

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 15-02-2025

Table of Content

Preserving India's Cultural Heritage
Legal Standing of Adultery in Civil Cases
Judicial Overreach: Involvement of CJI in Executive Appointments
Rural Indians Suffer from a 'Hidden Hunger'
Parliamentary Panel Recommends Minimum Price for Paddy Residue to Curb Stubble Burning

NEWS IN SHORT

Dokra Artwork
Sarojini Naidu
NAMASTE Scheme
U.S.-India TRUST Initiative
India-US 123 Agreement
Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDKY)
Ongole Breed
Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) Launches J. C. Bose Grant (JBG)

PRESERVING INDIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

In Context

- India is home to some of the world's most iconic historical and cultural sites. However, these monuments are under serious threat due to climate change and human activities.

Role of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1861 to protect and maintain historical monuments and sites.
- ASI currently oversees 3,698 protected monuments under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904)** and the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958)**.
- ASI's work includes:
 - Conservation and Restoration:** Regular maintenance of temples, forts, tombs, churches, palaces, and prehistoric sites.
 - Preventive Measures:** Addressing threats from climate, pollution, encroachments, and structural instability.

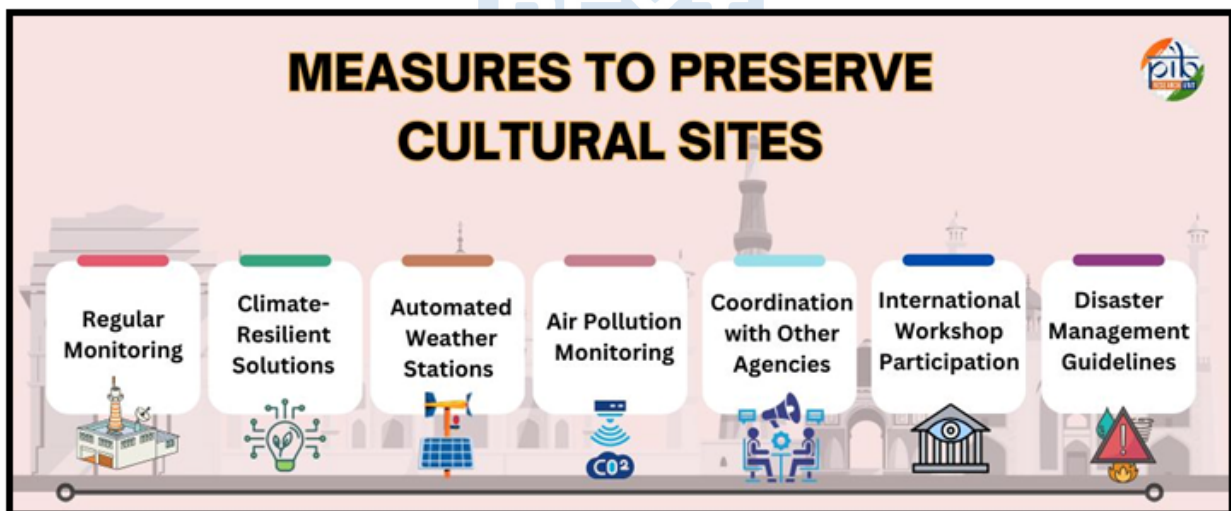
- Monitoring and Research:** Studying the impact of environmental changes on monuments.
- Legal Enforcement:** Ensuring monuments are protected from illegal activities and misuse.

Impact of Climate Change on Cultural Heritage

- Rising Sea Levels:** Coastal heritage sites like the Konark Sun Temple (Odisha) and Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu) are at risk from saltwater intrusion and erosion.
- Extreme Heat and Droughts:** Heatwaves and changing weather patterns affect the stability of ancient structures, especially those made from sandstone and limestone.
- Heavy Rains and Strong Winds:** Increased rainfall and cyclones lead to water damage and erosion in forts, palaces, and cave temples.
- Air Pollution:** Pollution has severely affected monuments like the Taj Mahal, turning its marble yellow due to high sulfur dioxide levels in the air.

Government Measures to Protect Heritage Sites

To counter these challenges, the government and ASI have adopted several measures:



- Increased Funding for Conservation:** The budget for ASI's preservation work has increased by 70% in recent years.
 - 2020-21 Allocation: ₹260.90 crores
 - 2023-24 Allocation: ₹443.53 crores
- Climate-Resilient Conservation Methods:** ASI has adopted scientific preservation techniques to protect monuments.
- Automated Weather Stations (AWS):** Installed in collaboration with ISRO to monitor temperature, wind, rainfall, and atmospheric pressure at heritage sites.
- Air Pollution Monitoring Labs:** Set up near monuments like Taj Mahal (Agra) and Bibi Ka Maqbara (Aurangabad) to track pollution levels.
- Collaboration with Other Agencies:** ASI works closely with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and UNESCO to develop strategies for disaster management of cultural sites.

- **Strengthening Legal Protection:** Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958), monuments are protected from encroachment and misuse.
 - ♦ **Section 30 of the 1958 Act** imposes heavy fines and legal action against those who damage or deface protected sites.

Way Forward

- **Community Involvement:** Local communities should be engaged in conservation efforts to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- **Public Awareness:** Educational programs and campaigns can help people understand the importance of protecting monuments.
- **Advanced Technology:** Using AI, 3D mapping, and drone surveillance can help in the documentation and restoration of historical sites.
- **Stronger Law Enforcement:** Stricter laws and harsher penalties for encroachments and defacement must be enforced.

Source: PIB

LEGAL STANDING OF ADULTERY IN CIVIL CASES

Context

- Adultery remains in the statute books as a **ground for relief in civil cases relating to maintenance and divorce**, and as a ground for punishment in the armed forces.

About

- Recently the Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled that evidence of consensual sexual intercourse was necessary to prove adultery as a ground for cancellation of maintenance.
- The ruling effectively restates the legal definition of adultery that has been accepted by the courts in civil proceedings.

What is Adultery?

- **Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC)**, recognised the crime of adultery and provides the accompanying punishment.
- It defined adultery as "whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent of that man, such sexual intercourse is guilty of the offence of adultery".

- ♦ Under it **only a man could be prosecuted** and punished for committing the crime of adultery.
- ♦ For someone to be punished for adultery he must have had sexual intercourse with another man's wife, **without that man's consent**.
- **Punishment:** It was punishable with up to five years imprisonment and a fine.

Decriminalization of Adultery

- The Supreme Court of India, in the landmark judgment of **Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)**, struck down **Section 497 IPC**, declaring it **unconstitutional**. The court held that:
 - ♦ Adultery is a private matter and **does not warrant criminal prosecution**.
 - ♦ It violates **Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty)** of the Constitution.
 - ♦ Marriage is a personal relationship, and the state should not interfere by imposing criminal liability.
- However, the SC clarified that **adultery would remain a moral wrong** and could be invoked as a **ground in civil proceedings**.
- Despite decriminalization in civilian life, **adultery is still an offense** under the Army Act, 1950, the Navy Act, 1957, and the Air Force Act, 1950. Military personnel can face disciplinary action for adultery under these laws.

Arguments in Favour of Decriminalising of Adultery in India

- **Gender Equality:** As per the law only men could be prosecuted, decriminalizing it promotes gender equality.
- **Personal Autonomy:** Criminalizing adultery undermines personal freedom and choice in relationships.
- **Encouragement of Healthy Relationships:** Decriminalizing adultery shifts the focus from punishment to addressing marital issues and encourages individuals to resolve personal disputes privately instead of using the legal system.
- **Overburdening of Legal System:** Decriminalizing adultery would reduce the burden on the judicial system, allowing courts to focus on more pressing criminal matters.

Arguments Against Decriminalising of Adultery in India:

- **Protecting Marital Integrity:** Criminalizing it helps protect the sanctity of marital bonds and discourages actions that undermine relationships.

- **Deterrence:** The threat of legal consequences may act as a deterrent to infidelity.
- **Social and Moral Values:** Decriminalizing it could be seen as encouraging behavior that erodes the foundation of family and societal structures.
- **Impact on Women:** In societies where patriarchy is still prevalent, removing criminal consequences might encourage men to engage in infidelity.

Source: IE

JUDICIAL OVERREACH: INVOLVEMENT OF CJI IN EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

Context

- Recently, the Vice-President of India raised significant **concerns over judicial overreach**, specifically questioning the **role of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) in executive appointments**.

Understanding Judicial Overreach in India

- Judicial overreach refers to an extreme form of judicial activism where arbitrary, unreasonable, and frequent interventions by the judiciary encroach upon the legislature's or executive's domain.
- It occurs when the court **oversteps its constitutional role** by making policy decisions or laws, which is the prerogative of the legislature.
- India's democratic framework ensures a system of checks and balances, delineating distinct roles for the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary.

Judicial Activism vs. Judicial Overreach

Aspect	Judicial Activism	Judicial Overreach
Definition	A proactive role of the judiciary in protecting citizens' rights and ensuring justice.	Judiciary exceeding its limits and interfering in legislative or executive functions.
Purpose	To uphold constitutional values and correct governmental failures.	To make decisions beyond the judiciary's mandate, often resembling policymaking.

Impact	Strengthens democracy and promotes social justice.	Weakens democratic institutions and disrupts the separation of powers.
--------	--	--

Former Chief Justices of India, including Ranjan Gogoi and P. Sathasivam, have emphasized the **fine line between judicial activism and overreach**, cautioning against excessive judicial intervention in governance.

- ♦ **Article 50** mandates separation of the judiciary from the executive.

Instances of Judicial Overreach

- **General Cases:**
 - ♦ **Madras High Court's Directive on 'Vande Mataram' (2017):** Mandated the singing of 'Vande Mataram' in schools, government offices, and private entities in Tamil Nadu, seen as excessive interference in cultural expression.
 - ♦ **Supreme Court's National Anthem Mandate in Cinema Halls:** The directive to play the national anthem and mandate standing was seen as unnecessary interference in executive policymaking.
 - ♦ **Madras High Court's Aadhaar-Social Media Linking Proposal (2019):** The court proposed linking Aadhaar with social media accounts to curb cybercrimes. However, the suggestion sparked privacy concerns and was criticized as judicial overreach into policy-making.
- **Instances in Executive Appointments:**
 - ♦ **Striking Down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) (2015):** The Supreme Court invalidated the NJAC, reaffirming judicial primacy in appointments, despite the commission being introduced through the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act (2014) to replace the Collegium System.
 - ♦ **Intervention in Bureaucratic Appointments:**
 - **Prakash Singh Case (2006):** Directed states on police reforms and officer appointments, overriding executive discretion.
 - **Alok Verma's Reinstatement as CBI Director (2018):** The Supreme Court overturned the government's decision to remove him, demonstrating judicial control over executive appointments.

International Comparison

- **USA:** Judges are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, ensuring executive oversight.
- **UK:** Parliamentary supremacy limits judicial interference.
- **France & Germany:** Judiciary has a limited role in executive appointments and policy decisions.

Implications of Judicial Overreach

- **Erosion of Democratic Principles:** Encroachment into legislative or executive functions undermines the separation of powers (Article 50), a fundamental aspect of democracy.
- **Constitutional Disruptions:** Judicial overreach distorts the balance of power essential for democratic governance.
 - ♦ It may transform the judiciary into a quasi-legislative or quasi-executive entity, affecting its independence.
- **Policy Implementation Issues:** Judicially mandated policies may lack thorough deliberation, resulting in ineffective governance.
 - ♦ The executive, responsible for governance, faces limitations in implementing policies efficiently.
- **Strained Inter-Branch Relations:** Overreach fosters mistrust among government branches, disrupting cooperative governance and leading to conflicts between the judiciary and executive.

Committee Recommendations

- **Law Commission Reports:** Emphasized the need for a transparent judicial appointment process.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Suggested a balanced approach between the judiciary and the executive.

Way Forward

- **Judicial Accountability Bill:** Establish mechanisms for judicial accountability.
- **Reforming the Collegium System:** Introduce transparency and executive consultation.
- **Encouraging Self-Restraint:** Judiciary should avoid making policy decisions.

Conclusion

- Judicial overreach remains a contentious issue in India, affecting governance and the balance of power between the three branches of

government. While judicial activism has played a vital role in upholding constitutional rights, excessive intervention risks undermining the democratic process. Ensuring judicial restraint and adherence to constitutional boundaries is crucial for maintaining the integrity of governance in India.

Source: TH

RURAL INDIANS SUFFER FROM A 'HIDDEN HUNGER'

Context

- A new study by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) shows that many Indians in rural areas **suffer from protein deficiency** in spite of producing sufficient protein-rich foods or being able to afford them.

Major Findings

- **More than two-thirds of households** surveyed across India's semi-arid tropics consume less protein than recommended despite sufficient availability of protein sources.
- **Consumptions of Staples:** Regions rely heavily on staple grains like rice and wheat, which contribute 60–75% of daily protein intake.
- **Underutilization of Protein-rich foods:** Foods such as pulses, dairy, eggs, and meat remain underutilized, not necessarily because they are scarce, but due to a mix of cultural food preferences, limited nutritional awareness, and financial constraints.
- **Deficiency in Wealthier Families:** Even wealthier families, who can afford diverse diets, often fail to meet recommended protein intake levels.
- **Households where women had higher levels of education** were more likely to consume a balanced diet.
- **PDS System:** India's Public Distribution System (PDS), has been successful in improving calorie intake.
 - ♦ However, it has inadvertently reinforced a diet dominated by cereals while failing to provide sufficient protein-rich options.
- **Reasons for the Dietary Habits:**
 - ♦ deeply ingrained dietary habits,
 - ♦ lack of understanding about the importance of protein-rich foods,
 - ♦ financial constraints.

Recommendations

- Increasing the inclusion of pulses, millets, and other protein-dense foods in government food programs to significantly improve nutritional outcomes.
- Region-specific strategies would be needed to promote balanced nutritional intake.
- Integrating nutrition education into public health programmes and school curricula.
- Encouraging farmers to grow a wider variety of nutrient-dense crops.

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

- ICRISAT stands as the premier drylands agricultural research institute, dedicated to uplifting smallholder farmers and ensuring food security in semi-arid tropics.
- It was established under a Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of India and the CGIAR in 1972.
- ICRISAT's headquarters are located in Asia (India), and the organization maintains offices across Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa.

Source: DTE

PARLIAMENTARY PANEL RECOMMENDS MINIMUM PRICE FOR PADDY RESIDUE TO CURB STUBBLE BURNING

In News

- A parliamentary panel has recommended establishing a minimum price mechanism for paddy residue, similar to the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops**, to discourage stubble burning.

Stubble Burning

- Stubble burning is the practice of **setting fire to crop residue (paddy stubble)** left after harvesting to quickly clear fields for the next crop.
- It is primarily **practiced in Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh** during October-November to prepare fields for rabi wheat sowing.
- Stubble burning leads to severe air pollution in **Delhi-NCR**, causing smog and high PM2.5 levels, worsening respiratory diseases. It harms soil fertility by destroying beneficial microbes, leading

to increased dependence on chemical fertilizers. The practice also **releases greenhouse gases** (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O), contributing to climate change and global warming.

Why Do Farmers Burn Stubble?

- Farmers burn stubble due to time constraints** between paddy harvesting and wheat sowing.
- High costs of alternative methods**, despite subsidies, discourage mechanized residue management.
- Lack of a fixed market price** makes selling paddy straw unprofitable.
- Limited awareness and inadequate incentives** further push farmers toward burning as a quick solution.

Key Recommendations made

- Minimum Price for Paddy Residue:** A mechanism should be set up in consultation with the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to benchmark and notify minimum prices annually before the Kharif harvest season.
 - This price should cover farmers' collection costs, including labour and machinery expenses.
- Subsidies:** The government should subsidize machinery like happy seeders, rotavators, and mulchers for in-situ paddy straw management.
- Promotion of Short-Duration Paddy Varieties:** The committee urged state governments to discourage long-duration paddy varieties like **PUSA 44** and promote short-duration alternatives.
- Developing a National Bioenergy Policy:** A unified national policy to integrate agricultural residue into bioenergy production.
- Others:** Address ex-situ crop residue management costs, provide financial incentives, improve supply chain infrastructure, and raise awareness among farmers to ensure economic viability and environmental sustainability.

Source: Print

NEWS IN SHORT

DOKRA ARTWORK

In News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted French President Emmanuel Macron a traditional **Dokra artwork** depicting musicians playing Indian instruments.

Dokra art

- Dokra art from Chhattisgarh is a traditional metal-casting craft using the ancient lost-wax technique.
 - ♦ It is also practiced in states like Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Telangana.
- The artwork, depicting musicians in dynamic poses, emphasizes the cultural significance of music in Indian heritage.
- Made from brass and copper, it features fine detailing and is enhanced with lapis lazuli and coral.
- The labor-intensive process showcases the artisans' skill and dedication, making the piece a celebration of India's tribal traditions and artistic excellence.

Lost-wax technique

- It involves patterning a clay core intricately with wax ribbons and then coating it carefully with a mix of clay and hay. The wax is subsequently melted off, and the cavity formed is filled with molten metal.

Source :IE

SAROIJINI NAIDU**In News**

- India celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary on February 13 as National Women's Day, marking her 146th birth anniversary in 2025.

About Sarojini Naidu

- Sarojini Naidu, born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad, was an inspiring poet and political activist.
- She is famously known as the **Nightingale of India**.
- She became the **first female governor of independent India** when she was appointed as the **Governor of Uttar Pradesh** in 1947.

- **Major Contributions :** She played a key role in India's struggle for independence and was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi.
 - ♦ As a member of the Constituent Assembly, she helped in drafting the Indian Constitution.
 - ♦ She participated in the 1930 Round Table Conference with Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Poetry and Recognition:** Naidu began writing poetry at a young age, penning her first long poem, *The Lady of the Lake*.
 - ♦ She was elected as fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1914 after publishing her first poetry collection.
 - ♦ Naidu's poetry collection *Golden Threshold* (1905) earned her the title "**Bul Bul e Hind**" and recognition worldwide.
- **Multilingual Abilities:** She spoke multiple languages, including Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, and English. Her eloquence in English captivated audiences both in India and abroad, making her a powerful voice in the Indian freedom movement.
- **Legacy:** Sarojini Naidu passed away in 1949, leaving a lasting legacy as a woman of substance and dignity.

Source: PIB

NAMASTE SCHEME**In Context**

- The distribution of PPE kits and Ayushman health cards under the **NAMASTE scheme** is a crucial step towards ensuring dignity, safety, and social empowerment of **Safai Mitras**.

About NAMASTE Scheme

- **Objectives:** Eradicate manual scavenging by promoting mechanized sanitation.
- Enhance the safety and dignity of sewer & septic tank workers.
- Formalize the workforce and provide skill development opportunities.
- **Implemented By:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) & Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- **Implementation Timeline:** FY 2023-24 to 2025-26 (3 years).
- **Target Group:** Initially focused on sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs).
 - ♦ Wastepickers were added in 2024 to further expand coverage.

Source: PIB

U.S.-INDIA TRUST INITIATIVE

In News

- India and the US have launched the “**Transforming Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology**” (TRUST) initiative.

About TRUST Initiative

- It builds on national programs like the US Critical Minerals and Materials (CMM) program and India's National Critical Minerals Mission to boost exploration, recycling, and R&D in critical minerals.
- It focuses on cooperation in the recovery and processing of critical minerals, including lithium and rare earth elements (REEs).
- It aims to reduce barriers to technology transfer, address export controls, and enhance high-tech commerce between the two countries, particularly in critical minerals and advanced materials.
- Importance:** It will promote collaboration among governments, academia, and the private sector to drive innovation in sectors like defense, AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, biotechnology, energy, and space.
 - It aims to counter China's dominance in critical minerals supply chains.

Source :IE

INDIA-US 123 AGREEMENT

Context

- India-US 123 Agreement of 2007 could finally achieve its full potential.

About

- India and the United States affirmed their commitment to furthering a bilateral Energy Security Partnership.
- The announcement signals their commitment to “fully realise” the US-India 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement, alongside a pledge to move forward on plans to work together to build American-designed nuclear reactors in India.

123 Agreement of 2007

- Also known as the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, it aims to facilitate **civilian nuclear cooperation between the two countries**.
- Key Features:**

- ♦ **Nuclear Trade:** It allows the U.S. to supply India with nuclear fuel, technology, and reactors for civilian energy purposes.
- ♦ **Non-Proliferation Commitment:** India, in exchange, agrees to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and place its civilian reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.
- ♦ **No Restrictions on Military Programs:** Unlike the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the agreement does not require India to forgo nuclear weapons development, as India is not a signatory to the NPT.
- ♦ **Energy and Economic Cooperation:** The agreement aims to enhance energy security, support India's growing energy demands, and promote economic cooperation between the two nations.

Source: IE

PRIME MINISTER DHAN-DHAANYA KRISHI YOJANA (PMDKY)

Context

- The Finance Minister while presenting the Union Budget announced the launch of the **Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDKY)**.

About

- PMDKY will cover 100 districts based on three broad parameters: low productivity, moderate crop intensity, and below-average credit parameters.
- Cropping intensity** is a measure of how efficiently land is used, and it is defined as the percentage of the gross cropped area to the net area sown.
- Aim:**
 - Enhance agricultural productivity;
 - Adopt crop diversification and sustainable agricultural practices;
 - Augment post-harvest storage at panchayat and block level;
 - Improve irrigation facilities;
 - Facilitate availability of long- and short-term credit.
- Under this scheme, 1.7 crore farmers will receive support. The scheme will be implemented **in partnership with state governments**.
- Benefits:** Provides quality seeds, fertilizers, and chemicals to boost crop production.

Source: IE

ONGOLE BREED

In News

- **Viatina-19, a cow of the Ongole breed**, has made history in Brazil by being auctioned for a staggering ₹41 crore.
 - ♦ The sale has placed **Ongole cattle** ahead of even **Japan's Wagyu** and **India's Brahman breeds** in terms of value.

About Ongole Breed

- The Ongole breed, also known as the **Nellore breed**, originates from Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- **Characteristics of the Ongole Breed:** Broad forehead, elliptical-shaped eyes, highly adaptable to extreme climatic conditions.

Other Important Indigenous Cattle Breeds in India

- **Gir (Gujarat)**
- **Hallikar (Karnataka)**
- **Khillari (Maharashtra)**
- **Tharparkar (Rajasthan)**
- **Deoni (Andhra Pradesh)**

Source: TOI

ANUSANDHAN NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (ANRF) LAUNCHES J. C. BOSE GRANT (JBG)

In News

- The **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** has announced the launch of the **J. C. Bose Grant (JBG)**—a prestigious new scheme aimed at recognizing the outstanding

contributions of senior Indian scientists and engineers.

About ANRF

- The ANRF serves as **India's apex body for scientific research, providing strategic direction** as per the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP). It aims to:
 - ♦ Seed, grow, and promote R&D across disciplines.
 - ♦ Foster a culture of research and innovation.
 - ♦ Support capacity-building at all levels to strengthen India's research ecosystem.

About the J. C. Bose Grant (JBG)

- **Objective:** To support senior-level researchers with exceptional achievements in science, technology, agriculture, medicine, humanities, and social sciences at the interfaces of S&T.
- **Eligibility:** Active senior Indian scientists or researchers.
 - ♦ Holding at least a Professor-level position or equivalent at a recognized Indian institution/university.
 - ♦ Proven track record of excellence in research through publications, patents, technology transfers, awards, and grants.
 - ♦ The grant can be availed until the age of 68.
- **Key Features:**
 - ♦ **Funding Amount:** 25 lakh per year for five years to support research activities.
 - ♦ **Institutional Support:** 1 lakh per year for the implementing institution.
 - ♦ **Multi-Disciplinary Scope:** Supports research across science, technology, agriculture, medicine, humanities, and social sciences.

Source: DST

