

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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NINE YEARS OF PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHIT MATRITVA ABHIYAN

In Context

- As of now, 6.19 crore pregnant women have been examined under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA).

About Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)

- Launched in June 2016**, it is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- It was designed to provide **assured, comprehensive, and quality antenatal care (ANC) services free of cost** to all pregnant women on the 9th of every month, particularly during the second and third trimesters.
- The PMSMA aligns with the broader goals of the **Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health plus Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) strategy** under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
- This has led to a significant improvement in **India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)**, which declined from 130 per lakh live births in 2014-16 to 80 per lakh live births in 2021-23—a notable reduction of 50 points.

KEY FEATURES OF PMSMA

- Monthly antenatal checkups on the 9th of every month at public health facilities.
- Services provided by OBGY specialists, radiologists, physicians, with private sector support.
- Minimum package for every woman: essential investigations (including 2nd trimester ultrasound) and medicines (IFA, calcium).
- Single window system for all ANC services and investigations.
- Special focus on:
 - Unregistered or missed ANC women
 - Dropouts
 - High-risk pregnancies
- Distribution of Mother and Child Protection Cards and safe motherhood booklets.
- High-risk pregnancy identification:
 - Green sticker: no risk
 - Red sticker: high risk

Extended PMSMA (E-PMSMA)

- About:** Launched in 2022 to ensure tracing and tracking of High-Risk Pregnant (HRP) women till a safe delivery is achieved by provisioning financial incentivization for the identified HRP women.
- Features:** Name-based line listing of HRPs.

- Provision of additional PMSMA Session (Max 4 times in a month).
- Individual tracking of HRP up to a healthy outcome (till 45th day after delivery).
- SMS alert to beneficiary as well as to the ASHA for registration of HRP & follow-up visits.

Integration with National Health Policies

- PMSMA complements other existing programs of the government like:
 - Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** Launched to incentivize institutional deliveries through conditional cash transfers. This scheme has benefitted over 11.07 crore women as of March 2025.
 - Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK):** Launched to promote free institutional delivery and neonatal care. More than 16.60 crore beneficiaries have been served since 2014-15.
 - LaQshya:** Initiative for improving quality of care in labour rooms.
 - Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN):** Launched to strengthen respectful and quality care for pregnant women. 90,015 SUMAN health facilities have been notified across the country by March 2025.
 - POSHAN Abhiyaan:** Launched to target the most vulnerable—children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers—by revamping the nutrition services. As of present, there are 6.97 crore Poshan Pakhwadas across the country.
 - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Launched to promote institutional delivery and ensuring maternal health, the scheme provides direct cash benefits of 5,000 to pregnant and lactating women.

Source: PIB

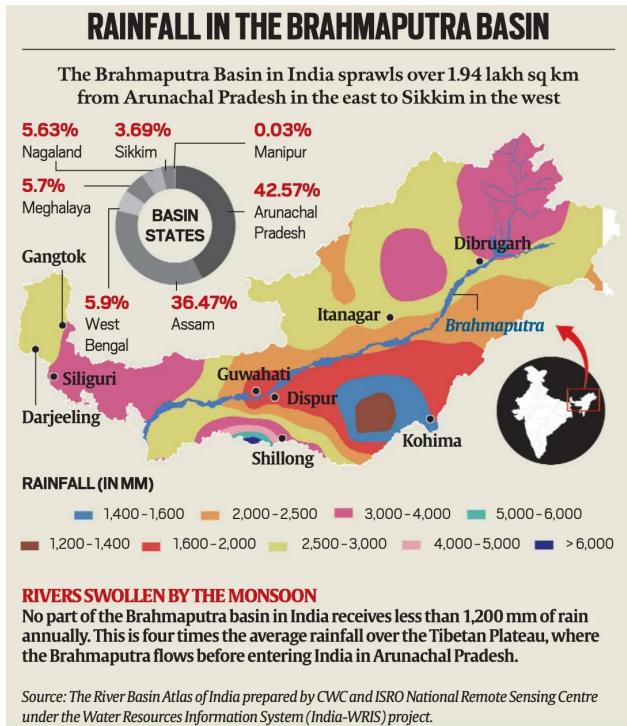
BRAHMAPUTRA FLOW IN INDIA AND IMPACT OF CHINESE DAMS

In Context

- India is closely monitoring Chinese infrastructure projects on the Brahmaputra River, particularly hydropower developments, due to their potential impact on downstream regions such as Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Brahmaputra River System

- The **Brahmaputra River** originates in the **Kailash ranges** at 5,150 m elevation, flows 2,900 km in total, including 916 km in India.



- It originates as **Yarlung Tsangpo** in Tibet .
- Its basin spans across **Tibet (China), Bhutan, India, and Bangladesh.**
- In India, it covers Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim.
- It enters India near Gelling in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - ♦ The river, which is called **Siang in Arunachal**, is joined by many tributaries in Assam as it flows down the plains before entering Bangladesh, where it is called **Jamuna**.
- **Tributaries:** Key right-bank tributaries include the Lohit, Dibang, Subansiri, and Teesta.
 - ♦ Left-bank tributaries include the Burhidihing and Kopili.
- **River-Linking Projects:**
 - ♦ **Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link:** Connects Brahmaputra to Ganga via Sankosh & Teesta.
 - ♦ **Jogighopa-Teesta-Farakka Link:** Links Brahmaputra via Jogighopa Barrage to Farakka on Ganga.
- **Host Riverine Island:** It hosts Majuli, the world's largest river island, and Umananda, the smallest river island in the world, both located in Assam.

How Could Chinese Dams Affect the Brahmaputra in India?

- **Hydrological Impact:** The Chinese dams may alter natural water flow patterns, affecting seasonal water availability.
 - ♦ **Example:** Medog Hydropower Project (proposed 60,000 MW) near the 'Great Bend' of the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet.

- ♦ A sudden release of water or temporary water retention can exacerbate floods or worsen dry spells in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, especially during the lean season.
- **Ecological Disruptions:** Reduced sediment flow, altered flood regimes, and biodiversity loss.
 - ♦ **Example:** The Kaziranga National Park, home to the one-horned rhinoceros, depends on regular flooding of the Brahmaputra for ecological regeneration.
- **Strategic & Geopolitical Risk:** Gives China a perceived upper hand in water diplomacy; potential tool for coercion. Like during the **2017 Doklam standoff**, China withheld hydrological data on the Brahmaputra, which it is obligated to share under a bilateral agreement.
- **Economic Consequences:** Uncertainty in water flow can affect irrigation, agriculture, and hydropower generation downstream.
 - ♦ **Example:** Any disruption in Subansiri and Siang tributaries, where India has planned large hydropower projects (e.g., Lower Subansiri Hydro Project), can delay infrastructure timelines or reduce output.
- **Inter-State Tensions in India:** Unpredictable flow from upstream may aggravate water-sharing conflicts between Indian states.

China's Contribution Vs India's Share

- Multiple expert studies (e.g., by PK Saxena and Teerath Mehra) indicate that China contributes only 22–30% of Brahmaputra's annual discharge.
- 70–78% of the river's flow is generated within India, primarily due to monsoonal rainfall and tributary inflows in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- Hydrologically, China's control over the river's headwaters has limited influence on its overall flow in India.
- Even to address water scarcity, two river-linking projects have been proposed: the **Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link** and the **Jogighopa-Teesta-Farakka Link**.

Way Forward

- India should conduct **detailed scientific studies** and develop an **adaptive strategy** to assess the impact of Chinese projects on the Brahmaputra.
- It must **strengthen diplomatic efforts** to access hydrological data and establish data-sharing protocols with China for early warnings and disaster preparedness.
- India can use forums like BIMSTEC, SCO, and Quad to internationalize the issue and press for sustainable and equitable transboundary river management.

Source :IE

DEMAND FOR COMPULSORY LICENSING FOR RARE DISEASE

Context

- A growing number of rare disease patients in India are urging the government to invoke the compulsory licensing provision under the **Indian Patents Act, 1970**.

About

- Compulsory licensing is a legal tool under **Section 84 of the Indian Patents Act, 1970**, which allows the government or any third party to manufacture a patented product or use a patented process **without the consent of the patent owner** in certain conditions.
- It aims to protect **public health and access to affordable medicines**.
- A compulsory license in India** can be granted **three years** after a patent is issued if:
 - The patented invention is not available to the public at a reasonable price.
 - The reasonable requirements of the public are not being satisfied.
 - The invention is not being worked on in the territory of India.

Legal Policy Landscape

- Patent Law Amendments:** India's 1970 Patents Act originally allowed only **process patents**, enabling generic drug manufacturing.
 - Hence, India became the **"pharmacy of the world"** by producing affordable medicines.
- Safeguards Against Monopoly Abuse:** India's law includes **anti-evergreening provisions (Section 3(d))** to prevent companies from extending monopoly through minor modifications.
 - It also allows for **pre- and post-grant opposition** to patents.

TRIPS Agreement and Flexibilities

- India became a member of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** and was required to align its intellectual property laws with the **TRIPS Agreement (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)**, which came into effect in **1995**.
 - The TRIPS Agreement provides for the compulsory licensing (CL).
- India amended its Patents Act in 2005**, allowing for both product and process patents in the pharmaceutical sector.
 - These patents are now valid for a period of **20 years** from the date of filing.
- The Doha Declaration** on TRIPS and Public Health (2001) further clarified that:

- Countries may issue a compulsory license in the interest of **public health emergencies**, although the presence of an emergency is **not a mandatory condition**.
- Each country has the **sovereign right to determine the grounds** on which it can issue a compulsory license.
- The patent holder must be compensated through the payment of **"adequate remuneration,"** the amount of which is to be determined by the issuing country based on the economic value of the license.
- A waiver in 2003**, later made permanent in **2017**, allowed countries to **import affordable drugs produced under CL** from other nations.
 - This created a legal route for cross-border access to affordable medicines.

What are Rare Diseases?

- Rare diseases, also known as **orphan diseases**, are conditions that occur infrequently within a population.
 - They are characterized by three key markers:** Total number of people with the disease, Prevalence and Availability /Non-availability of treatment options.
- The World Health Organization (WHO)** defines a rare disease as a condition that affects a small percentage of the population, typically fewer than 1 in 1,000 to 2,000 people.

Initiatives taken for rare diseases in India

- National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021:** It was launched in **2021**, under which financial assistance up to Rs 50 lakh is provided to patients receiving treatment at an identified Centre of Excellence (CoE).
- The Health Ministry has opened a **Digital Portal for Crowdfunding & Voluntary Donations** with information about patients and their rare diseases.
 - Donors can choose the CoE and patient treatments they wish to support.
- Each **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** also has its own **Rare Disease Fund**, which is used with approval from its governing authority.
- The Department of Pharmaceuticals has launched the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** for Pharmaceuticals, offering financial incentives to selected manufacturers for **domestic production of orphan drugs**.

Source: IE

INDIA-TÜRKIYE RELATIONS

Context

- India is carefully balancing its trade relations with Türkiye (*Turkey*), ensuring that economic advantages are not compromised despite geopolitical concerns.

About India-Turkey Relations

- Historical and Early Diplomatic Engagements:** India and Turkey share a long history of diplomatic and cultural exchanges, dating back to the **Ottoman era**.
 - The **first exchange** of diplomatic missions between the **Ottoman Sultans and the Muslim rulers** of the subcontinent dates back to the years **1481-82**.
 - The **Sufi Philosophy of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi** found a natural resonance **Bhakti movement in India**.
- Political Engagement:** Both have maintained formal **diplomatic ties since 1948**.
 - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited India for the **G20 Summit in 2023**.
 - Both nations focused on trade, investment, defense, and security cooperation.
 - Turkey has participated in multilateral forums such as the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** and **ASEAN meetings**, where officials from both nations have engaged in dialogue.
- Trade and Economic Relations:** The **Bilateral Trade Agreement between India and Turkey** was **signed in 1973**.
 - It was followed by an Agreement on setting up an **India-Turkey Joint Commission on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC)** in 1983.

Current Trade Statistics

- India has a **trade surplus of \$2.73 billion** with Turkey, primarily driven by **engineering goods, electronics, and chemicals**.
- In FY25, **India's exports to Turkey totaled \$5.72 billion**, with engineering exports accounting for over 50% of the total.
- Turkey had **increased petroleum product imports from India** following the **Ukraine war**, but it has seen a **significant decline** in FY25.
- However, Turkey's exports to India remain limited to fruits, nuts, gold, and marble.

Do You Know?

- Türkiye is currently the **8th largest destination** of Indian engineering merchandise.
- India is the **3rd top supplier to Turkey after Russia and UAE for aluminium** and its products, **10th supplier** for electrical machinery & equipment and **11th supplier** for medical & surgical equipment and pharmaceutical machinery.
- In the last five fiscal years, **India's engineering exports to Turkey** increased by **24%**.

Defense and Security Cooperation: Türkiye has expressed interest in defense collaboration, including joint military exercises and technology exchange.

Concerns & Challenges in India-Turkey Relations

- Geopolitical Challenges:** Turkey's support for **Pakistan**, including military supplies, has led to **security clearance cancellations** for Turkish firms operating in India.
 - Additionally, Turkey has **historically backed Pakistan on the Kashmir issue**, further straining diplomatic ties.
- Security & Infrastructure Issues:** India recently revoked security clearance for **Çelebi Airport Services India** citing national security concerns.
 - It reflects India's growing scrutiny of Turkish firms involved in critical infrastructure.
 - Additionally, concerns over **Turkish drones used by Pakistan** in military conflicts have strained relations.

India's Response

- India has been actively engaging with **Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia** to counterbalance Turkey's influence and military expansion in South Asia.

Source: IE

NEW BASE YEAR FOR GDP, CPI, IIP FROM EARLY 2026

Context

- As per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), **Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI)** will see a **new base from next year onwards**.

About

- In 2024, MoSPI has set up a **26-member Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics** to decide the base year for GDP data.

- ♦ **Biswanath Goldar** has been appointed as its chairman.
- **For GDP**, the new series is scheduled to be released **on February 27, 2026 with financial year 2022-23 as base year.**
- **For IIP**, 2022 -23 has been tentatively identified as the revised base. **IIP on revised base would be released from 2026-27.**
- For CPI, **2024 has been identified as the revised base year** as the item basket and the weightage of the items would be decided based on the **NSO's Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (HCES) conducted in 2023-24.**
 - ♦ The new CPI series is expected to be published from the **first quarter of 2026.**

What is Base Year?

- A base year is a **benchmark year** used for **comparison in economic and statistical calculations.**
- It provides a **reference point** against which **current values of indicators like GDP, CPI, and IIP are measured** to track real changes over time.
- **Significance:**
 - ♦ It allows us to **remove the effect of inflation** and see real growth.
 - ♦ Helps in creating **index numbers** (like CPI = 100 in base year).
 - ♦ Ensures that the **data reflects the current structure of the economy**, consumption patterns, and prices.

Need for the Change of the Base Year?

- It is usually changed every 7–10 years to reflect:
 - ♦ New consumption patterns;
 - ♦ Changes in economic structure;
 - ♦ Introduction of new goods and services.
- Ensures data remains relevant and accurate.
- This will give a clearer picture about the state of the economy which will help the government to design its economic policies.

Economic Datasets

- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** GDP is the **total monetary value of all final goods and services** produced within a **country's domestic territory** during a **specific period (usually a quarter or a year).**
 - ♦ It is calculated by **adding up all the expenditures** made in the economy, including **expenditures by Indians in their individual capacity, expenditures by governments, expenditures by private businesses, etc.**
 - ♦ This provides a picture of the **demand side of the economy.**

- ♦ **Current base year used 2011–12.**
- ♦ **Released By:** National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Index of Industrial Production (IIP):** IIP measures the **volume of production** in the **industrial sector**, including mining, manufacturing, and electricity.
 - ♦ It is a volume-based index, not value-based like GDP.
 - ♦ Indicates industrial activity, helping assess the short-term economic momentum.
 - ♦ **Published monthly** and the base year currently is **2011–12** (revision to 2022–23 is underway).
 - ♦ **Released By:** NSO, MoSPI.
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI):** CPI measures the **average change in prices** paid by **consumers for a basket of goods and services** over time — i.e., it tracks retail inflation.
 - ♦ Tracks cost of living and purchasing power.
 - ♦ Includes items like food, housing, clothing, transport, etc.
 - ♦ It is published **monthly**, the **current base year: 2012** (to be revised to 2024).
 - ♦ **Released By:** NSO, MoSPI.

Conclusion

- By updating the base years—GDP and IIP to 2022–23 and CPI to 2024—India aims to capture **recent shifts** in consumption patterns, industrial output, and price structures.
- These changes will ensure that the data used for economic analysis and policy formulation is more **accurate, relevant, and reflective of contemporary conditions.**
- This, in turn, will enhance the **effectiveness of government planning, policymaking, and monitoring** of the country's economic progress.

Source: IE

CONSULTATIVE REGULATION-MAKING

Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a policy framework for **how it will publish regulations, directions, guidelines and notifications.**

Background

- This follows a similar move by the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**, which published regulations setting out the procedure it would follow to issue regulations.

- **Both RBI and SEBI are statutory regulators** with **quasi-legislative powers**, have initiated reforms to **improve transparency and accountability** in regulation-making.
- These reforms are in line with **global best practices** and are essential to uphold the **rule of law**.

Recent Reforms

- RBI will now conduct **impact analyses** before issuing regulations.
- SEBI will **clarify the regulatory intent** and objectives of its proposals.
- Both regulators will **invite public comments for at least 21 days** and will periodically review their existing regulations.

Significance

- **Strengthens Democratic Legitimacy:** It ensures that rule-making by unelected bodies (like RBI and SEBI) is democratically accountable.
- **Improves Regulatory Quality:** Inviting feedback from stakeholders (businesses, experts, civil society) helps regulators design better, more effective rules.
- **Increases Public Trust:** Transparency in regulation-making builds trust in the regulatory process.
- **Enhances Compliance and Implementation:** Regulations developed through consultation are more likely to be realistic and practical, leading to better compliance.
- **Facilitates Periodic Review and Reform:** Public inputs and defined review mechanisms ensure that outdated or ineffective regulations are identified and amended or repealed.
- **Aligns with Global Best Practices:** Advanced jurisdictions like the US, UK, and the EU have institutionalised consultative mechanisms.

Challenges

- **Slows Down the Regulatory Process:** Consultation and impact assessment add time to the regulation-making process.
- **Risk of Regulatory Capture:** Powerful interest groups or industry lobbies may dominate consultations.
- **Resource and Capacity Constraints:** Regulators like RBI and SEBI face limited administrative capacity and technical expertise.
 - ♦ Conducting detailed impact assessments, public consultations, and cost-benefit analyses for each regulation can overburden staff and divert resources from enforcement or supervision.

- **Confidentiality and Sensitivity:** Certain regulatory matters (e.g., monetary policy, cybersecurity, systemic risks) require confidentiality.
 - ♦ Public consultations in such cases can lead to speculation, market volatility, or information leakage.

Conclusion

- India has begun moving toward more transparent and consultative financial regulation-making through reforms by RBI and SEBI.
- However, further steps—like mandating economic justification, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and enacting a comprehensive procedural law—are needed to institutionalize good regulatory practices across the board.

Source: TH

KERALA WANTS CENTRE TO AMEND THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT

Context

- The Kerala government has urged the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to amend the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLPA)**, so it can be allowed to kill wild animals that foray into human habitats.

Kerala's Demands to the Union government

- **Amend WLPA, 1972** to allow culling of "man-eating" or dangerous wild animals without excessive procedural delays.
- **Declare Wild Boars as Vermin under Section 62** of the Act, permitting their hunting in designated areas for a limited time.
- **Remove Bonnet Macaques from Schedule I**, thus allowing wildlife authorities to take direct action like capture and relocation.

Reasons for increase in human-wildlife conflict

- **Degraded Habitats:** Deforestation, developmental activities, and agricultural expansion have shrunk and fragmented wildlife habitats.
- **Rise in Certain Animal Populations:** Explosion in the population of wild pigs and monkeys, especially bonnet macaques, has worsened the conflict.
- **Human Activities:** Grazing of cattle in forest areas and changes in cropping patterns attract wild animals.
- **Ecological Imbalances:** Decline in top predator species due to historical hunting policies has led to an unnatural increase in herbivorous species.

The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

- The WLP, 1972 contains six schedules that assign different levels of protection:
 - ♦ **Schedule I & II:** Provide the highest protection to species like tigers, elephants, etc. Offences under these schedules attract the most stringent penalties.
 - ♦ **Schedule V:** Lists species classified as 'vermin', such as common crows, fruit bats, rats, and mice, which can be hunted without restriction.

Procedure to declare Vermin

- **State Government's Request:** A state government can request the Central Government to declare a wild animal as vermin if it is causing significant issues like property damage, crop damage, or posing a threat to human life or livestock.
- **Central Government Notification:** The Central Government can, by notification, declare a wild animal (except those in Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II) as vermin for a specific area and time period.
- **Loss of Protection:** Once declared vermin, the animal loses its protection under the Wildlife Protection Act and can be hunted or culled without penalty.

What are the Concerns?

- **Ecological Disruption:** Mass culling creates vacuum in the food chain and affects predator-prey balance.
- **Risk to Non-target Species:** Traps for wild boars have caught tigers and leopards in states like Karnataka.
- **Lack of Data:** Many decisions are made without comprehensive data on species population, crop damage, or conflict hotspots.
- **Ethical Concerns:**
 - ♦ **Sanctity of Animal Life:** Unjustified or mass culling raises moral concerns about the right to life of wild animals.
 - ♦ **Species Discrimination:** Labelling certain animals as 'vermin' can lead to systemic extermination based on human convenience, not ecological necessity.
 - ♦ **Welfare Violations:** Lethal traps and inhumane killing methods often cause unnecessary suffering to both target and non-target species.

Source:TH

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE 2025

In News

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed the **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure 2025**.

International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure 2025

- It brings together governments, organizations, institutions, the media, and infrastructure stakeholders to strengthen the global discourse on disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- It is being hosted in **Europe for the very first time**.
- It is aligned with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) in Geneva, and third U.N. Oceans Conference (UNOC3).
- **The theme, 'Shaping a Resilient Future for Coastal Regions,'** highlights the vulnerability of coastal areas and islands to natural disasters and climate change.
 - ♦ Recent events like **Cyclone Remal** in India and Bangladesh, **Hurricane Beryl** in the Caribbean, **Typhoon Yagi** in South-east Asia, **Hurricane Helene** in the United States, **Typhoon Usagi** in Philippines and **Cyclone Chido** in parts of Africa.
 - Such disasters caused damage to lives and property.

Key Points

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled India's experiences with past disasters, such as the **1999 super-cyclone** and the **2004 tsunami**, noting the country's progress in building cyclone shelters and a tsunami warning system.
- He praised the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure's (CDRI)** work with 25 Small Island Developing States and welcomed the African Union's involvement.
 - ♦ He outlined **five key priorities:** integrating disaster resilience in education, creating a global digital repository of best practices, ensuring innovative financing for developing nations, supporting Small Island Developing States, and strengthening early warning systems.
- **African Union** joins India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure at international conference on disaster infrastructure

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- It was **launched in 2019** by the Government of India with **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** support.
- It is a global partnership of governments, UN agencies, development banks, the private sector, and academia.

54	163	\$21.52 _{mn}
Members	Projects	Funding

- Its goal is to **enhance the resilience of infrastructure** to climate and disaster risks, supporting sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs.
- It helps countries strengthen both existing and future infrastructure in line with the SDGs, Paris Agreement, and Sendai Framework.

Source :PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

ULLAS PROGRAM

In News

- Mizoram and Goa declared themselves “fully literate” under the ULLAS adult literacy programme, with literacy rates of 98.2% and 99.72%, respectively.

ULLAS program

- ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram, also known as the New India Literacy Programme (NILP).
- It is a **centrally sponsored initiative** that aligns with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- It aims to provide functional literacy (reading, writing, numeracy) and life skills to adults aged 15+ who missed formal education, enabling their social integration and contribution to national growth.
- The programme is driven by volunteerism, promotes social responsibility ('Kartavya Bodh'), and offers educational content in regional languages via the DIKSHA platform and ULLAS app.
 - Learners and volunteers receive certificates to encourage motivation and ongoing learning.

Source :IE

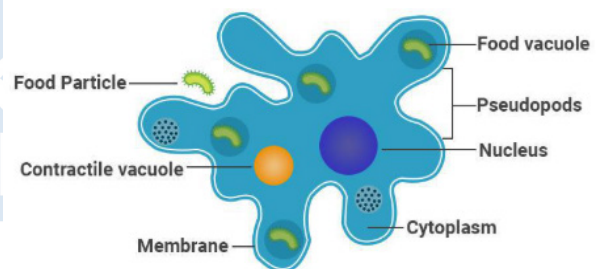
AMOEBA

Context

- Kerala's State Public Health Laboratory (PHL) has developed **molecular diagnostic kits** to detect five species of free-living amoeba (FLA) that can cause **amoebic meningoencephalitis**.

What is an Amoeba?

- Amoeba is a type of **single-celled microscopic organism** that belongs to the group **protozoa**.
- It is one of the simplest forms of life and is found in water, soil, and other moist environments.
- Key Characteristics:**
 - Eukaryotic:** It has a well-defined nucleus.
 - Shape-shifting:** Amoebae have no fixed shape; they constantly change shape by extending parts of their body called **pseudopodia (false feet)**.
 - Movement and Feeding:** Pseudopodia help them move and engulf food particles (a process called phagocytosis).
 - Reproduction:** They reproduce asexually through binary fission, where the cell splits into two.



Amoeba

What Is Amoebic Meningoencephalitis?

- Amoebic meningoencephalitis** is a rare and often **deadly brain infection** caused by certain species of free-living amoeba.
- It **affects the central nervous system (CNS)** and usually occurs when contaminated water enters the nasal passages and reaches the brain.
- Symptoms:** fever, nausea, stiff neck, seizures, and rapid progression to coma and death.

Source: TH

11TH BRICS PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

Context

- The **11th BRICS Parliamentary Forum** was held in Brasilia, Brazil.

About

- A broad consensus was reached on **key global issues**: the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), global trade and economy, inter-parliamentary cooperation, global peace and security.
- India stressed the **need for joint efforts** to curb financial support to terrorist organizations, enhance intelligence sharing, prevent the misuse of emerging technologies, and promote cooperation in investigation and judicial processes.
- India was entrusted with **hosting the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum next year**, and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla was formally handed over the **chairmanship**.

About BRICS

- **BRICS** is an acronym that refers to a group of **five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.
 - ♦ **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates** have joined BRICS as new full members.
- The term was originally coined by economist **Jim O'Neill in 2001**.
- **Origin**: As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the Leaders of Russia, India and China in St. Petersburg on the margins of the **G8 Outreach Summit in 2006**.
 - ♦ The grouping was formalized during the 1st meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of **UNGA in New York in 2006**.
 - ♦ Initially, the grouping was termed BRIC as **South Africa was inducted in 2010** and from there on it has been referred to as **BRICS**.
- **Summits**: The governments of the BRICS states have met annually at formal summits **since 2009**.
- BRICS countries have come together to deliberate on important issues under the **three pillars of**:
 - ♦ political and security,
 - ♦ economic and financial and
 - ♦ cultural and people-to-people exchanges.
- **New Development Bank**: Formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states.
 - ♦ The Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.

Source: PIB

LOSGNA OCCIDENTALIS

In News

- The discovery of a new species of **parasitic wasp - named 'Losgna Occidentalis'** from Chandigarh has drawn attention to the **unexplored richness of India's biodiversity**.

About

- The genus Losgna belongs to the **family Ichneumonidae**, commonly known as **Darwin wasps**. These are **parasitic wasps known for laying eggs** in or on other arthropods, thus playing an **important role in biological pest control**.
 - ♦ Parasitic wasps belong to the order **Hymenoptera**, which also **includes bees and ants**.
 - ♦ They **do not build hives**, nor do they serve a queen like social bees or ants.
- The genus was last recorded in India in 1965 by the **German entomologist Heinrich**. Since then, no specimens or records have been found in Indian collections.
- They serve as natural biocontrol agents by targeting pest species like crop-eating insects.

Source: TH

AI RAM INITIATIVE

Context

- The UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia, in collaboration with the IndiaAI Mission and Ikigai Law, organized the **5th and final Stakeholder Consultation on AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) in India**.

AI RAM Initiative

- The initiative aims to develop an **India-specific AI policy** report that maps strengths, identifies growth opportunities and offers actionable recommendations for the ethical and responsible adoption of AI across sectors.
- The AI RAM acts as a **diagnostic tool to support governments** in strengthening regulatory and institutional capacity in AI.

Significance of the initiatives

- Aligns with the **INDIAai Mission**, launched with over **₹10,000 crore** funding.
- Prioritises the "Safe and Trusted AI" pillar focused on:
 - ♦ Ethical AI development,
 - ♦ Indigenous governance frameworks,
 - ♦ Self-assessment guidelines,
 - ♦ Capacity-building for AI innovation.

Source: PIB

STRATOSPHERIC AEROSOL INJECTION

Context

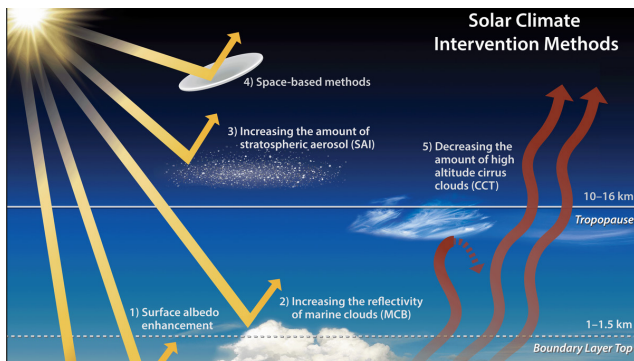
- Some researchers have proposed **Stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI)** to directly cool the planet rather than bank on reducing emissions alone.

About

- The team found that **injecting 12 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide every year** at an altitude of **13 km in the local spring and summer seasons** of each hemisphere could cool the planet by **approximately 0.6° C**.

Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI)

- It is a proposed form of **geoengineering** aimed at **cooling the Earth by reflecting a portion of sunlight back into space**.
- It involves the **deliberate release of aerosols** (tiny reflective particles) into the **stratosphere**, typically **10–50 km above the Earth's surface**.
- Aerosols Used:**
 - Most commonly proposed is **sulfur dioxide (SO₂)**.
 - Alternatives:** calcium carbonate, titanium dioxide, or alumina.
- Mechanism:**
 - Aerosols scatter and reflect incoming solar radiation.
 - This reduces the amount of sunlight reaching the Earth's surface, cooling the planet.



- Delivery Methods:**
 - High-altitude aircraft;
 - Stratospheric balloons;
 - Artillery shells or rockets (less feasible).

Potential Benefits:

- Could rapidly lower global temperatures.
- May buy time to implement long-term climate mitigation strategies.
- Potential to slow melting of polar ice and reduce heatwaves.

Source: TH

30X30 TARGET

Context

- A new report has revealed that the world needs to **invest \$15.8 billion** annually to meet the **30x30 target**.

About the 30x30 Target

- The 30x30 target is **one of 23 goals** outlined in the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, adopted by 196 countries in 2022, to halt and reverse nature loss.
- It aims to conserve and manage at least **30 per cent** of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal areas through protected areas (PA) and **other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)**.
- The 30x30 target is more ambitious than its predecessor **Aichi Target 11**, which aimed for the protection of **17% of land and 10% of coastal and marine areas**.

Source: DTE

NOMADIC ELEPHANT

Context

- The **17th edition** of the joint military exercise '**Nomadic Elephant**' is being held at the **Special Forces Training Centre in Mongolia**.

About

- It is an **annual event** conducted **alternatively** in India and Mongolia.
- The first edition of the exercise was conducted in **2004**.
- The last edition of the same exercise was conducted at **Meghalaya in 2024**.
- The exercise is aimed at **enhancing interoperability between the two forces**.

Source: TH