014** with a budget of **₹20,000 crore**, the **Namami Gange Programme (NGP)** is the flagship initiative under NMCG, focusing on **pollution abatement**, **riverfront development**, **biodiversity conservation**, and **public awareness**.
- **Statutory Status:** **NMCG is not a statutory body**. It functions as a **government program and organisation** under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**, not by a statute of Parliament.

Golden Hour

Why in News?

The Centre told the Supreme Court it will implement a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during the 'golden hour' within a week, after court warnings over delays.

Description:

- **Definition:** The 'Golden Hour' refers to the first **one hour** following a traumatic injury, during which **prompt medical treatment** significantly increases the chances of survival.
- **Legal Basis:** Defined under **Section 2(12-A)** of the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**.
- **Purpose:** To provide **cashless treatment** to road accident victims during the critical golden hour.
- **Statutory Provision:** **Section 162(2)** of the Motor Vehicles Act mandates the government to frame a scheme for cashless treatment during the golden hour.
- **SC Intervention:** The **Supreme Court** mandated the **Centre** to implement the scheme following a **petition by Dr. S Rajaseekaran** (Orthopaedic Surgeon from Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore).
- **Deadline:** The Centre was instructed to implement the scheme **by March 14, 2025**, but delays led to the SC warning of **contempt proceedings**.
- **Recent Update (April 2025):** The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** assured the SC that the scheme would be implemented **within a week**.
- **Objective:** Reduce road accident fatalities by ensuring **immediate, free-of-cost emergency care** across India's road network.

Project Elephant

Why in News?

The Environment Ministry completed Phase-I of a synchronised elephant population census in Northeast India under Project Elephant, surveying 3,452 km of railway lines to identify high-risk zones for mitigation and improve conservation planning for the species' habitats.

Description:

- **Launched:** 1992
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
- **Objective:** To ensure the protection of elephants and their habitats, address issues of human-elephant conflict, and ensure welfare of captive elephants.

Space for Notes:

Key Goals:

- Protect wild elephant populations.
- Conserve elephant habitats and corridors.
- Reduce human-elephant conflicts.
- Support research and veterinary care for elephants.
- Train frontline staff in elephant conservation.

Coverage in India:

- **Elephant Reserves:** 33 notified reserves across India.
- **Elephant Corridors:** 150 identified corridors to ensure safe passage for migration.
- Note: Elephant reserves *lack* independent legal protection unless they overlap with existing Reserve Forests or Protected Areas.

Recent Initiatives:

- **Project REHAB** (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees):
 - Uses bee-fences to deter elephants from entering human settlements.
 - Aims to reduce conflict and retaliatory killings.

Related Conservation Status:

- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I species → highest legal protection.
- **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix I → strictest protection.
- **IUCN Status:** Asian Elephant – Endangered.

India's Elephant Population:

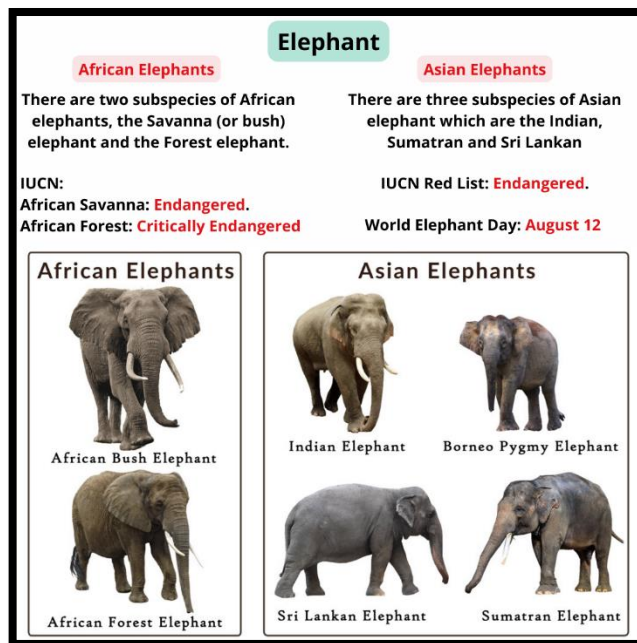
- ~29,964 (as per 2017 census).
- India hosts ~60% of all Asian elephants.
- Highest numbers in Karnataka, followed by Assam and Kerala.
- Sathyamangalam forest division has the highest concentration among protected areas.

Threats:

- Ivory trade.
- Habitat loss and fragmentation.
- Human-elephant conflict.
- Interstate and transnational wildlife trafficking.

Related Global Initiatives:

- **World Elephant Day:** 12th August (awareness).
- **MIKE Programme** (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants):
 - Global initiative tracking elephant mortality trends.
 - Supports conservation in Asia and Africa.


Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - IV (PMGSY-IV)
Why in News?

The Centre has directed states to install QR codes on PMGSY road boards to collect citizen feedback on road quality and maintenance. This move aims to enhance transparency, use AI for inspection analysis, and improve rural road accountability.

Description:
Approval & Period:

- Approved by the Union Cabinet for the period 2024-25 to 2028-29.

Objective:

- Enhance rural connectivity by constructing 62,500 km of new all-weather roads.

Space for Notes:

Coverage:

- To connect **25,000 unconnected habitations**, based on population:
 - **Plains:** Habitations with a population **over 500**.
 - **Northeast & Hill States:** Population **over 250**.
 - **LWE-affected districts:** Population **over 100**.

Expected Outcomes:

- Boost socio-economic development in remote rural areas.
- Improve access to:
 - **Education**
 - **Healthcare**
 - **Markets**
 - **Growth centres**
- Generate **40 crore human-days** of employment.

Background of PMGSY:

- Launched in **2000** as a **100% centrally-sponsored scheme**.
- Aimed at providing **all-weather road connectivity** to unconnected rural habitations.

Funding Pattern (since 2015-16):

- **60:40** cost-sharing between **Centre and State Governments**.

Achievements Till Date:

- Around **8 lakh km** of rural roads were constructed.
- Over **1.8 lakh habitations** connected under various phases of PMGSY.

Agniveer Scheme
Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry will launch a portal to track and support ex-Agniveers' career progression post-service, coordinating with ministries and reserving CAPF vacancies for Agniveer recruits from 2026.

Description:

1. **Short-Term Military Service:** The Agniveer Scheme recruits youth into the Indian Armed Forces for a **four-year service period**, after which only **25% may be retained** for longer tenure.
2. **Eligibility Criteria:** Candidates must be **17.5 to 21 years old** and have passed **Class 10 or 12**, with specific physical and medical standards.
3. **Financial Benefits:** Agniveers receive a **monthly salary** starting at ₹30,000 and increasing to ₹40,000, plus a **Seva Nidhi package of ₹11.71 lakh** (including government contribution and interest) after 4 years.
4. **Post-Service Opportunities:** After completion, Agniveers get **priority in CAPF, police, and allied forces**, and are eligible for **entrepreneurship support, education bridging courses, and private sector jobs**.
5. **Strategic Objective:** The scheme aims to **modernize and youthify** the armed forces while reducing the **pension burden**, and instill **discipline, skills, and patriotism** among Indian youth.

MGNREGA
Why in News?

The Centre, for the first time, capped MGNREGS spending at 60% of the annual outlay for FY26's first half, bringing it under a monthly/quarterly expenditure plan to curb unplanned fiscal pressure.

Space for Notes:

Description:

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a significant social security scheme aimed at improving livelihood security for rural households.
- **Eligibility:** Any Indian citizen over the age of 18, residing in a rural area, and willing to perform unskilled manual labor can apply.
- **Guarantee:** The scheme guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment per household in a financial year.
- **Coverage:** The scheme is applicable across the country, except for areas with 100% urban districts.
- **Implementation:** The Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat play a critical role in approving and prioritizing works to be carried out under the scheme.

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National Security Guard (NSG)
Why in News?

The Madras High Court directed the Centre to consider releasing RTE funds separately from Samagra Shiksha funds, amidst Tamil Nadu's refusal to implement NEP 2020 and pending ₹2,151.59 crore.

Description:

1. **Establishment and Legal Basis:** The NSG was raised in 1984 following Operation Blue Star and Indira Gandhi's assassination. It was formally established under the **National Security Guard Act, 1986**.
2. **Administrative Control:** The Union Ministry of Home Affairs exercises both administrative and operational control over the NSG.

3. **Organisational Structure:** The NSG comprises two main components:
 - **Special Action Group (SAG)** – Army personnel
 - **Special Ranger Group (SRG)** – Drawn from Central Armed Police Forces and State Police
4. **Primary Functions:** NSG handles counter-terrorism, hostage rescue, VIP security, bomb disposal, and post-blast investigation (PBI). It is used only in exceptional situations, not for regular policing.
5. **Headquarters and Motto:**
 - **Headquarters:** New Delhi
 - **Motto:** *Sarvatra Sarvottama Suraksha* (Everywhere with the Best Security)
 - Members are nicknamed "**Black Cats**" due to their uniform.

Space for Notes:

Right to Education (RTE) Act

Why in News?

The Madras High Court directed the Centre to consider releasing RTE funds separately from Samagra Shiksha funds, amidst Tamil Nadu's refusal to implement NEP 2020 and pending ₹2,151.59 crore.

Description:

- **Unnikrishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993):** Supreme Court declared **Right to Education** as a fundamental right under **Article 21**.
- **86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002:**
 - **Article 21A:** Free and compulsory education to children aged **6 to 14 years**.
 - **Article 45 (DPSP):** Early childhood care for children up to age 6.
 - **Article 51A (Fundamental Duties):** Duty of parents to educate children (6–14 years).

Enactment:

- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009:** Enforces **Article 21A**.

Key Provisions of RTE Act:

1. **Free and Compulsory Education:**
 - For ages **6–14** in neighborhood schools.
 - Children above 6 not in school must be admitted to **age-appropriate classes**.
 - **No detention, expulsion, or board exams** till Class VIII.
2. **Curriculum & Recognition:**
 - **Academic authority** to decide curriculum.
 - **Pupil-teacher ratio:** 1:30.
 - Schools must fulfill **infrastructure norms**.
 - **Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)** mandatory.
 - **NCTE** sets teacher qualification norms.
3. **Responsibilities:**
 - **Government & aided schools** to ensure free education.
 - Teachers prohibited from **private tuitions**.
 - **School Management Committees (SMCs)** to monitor functioning and budgeting.
4. **Government Duties:**
 - **Centre:** Advisory council, curriculum, teacher standards.
 - **States:** Implement admission, attendance, infrastructure.
5. **Grievance Redressal:**
 - **NCPCR** and **State Commissions** to protect child rights and act as civil courts.
6. **Financial Aspects:**
 - **Cost shared** by Centre and States.
 - **The Finance Commission** may provide funds to states.

Achievements:

- **Enrollment** increased at upper primary level by **19.4%** (2009–16).
- **Infrastructure** improved: 13% schools fully RTE compliant.
- **25% Reservation** for weaker sections: Over **3.3 million students** (2018–19).

Amendments:

- **2012:**
 - Included **children with disabilities**.
 - **Exempted** religious/minority institutions.
- **2019:**
 - **Abolished no-detention policy**, states decide on its continuation.

UMEED Portal
Why in News?

Portal for Monitoring Waqf Properties: The Ministry of Minority Affairs launched the UMEED portal for real-time monitoring, verification, and geotagging of Waqf properties to increase transparency and public participation in asset management.

Description:

- UMEED stands for Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development.
- It is a centralised digital platform to register Waqf properties across India.
- Launched after the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 received Presidential assent.
- Aim: Enhance transparency and efficient management of Waqf assets.
- Registrations will be done by respective State Waqf Boards.
- All Waqf properties must be registered within six months of portal launch.
- Registration must include full measurements and geotagged location data.
- Properties under women's names will not qualify as Waqf properties.
- Women, children, and economically weaker sections remain beneficiaries.
- A 1–2-month extension may be allowed for technical or valid delays.
- Properties unregistered after the deadline will be marked as disputed and sent to the Waqf Tribunal.

India's National Policy for Senior Citizens
Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is drafting a new senior citizens policy to address demographic changes, ensure elder welfare, digital inclusion, and improve institutional care and protections.

Description:
Policy in Draft Stage:

- The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is drafting a new **National Policy for Senior Citizens**, announced during the 4th meeting of the National Council for Senior Citizens on **June 4, 2025**.
- The policy is being shaped with multi-stakeholder inputs to address evolving demographic and socio-economic needs.

Space for Notes:

Legal and Constitutional Framework:

- **Article 41** of the Constitution mandates state support for the elderly.
- The **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007** legally obliged children/heirs to support elderly parents and mandated maintenance tribunals and old age homes.
- Support also exists through personal laws, **income tax benefits**, and **transport concessions**.

Demographic Context:

- Senior citizen population projected to rise:
 - 8.23% (2011) → 12.16% (2026) → 20% (2047).
- The **Census reference year is March 2027**.

Key Challenges:

- **Healthcare gaps:** Inadequate geriatric care and high costs.
- **Economic insecurity:** Absence of formal pension for many.
- **Social issues:** Isolation, elder abuse, and family neglect.
- **Digital exclusion:** Inaccessibility to tech-based services.
- **Infrastructure:** Uneven and subpar senior care facilities.

Focus Areas of the New Policy:

- **Digital inclusion** for accessing pensions, healthcare, etc.
- **Institutionalising NGO roles** in elder care and policymaking.
- **Grievance redressal mechanisms** for elder abuse.
- **Minimum standards** for care homes and facilities.
- **Community engagement** and intergenerational bonding.

Ongoing Schemes Reviewed:

- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):** 5+ lakh seniors given assisted-living aids.
- **Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSRc):** Supports 708 NGOs providing elder care services.
- Both fall under the **National Action Plan for Welfare of Senior Citizens (2020)**.

National Polio Surveillance Project (NPSP)
Why in News?

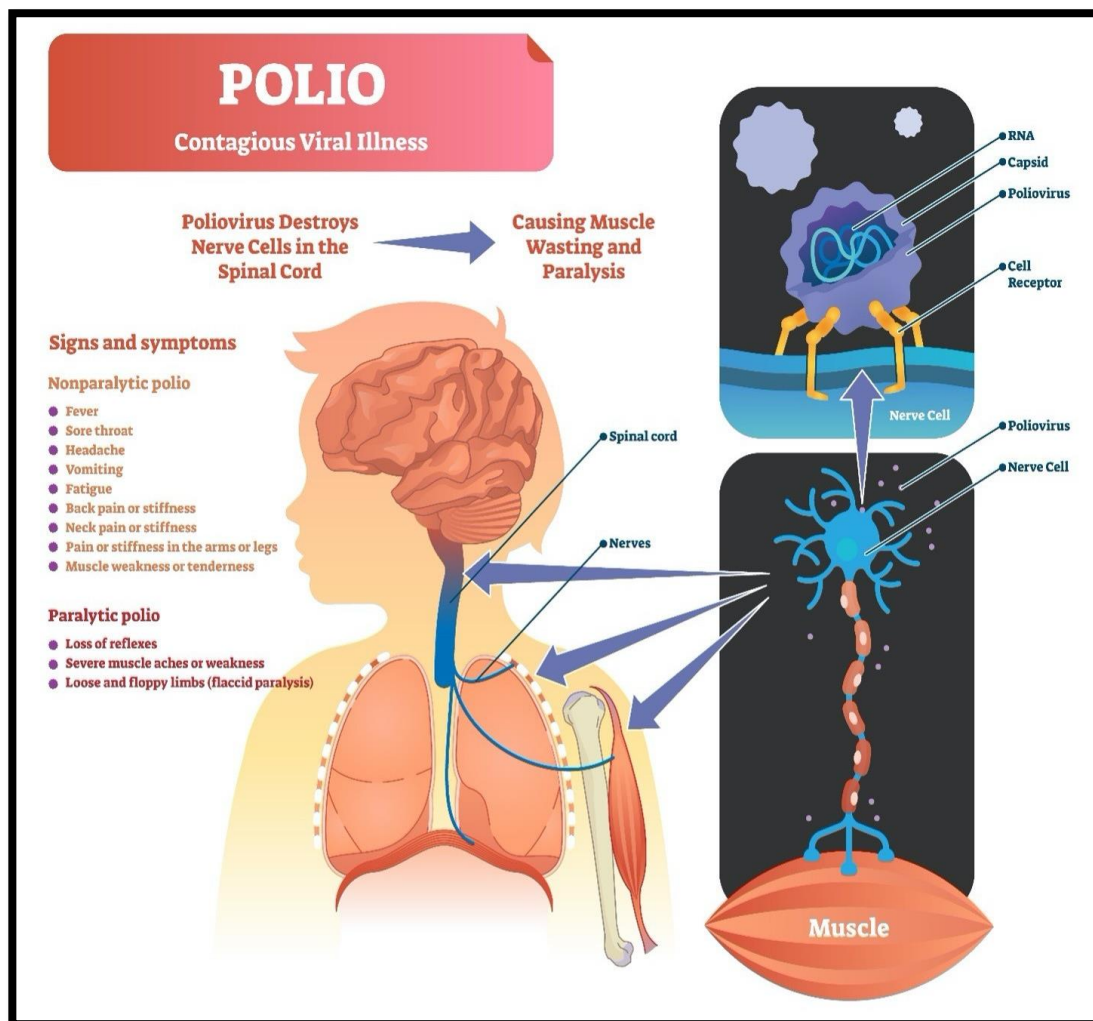
The Indian government plans to gradually wind down WHO-run National Polio Surveillance Network centres, raising concerns among experts about premature action amid ongoing global polio threats.

Description:

1. **Launch:** The **National Polio Surveillance Project (NPSP)** was launched in **1997** as a joint initiative between the **Government of India** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to monitor and eradicate polio.
2. **Core Function:** The NPSP focuses on the **surveillance of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP)**, which is a key indicator for detecting potential polio cases.
3. **Polio-Free Status:** The project played a critical role in India's **declaration as polio-free in 2014** by supporting widespread immunization and rapid response to outbreaks.
4. **Integration (2025):** In **2025**, NPSP's operations were integrated into the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** under the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)** to strengthen overall disease surveillance.
5. **Expanded Role:** The Ministry of Health has proposed expanding the NPSP's scope to **track emerging infectious diseases**, enhancing India's preparedness for future health threats.

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National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

Why in News?

The Centre approved ₹2,006.40 crore aid for Himachal Pradesh to support recovery from 2023 monsoon damage, including cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides, through the National Disaster Response Fund.

Description:

1. **Legal Basis:** Defined under Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
2. **Purpose:** Meant to cover emergency response, relief, and rehabilitation expenses due to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.
3. **Relation to SDRF:** Supplements the State Disaster Response Funds (SDRF) in case of severe disasters, if SDRF funds are insufficient.
4. **Account Location:** Placed under the “Public Account” of India under “Reserve funds not bearing interest” – hence, no parliamentary approval needed for withdrawals.
5. **Eligible Disasters:**
 - **Natural:** Cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, cold wave, frost.
 - **Man-made:** Terrorist attacks, chemical, biological, and nuclear disasters (as notified by GoI).

6. Funding Procedure:

- States submit a **memorandum** showing sector-wise damage.
- The **Central Government** assesses and allocates additional funds accordingly.

7. Usage Scope:

- Meant **only for immediate relief** (not for reconstruction, preparedness, or mitigation).
- No compensation** for property or crop loss.

8. Financing Sources:

- Funded via **cess** on excise/customs duty on specified items.
- Additional funds come from **general budgetary resources**.

9. Governing Authority: Decisions on NDRF usage are taken by the **National Executive Committee (NEC)** under **NDMA**.

10. Audit: Annually audited by the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**.

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FASTag Reforms – 2024 & 2025

Why in News?

The Rs 3,000 FASTag Annual Pass, effective from August 15, 2025, offers private vehicles hassle-free travel on National Highways and Expressways for one year or 200 trips. It reduces toll costs and can be activated on existing FASTags via official apps.

Description:

1. 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' Initiative:

- Launched by:** National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)
- Date:** Announced in **January 2024**
- Objective:** To prevent misuse of FASTag by:
 - Linking multiple FASTags to a **single vehicle**
 - Using a single FASTag for **multiple vehicles**
- Mandate:** All users were required to complete **KYC (Know Your Customer)** verification by **January 31, 2024**, failing which FASTags would be **deactivated**.
- Background:** Launched after reports of **KYC violations** and **RBI norm breaches**, affecting the National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) system.

2. FASTag Annual Pass Scheme:

- Announced by:** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- Date:** Announced on **June 19, 2025**; effective from **August 15, 2025**
- Applicable to:** Only **non-commercial private vehicles** (cars, jeeps, vans)
- Cost:** ₹3,000 per vehicle
- Validity:** Valid for **1 year** or **200 toll trips**, whichever comes first
- Benefit:**
 - Reduces average toll cost to **₹15 per trip**
 - Estimated **annual savings of ₹7,000** per user
- Platform for Activation:** Can be activated via the **Rajmargyatra** mobile app or **NHAI website**
- Note:** Not valid on **State Highways, municipal roads**, or for **commercial vehicles**. Misuse leads to **immediate deactivation**.

Space for Notes:

How Electronic RFID Toll Collection Works

Step 1

Motorist purchases an RFID transponder or RFID tag and attaches it to the vehicles windshield.



Step 2

As the vehicle approaches the tollbooth, the RFID reader in the tollbooth sends a radio waves that activates the windshield-mounted RFID tag. The activated tag sends vehicle information to the RFID reader.

Step 3

The RFID reader sends the vehicle information to the lane controller. The lane controller, which is part of a local area network, transmits the vehicle information to a central computer. The central computer subtracts the toll from the motorist's account. If the vehicle does not have an RFID tag, a high-speed camera takes a picture of the license plate and the computer prints a violation notice, which is mailed to the motorist.

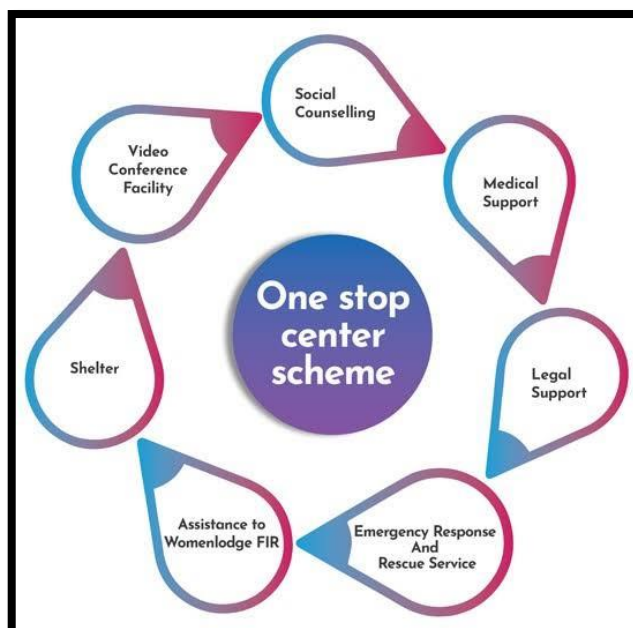
One Stop Centre Scheme

Why in News?

Nearly a decade after their launch, One Stop Centres have expanded to 802 locations, aiding women facing violence. Indore's centre, among the busiest, reflects increased awareness and demand for integrated legal, medical, shelter, and counselling services funded under the Nirbhaya Fund.

Description:

- Ministry & Type:** It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).
- Objective:** Aims to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, in both private and public spaces, under one roof.
- Funding:** Entirely funded through the Nirbhaya Fund, with 100% central financial assistance.
- Target Group:**
 - Supports all women and girls below 18 years of age, irrespective of caste, class, religion, region, or marital status.
 - For minors, OSCs are linked with institutions under JJ Act, 2000 and POCSO Act, 2012.



5. **Services Provided:** Includes emergency response, medical aid, legal and police assistance, psycho-social counselling, temporary shelter, and video conferencing for court hearings.

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Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan, 2025

Why in News?

The **Adi Karmayogi initiative** of the Tribal Affairs Ministry has begun training officials and volunteers through participatory exercises like role-play and group tasks to build **20 lakh “change leaders”** in tribal villages, aiming at last-mile scheme delivery and **Village Vision 2030**.

Description:

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- **Date:** 20 August 2025
- **Theme:** Rebuild governance from the bottom up, guided by **tribal values** and led by local leaders

Objectives:

- Empower **tribal communities** and promote **responsive, people-centric governance**
- Build a network of **20 lakh change leaders** across:
 - 1 lakh villages
 - 550 districts
 - 30 States/UTs

Key Components:

1. Institutional Mechanisms:

- **Adi Sewa Kendra:**
 - To be set up in all tribal villages
 - Officers + community members dedicate **1–2 hours fortnightly (Adi Sewa Samay)**
 - Address local issues, mentor youth, support governance
- **Governance Lab Workshops:**
 - Multi-level workshops (state → district → village)
 - Engage departments to **co-create solutions** for tribal development

- **Tribal Village Action Plan:**
 - Jointly developed with villagers
 - Vision document for Tribal Village Vision 2030
 - Aligned with SDGs + national development goals

2. Volunteer Engagement

- **Adi Sahyogi:** Teachers, doctors, professionals → mentor & mobilize communities
- **Adi Saathi:** SHGs, NRLM members, tribal elders, youth, local leaders → outreach & implementation

3. Capacity Building

- Training for tribal youth, women, leaders in:
 - Governance
 - Problem-solving
 - Social mobilization

Significance:

- Part of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh
- Contributes to **Viksit Bharat 2047** vision by:
 - Empowering tribal communities
 - Ensuring responsive, inclusive governance
 - Fostering local leadership
- Strengthens flagship schemes:
 - Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan
 - PM-JANMAN (Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)
 - National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission

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International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Why in News?

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) plans to establish 17 centres of excellence globally and a Global Capability Centre (GCC) in India, envisioned as a “Silicon Valley for solar,” to boost solar research, human resource training, and innovation.

Description:

- **Type:** Intergovernmental organization.
- **Launched:** 2015 (India + France) during UNFCCC COP21, Paris.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana (at National Institute of Solar Energy, NISE).
- **Vision:** “Let us together make the sun brighter.”
- **Mission:** “Every home will have a light at home.”

‘Towards 1000’ Strategy (by 2030):

1. Mobilize **USD 1000 billion** for solar energy.
2. Provide energy access to **1000 million people**.
3. Install **1000 GW** solar capacity.
4. Avoid **1000 million tonnes CO₂** emissions annually.

Objectives:

- Facilitate deployment of **1000 GW** of solar capacity globally by 2030.
- Mobilize **US \$1 trillion+** for solar projects.
- Develop innovative financing & reduce cost of solar energy.
- Encourage **R&D** & capacity building.
- Make solar **mainstream** in energy mix.

Priority Areas:

1. **Analytics & Advocacy**
2. **Capacity Building**
3. **Programmatic Support**
4. **Readiness & Enabling Activities**

Governance Structure:

- **ISA Assembly** → Apex decision-making body (all members).
- **Steering Committee** → Strategic guidance & oversight.
- **Secretariat** → Administrative arm.
- **Director General** → Head of ISA (4 years, re-electable).

Membership:

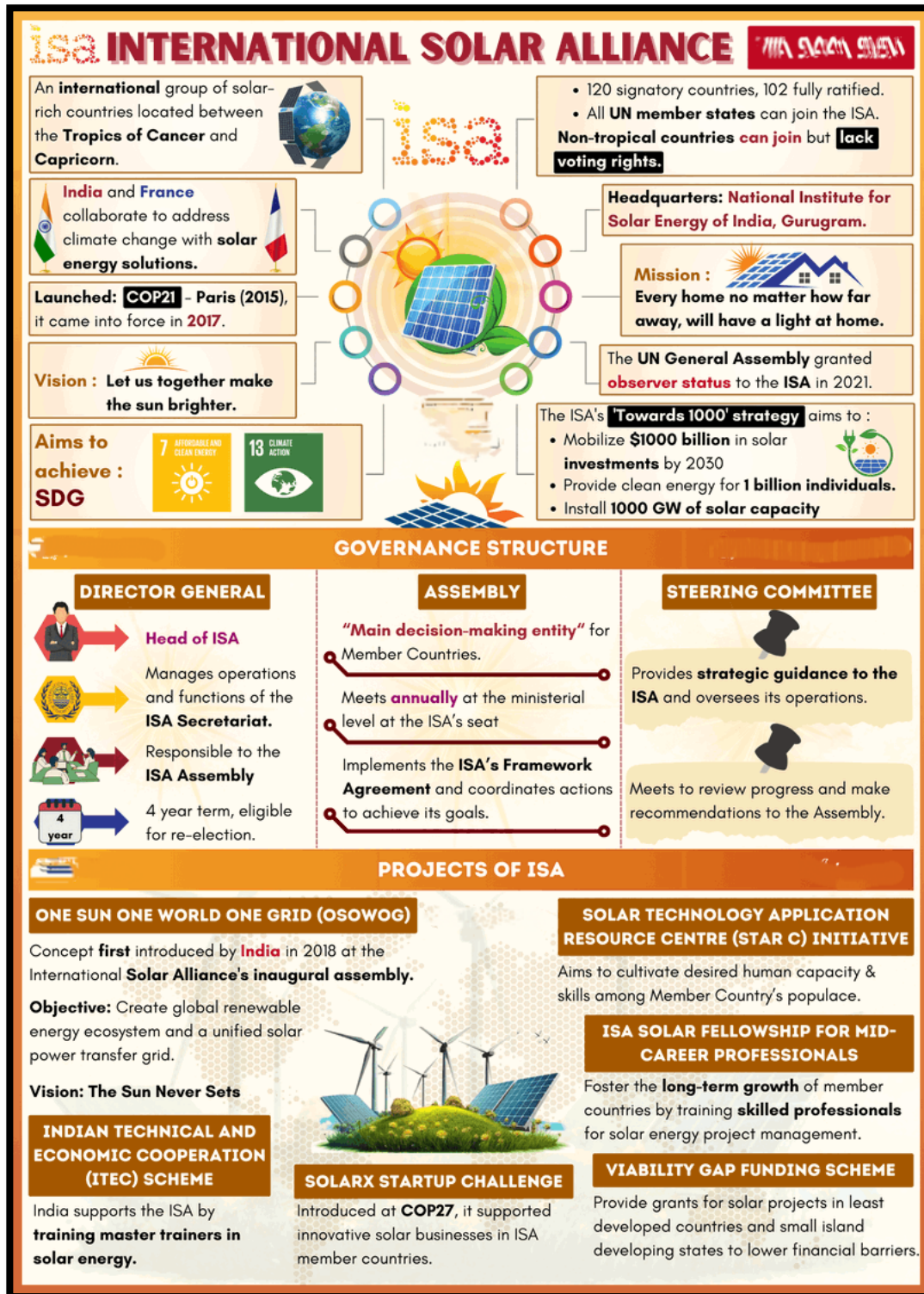
- Initially → Countries **between Tropic of Cancer & Capricorn**.
- **2020 Amendment** → All UN member states eligible.
- Present: **110+ signatories**, ~90 full members (ratified).

Key Initiatives / Projects:

- **STAR-C** (Solar Technology Application Resource Centre) → Capacity building hubs.
- **ITEC Scheme** (India-supported training at NISE).
- **ISA Solar Fellowship** → For mid-career professionals.
- **One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)** → India’s 2018 initiative for global solar power grid.
- **Mini-grids, Solar pumps, Solar rooftops, Solar street lights, Water heaters.**
- **Affordable Finance at Scale** → Work with Green Climate Fund, World Bank IFC, etc.

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Next-Generation GST Reform (2025)

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged states to cooperate in implementing **Next-Generation GST Reforms** before Diwali 2025. The proposal seeks to simplify GST into **two slabs (5% and 18%)** plus a 40% sin goods rate, benefiting the poor, middle class, and businesses.

Description:

- Introduced: 1st July 2017.
- Based on **Vijay Kelkar Task Force (2002)** recommendations.

- Replaced multiple indirect taxes (excise, VAT, service tax) → “One Nation, One Tax” system.
- Current Structure (pre-2025 reforms): **5%, 12%, 18%, 28%** + special rates (0.25% for diamonds, 3% for gold/jewellery).
- **Challenges:**
 - Multi-slab complexity.
 - Inverted duty structures (input tax > output tax).
 - Compliance burden for MSMEs.

Next Gen GST:

Blueprint 2025:

Announced by PM from Red Fort (15th Aug 2025) on GST's 8th anniversary.

- **New GST Rates:** 5% & 18%.
- **Launch Timeline:** Before Diwali 2025.
- **Original GST launch:** 1st July 2017.
- **Pillars of Reform:** Structural, Rate Rationalisation, Ease of Business.
- **Article:** GST Council – Art. 279A.
- **Compensation Cess ends:** March 2026.

Pillars of Reform:

1. **Structural Reform** – Fixes inverted duty structure, smooth ITC flow, boosts Atmanirbhar Bharat.
2. **Rate Rationalisation** – Four slabs reduced to two (5% & 18%); essentials → 5%, durables → 18%.
3. **Ease of Living & Business** – Tech-enabled compliance (pre-filled returns, automated refunds), simpler registration for MSMEs/startups.

Inclusive Growth Dimensions:

- **Common Man:** Cheaper essentials (food, household goods).
- **Women:** Reduced tax on personal care items.
- **Students:** Lower tax on educational tech & materials.
- **Farmers:** Lower rates on agri-inputs/equipment.
- **Middle Class:** Cheaper consumer durables.

GST Council & Federal Aspect:

- **GST Council** = Constitutional body (Art. 279A).
- **Composition:** Union Finance Minister + State Finance Ministers.
- **Decision-making:** **75% weighted vote** (Centre = 1/3, States = 2/3).
- Reflects **Cooperative Federalism**.
- Reforms under review by the **Group of Ministers (GoM)** before final approval.

Economic Impact Expected:

- **Consumption boost** (Laffer Curve effect).
- **MSMEs** → lower costs + formalisation.
- **Exports & Manufacturing** → more competitive.
- **Consumer Relief** → higher purchasing power.
- Space for reforms created after the end of GST Compensation Cess (March 2026).

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approved four new semiconductor projects worth ₹4,594 crore under the ₹76,000-crore India Semiconductor Mission, to be set up in Odisha, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh, enhancing India's chip manufacturing and advanced packaging capabilities.

Description:

- **Nature:** Specialized and independent **Business Division** within the **Digital India Corporation**.
- **Aim:** Build a vibrant **semiconductor & display ecosystem** to make India a **global hub** for electronics manufacturing and design.
- **Powers:** Has **full administrative & financial powers** to catalyse India's semiconductor ecosystem in **manufacturing, packaging, and design**.
- **Advisory Board:** Includes **leading global experts** in the semiconductor field.
- **Nodal Agency:** For schemes under the **Semicon India Programme**.

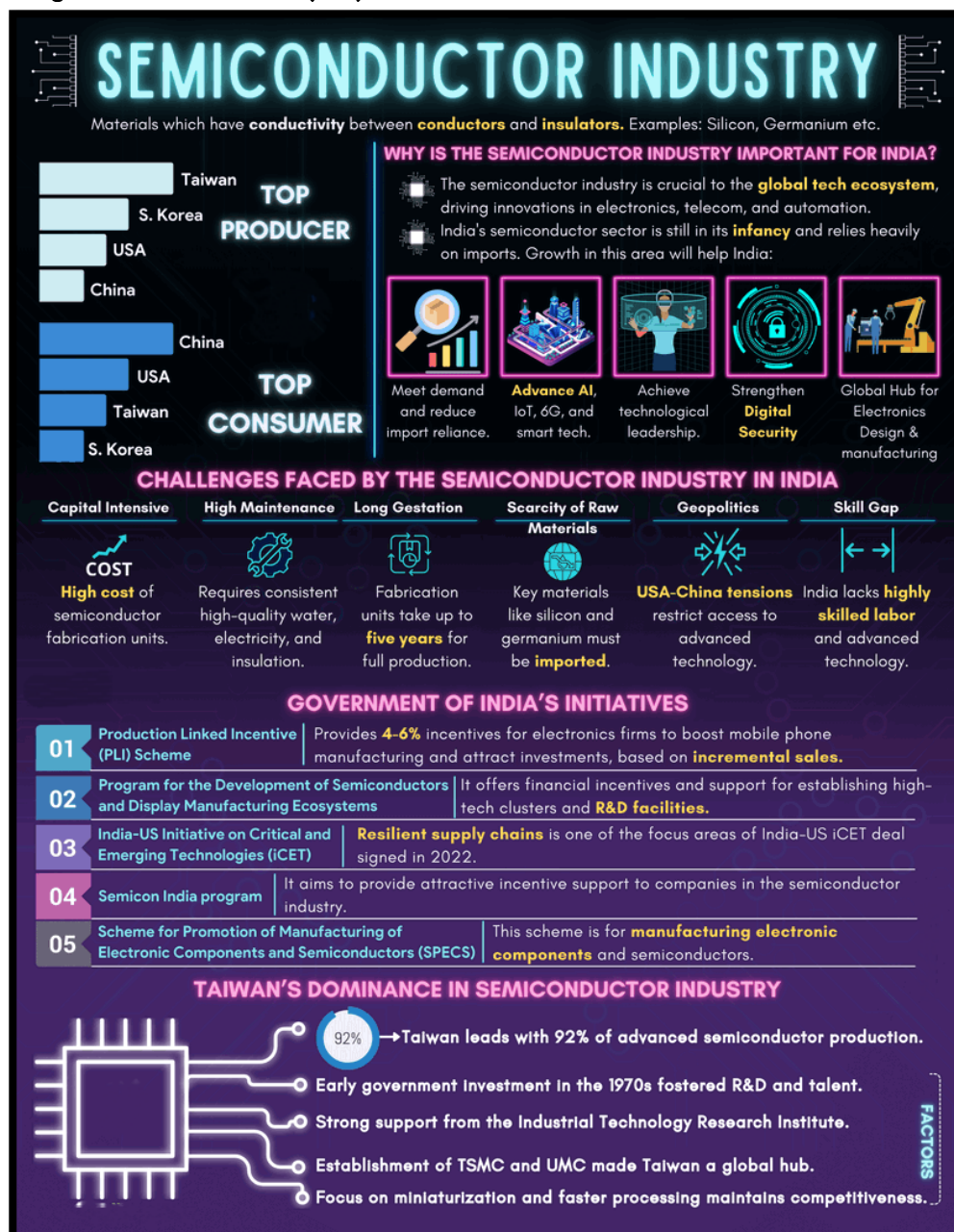
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Semicon India Programme:

- **Launch:** 2021, under Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).
- **Total Financial Outlay:** ₹76,000 crore.
- **Objective:**
 - Develop a sustainable semiconductor & display ecosystem in India.
 - Provide financial support to companies in semiconductors, display manufacturing, and design.
 - Promote indigenous Intellectual Property (IP) generation.
 - Encourage Technology Transfer (ToT).

Four Schemes under Semicon India Programme:

1. Scheme for setting up Semiconductor Fabs in India.
2. Scheme for setting up Display Fabs in India.
3. Scheme for setting up:
 - Compound Semiconductors
 - Silicon Photonics
 - Sensors Fab
 - Semiconductor Assembly, Testing, Marking & Packaging (ATMP) / OSAT facilities.
4. Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.

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Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approved ₹30,000 crore compensation to three PSU oil marketing companies for LPG subsidies and a targeted ₹300 per cylinder subsidy (up to nine refills yearly) for PMUY beneficiaries, aiming to offset high global LPG prices.

Description:

Launch: May 2016

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG)

Type: Central Sector Scheme

Objective:

- To provide clean cooking fuel (LPG) to rural and deprived households.
- To reduce health hazards from traditional cooking fuels like firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes.
- To promote women empowerment and protect the environment.

Key Features:

1. Financial Assistance:

- ₹1,600 per 14.2 kg LPG connection.
- ₹1,150 per 5 kg LPG connection.

2. Additional Benefits:

- First LPG refill **free of cost**.
- Free stove (hot plate).
- Deposit-free connection.

3. Priority States:

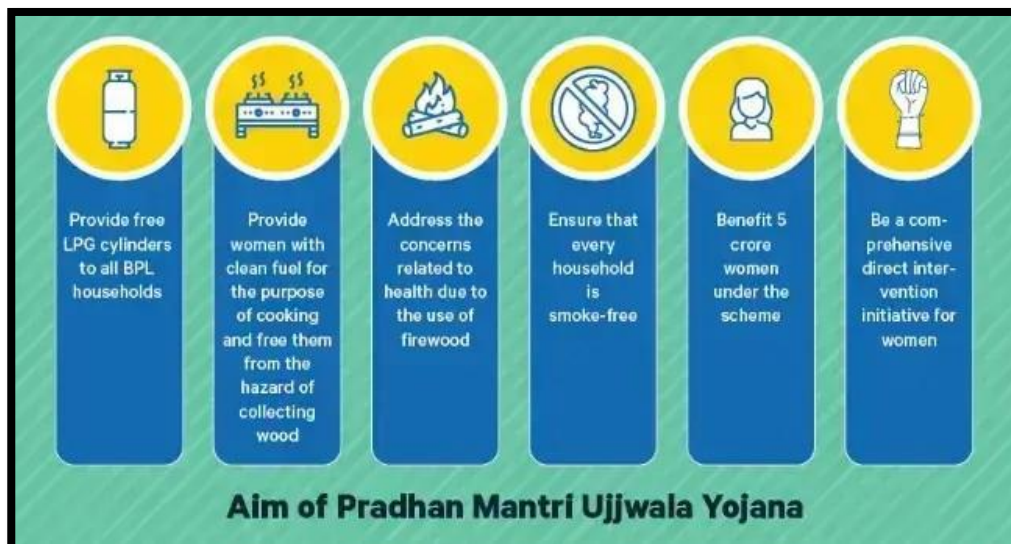
- States with **lower LPG coverage** (as of 1 Jan 2016) get preference.

4. Exclusion:

- Male members of a household **cannot apply**.

Eligibility under Ujjwala 2.0?

- **Adult woman** from a poor household without an LPG connection.
- Belonging to any of these:
 - SECC 2011 list.
 - SC/ST households.
 - PMAY (Gramin) beneficiaries.
 - Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries.
 - Forest dwellers.
 - Most Backward Classes (MBC).
 - Tea and Ex-tea garden tribes.
 - People living in river islands.
- If not in the above list – can apply via **14-point self-declaration** of poverty.



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Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education (MERITE) Scheme

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet approved the MERITE scheme to enhance quality, equity, and governance in 275 technical institutes, with ₹4,200 crore funding (2025-30), including World Bank assistance, aiming to boost research, innovation, skilling, and employability in technical education.

Description:

- Approved by: **Union Cabinet** (8 Aug 2025).
- Implemented by: **Ministry of Education**.
- Duration: **2025-26 to 2029-30** (5 years).
- **Central Sector Scheme**.

Objective:

- Improve **quality, equity, and governance** in technical education across all **States & UTs**.
- Aligned with **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

Coverage:

- **275 technical institutions:**
 - **175 Engineering Institutions** (incl. NITs, State Engg. Institutions, Affiliating Technical Universities)
 - **100 Polytechnics**.
- **7.5 lakh students** to benefit.
- **State/UT Technical Education Departments** also supported.

Key Benefits & Expected Outcomes:

1. **Digitalisation strategies** for States/UTs.
2. Guidelines for **multidisciplinary programs** in technical courses.
3. Improved **learning & employability skills**.
4. Higher **transition rates** across student groups.
5. Stronger **research & innovation ecosystem**.
6. Better **quality assurance & governance**.
7. Increased **accreditation** of institutions.
8. **Industry-aligned curricula & blended learning** courses.
9. **Future academic administrator's** development, esp. women faculty.

Implementation Mechanism:

- Funds transferred via **Central Nodal Agency**.
- **IITs, IIMs, AICTE, NBA** to play key roles.
- Focus areas:
 - **Internships & industry linkage**.
 - **Faculty Development Programs**.
 - **Research hubs & innovation centers**.
 - **Skill labs, maker spaces, and language workshops**.

Background & Policy Link:

- Rooted in **NEP 2020 reforms**:
 - Curriculum revamp, pedagogy, and assessment reform.
 - Promoting **multidisciplinary** in technical education.
 - Addressing **gender gaps & reducing digital divide**.
- Collaborative design with **World Bank & State/UT feedback**.

National Task Force on Student Mental Health & Suicide Prevention

Why in News?

Supreme Court of India decided to constitute a National Task Force (NTF) to address mental health challenges among students and prevent suicides. Trigger: NCRB data (2022) – 13,000+ student suicides; consistent upward trend.

Description:

- **Type:** Supreme Court-appointed multidisciplinary expert body (ad-hoc).
- **Mandate:**
 - Identify **primary & secondary factors** causing student suicides.
 - Recommend **policy reforms** for mental wellness.
 - Examine **institutional failures** in counselling, grievance redressal, and outreach.
 - Suggest measures under **NEP 2020 & Mental Healthcare Act 2017** framework.

Composition:

- **Fields represented:** Psychology, education, public health, sociology, law.
- Members include experts & practitioners with experience in **youth mental health & education systems**.

Key Factors Identified:

1. **Academic Pressure** – competitive, exam-centric system; rote learning; unrealistic expectations.
2. **Discrimination** – caste, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation.
3. **Financial Stress** – high fees, education loans.
4. **Ragging & Sexual Harassment** – weak enforcement of UGC anti-ragging rules.
5. **Lack of Emotional Support** – absence of mentorship, peer groups, trained counsellors.
6. **Digital Fatigue & Social Media Pressures** – cyberbullying, constant comparison.

Institutional & Social Gaps:

- **Schools/colleges:** Few trained counsellors, stigma around mental health.
- **Education system:** Focus on marks over life skills/resilience.
- **Families:** Lack of awareness of early signs of depression/anxiety.
- **Society:** Decline of community support systems.

Possible Policy Implications:

- Integration of **mental health education** in curriculum.
- **Mandatory counselling units** in schools & higher education institutions.
- Early intervention programmes from **middle school**.
- Mental health parameters in **accreditation & ranking** of institutions.
- **National Student Wellbeing Index** for periodic monitoring.

First AI-Powered Anganwadi Centre in India
Why in News?

On August 2, 2025, Maharashtra inaugurated India's first AI-powered Anganwadi Centre in Waddhamna village, Nagpur district.

Part of the Mission Bal Bharari pilot initiative.

Description:**What is an Anganwadi Centre?**

- Anganwadi = "courtyard shelter"
- Grassroots-level **childcare and mother care centres** under the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme**.
- Services offered:
 - Supplementary nutrition
 - Immunization
 - Health check-ups
 - Pre-school non-formal education
 - Health & nutrition education

What Makes This Anganwadi Centre Special?

- Integrates **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Virtual Reality (VR)** for early childhood learning.
- **AI Dashboards** track learning progress and personalise content.
- **VR Headsets** used for interactive learning: poems, songs, and foundational literacy/numeracy.
- Ensures **technology-led experiential learning** for rural children.

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Objectives of the AI Initiative:

1. Bridge the **rural-urban divide** in early education.
2. Promote **interactive, joyful, and adaptive learning**.
3. Empower Anganwadi workers with **smart classroom tools**.
4. Improve **learning outcomes** for children aged 0–6 years.

Training of Anganwadi Workers:

- Workers are trained to operate:
 - AI-enabled teaching systems
 - Smart classroom interfaces
 - Student progress dashboards

Expansion Plan:

- 40 more AI-powered Anganwadis are planned in **Nagpur district**.
- Scalable model: potential blueprint for other states.

Key Feature	Details
Launched in	Waddhamna village, Nagpur, Maharashtra
Launched by	Maharashtra Govt under Mission Bal Bharari
First of its kind in	India
Tech Used	AI, VR, Smart Dashboards
Age Group Covered	0–6 years (Preschool/ICDS)
Related Scheme	Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
Target	Early childhood education in rural areas

Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPCI)
Why in News?

Three months after launching the ₹4,150 crore EV localisation scheme (SPMEPCI) to attract global automakers like Tesla, no applications have been received, as companies await foreign trade agreements and have expressed no demand for policy modifications, officials said.

Description:

- Notified: 15 March 2024.
- Implementing Ministry: Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- Objective: Boost domestic manufacturing of electric passenger vehicles (EVs), attract global investment, and support India's net-zero and Make in India goals.

Key Features:

1. **Reduced Import Duties:**
 - Up to 8,000 electric 4-wheelers (CBUs) are imported annually at **15% duty** (existing: 70–100%).
 - Minimum CIF value: \$35,000 per unit.
 - Validity: 5 years from approval.
2. **Investment Requirement:**
 - Minimum investment: **₹4,150 crore**.
 - Manufacturing operations must start within **3 years**.
 - Eligible investment: plant, machinery, ER&D, new buildings (≤10% of committed investment), charging infrastructure (≤5%).
3. **Domestic Value Addition (DVA):**
 - **25% DVA** within 3 years.
 - **50% DVA** within 5 years.
4. **Compliance & Safeguards:**
 - Bank guarantee: total duty foregone or ₹4,150 crore, whichever is higher.
 - Guarantee valid throughout scheme tenure.
5. **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - Global automotive revenue ≥ ₹10,000 crore.
 - Minimum global fixed asset investment ≥ ₹3,000 crore.

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Supporting EV Ecosystem Schemes:

- **PM E-DRIVE:** Incentivises e-2W, e-3W, e-buses, e-trucks, and charging infrastructure.
- **PLI-Auto:** Production Linked Incentives for Advanced Automotive Technology.
- **PLI for Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC):** Establish 50 GWh battery manufacturing.
- **FAME-II:** Incentivises domestic EV and component manufacturing.
- **PM e-Bus Sewa – PSM:** Supports deployment of 38,000+ electric buses.

Significance:

- Enhances India's green mobility and EV manufacturing ecosystem.
- Aligns with **Make in India** and climate goals.
- Promotes job creation and local value addition.
- Attracts global EV manufacturers while safeguarding domestic economic benefits.

ECINET (Election Commission of India Network)
Why in News?

The Election Commission launched a new e-sign feature on ECINet requiring Aadhaar-based OTP verification for voter registration, deletion, or correction, aiming to prevent fraudulent additions or deletions, following cases like Aland (Karnataka) and Rajura (Maharashtra).

Description:

- A **single-point digital platform** developed by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**.
- Aims to integrate and reorient **40+ mobile and web applications** of ECI into one unified interface.
- Launched during **June 2025 bye-elections** in Kerala, Gujarat, Punjab, and West Bengal.

Key Features:

- **One-stop solution** for electors, officials, political parties & civil society.
- Subsumes apps like: Voter Helpline App, Voter Turnout App, cVIGIL, Suvidha 2.0, ESMS, Saksham, KYC App.
- **Simplified UX/UI:** No need for multiple logins.
- Access via **desktop or smartphone**.
- Data entered **only by authorized ECI officials** → ensures accuracy.

Legal Backing:

- All data aligned with:
 - Representation of People Act, 1950 & 1951
 - Registration of Electoral Rules, 1960
 - Conduct of Election Rules, 1961
 - Instructions issued by ECI

Significance:

- Reduces **duplication and fraudulent practices**.
- Improves **transparency, efficiency, and trust** in electoral processes.
- Part of **Digital India & electoral reforms agenda**.

Sawalkote Hydropower Project
Why in News?

The Sawalkote dam project on the Chenab River in Jammu & Kashmir, part of the Indus system, is back in focus as India seeks environmental clearance for its 1,865 MW hydropower project. The move comes after the Indus Waters Treaty went into abeyance, making the project a strategic priority.

Description:
Basic Details:

- **Capacity:** 2,185 MW (run-of-the-river project).
- **Location:** Chenab River, Ramban District, Jammu & Kashmir (UT).
- **Status:** Proposed; **largest hydroelectric project in J&K** and among the biggest in North India.

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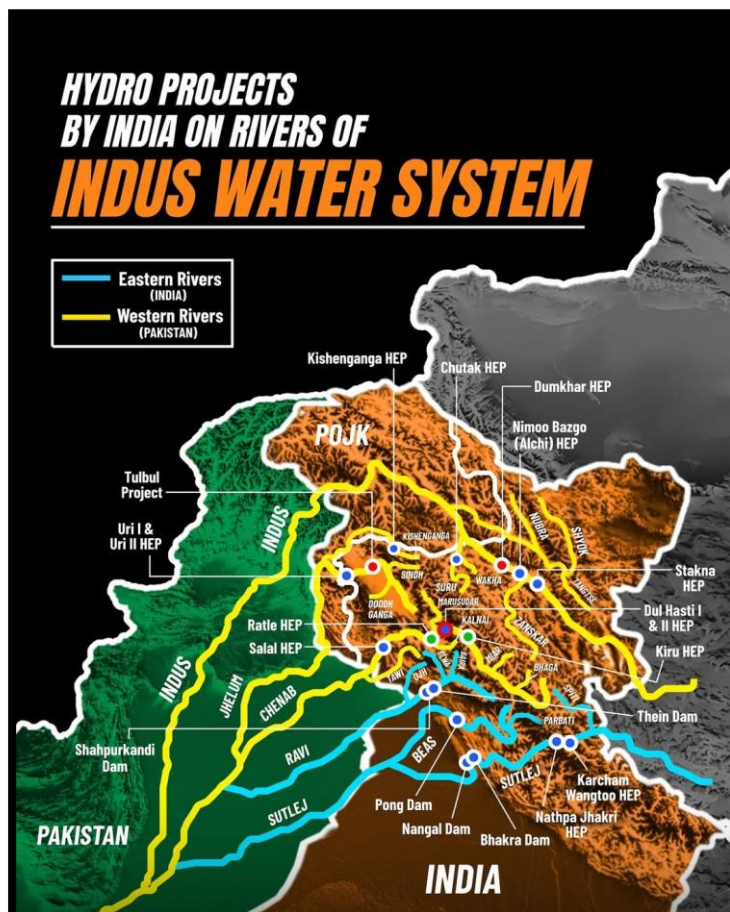
- **Implementing Agencies:**
 - National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd.
 - Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC).
- **Estimated Cost:** ₹22,704 crore.
- **Dam Type:** 192.5-metre roller-compacted concrete gravity dam.
- **Annual Power Generation (Expected):** ~7,000 million units.

Significance:

- **Power security:** Major boost to power availability in J&K, especially in winters.
- **Energy surplus:** Potential to make J&K **power-surplus**, with exports to the national grid.
- **Water management:** Regulates Chenab's flow → better agriculture & domestic supply.
- **Flood mitigation:** Helps reduce downstream flood risks.

Link with Indus Waters Treaty (1960):

- **Treaty Parties:** India & Pakistan; mediated by the World Bank.
- **River Allocation:**
 - Eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej): Exclusive use by India.
 - Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab): Primarily for Pakistan.
- **India's Rights on Western Rivers:**
 - Limited, **non-consumptive use** (domestic, navigation, flood control, irrigation within limits, hydropower).
 - Hydropower allowed **without altering flow**.
- **Water Share:** Pakistan ~70%, India ~30%.
- **Dispute Resolution Mechanism:**
 - Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) – first level.
 - Neutral Expert – for unresolved technical disputes.
 - Court of Arbitration – for legal disputes.



Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

Why in News?

Nearly a year after its launch, Tamil Nadu has not implemented the expanded Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY for citizens aged 70 and above. Disagreements with the Centre over coverage and financial burden have stalled the scheme, leaving around 43 lakh seniors currently unable to access ₹5 lakh annual treatment benefits.

Description:

- Part of **Ayushman Bharat** (launched on 23 Sept 2018, Ranchi).
- Flagship health assurance scheme of GoI → aims at **Universal Health Coverage**.
- Designed as per **National Health Policy 2017**; aligned with **SDGs** ("leave no one behind").

Key Features

- World's largest **government-funded health assurance scheme**.
- Coverage: **₹5 lakh per family / year** → for *secondary & tertiary* hospitalization.
- Entitlement: ~12 crore poor & vulnerable families (~55 crore people).
- Based on **SECC-2011 (rural & urban deprivation/occupation)**; also covers erstwhile RSBY families.
- **Cashless & paperless** access at empanelled public/private hospitals across India.
- No cap on family size, age, gender; **pre-existing diseases covered from Day-1**.
- Benefits portable pan-India; includes 3-day pre & 15-day post hospitalization.
- ~1,900+ procedures covered (surgery, ICU, implants, diagnostics, drugs, physician fees).
- Public hospitals reimbursed at par with private.

Beneficiaries & Eligibility:

- Bottom 40% of Indian population.
- Identified via **SECC 2011** deprivation & occupational criteria.
- No enrollment fee / premium for beneficiaries.
- All senior citizens aged 70 or above, regardless of economic status, are eligible for free medical treatment up to ₹5 lakh under this scheme. (added in 2024)

Funding & Implementation:

- Fully funded by GoI; cost shared **Centre: State = 60:40** (90:10 for NE & Himalayan; 100% for UTs).
- Implemented by **National Health Authority (NHA)**.
- States adopt **Insurance Model / Trust Model / Mixed Model**.

Related Initiatives:

- **Ayushman Bharat – Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs)** → 1.5 lakh centres for primary healthcare.
- **PM-JAY MA (Mukhya Mantri Amrutam Yojana)** – Gujarat-specific integration.
- **National Digital Health Mission** – to integrate health records.

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme & PLI 2.0

Why in News?

The Union government has reopened applications (Sept 15–Oct 14) for the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods to boost manufacturing of AC and LED components. Both new and existing beneficiaries may invest more, following earlier success and ₹10,406 crore commitments.

Description:

Launched: April 2020 (Govt. of India).

- **Objective:**
 - Boost **domestic manufacturing** & reduce import dependence.
 - Attract global companies/OEMs to set up units in India.
 - Enhance **exports, value addition, jobs & skills**.
- **Coverage:** 14 sectors (electronics, pharma, food processing, telecom, textiles, specialty steel, drones, white goods, solar modules, ACC batteries, etc.).
- **Incentive:** Linked to **incremental production/sales** over a base year.

Progress so far:

- Success: **Mobile phones, pharma, food processing.**
- Lagging: IT hardware, textiles, specialty steel, advanced chemicals.
- Issue: Local value addition often remains in **single digits** (esp. mobiles).

PLI 2.0 – Proposed Reforms:

- Link incentives to value addition & localization (components, semiconductors, PCBs).
- Export-oriented incentives → encourage scale & global competitiveness.
- Build component ecosystem: JVs, tech transfer, MSME integration.
- MSME support: credit, infra, special incentives.
- Focus on semiconductors: fabs, chip design, assembly.

Global Lessons:

- Inspired by industrial policies of **China, Japan, South Korea.**
- Example: China allowed Tesla → boosted EV supply chain → BYD, Nio, etc.
- India aims to replicate: foreign investment + domestic ecosystem.

Significance:

- Promotes **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, Make in India.
- Bridges supply-chain gaps → reduces imports.
- Enhances **exports** & integrates India into global value chains.
- Generates employment & skills in high-tech manufacturing.

Related Policies:

- National Policy on Electronics (NPE), 2019
- National Policy on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage
- National Semiconductor Mission

Gyan Bharatam Mission

Why in News?

Prime Minister Modi launched the **Gyan Bharatam Mission** to digitise India's ancient manuscripts, curb intellectual piracy, create a knowledge database, and promote global sharing of traditional knowledge, highlighting collaborations with Thailand, Vietnam, and Mongolia.

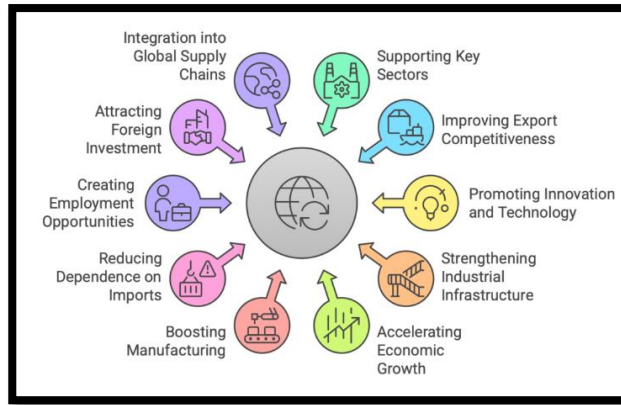
Description:

- Announced in the **Union Budget 2025-26.**
- A **national initiative** to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage.
- Seeks to combine **traditional wisdom** with **modern technology** for future generations.

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Culture:

Objectives:

- To survey, document, conserve, restore, and digitise India's manuscript wealth.
- To establish a **National Digital Repository** for easy public access.
- To encourage research, learning, and integration of **Indian Knowledge Systems** into education.



Space for Notes:

Mission Components:

1. **Survey & Documentation**
 - Nationwide identification, cataloguing, and metadata creation of manuscripts.
2. **Conservation & Restoration**
 - Safeguarding fragile manuscripts using both **scientific techniques** and **traditional practices**.
3. **Digitisation & Repository**
 - AI-assisted digitisation of manuscripts.
 - Establishment of a **National Digital Repository**.
4. **Technology & AI Innovation**
 - Use of **Handwritten Text Recognition** tools.
 - Launch of the “**Gyan-Setu**” AI Challenge to boost innovation.

Significance:

- India has **44+ lakh manuscripts** documented in *Kriti Sampada* (National Database).
- Preserves civilisational knowledge: **philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, arts, literature, spirituality**.
- Supports **Article 51A(f)** – Fundamental Duty to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.
- Aligns with **NEP 2020**, integrating **Indian Knowledge Systems** with modern education.
- Bridges **heritage and technology**, empowering youth and showcasing India's **global cultural leadership**.

Fast Track Immigration – Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP)
Why in News?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the **Fast Track Immigration–Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP)** at five more airports – Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Kozhikode and Amritsar – enabling pre-verified Indian nationals and OCI cardholders to obtain seamless immigration clearance in just 30 seconds.

Description:

- Launched by **MHA in 2024** (pilot at Delhi Airport).
- New phase inaugurated by Union Home Minister & Minister of Cooperation (Sept 2025) at **Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Trichy, Kozhikode & Amritsar** airports.
- Now operational at **13 airports** (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Kochi, Ahmedabad + 5 new ones).
- Planned integration with **Navi Mumbai & Jewar (Noida)** airports.

Objective:

- Provide **seamless, quick, and technology-driven** immigration clearance for Indian citizens & OCI cardholders.
- Improve **passenger convenience** and act as a “**trust multiplier**”.
- Strengthen **national security** by biometric-based access.

Key Features:

Feature	Details
Enrolment	Online via ftittp.mha.gov.in
Documents	Details & documents uploaded on portal
Biometrics	Captured at FRRO / airport
Procedure	Scan boarding pass → scan passport → biometric verification at e-Gate
Time for clearance	~30 seconds
Target Users	Indian citizens & OCI cardholders
Registrations (2025)	~3 lakh registered; ~2.65 lakh already used facility

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Significance:

- Integrates **Speed, Scale & Scope** (PM's vision).
- Reduces queues & manual checks → enhances travel experience.
- Improves **border management** through verified trusted travellers.
- Supports growth in **international passenger traffic** (+60% from 2014 to 2024).

Institutional Framework:

- Implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** with support from **Intelligence Bureau & Bureau of Immigration**.
- Linked with **Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRRO)** for biometrics.
- Aim: **Convenience + Security**.

PM-JANMAN Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyay Maha Abhiyan)
Why in News?

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has requested the Census 2026 to **enumerate PVTGs separately** to capture accurate demographic, cultural, and socio-economic data, aiding targeted scheme implementation like **PM JANMAN** and assessing if current PVTG classification remains relevant.

Description:

Feature	Detail
Scheme Name	PM-JANMAN
Target Group	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Tribal Affairs + States
Coverage	75 PVTGs across 18 States + 1 UT
Main Focus Areas	Housing, health, education, livelihood, infrastructure, clean energy
Significant Initiative	Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, Solar power & street lights
Data Challenge	Accurate PVTG population & demographics lacking; survey-based estimate ~47.5 lakh

PM JANMAN
(Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)
A visionary initiative towards Tribal welfare

11 Basic Amenities | 24,000 Crore Allocated | Convergence with 9 Ministries

10 States & 1 Union Territory	Sabko Pucca Ghar
75 PVTG Communities	Har Ghar Nal Se Jal
₹24,000 Crore Allocated	Gaon-Gaon Tak Sadak
7 Lakh Households	Har Ghar Bijli
28 Lakh PVTG Population	Shiksha Ke Liye Hostel
Convergence with 9 Ministries	Kaushal Vikas
11 Basic Amenities	Door Daraz Gaon Tak Mobile Medical Unit
	Sabko Poshan
	Unnat Aajeevika
	Door Daraz Gaon Tak Mobile Network

Empowering Tribals Transforming India

Space for Notes:

Anganwadi Services

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Why in News?

The Union Government has issued new guidelines to co-locate nearly **11 lakh anganwadi centres** with primary schools, ensuring continuity in early childhood education through curriculum alignment ('Aadharshila'), joint planning, data integration, and smoother transition from anganwadis to Class 1.

Description:

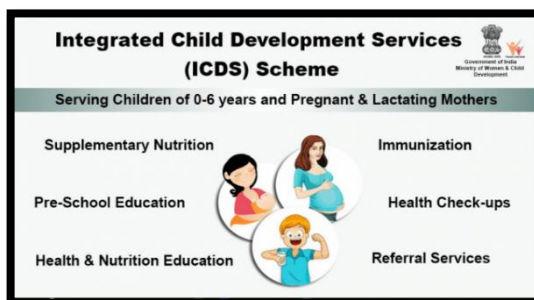
- **Meaning:** "Courtyard shelter" (in English).
- **Launched:** 1975, under **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**.
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme, implemented by States/UTs.
- **Coverage:** Children (0–6 yrs), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers.
- **Objective:** Combat child hunger & malnutrition; provide basic health, nutrition & pre-school education.

Key Services (Components):

- **Nutrition** → Supplementary nutrition, take-home rations, meals.
- **Health Check-ups** → Monitoring, immunisation.
- **Pre-school Education** → Early childhood care, social & cognitive development.
- **Health & Nutrition Education** → Awareness for mothers/caregivers.
- **Referral Services** → Link children/mothers to higher healthcare.
- **Community Mobilisation** → Awareness on health, nutrition, development.
- **Support for Women & Adolescents** → Counselling for mothers; menstrual hygiene awareness.
- **Record Keeping** → Growth monitoring, beneficiary data.

Government Measures for Anganwadi Workers & Helpers:

- **Insurance & Social Security:** PMJJBY, PMSBY, PM-SYM, ₹50 lakh COVID-19 insurance cover.
- **Ayushman Bharat:** Coverage extended (₹5 lakh per family/year).
- **Promotions:**
 - 50% Anganwadi Workers posts → promoted from Helpers.
 - 50% Supervisors → promoted from Workers.
- **Leave:** Maternity (180 days), Miscarriage (45 days), Annual (20 days).
- **Uniforms:** 2 sets/year (saree/suit).
- **IT Use (Poshan Tracker, 2021):** Digitisation, smartphones for workers.
- **Upgradation of Mini-AWCs:** Honorarium raised (₹4,500/month).
- **Retirement Policy:** Uniform retirement date → April 30.



National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), 2025

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a **₹1,500 crore scheme** under the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** to develop domestic recycling capacity for extracting critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, and rare earths from secondary sources, including e-waste and lithium-ion battery scrap, over **2025–31**.

Description:

- Launched in **2025** by the **Ministry of Mines** under **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.
- Aim: **Self-reliance** in critical minerals vital for clean energy & strategic sectors.
- **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** to conduct **1,200 exploration projects (2024–31)**.
- A committee (Nov 2022) identified **30 critical minerals**, 24 placed in Part D, Schedule I of MMDR Act, 1957.
 - Central Govt now has **exclusive authority to auction leases** for these 24 minerals.
- Proposal for **Centre of Excellence on Critical Minerals (CECM)** for research & updating list.

Importance of Critical Minerals:

- **Energy transition & National Security:** Used in Solar PV, Wind, EVs, Batteries, Defence, Electronics.
- **Supply chain risk:** Often concentrated in a few countries (China, Australia, Chile, Congo).

Usage:

- **Solar** – Silicon, Tellurium, Indium, Gallium.
- **Wind** – Rare Earths: Dysprosium, Neodymium (magnets).
- **EVs** – Lithium, Nickel, Cobalt.
- **Energy Storage** – Lithium-ion batteries (Li, Co, Ni).

NCMM – Objectives:

1. **Secure supply chain** (domestic + overseas sourcing).
2. **Strengthen value chains** – exploration, processing, R&D, recycling.
3. **Skill development & patents** in mineral tech.
4. **Build strategic reserves** (stockpile).

Mission Targets (2024–31):

Key Area	Target
Domestic Exploration Projects	1200
Overseas Mines (PSUs)	26
Overseas Mines (Private)	24
Recycling from scrap/waste	400 kt
Patents in value chain	1000
Skill development	10,000 trained
Mineral Processing Parks	4
Centres of Excellence	3
Mineral Stockpiles	5

Key Features:

- **Fast-track approvals**, new **Exploration Licence (EL)** for private players.
- **Secondary recovery** (fly ash, red mud, tailings).
- Offshore exploration: **Polymetallic nodules** (Co, REEs, Ni, Mn).
- **Auctioning 100+ mineral blocks**.
- Involvement of **PSUs, States, Private sector**.

International Partnerships:

- **KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd):**
 - MoU with **Argentina (2024)** → Lithium exploration (15,703 ha).
 - MoU with **Australia (2022)** → Strategic cooperation.
- Due diligence: Lithium & cobalt projects in Australia.
- **IREL (India) Ltd:** Odisha, Kerala plants for REEs; exports & R & R&D expansion.

Space for Notes:

Relevance for Climate Goals:

- Supports:
 - **45% emission intensity reduction by 2030 (2005 baseline).**
 - **50% electricity from non-fossil by 2030.**
 - **Net-zero by 2070.**
- NCMM ensures **steady mineral supply** for solar, wind, EVs, storage → clean energy future.

Adi Vaani
Why in News?

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched **Adi Vaani**, India's first AI-powered tribal language translator, developed by IIT Delhi-led consortium under **Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh**. The tool enables real-time translation, cultural preservation, and digital inclusion, with beta support for Santali, Bhili, Mundari, and Gondi languages.

Description:

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2025).
- **Nature:** India's first **AI-powered translation tool** for tribal languages.
- **Developed under:** *Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh* initiative.
- **Lead Institution:** IIT Delhi, with BITS Pilani, IIIT Hyderabad, IIIT Naya Raipur, in collaboration with **Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)** of Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Meghalaya.

Objectives:

- Bridge communication gaps between **tribal and non-tribal communities**.
- Safeguard and **digitally preserve endangered tribal languages**.
- Provide **real-time translation** (text & speech) between Hindi/English and tribal languages.
- Promote **digital literacy, healthcare communication, civic inclusion**, and awareness about **government schemes** in tribal areas.
- Preserve folklore, oral traditions, and cultural heritage.

Languages Covered (Beta Launch):

- **Santali** (Odisha)
- **Bhili** (Madhya Pradesh)
- **Mundari** (Jharkhand)
- **Gondi** (Chhattisgarh)

Methodology & Features:
1. Technology Base:

- Uses AI models like **No Language Left Behind (NLLB)** and **IndicTrans2** for **low-resource tribal languages**.
- Incorporates **community participation** for data collection, validation, and development.

2. Functional Toolkit:

- Text-to-Text, Text-to-Speech, Speech-to-Text, Speech-to-Speech translation.
- **OCR (Optical Character Recognition):** For digitising manuscripts and primers.
- Bilingual dictionaries and curated repositories.
- Subtitles for **Prime Minister's speeches, health advisories** (e.g., Sickle Cell Disease awareness), govt. schemes in tribal languages.

Space for Notes:

Significance:

- First step towards building a **Large Language Model (LLM)** for tribal languages.
- Helps in **inclusion of tribal communities** in governance, education, and healthcare.
- Strengthens **India's linguistic diversity** and promotes **cultural preservation**.

Samagra Shiksha Scheme
Why in News?

The Supreme Court issued notice to the Centre after Tamil Nadu complained of bearing over ₹3,000 crore reimbursements to private schools under the RTE Act, alleging denial of Samagra Shiksha funds due to its non-implementation of NEP 2020.

Description:

- **Launch:** 2018
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Education (Department of School Education & Literacy)
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **Merged Schemes:**
 - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – Elementary education
 - Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) – Secondary education
 - Teacher Education (TE)

Coverage:

- **Levels:** Pre-primary to Class 12 (entire school education spectrum).
- **Beneficiaries:** ~15.6 crore students, ~57 lakh teachers, across 11.6 lakh schools (Govt. & aided).

Funding Pattern:

- **General States:** 60:40 (Centre : State)
- **NE & Himalayan States:** 90:10
- **UTs without legislature:** 100% Central funding

Vision & Objectives:

- Holistic and equitable quality education for all children.
- Improve learning outcomes & teacher training.
- Focus on digital learning, foundational literacy & numeracy (NIPUN Bharat, 2021).
- Promote inclusivity (Girls, CwSN, socio-economically disadvantaged).
- Integration of vocational education, sports, arts, ICT, and digital tools.
- Alignment with **NEP 2020** and **SDG-4 (Quality Education)**.

Key Features (Samagra Shiksha 2.0):

- **Infrastructure:** classrooms, labs, libraries, toilets.
- **Digital push:** Smart classrooms, ICT labs, DIKSHA platform.
- **Girls' Education:** Expansion of KGBVs (Class 6–12), stipends, self-defence training.
- **Inclusive Education:** Support for CwSN – scholarships, accessible material.
- **Vocational Training:** From Class 6 onwards.
- **Sports & Physical Education:** Linked with *Khelo India*.
- **Focus Areas:** EBBs (Educationally Backward Blocks), LWE areas, border & aspirational districts.
- The scheme expanded in 2021 to align with NEP 2020.

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