

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 16-07-2025

Table of Content

Supreme Court on Free Speech on Social Media
Union Government Report on Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCR Act) 1955
10 Years of Skill India Mission
India's Strategic Push for Global Capability Centers
The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
STPI Aims to Spread IT Sector Growth Nationwide
Black Hole Merger
Confined Field Trials on GM Maize

NEWS IN SHORT

Thiru K. Kamaraj
Spinning of Earth
Furlough & Parole
Indian Council of Agricultural Research
Statathon: A Data Journey Towards Viksit Bharat
India's first Digital Nomad Village inaugurated in Sikkim
Patriot Air Defense Systems

SUPREME COURT ON FREE SPEECH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In News

- The Supreme Court of India expressed concern over the increasing abuse of the right to free speech, particularly on social media, and stressed the need for self-restraint and regulation.

SC Observations

- The Court reiterated that freedom of speech and expression is integral to a civilised society and cannot be "trampled upon on flimsy and fanciful grounds."
- The Supreme Court has clearly stated that the right to **freedom of speech (Article 19)** must be balanced against the **right to life and dignity (Article 21)**. In the event of conflict, dignity prevails over unfettered speech.
- The Court has stressed that citizens must exercise **self-restraint** online and highlighted that endless litigation due to offensive posts is clogging the legal system. It warned that unless people regulate themselves, **State intervention may become necessary**.

Constitutional & Legal safeguard: Freedom of speech and expression

- In India, free speech rights are governed by **Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution**, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression but allows "reasonable restrictions" under Article 19(2) for reasons like public order, decency, morality, security of the state, or incitement to violence.
- Article 361A of our Constitution says:** No person shall be liable to any proceedings, civil or criminal in any court in respect of the publication in a newspaper of a substantially true report of any proceedings of either House of the Legislature of a State, unless the publication is proved to have been made with malice.

Impacts of Social Media on Freedom of Speech

- Amplification of Voices:** Social media platforms have democratized expression, allowing individuals and marginalized groups to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences.
- Rapid Dissemination of Information:** News, information, and diverse viewpoints can spread instantaneously across social media, fostering a more informed citizenry and enabling quick responses to events.
- Increased Transparency:** Social media can hold governments, corporations, and individuals accountable by providing a platform for whistleblowers and citizens to expose wrongdoing

and share information that might otherwise be suppressed.

Challenges & Concerns

- Spread of Misinformation and Disinformation:** The ease with which content can be shared on social media also makes it a breeding ground for false rumors, propaganda, and misleading information.
- Legal and Regulatory Challenges:** Governments worldwide are grappling with how to regulate social media content while upholding freedom of speech.
 - India does not have a comprehensive law to regulate social media discourse. Although the **IT Act, 2000** and provisions of other laws address some issues, enforcement is inconsistent and weak.
- Impact on Privacy:** Digital surveillance and data gathering can create an environment where individuals are less willing to express themselves freely.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The Supreme Court emphasized that safeguarding free speech requires not just legal measures but also self-discipline and public responsibility.
- It urged citizens to use their right wisely to avoid forcing the state into imposing restrictions that may limit freedoms.
 - Misuse of speech, especially online, risks undermining democratic values.

Source: TH

UNION GOVERNMENT REPORT ON PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT (PCR ACT) 1955

Context

- The **Union government's 2022 annual report** on the implementation of **Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCR Act) 1955**, has been made public by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

Challenges Highlighted by the 2022 Report

- Underreporting:** Low case numbers may reflect lack of awareness, fear of retaliation, reluctance to use the law, or preference for the SC/ST Act, rather than actual reduction in untouchability practices.
- High Pendency and Poor Conviction Rates:** In 2022, 1,242 cases under the PCR Act were pending trial in courts.
 - The pendency rate in courts remains above 97%, indicating sluggish judicial processing.

- **Ineffective Enforcement:** The very high rate of acquittals and pendency signals gaps in investigation, evidence collection, witness/victim protection, and judicial processes.
- **Overlapping Legislation:** The enactment and broader coverage of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has shifted most prosecution of caste-based crimes under its provisions, relegating the PCR Act to limited, less severe offences.
- **Lack of State Initiative:** Several States have not established the required infrastructure or reporting systems, undermining the intended purpose of the Act.

Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCR Act) 1955

- **Article 17 of the Constitution** (enforced on 26 January 1950) legally abolished untouchability.
- To operationalise this constitutional guarantee, the **Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 was passed.**
- In 1976, the Act was comprehensively amended and renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, to reflect its **focus on the enforcement of civil rights.**

Key Provisions of Protection of Civil Rights Act

- **Definition of 'Civil Rights':** Refers to any right accruing to a person by reason of the abolition of untouchability under Article 17 of the Constitution.
- **Punishable Offences:** Denial of access to public places like temples, wells, shops, restaurants, roads, schools, etc.
 - ♦ Refusal to sell goods or render services based on untouchability.
 - ♦ Insulting a person on the ground of untouchability.
 - ♦ Compulsion to perform menial services or social boycott.
 - ♦ Preventing any person from observing any religious or social custom.
- **Nature of Offences:** All offences under the Act are cognizable and non-compoundable.
 - ♦ Enhanced punishment for repeat offenders (up to 2 years and fine).
- **Institutional Framework:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal ministry for implementation.
 - ♦ State-level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees are to be formed.
 - ♦ Annual Reports on the Act's implementation are tabled in Parliament.

Way Forward

- Revamp and strengthen enforcement mechanisms under the Act.

- Regular training and sensitisation of police, judiciary, and public officials.
- Strengthen monitoring at the district level, including the declaration of "untouchability-prone" areas where necessary.
- Improve legal aid and awareness among Dalit communities.
- Ensure better coordination between PCR Act and SC/ST PoA Act implementation.

Source: TH

10 YEARS OF SKILL INDIA MISSION

Context

- Skill India Mission completed ten years.

About Skill India Mission (SIM)

- Launched on **15 July 2015**, World Youth Skills Day, the Skill India Mission provides skill, re-skill, and up-skill training through an extensive network of skill development centres and institutes under various schemes.
- In February 2025, the restructured 'Skill India Programme' was approved for **2022-23 to 2025-26, merging** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 (PMKVY 4.0), the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS), and the Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme into a **single Central Sector Scheme.**
 - ♦ **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)-** Offers short-term skill training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for youth nationwide, including rural areas.
 - ♦ **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)-** Promotes apprenticeship with financial support for stipends, providing both basic and on-the-job training.
 - ♦ **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)-** Provides vocational skills to non-literates, neo-literates, and school dropouts (up to 12th standard), focusing on women, SC/ST/OBC, and minorities in rural and low-income urban areas.

Major Achievements (2015–2025)

- **Over 6 crore youth skilled:** Across 38 sectors, including IT, manufacturing, services, construction, and agriculture.
- **Women empowerment:** Special initiatives increased female workforce participation in several sectors.
- **Recognition:** India ranked 11th in the WorldSkills Competition 2022.
- **Sector-wise employment:** Notable growth—manufacturing (15%), services (20%), construction (25%).

Socio-Economic Impact

- **Unemployment reduced:** Employability among Indian graduates has risen to 54.81% (India Skills Report 2025).
- **Workforce participation increased:** Employment rate rose from 36.9% to 37.9% in the same period.
- **Inclusive growth:** Imparted growth for rural, tribal, LWE-affected, and Northeast regions.
- **Entrepreneurship boost:** Youth equipped for self-employment, MSMEs, and start-ups.

Challenges

- **Quality & Industry Relevance:** Skill mismatch continues in several sectors.
- **Low absorption by industry:** Some trained candidates still face placement hurdles, especially in rural and informal sectors.
- **Regional disparities:** Uneven implementation and outcomes across states.
- **Social biases:** Vocational training sometimes seen as inferior to mainstream education.
- **Infrastructure and trainer shortage:** Gaps in modern equipment and skilled trainers.
- **Funding Delays:** Funding delays and coordination issues between Central and State bodies flagged by the **Sinha Committee** (2022).

Way Forward

- **Digital push:** Greater integration of e-learning, AI-driven monitoring, and blended training models.
- **Enhanced private sector and global partnerships:** Focus on international standards and global value chains.
- **Regular impact assessment:** Focus on outcomes (job placement, entrepreneurship) beyond just training numbers.

Source: PIB

INDIA'S STRATEGIC PUSH FOR GLOBAL CAPABILITY CENTERS

Context

- India is working on comprehensive policy interventions to accelerate the growth of **Global Capability Centers (GCCs)**.

What are Global Capability Centers (GCCs)?

- These are **offshore units** established by **multinational corporations** to manage a wide range of business functions like software development, data analytics, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and customer experience management.

- These are **wholly owned subsidiaries of global firms**, offering strategic control and alignment with corporate goals.
- GCCs have evolved from **cost-saving BPO units** to strategic innovation hubs driving digital transformation, AI, and R&D.
- They differ from traditional outsourcing by focusing on value creation, innovation, and digital transformation.

Why do GCCs Matter for India?

- **High-Value Services:** GCCs deliver advanced services in AI, cloud computing, and digital transformation.

India's GCC Landscape



India has over 1,800 GCCs currently operational, with a workforce of 1.9 million professionals.



It is projected to expand to 2,400 centers and 2.8 million workforce by 2030.



GCCs are poised to contribute \$0.5 trillion to India's GDP as the nation moves toward becoming a \$10 trillion economy by 2035.



Contribution to GVA: 1.8% of India's total GVA



Revenue Forecast:
\$105 billion by 2030

- **Skill Development:** Government initiatives like the **PM Internship Scheme** and **Mutual Recognition of Skills and Standards** are aligning workforce capabilities with GCC needs.
- **Global Outreach:** India is attracting non-US multinationals from Germany, Japan, and Nordic countries, diversifying its GCC portfolio.

India's Advantage

- **Talent Pool:** 2.1 million STEM graduates annually; 35% women participation; median age of 28.
- **Infrastructure:** Digital India, ease of doing business reforms, and state-level policies in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Gujarat.
- **Policy Support:** National frameworks and state-specific GCC policies (e.g., Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh) aim to decentralize growth and promote tier-2 city expansion.

Strategic Push by the Government

- India announced a **national framework to guide GCC expansion** in the 2025–26 Budget.

- Focus areas include AI, engineering R&D, and emerging technologies.
- The government is encouraging industry-academia partnerships, internship programs, and global outreach to attract non-US multinationals.

Source: BL

THE PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS)

Context

- **The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** for June 2025 has been released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- The PLFS gives estimates of **key employment and unemployment indicators**.
- **These indicators are:**
 - ♦ **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** It is the percentage of persons in the labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
 - ♦ **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
 - ♦ **Unemployment Rate (UR):** UR is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
 - ♦ **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey.

Major Highlights

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** among persons of age **15 years and above** was **54.2 %** during June 2025 as compared to **54.8% during May, 2025**.
 - ♦ LFPR in rural areas was 56.1% and LFPR in urban areas was 50.4%.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** in rural areas among persons of age 15 years and above was 53.3% during June, 2025.
 - ♦ WPR in urban areas among persons of the same age group was 46.8% with the overall WPR at the country level observed as 51.2%.
- **The unemployment rate for females and males** of all ages above 15 was 5.6%.
 - ♦ While for men, the rate remained same as of May, for females, there was a **decrease in UR by 0.1 percentage point**.
 - ♦ While the rural unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 percentage points, the **urban**

unemployment rate increased by 0.2 percentage points between May and June.

- **The marginal decline in LFPR and WPR** was largely influenced by **seasonal agricultural patterns**, intense summer heat limiting outdoor physical work, and a shift of some unpaid helpers, particularly from higher-income rural households, towards domestic chores.

Government Initiatives to Increase Women Participation in Labour Force:

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** Under PMMY, women can avail of micro-credit loans without collateral to set up small enterprises, helping women overcome barriers related to accessing capital.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme:** The scheme works to prevent gender-based discrimination and violence, focusing on changing societal attitudes towards girls.
 - ♦ It promotes education, health, and empowerment, which indirectly increases women's participation in the labor force.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:** The Act extended the maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for women working in establishments with more than 10 employees.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog:** The platform offers mentorship, networking, funding, and skill development opportunities for women in business.
- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM):** The NRLM, through its SHG component, encourages women in rural areas to form collectives that can access credit, entrepreneurship training, and marketing opportunities.
- **National Creche Scheme:** This scheme supports working mothers, especially those in the unorganized sector, by setting up daycares in nearby locations where they can leave their children while they work.
- **Mission Shakti** is a women empowerment programme launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) for the period 2021-2025.
 - ♦ It aims to strengthen interventions for women's welfare, safety, and empowerment, making women equal partners in nation-building.
- **The Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE KIRAN) program** has supported nearly 1,962 women scientists from 2018 to 2023.

Way Ahead

- The marginal increase in urban unemployment, coupled with reduced labour force engagement,

reflects **ongoing structural challenges** in generating quality jobs, especially in the non-agricultural and urban sectors.

- Moreover, the **influence of climatic factors** such as extreme heat on labour participation highlights the **growing relevance of environmental factors in shaping employment trends**.
- Continued monthly tracking of labour data will be essential to **monitor emerging patterns** and to ensure timely, targeted interventions that can address deficiencies in India's labour market.

Source: PIB

STPI AIMS TO SPREAD IT SECTOR GROWTH NATIONWIDE

Context

- The Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), is repositioning itself to drive the next wave of inclusive and innovation-driven IT growth across the country, especially targeting Tier-II and Tier-III cities.

Software Technology Parks of India (STPI)

- STPI is a body set up under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** in **1991** to promote the growth of
 - ♦ the **IT/ITeS (Information Technology / Information Technology enabled Services)** and
 - ♦ **ESDM (Electronics System Design and Manufacturing) industry** in India.
- It was established to offer **software certification, tax holidays and incentives** and high speed data connections.
 - ♦ It played a key role in turning the infant IT sector into a major export-oriented industry.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Early Focus Cities:** The initial STPIs were set up in **Bengaluru, Pune, and Bhubaneswar**, which played a pivotal role in the early development of the IT sector.
- **Economic Contributions:** As of the financial year **2024–25**, STPI-registered units contributed software exports worth approximately **₹10.59 lakh crore** (about \$110 billion).
 - ♦ This amount constitutes over half of India's total software exports, which exceed **\$200 billion**.

Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) 2.0

- **Wider Geographical Outreach:** STPI has expanded to 67 centres across the country, significantly increasing its footprint beyond traditional metro cities.

- ♦ Of the total centres, 59 are located in **Tier-II and Tier-III cities**, reflecting a conscious effort to spread IT growth to underrepresented regions.
- **Decentralisation of IT Services:** The initiative aims to bring IT-enabled services (ITeS), software development, and business process management (BPM) opportunities to smaller towns and cities.
- **Targeting Youth and Local Entrepreneurs:** By moving closer to educational institutions and smaller urban clusters, STPI seeks to empower youth and aspiring entrepreneurs with access to digital opportunities.
- **Creation of Large-Scale Incubation Infrastructure:** STPI has developed over **17 lakh square feet** of incubation space to support emerging startups and tech ventures.
- **Support for Startups and MSMEs:** These incubation spaces are designed to accommodate micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially those focused on software products and services.

Policy Convergence and National Alignment

- STPI's renewed mandate complements the Government of India's flagship schemes like;
 - ♦ **Under Digital India**, STPI is expanding digital infrastructure to remote and underserved areas.
 - ♦ As part of **Startup India**, it is promoting early-stage innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - ♦ In line with the **Make in India**, STPI supports indigenous technology development and software production.

Way Ahead

- India's global leadership in IT has so far been driven largely by service exports, which, while significant, offer limited value addition in the long term.
- To remain competitive in the evolving digital landscape, the country must now pivot towards a robust software product-based economy.
- The **National Policy on Software Products (NPSP) 2019** rightly emphasises this transition by advocating for indigenous innovation and IP-led growth.

Source: TH

BLACK HOLE MERGER

In News

- Scientists have detected signals from the largest black hole merger ever observed, marking a breakthrough in the study of the universe's most powerful cosmic collisions.

About

- The event, **named GW231123**, was detected on November 23, 2023, by the global network of **gravitational wave detectors**, including **LIGO, Virgo, and KAGRA**.
- The merger involved two black holes with masses of 100 and 140 times the mass of our Sun, creating a final black hole of **225 solar masses** — making it one of the heaviest black hole mergers ever detected.

What Are Gravitational Waves (GW), and How Are They Detected?

- **Gravitational waves (GW)** are ripples in the fabric of space-time, predicted by Albert Einstein in 1916 as part of his General Theory of Relativity.
- These waves are generated by some of the universe's most violent and energetic processes—like the collision and merger of black holes.
- When massive objects **accelerate (especially in mergers)**, they produce these waves, which travel outward at the speed of light, causing tiny distortions that can be measured by highly sensitive instruments.

Black Holes

- A black hole is a region in space where gravity is so strong that nothing—not even light—can escape.
- Black holes may be:
 - ♦ **Stellar-mass:** Formed from dying massive stars (typically a few to tens of solar masses),
 - ♦ **Intermediate-mass:** Ranging from hundreds to thousands of solar masses (like the GW231123 remnant),
 - ♦ **Supermassive:** Millions to billions of solar masses, found at galactic centers.

Scientific and Theoretical Significance

- **Challenges to Astrophysical Models:** Events like GW231123 are pivotal in refining or revising our understanding of black hole formation, the behavior of matter under extreme gravity, and even the ultimate laws governing the universe's evolution.
- **Cosmological Impact:** Each detection adds a valuable data point for understanding the population, distribution, and evolution of black holes throughout cosmological history.

Source: TH

CONFINED FIELD TRIALS ON GM MAIZE**Context**

- The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has approved confined field trials of two varieties of genetically modified (GM) maize at

the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) for the 2025 Kharif season.

Traits Being Tested in GM Maize

- **Herbicide Tolerance:** Developed to withstand glyphosate, a broad-spectrum herbicide.
 - ♦ **Objective:** Assess weed control efficacy when glyphosate is applied.
- **Insect Resistance:** Engineered to combat lepidopteran pests (e.g., stem borers).
 - ♦ **Objective:** Test for protection levels and yield benefits.

What are GM crops?

- Crops that have undergone **genetic engineering processes** to alter their DNA are referred to as genetically modified crops.
 - ♦ This alteration is done **to introduce desirable traits** such as resistance to pests or herbicides, improved nutritional content, or increased yield.
- **The process of creating GM crops typically involves:** identification of desired traits, isolation of genes, insertion into crop genome, and expression of the trait.
- **The techniques used in GM crops are:** gene guns, electroporation, microinjection, agrobacterium etc.
- **The types of modification are:** transgenic, cis-genic, subgenic and multiple trait integration.
- **The main trait types** in GM crops are herbicide tolerance (HT), insect resistance (IR), Stacked traits etc.

Indian Scenario in GM crops

- **Bt Cotton:** In 2002, the GEAC had allowed the commercial release of Bt cotton.
 - ♦ Bt cotton has two alien genes from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that allows the crop to develop a protein toxic to the common pest **pink bollworm**.
 - ♦ Till now, it is the only GM crop that is allowed in India.
- Many varieties of GM crops are under different stages of development, like **Bt brinjal** and **DMH-11 mustard**.

Regulatory framework in India

- **The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC):** It under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**, is responsible for the assessment of proposals related to the commercial release of GM crops.
- **Acts and rules** that regulate GM crops in India are:

- ♦ Environment Protection Act, 1986 (EPA)
- ♦ Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- ♦ Plant Quarantine Order, 2003
- ♦ GM policy under Foreign Trade Policy
- ♦ Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
- ♦ Drugs and Cosmetics Rule (8th Amendment), 1988.

What are the concerns?

- **Use of Glyphosate:** Field trials involve GM maize engineered to tolerate glyphosate, a herbicide banned in Punjab.
 - ♦ Activists cite studies linking glyphosate to carcinogenic effects, such as **non-Hodgkin lymphoma**, and soil ecosystem disruption.
- **Biodiversity Risks:** GM crops can affect non-target organisms, promote monocultures, and cause gene flow to native crop varieties, threatening biodiversity.
- **Public Health concerns:** Antibiotic resistance markers in GM crops may reduce the efficacy of real antibiotics in humans, raising the risk of antibiotic-resistant **superbugs**.
- **Legal Inconsistencies:** The lack of transparency in issuing **No Objection Certificates (NOCs)** for field trials has been questioned by civil society groups like the Coalition for a GM-Free India.
 - ♦ They argue that public consultation, independent review, and parliamentary oversight are missing.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen Scientific Transparency:** Ensure independent, peer-reviewed assessments of GM crop safety and efficacy. Publish trial data in the public domain to build trust and credibility.
- **Promote Public Engagement:** Conduct open consultations with farmers, scientists, and civil society to address concerns.
 - ♦ Launch education campaigns on GM technology, risks, and benefits.
- **Protect native crop varieties** through buffer zones and containment strategies.
- **Empower biosafety and ethics committees** with greater independence and accountability.
- **Involve state agricultural universities** only for research and not promotional roles.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

THIRU K. KAMARAJ

In News

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Thiru K. Kamaraj Ji on his birth anniversary.

Thiru K. Kamaraj

- Kumaraswami Kamaraj was born in Tamil Nadu on July 15, **1903**.
- His early life was shaped by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and meeting Mahatma Gandhi, which inspired him to join the freedom movement.
- He became active in the **Indian National Congress, participating in non-cooperation and Salt Satyagraha movements**.
- He was elected **unopposed to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1937** and re-elected in **1946**.
 - ♦ That same year, he was also elected to the Constituent Assembly of India and later to Parliament in 1952.

Other Political roles

- Kamaraj became the Chief Minister of Madras in 1954.
- In **1963**, he proposed to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that senior Congress leaders should resign from ministerial posts to focus on strengthening the party organisation.
 - ♦ This initiative became known as the 'Kamaraj Plan.'
- In recognition of his service to the nation, he was posthumously awarded **Bharat Ratna in 1976**.

Legacy

- He was at the forefront of India's freedom struggle and provided invaluable leadership in the formative years of our journey after Independence.
- His noble ideals and emphasis on social justice inspire us all greatly.

Source :PIB

SPINNING OF EARTH

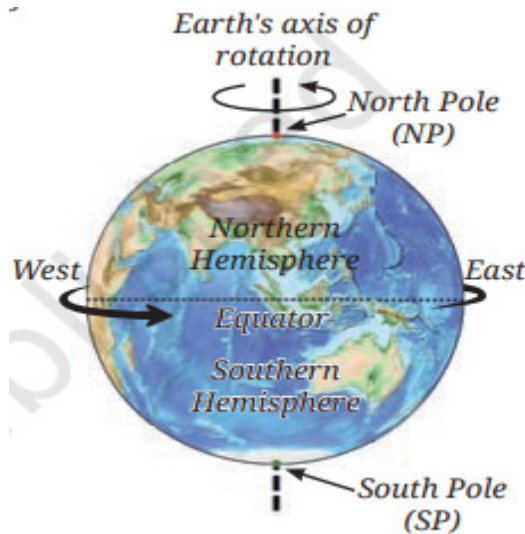
In News

- Earth is expected to spin slightly faster on July 9, July 22, and August 5, 2025, shortening each day by 1.3 to 1.51 milliseconds.

Spinning of Earth

- Earth spins on an imaginary axis passing through the North Pole, its center of mass, and the South Pole.
 - ♦ The earth rotates on its axis from west to east completing a rotation in 23 hours and 56 minutes.
- This axis shifts naturally due to changing mass distribution inside and on the planet — a phenomenon called polar motion.

- Historically, Earth's rotation has slowed over billions of years due to the moon moving away, lengthening our days.
- However, recent years have shown variability, with 2020 seeing the fastest rotations since the 1970s and the shortest recorded day on July 5, 2024.



- Factors like mantle circulation, ocean currents, and hurricanes contribute to this shift, which can vary by several meters each year.
- Human activities, particularly climate change, also influence polar motion.
- Studies in 2016 and 2021 found that melting glaciers and ice in Greenland and related water mass redistribution have accelerated the axis drift since the 1990s.

Impacts

- Although days may vary by milliseconds, our clocks remain unchanged, since only a 900-millisecond difference would require adjusting time zones.
 - These differences are tracked by the International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service (IERS), which adds "leap seconds" when needed.

Source :IE

FURLOUGH & PAROLE

Context

- The Delhi High Court ruled that prison authorities can **decide on parole or furlough requests** of convicts whose appeals are pending in the Supreme Court.

About

- In India, parole and furlough are **two forms of temporary release granted to prisoners under specific circumstances**.

- Parole is generally granted by the **Divisional Commissioner**, while furlough is granted by the **Deputy Inspector General of Prisons**.

Parole

- Parole** is a conditional release granted to a prisoner **for a specific purpose or emergency for a short duration**. It is not a right, but a **privilege** granted under defined conditions.
 - It is granted to maintain social relations with family and the community in order to fulfil familial and social obligations and responsibilities.
 - The prisoner has to spend extra time in prison for the period spent by him outside the Jail on parole.
- Parole may be of the following two types:** Emergency Parole and Regular Parole.
- Legal Framework:** Governed by **State Prison Rules** (as prison is a State subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution).

Furlough in India

- Furlough** means release of a prisoner for a short period of time after a gap of a certain qualified number of years of incarceration by way of motivation for him maintaining good conduct and remain disciplined in the prison.
 - This is purely an **incentive for good conduct in the prison**.
 - Therefore the period spent by the prisoner outside the prison on furlough **shall be counted towards his sentence**.
- Legal Basis:** Also governed by State Prison Rules, and varies slightly between states.
- Under trial prisoners are not eligible** for regular parole and furlough, and may be released only on emergency parole, that too by the order of the concerned trial court.

Source: IE

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Context

- The 97th foundation of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) organised was observed recently.

About ICAR

- It is an **autonomous body** under the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)**, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

- ICAR is the apex body for coordinating, guiding, and managing research and education in agriculture and allied sectors in India.
- **Established in 1929**, it was earlier known as the **Imperial Council of Agricultural Research**.
- **It is headquartered** at NASC Complex, **New Delhi**.

Major Initiatives in 2024–25

- **Global Centre of Excellence on Millets (Shree Anna)**: Promoting millets globally in line with the International Year of Millets 2023 legacy.
- **Genome Editing in 40 Crops**: Enhancing climate resilience, pest resistance, and nutritional value.
- **Clean Plant Programme**: Operational in 9 centres to ensure disease-free planting material.
- **MAHARISHI (Millets and Other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative)**: Preserving traditional grains.
- **All India Network Project on Biotech Crops and Emerging Pests**: Strengthening research against climate-induced pest outbreaks.

Source: PIB

STATATHON: A DATA JOURNEY TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT

Context

- The National Statistical Office (NSO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, has launched a national-level grand challenge titled **"Statathon – A Data Journey Towards Viksit Bharat."**

About

- The Statathon is designed to harness emerging technologies and innovative solutions to transform the landscape of official statistics in India.
- Organised under the aegis of **MoSPI's Data Innovation Lab (DI Lab) initiative**, the Statathon marks an important milestone in the commemoration of 75 years of the National Sample Survey (NSS).
- The challenge invites participation to address **five problem statements**, each covering **different phases of the data lifecycle; collection, processing & analysis, and dissemination**.

What are the Problem Statements?

- **API Gateway for Survey Datasets**: Development of a scalable, configurable, and privacy-compliant API gateway enabling SQL-based data retrieval from NSS datasets.

- **AI-Powered Smart Survey Tool**: Creation of an AI-enabled, multilingual, mobile-friendly survey application using digital platforms for real-time data collection.
- **AI-Enhanced Application for Automated Data Processing**: Development of AI based configurable modules for data scrutiny, statistical analysis, and report generation.
- **Semantic Search for Occupation Classification (NCO)**: Implementation of a semantic search interface using NLP and Gen AI for intuitive, context-aware searches across occupational codes.
- **Evaluation and Enhancement of Data Anonymisation Practices**: Review of current anonymisation methods and development of a robust safe data tool to ensure data privacy and security.

Source: PIB

INDIA'S FIRST DIGITAL NOMAD VILLAGE INAUGURATED IN SIKKIM

Context

- The country's first Digital Nomad Village was officially inaugurated at Yakten village, Pakyong district in Sikkim.

About the Nomad Sikkim Initiative

- **Objective**: To develop Yakten as a sustainable remote work hub for digital professionals while supporting local tourism and rural livelihoods.
- **Facilities**:
 - ♦ **Village-wide high-speed Wi-Fi connectivity** through two dedicated internet lines.
 - ♦ **Provision of inverters** to ensure uninterrupted power.
 - ♦ Plans under **Jal Jeevan Mission** to address water scarcity.
- **Model**: Enables professionals to work remotely in a peaceful, eco-friendly setting, providing a year-round alternative to seasonal tourism.

Source: AIR

PATRIOT AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS

In News

- Amid discussions over weapon supply to Ukraine, US President Donald Trump has said he will send Patriot air defence systems to help Ukraine against Russian aggression.

About

- The Patriot system (Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target) is a highly advanced,

mobile **surface-to-air missile defence** system developed by **Raytheon**.

- ♦ It is considered one of the most advanced air defence systems in the US arsenal and has been in service since the 1980s.
- It includes radar, control units, launchers, and support vehicles.
- It can intercept aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles, depending on the interceptor type: PAC-2 uses proximity blasts, while PAC-3 interceptors directly hit the target.

- Patriot radars have a **range of over 150 km**. Though not designed for hypersonic threats, Ukraine used it in 2023 to shoot down a **Russian Kinzhal missile**.
- Over 240 units have been delivered to 19 countries, including the U.S., Germany, Japan, and Ukraine.
 - ♦ Each battery costs over \$1 billion, and each missile is about \$4 million.

Source :IE

■■■■

