

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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### Table of Content

Online Skill-Based Gaming  
The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025  
Balochistan Train Hijack  
Compassion in Health Care  
Trends and Progress of Housing in India 2024  
Former Philippine President Duterte Arrested By ICC

### NEWS IN SHORT

PM's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors (PM-YUVA 3.0)  
Oilfield (Regulatory and Development) Amendment Bill Passed in Lok Sabha  
Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)  
Thalassemia  
Astra Missile  
Mission Amrit Sarovar  
Lie-Detector Test (Polygraph Test)

## ONLINE SKILL-BASED GAMING

### In Context

- **Online skill-based gaming** has the potential to harness programming, design, and storytelling talent to leapfrog India to the top of the **tech leaderboard globally**.

### About

- With India's **650 million smartphone users** and a **youthful population**, the country is uniquely positioned to **leverage gaming as a driver of technological innovation, employment, and economic expansion**.
- However, **stringent taxation policies, ambiguous regulatory frameworks, and retrospective taxation demands** threaten to stifle the sector's growth.

### Potential of Online Skill-Based Gaming

- It is one of the **major sunrise sectors of India**. The **online gaming industry** has witnessed exponential growth, with **three Indian startups achieving unicorn status**. According to a **PwC report**, the sector:
  - ♦ Accounted for **₹33,000 crore in 2023**.
  - ♦ It is projected to **double to ₹66,000 crore by 2028**, growing at a **CAGR of 14.5%**.
  - ♦ Could **generate 2-3 lakh additional direct and indirect jobs**, on top of the **2 lakh existing jobs** in the industry.

### Why Online Gaming Matters for India's Tech Ecosystem?

- **Fostering Talent:** The sector **harnesses skills in programming, design, and storytelling**, creating a **multi-disciplinary innovation hub**.
- **Boosting Exports:** India can **become a global exporter of game development, animation, and AR/VR technologies**.
- **Startups & Investment Growth:** The gaming ecosystem is attracting **venture capital and international investment**, further strengthening India's digital economy.

### Regulatory Challenges Hindering Growth

- **Excessive Taxation and Retrospective GST Demand:** The **Supreme Court's 2025 stay order** on the **Union government's ₹1.12 lakh crore retrospective GST demand** highlighted how **excessive taxation threatens industry survival**.
  - ♦ **Online gaming is taxed at 28% GST**, a rate similar to **gambling, liquor, and tobacco**.

- ♦ Smaller startups struggle to comply with such taxation, risking **bankruptcies and shutdowns**.
- **Conflation with Gambling and Betting:** Some **State governments imposed bans on online gaming**, classifying them as **gambling**.
  - ♦ **Courts later overturned these bans**, recognizing that **"games of skill" are legal and distinct from gambling**.
  - ♦ However, **misconceptions about gaming persist**, affecting regulatory clarity.
- **Risk of Illegal Offshore Gaming Sites:** **Excessive taxation** can drive users towards **unregulated gambling sites**, which operate offshore beyond Indian regulatory reach.
  - ♦ Such platforms **pose national security and financial risks** while depriving the Indian economy of legitimate tax revenues.
- **Societal Concerns:** Families and regulators are concerned about **gaming addiction and excessive screen time**.

### Need for a Balanced Regulatory Approach

- **Rationalizing Taxes:** Online gaming should not be taxed at par with gambling, liquor, and tobacco.
  - ♦ A **differentiated tax structure** should be introduced, **recognizing gaming as an entertainment and skill-based industry** rather than a vice.
- **Developing a Transparent Regulatory Framework:** A **national policy framework** should be crafted in collaboration with **industry stakeholders**.
- **Policies should address:**
  - ♦ **Skill-based gaming vs. gambling distinction**
  - ♦ **Consumer protection measures** (age restrictions, self-exclusion options)
  - ♦ **Data privacy and security regulations**
- **Encouraging Investment in Gaming R&D:** **Incentives for game development startups** to create **Indian-origin games** with cultural and educational value.
  - ♦ Establish **gaming incubators and research hubs** to promote innovation in **AR, VR, and AI-based gaming**.
- **Strengthening Consumer Awareness:** Gaming platforms must **self-regulate** to identify **problematic behavior** and promote **responsible gaming**.

Source: TH

## THE IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGNERS BILL, 2025

### Context

- The Union government introduced the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha, aimed at overhauling India's immigration system.

### Key Provisions

- The Bill seeks to replace** four pre-Independence and early post-Independence Acts: the Passport (Entry into India) Act, **1920**, the Registration of Foreigners Act, **1939**, the Foreigners Act, **1946**, and the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, **2000**.
- Establishment of Bureau of Immigration:** The Bill proposes the establishment of a Bureau of Immigration (**Section 5**), headed by a Commissioner.
  - The Bureau will regulate immigration, oversee entry and exit of foreigners, and perform other functions as prescribed by the Centre.
- Central Government's Powers over Foreigners:** Under **Section 7**, the Bill empowers the Central government to:
  - Specify entry and departure points** and impose conditions on foreigners upon arrival.
  - Order foreigners to stay in designated areas or prohibit them from entering specific regions.
  - Mandate **identity verification**, biometric submission, and medical examination for foreigners.
  - Restrict association with certain individuals** or involvement in specified activities.
- Punishments:** The Bill also carries punishments for foreigners who:
  - Enter any area without a valid passport or a travel document (**Section 21**). The punishment is up to **five years** imprisonment and/or a fine of up to **Rs 5 lakh**.
- Restrictions on carriers:** A carrier has been defined as a person or entity "engaged in the business of transporting passengers or cargo by air, water or land by aircraft or ship or any other mode of transport".
  - Under Section 17**, carriers are required to share information related to the passengers and crew with an immigration officer or with a District Magistrate/Police Commissioner when asked.

### Criticism of the Bill

- Violation of Fundamental Rights:** It is argued that the Bill violates fundamental rights by granting the government excessive powers over foreigners, potentially affecting asylum seekers and legitimate travelers.
- Lack of an Appeal Mechanism:** The government's authority to issue binding directives without a transparent appeal mechanism raises concerns over natural justice and due process.

### Concluding remarks

- The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, represents an effort to modernize India's immigration framework.
- However, concerns regarding human rights implications, and broad executive authority highlight the need for additional safeguards.
- Addressing these concerns by introducing clear legal recourse and judicial oversight would ensure a fair and balanced approach to national security and governance.

Source: IE

## BALUCHISTAN TRAIN HIJACK

### Context

- The **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** has claimed responsibility for hijacking the Jaffar Express.

### About Balochistan

- It is the **largest** but **least populated** of Pakistan's **four provinces** – Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



- Ethnic Groups:** Baloch, Brahui, and Pashtuns.
- It has **substantial reserves of oil and gas**, alongside gold and copper deposits, but has lagged in economic growth compared to other regions in the country.



- The province has been the site of a series of insurgencies, brutal state repression, and an enduring **Baloch nationalist movement since 1948.**

### Background of the Insurgency

- **1947 Partition of Balochistan:** The region was divided into four princely states: **Kalat, Kharan, Las Bela, and Makaran.**



- ♦ During Partition, Kharan, Las Bela, and Makaran chose to join Pakistan, while **Kalat opted for independence.**
- **Treaty with Muslim League:** On August 11, 1947, Kalat signed a treaty with the Muslim League, recognizing its independence.
- **British Resistance:** Despite recognition, the British issued a memorandum stating the Khan of Kalat was unprepared for international responsibilities.
- **Pakistan Military Action:** On March 26, 1948, the Pakistan Army moved into Baloch coastal regions (Pasni, Jiwani, Turbat).
  - ♦ The Khan of Kalat had no choice but to agree to merge with Pakistan.

### Insurgency and Discontent

- **Forceful Integration:** The annexation of Kalat into Pakistan led to discontent and resistance among the Baloch people.
  - ♦ Many nationalists saw the integration as a betrayal of their autonomy and cultural identity.
- **Insurgencies:** Balochistan experienced numerous uprisings for independence, though Pakistan managed to suppress them.
- **Current Status:** Once a sovereign state, Balochistan is now the most neglected and poverty-stricken province of Pakistan.
  - ♦ Despite being the largest province and rich in minerals, Balochistan contributes only about 4% to Pakistan's economy.
- **Balochistan Liberation Army:** The BLA are a Baloch ethnonationalist group who emerged in the 2000s with the aim of achieving independence for Balochistan.
  - ♦ Pakistan banned the organisation in **2006**, and the United States designated it as a global terrorist organisation in **2019**.

### India's Stand on Balochistan

- **Complex Position:** India's stance on Balochistan is shaped by geopolitics, regional stability, and its relationship with Pakistan.
  - ♦ The India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir makes any involvement in Balochistan a potential trigger for escalating tensions.
- **Support for Self-Determination:** India supports the right to self-determination for Balochistan's people but avoids interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs.
- Overall, India's stance on Balochistan involves **expressing concerns about human rights violations without interfering into the internal affairs.**

Source: IE

## COMPASSION IN HEALTH CARE

### In Context

- Recently, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** released a landmark report titled **"Compassion and Primary Health Care,"** recognizing **compassion** as a transformative force in health care.

### About

- Compassion in health care is not merely an **ethical obligation** but a **strategic necessity**. It enhances **patient recovery rates**, **improves mental well-being**, **strengthens patient-provider relationships**, and **reduces burnout among health-care professionals**. The incorporation of **compassionate care practices** can revolutionize health care delivery, making it **more patient-centric, sustainable, and effective**.

### Benefits of Compassionate Health Care

- Several studies emphasize the **direct correlation** between compassionate care and improved health outcomes:
- Faster Recovery and Shorter Hospital Stays:**
  - Research by **Stanford University's CCARE** indicates that **patients treated with compassion recover faster** and require shorter hospitalization.
  - Johns Hopkins Hospital** found that a **40-second compassionate conversation**, where a doctor expresses solidarity (e.g., "We are in this together"), significantly **reduces patient anxiety and improves recovery**, particularly among cancer patients.
- Benefits for Health-Care Providers:**
  - Studies suggest that practicing **compassionate care** leads to **reduced stress, improved job satisfaction, and stronger patient relationships**.

### Compassion, Sympathy and Empathy

- The terms **sympathy, empathy, and compassion** are often used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings in **health-care ethics**:
  - Sympathy:** A **short-term, pity-based reaction** that does not necessarily lead to action.
  - Empathy:** Involves **deep emotional immersion** in others' problems, which can sometimes **lead to emotional fatigue and anxiety** in caregivers (known as **empathy fatigue**).
  - Compassion:** A **balanced, problem-solving approach**, where health-care providers **understand and feel the pain of their patients but maintain emotional stability**. This ensures **sustained, high-quality health care delivery** without personal exhaustion.

- Thus, **compassion** provides a **sustainable model** for medical professionals, allowing them to **effectively help patients while safeguarding their own mental and emotional well-being**.

### Urgent Need for Compassion in Mental Health

- The **WHO and mental health experts** warn that **depression could become the next global epidemic** due to its **widespread impact**. Health-care systems must integrate **compassionate mental health care** as a fundamental pillar.
- Case Study: Pradeep's Transformation through Compassion**
  - Pradeep, a rescued child, was abandoned and labeled as "cursed" by his community. He was brought to **Bal Ashram**, a long-term rehabilitation center under the **Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion**.
  - The **caregivers at Bal Ashram**, trained in **compassionate rehabilitation**, allowed him the **emotional space to heal**, rather than forcing him to speak about his trauma.
  - Over time, he **formed friendships, rebuilt his confidence, and shared his story**, demonstrating how **compassion is a transformative force in mental health recovery**.

### Strategies for Implementing Compassionate Health Care

- Embedding Compassion in Health-Care Leadership & Policy:**
  - Health-care decision-making** should **prioritize compassion** rather than just operational efficiency.
  - Industry leaders, hospitals, and policy think tanks** must integrate **compassion as a foundational principle** in health-care governance.
- Training Health-Care Providers in Compassionate Practices:**
  - Doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff** should be trained in **compassion-based communication** and **differentiating empathy from compassion** to avoid burnout.
  - Medical curriculums should include **compassionate care training**, ensuring that future health professionals understand the importance of patient-centric care.

- **Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Health Care for All:**
  - ♦ **Compassionate health care** must not be limited to privileged sections of society. It should be:
    - **Accessible to rural populations** through better **health-care outreach programs**.
    - **Inclusive for marginalized communities** (caste, gender, economic status).
    - **Integrated into public health policies** to ensure affordable and dignified treatment for all.
- **Strengthening Mental Health Care with a Compassionate Approach:**
  - ♦ **Mental health professionals** should be trained in **trauma-sensitive and compassionate care**.
  - ♦ **Community-based mental health programs** should be expanded to reduce the stigma around mental health issues.
- As on 30-09-2024, Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) & Low-Income Groups (LIG) accounted for 39%, Middle-Income Groups (MIG) accounted for 44% and HIG accounted for 17% of outstanding individual housing loans.
- Only 5% of buildings in India are **classified as 'green'**.

#### Government Initiatives Driving Housing Sector Growth

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G):** Aims for rural housing development with a focus on affordable housing.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U):** Supports low-cost housing projects in urban areas.
- **Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF):** Boosts infrastructure financing for affordable housing.
- **Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs):** Focuses on housing solutions for migrant workers and urban poor.

#### Global Perspectives and Best Practices

- **United Kingdom (NHS):** Emphasizes "**compassionate leadership**" in public health care.
- **Japan's Universal Health Care System:** Integrates **holistic healing and compassionate patient care**.
- **Scandinavian Countries:** Have **patient-first health-care policies** that incorporate **mental well-being as a fundamental health-care principle**.
- India can **adopt and customize these best practices** within its **Ayushman Bharat and AIIMS-led training programs**.

Source: TH

## TRENDS AND PROGRESS OF HOUSING IN INDIA 2024

### In News

- National Housing Bank (NHB) has released the **Report on Trends and Progress of Housing in India, 2024**.

### Key Highlights of the Report

- Banks **dominate the housing finance market**, accounting for 81% of total housing loans whereas the Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) contribute 19%.

### Challenges in Housing Finance

- **Regional Disparities in Credit Flow:** Western, Southern, and Northern states receive the highest housing finance disbursements.
  - ♦ Eastern and Northeastern states experience low credit penetration, limiting housing accessibility in these regions.
- **Limited Reach of Housing Finance Companies (HFCs):** HFCs play a vital role by providing flexible loan eligibility criteria and efficient service.
  - ♦ However, HFCs have a limited branch network in rural and underdeveloped areas, restricting their ability to bridge the housing finance gap.
- **Low Adoption of Green Buildings:** Challenges remain there like higher initial costs of eco-friendly construction, lack of incentives for developers, and limited awareness on sustainability.

### Opportunities for Growth

- **Technological advancements** in construction like use of AI, data analytics, and predictive modelling, 3D Printing and the **digitization of land records** are identified as factors that could facilitate growth in the sector.
- **Increase in funding and growing demand for smart cities and affordable housing** in metro and Tier-II & Tier-III cities causing demand to go up.

**About National Housing Bank (NHB)**

- **Founded:** In 1988, under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.
- **Objective:** To regulate, promote, and develop the housing finance market in India.
- **Ownership:** 100% owned by the Government of India.
- **Regulation:** NHB supervises HFCs, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the primary regulator.
- **Functions:** Encourages financial inclusion by improving access to housing loans for the middle-class and low-income groups.
- Bridges the housing finance gap by expanding credit facilities to underdeveloped regions.
- **Headquarter:** New Delhi.

Source: PIB

## FORMER PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT DUTERTE ARRESTED BY ICC

**In News**

- Former **Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte** was taken into custody based on a warrant issued by the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**.

**More About the News**

- He was accused of crimes against humanity over his deadly **“war on drugs”** during his tenure where more than 6, 000 suspects were killed which UN found that most victims were young, poor urban males.
- Also, earlier, the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** issued an arrest warrant against **Russian President Vladimir Putin** for alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

**International Criminal Court (ICC)**

- **About:**
  - ♦ The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the **world’s first permanent international court** established to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of serious international crimes.
- **Establishment:**
  - ♦ Under the **Rome Statute (1998)**, has 125 member states and **exercises jurisdiction over four core crimes:**
    - **Genocide** (Intentional destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group)

- **Crimes against Humanity** (Widespread attacks against civilians)
- **War Crimes** (Grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions)
- **Crimes of Aggression** (Acts of aggression by a state violating sovereignty, territorial integrity)
- **Jurisdiction:** The ICC can exercise jurisdiction when:
  - ♦ Crimes are committed by a national of a State Party or on territory of a State Party.
  - ♦ A non-member state accepts ICC jurisdiction voluntarily.
  - ♦ The UN Security Council can refer a case to the ICC (Chapter VII of the UN Charter).
  - ♦ The ICC Prosecutor initiates an investigation upon own initiative or a State Party’s request.
- **Enforcement Challenges:**
  - ♦ The ICC does not have its own police force and relies on state cooperation for arrests and extraditions.
  - ♦ Non-member states have no obligation to cooperate (e.g., Israel, the US, Russia, China, and India).

**Why Has India Not Joined the ICC?**

- India has refrained from joining the Rome Statute, citing concerns over:
  - ♦ **Sovereignty and Political Interference:** ICC’s subordination to the UN Security Council raises concerns that it could be politically misused. The power to bind non-member states violates India’s principle of sovereignty.
  - ♦ **Wide Powers of the ICC Prosecutor:** The ICC Prosecutor can initiate investigations **suo motu (on its own)**, without a State Party referral. This broad power raises concerns about misuse for political purposes.
  - ♦ **Exclusion of Key Security Issues:** Terrorism and nuclear weapons use are not covered under ICC jurisdiction. India believes that these issues pose major security threats and should be included.
  - ♦ **Lack of Protection for Armed Forces:** India is concerned that Indian military personnel deployed in conflict zones (e.g., Kashmir, Northeast India, or UN Peacekeeping missions) could be unfairly targeted.
  - ♦ **Selective Prosecution and Western Bias:** ICC has failed to investigate powerful countries for their military interventions (e.g., US in Iraq, Russia in Ukraine, NATO’s Libya intervention).



Features	International Criminal Court (ICC)	International Court of Justice (ICJ)
<b>Establishment</b>	• 2002 (Rome Statute, 1998)	• 1945 (UN Charter)
<b>Location</b>	• The Hague, Netherlands	• The Hague, Netherlands
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	• Individuals accused of serious crimes	• Disputes between states
<b>Crimes Covered</b>	• Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, Crime of Aggression	• Legal disputes (sovereignty, borders, treaty violations) and advisory opinions
<b>Binding Nature</b>	• ICC rulings are legally binding but rely on state cooperation for enforcement	• ICJ rulings are binding but can be ignored (enforcement through UN Security Council)
<b>Membership</b>	• 125 States Parties (Rome Statute)	• All 193 UN Member States
<b>Cases Heard</b>	• Criminal cases against individuals	• Civil cases between states
<b>Appeal</b>	• Has an appeals mechanism	• No formal appeals process

## NEWS IN SHORT

### PM'S SCHEME FOR MENTORING YOUNG AUTHORS (PM-YUVA 3.0)

#### Context

- The Ministry of Education launched the third edition of the Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors (PM-YUVA 3.0).

#### About

- The initiative aims to train young authors **under the age of 30** to promote reading, writing, and book culture in India.
- The program provides mentorship and publishing opportunities to enhance Indian literature on a global platform.
- It focuses on **three themes**:
  - ♦ Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Nation Building;
  - ♦ Indian Knowledge System; and
  - ♦ Makers of Modern India (1950-2025).
- The scheme is in line with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which highlights the need to create a knowledge-driven ecosystem.
- **The National Book Trust, India**, will oversee the implementation of PM-YUVA 3.0.

Source: AIR

### OILFIELD (REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL PASSED IN LOK SABHA

#### Context

- Lok Sabha passed the Oilfield (Regulatory and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024.
  - ♦ The Bill was earlier passed by the Rajya Sabha on 3rd December, 2024.

#### Key Provisions of the Bill

- The Bill amends the **Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948**.
  - ♦ The Act regulates the exploration and extraction of natural gas and petroleum.
- **Definition of mineral oils expanded:** The earlier Act defines mineral oils to include petroleum and natural gas. The Amendment Bill expands the definition to include:
  - ♦ Any naturally occurring hydrocarbon,
  - ♦ Coal bed methane, and Shale gas/oil.
  - ♦ However, it clarifies that mineral oils will **not include coal, lignite or helium**.
- **Introduction of petroleum lease:** The Bill replaces the mining lease with a petroleum lease, which also covers a similar set of activities.
  - ♦ Existing mining leases granted under the Act will continue to be valid.

Source: PIB



## PRADHAN MANTRI JAN VIKAS KARYAKRAM (PMJVK)

### In News

- The National Review Meeting was conducted by the Ministry of Minority Affairs to assess the progress of the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)**.

### The Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** aimed at developing community infrastructure and basic amenities in 1300 identified areas across India.
- The scheme, restructured in May 2018, focuses on reducing socio-economic gaps
- It is implemented through State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administrations.
- It operates on a fund-sharing pattern between the Centre and States/UTs.

### Priorities and Focus

- The scheme prioritizes projects in education, health, skill development, and women's welfare, such as building schools, hostels, laboratories, ITIs, hospitals, and community toilets.
- Proposals for projects are recommended by State Level Committees (SLC) and approved by the Empowered Committee (EC) within the Ministry.

Source :Air

## THALASSEMIA

### Context

- Andhra Pradesh is considering increasing the monthly pension for thalassemia patients and extending it to those above the poverty line, given the high cost of treatment.
  - At present, the government is providing treatment to patients below the poverty line under the NTR Vaidya Seva scheme.

### What is Thalassemia?

- Thalassemia is an **inherited blood disorder** (passed from parents to children through genes) where the body cannot produce enough **hemoglobin**, the protein in red blood cells (RBCs) that carries oxygen.
- Each red blood cell contains 240 to 300 million hemoglobin molecules, and a deficiency leads to **severe anemia**, requiring **blood transfusions every 2-3 weeks** for survival.

- Symptoms of Thalassemia:** Apart from anemia, patients may experience: weak bones, delayed or slow growth, Iron overload (due to frequent transfusions), poor appetite, enlarged spleen or liver, and pale skin.

### Do you know?

- India is known as the **thalassemia capital of the world**, with over **1,00,000 patients dying** before the age of 20 due to lack of access to treatment.
  - The **first case** of thalassaemia in India was reported in **1938**.
- In India, **thalassemia**, along with two other blood disorders (Hemophilia and Sickle Cell disease), was recognised as a benchmark disability in the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, of 2016**.
- Every year, **World Thalassemia Day** is observed on **May 8** to raise awareness among the public and policymakers.

Source: TH

## ASTRA MISSILE

### Context

- The indigenously-built Tejas light combat aircraft successfully test-fired the **Astra air-to-air missile** off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha.

### About

- Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**), Astra is an advanced **beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM)** designed to engage targets over **100 km away**.
- Equipped with advanced guidance and navigation systems, it ensures **high precision** in target engagement.
- Inducted into the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, Astra strengthens India's air defense with its ability to achieve speeds exceeding **Mach 4** and reach a maximum altitude of **20 km**, making it highly effective in air combat.

Source: DD News

## MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR

### In News

- The Indian Railways will dig ponds as part of the Union government's **Mission Amrit Sarovar** that aims to address the critical issue of water scarcity in the country.

### Mission Amrit Sarovar

- **About:** It was launched on April 24, 2022, to conserve water for the future by developing and rejuvenating ponds (Amrit Sarovars) across India.
  - ♦ It aims to develop or **rejuvenate 75 Amrit Sarovars** in each district of India, totaling approximately 50,000 ponds nationwide.
- **Features:**
  - ♦ It is a **“Whole of Government”** approach with participation from multiple ministries:
    - Rural Development, Jal Shakti, Culture, Panchayati Raj, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, and technical organizations.
- The works are being implemented by States and Districts with convergence from various ongoing schemes like:
  - ♦ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), 15th Finance Commission Grants, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sishayi Yojna sub-schemes like Watershed Development Component and Har Khetko Pani.
  - ♦ Public contributions such as crowdfunding and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are allowed to support the initiative.

### Importance

- Amrit Sarovars will provide opportunities for livelihood through activities such as irrigation, fisheries, duckery, water chestnut cultivation, water tourism, and other related activities.
- The ponds will act as social gathering points in the localities and serve as sites for flag hoisting on Independence Day.

### Progress

- As of January 2025, over 68,000 Sarovars have been completed, improving surface and groundwater availability across various regions.
- Phase Two was launched with a focus on water availability, community participation (Jan Bhagidaari), strengthening climate resilience, and fostering ecological balance for lasting benefits.

Source :TH

## LIE-DETECTOR TEST (POLYGRAPH TEST)

### In Context

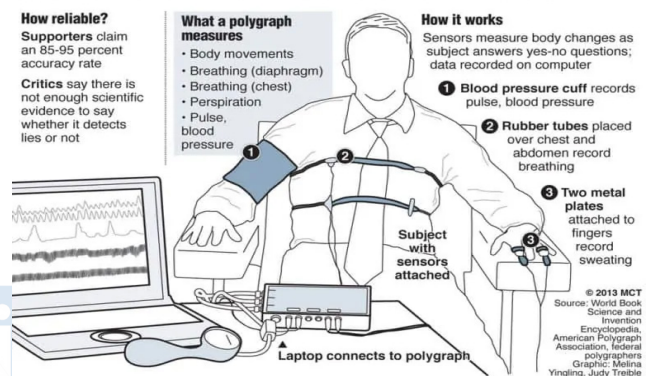
- The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) conducted a **polygraph test of the** prime accused in the New India Cooperative Bank's fraud case.

### What is the Polygraph Test?

- The Polygraph Test is commonly known as a **lie detector test**.

### Do polygraphs detect lies?

*Polygraph or “lie detector” exams continue to be used by law enforcement and government agencies for various screenings even though most criminal courts ban polygraph evidence.*



- It is based on the assumption that **physiological responses** (heartbeat, changes in breathing, sweating, etc.) triggered when a person is lying are different from what they would be otherwise.
- **Instruments** like cardio-cuffs or sensitive electrodes are attached to the person, and variables such as blood pressure, pulse, blood flow, etc., are measured as questions are put to them.
- A **numerical value is assigned** to each response to conclude whether the person is telling the truth, is deceiving, or is uncertain.

### Are the results of the tests admissible as evidence?

- In **‘Selvi & Ors vs State of Karnataka & Anr’ (2010)** the Supreme Court said,
- that the results of the tests cannot be considered to be **“confessions”**.
- However, any information or material subsequently discovered with the help of such a voluntarily-taken test can be admitted as evidence.

Source: TH