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Time: 45 Min

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COMMERCIAL & PROHIBITED SPEECHES NOT PART OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: SC

In News

- The Supreme Court of India recently clarified that commercial and prohibited speeches do not enjoy protection under the **Fundamental Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19(1)(a)).**
  - The ruling reinforces the idea that Fundamental Rights are **not absolute and are subject to reasonable restrictions.**

Constitutional Background

- **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression.
- Includes political speech, dissent, press freedom, artistic expression, etc.
- **Article 19(2):** The State may impose restrictions on speech in the interests of Sovereignty & integrity of India, Security of the State, Friendly relations with foreign States, Public order, Decency or morality, Contempt of court etc.

Supreme Court's Key Observations

- **Commercial speech:** E.g., advertisements, profit-driven promotions do not automatically get the same fundamental protection as political or social speech.
- **Prohibited/Hate Speech:** Expressions promoting enmity, hatred, or violence against any group based on inherent characteristics are not constitutionally protected.
- **Accountability of Influencers:** Influencers with large audiences must exercise responsibility and caution, as irresponsible speech causes harm or ridicule to specific communities—especially vulnerable ones like the disabled.
- **Social Media Guidelines:** The Supreme Court directed the government to frame comprehensive guidelines for regulating online content to curb harm and ensure accountability.

Evolution of Jurisprudence on Speech

- **Indian Express v. Union of India (1985):** Press freedom recognized as part of Article 19(1)(a).
- **Tata Press Ltd. v. MTNL (1995):** Commercial speech like advertisements promoting consumer welfare were held to be protected, but not all commercial activity qualifies.
- **Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal (2014):** Laid down the "community standards test" for obscenity.

- **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015):** Struck down Section 66A of IT Act as it violated free speech.

Laws Governing Commercial & Prohibited Speech in India

- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Regulates misleading advertisements and unfair trade practices.
  - Establishes **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** with power to ban misleading ads.
- **Sec. 67 of Information Technology Act, 2000:** prohibits publishing obscene material in electronic form.
- **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** Bans derogatory portrayal of women in ads, publications, media.
- **Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 / Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:** Defamation (Sec. 499 IPC / Sec. 354 BNS), Promoting enmity between groups (Sec. 153A IPC / Sec. 194 BNS) & Obscenity (Sec. 292–294 IPC / Sec. 282 BNS).

Source: TH

INDIA- FIJI ISLANDS RELATION

Context

- India and Fiji unveiled initiatives **to bolster defence and maritime security cooperation**, including the creation of a Defence Attache post at the High Commission of India in Suva, which will also cover the Pacific Islands.
  - There is a **growing momentum in bilateral ties** aimed at promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

India-Fiji Ties

- **Historical Relations:** The India-Fiji relations began in 1879. Over the next four decades, approximately 60,553 Indians were brought to work on sugarcane plantations, laying the foundation for a vibrant Indian diaspora known as **Girmitiyas**.
- **FIPIC:** In 2014, the Indian Prime Minister visited Fiji; this visit, coinciding with the inaugural Forum for **India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit**, cemented India's commitment to the Pacific region.
  - The Forum saw participation **of 14 Pacific Island Countries.**
- **Trade Relations:** The bilateral trade stood at approximately US$68 million in 2024-2025, which includes US$65.05 million in exports to Fiji from India.

- **Developmental Partnership:** The solarisation project at the State House, the cogeneration plant, and initiatives in healthcare and education reflect India's commitment to Fiji's sustainable development.

Fiji's Significance for India

Counterbalancing China
Fiji's partnership helps India balance China's influence in the region.

Diaspora & Cultural Ties
The Indo-Fijian community bridges cultural and linguistic connections.

Geopolitical Importance
Fiji's role in the Blue Pacific enhances India's strategic presence.

Gateway to PICs
Fiji's location facilitates India's outreach to Pacific Island Countries.

- **Diaspora:** The Girmit Day commemorations in Fiji mark the arrival of the first Indian labourers.
  - The number of Indians living in Fiji is about 2300, mostly engaged in services like IT, management, finance, banking, education, medical, the hotel industry, etc.
  - Hindi is one of the **official languages of Fiji.**
- **Multilateral Forums:** Fiji has joined both the **International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA).**
  - It collaborates with India at the UN, Commonwealth, and other multilateral fora on issues like climate change, sustainable development, and ocean governance.

About Fiji

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- **Location:** Republic of Fiji is situated in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Australia and north of New Zealand.
- **Composition:** About 330 islands and over 500 islets & reefs. Around 110 islands are inhabited.
- **Capital:** Suva (on Viti Levu island).
- **Political Structure:** Parliamentary democracy, member of the Commonwealth.
- **Major Islands:**
  - **Viti Levu:** Largest island, home to capital Suva and ~70% of population.
  - **Vanua Levu:** Second largest island.

Source: PIB

WOMEN LEADING INDIA'S ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION STORY

In News

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has emphasized that **Women's employment rate in India has nearly doubled** between 2017-18 to 2023-24.

Recent Trend in Women's Labour Participation

- As per the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24** the women's employment rate (WPR) has increased from **22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24,** and unemployment dropping from **5.6% to 3.2%**.
  - Rural female employment surged by **96%**, and urban by **43%.**
- **Employment in the formal Sector: As per EPFO,** over 1.56 crore women joined the formal sector via EPFO in 7 years, and 16.69 crore women are **registered on e-Shram** for access to welfare schemes.
- **Rise in Entrepreneurship:** The share of **women-owned establishments** rose from 17.4% in 2010–11 to 26.2% in 2023–24, while the number of women-led MSMEs nearly doubled from 1 crore to 1.92 crore in the same period.
- **Future Projection:** The **India Skills Report 2025** projects **55% global employability for Indian graduates.**

Steps Taken

- Government initiatives have significantly boosted **women entrepreneurship in India.**

- **Gender budgets have increased by 429%** in the last decade, rising from 0.85 lakh crore in FY 2013-14 (RE) to Rs. 4.49 lakh crore in FY 2025-26.
- **Programs like Startup India** have fostered a thriving ecosystem, with nearly 50% of DPIIT registered startups having at least one-woman directors.
- Flagship programs such as **Namo Drone Didi, and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – NRLM** are also playing a crucial role, equipping them with resources and opportunities needed to drive sustainable progress.
- **PM Mudra Yojana**, which is playing a crucial role in financial inclusion, with women receiving **68% of the total MUDRA loan**s
- Similarly, unde**r PM SVANidhi has empowered street vendors, around 44% beneficiaries are women under the scheme.**

Importance of Women Participation

- Increasing female participation **can boost GDP** and achieving **70% women workforce participation** is central to India's **Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.**
- Employment empowers **women, reduces gender disparities, and improves household well-being.**
- India's young population offers a unique opportunity to **harness female talent.**
- It aligns with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).**

Challenges

- **Patriarchal attitudes** often restrict women's mobility and career choices.
- **Unpaid care work** disproportionately falls on women.
- **Lack of safe transport, sanitation, and workplace facilities** deters participation.
- **Women are overrepresented in informal,** low-paying, and unprotected jobs.
- Schemes like MGNREGA and Skill India have potential but need better targeting and gender-sensitive design.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- India's rising female workforce participation presents a transformative opportunity, but sustaining it requires systemic reforms.
- Expanding skill development and vocational training for women, incentivising formal employment, and strengthening workplace safety through strict enforcement of harassment laws and provision of crèches are critical.

- With coordinated policies and societal change, women's participation can become a driver of inclusive growth and a pillar of India's vision for **Viksit Bharat@2047.**
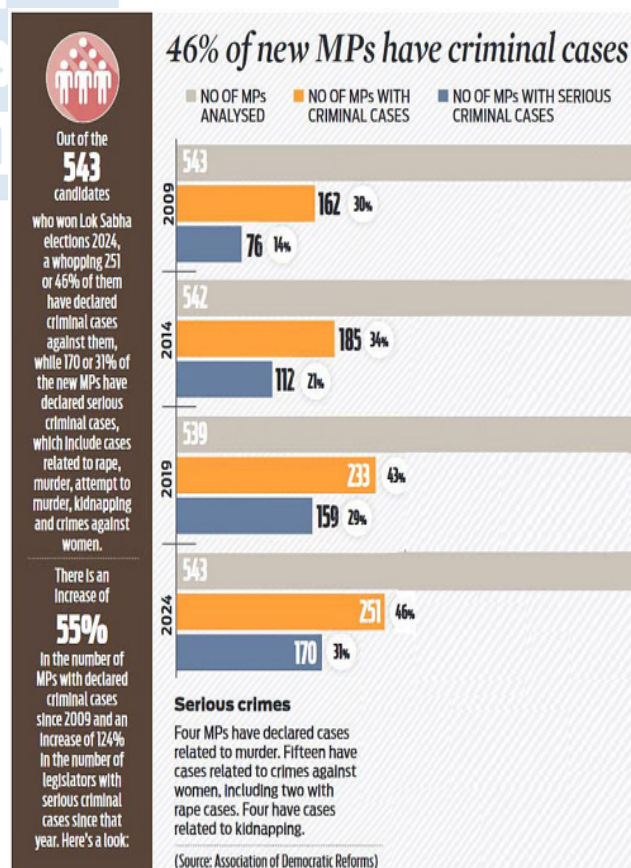
Source :PIB

30% OF MPS AND MLAS FACE SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES

Context

- An analysis of MPs and MLAs across India shows that **31% of Members of Parliament (MPs) and 29% of Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs)** have declared **serious criminal charges** against them.

Criminalisation of politics

- **Criminalisation of politics** refers to the growing participation of individuals with criminal backgrounds in electoral politics.
  - **A serious criminal charge includes** offences where the maximum punishment is five years or more, or those that are non-bailable.
- **In the Lok Sabha,** the share of MPs facing serious criminal cases has more than doubled, from **14% in 2009 to 31% in 2024**.

46% of new MPs have criminal cases

NO OF MPs ANALYSED | NO OF MPs WITH CRIMINAL CASES | NO OF MPs WITH SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES

Out of the **543** candidates who won Lok Sabha elections 2024, a whopping 251 or 46% of them have declared criminal cases against them, while 170 or 31% of the new MPs have declared serious criminal cases, which include cases related to rape, murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping and crimes against women.

There is an Increase of **55%** in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases since 2009 and an increase of 124% in the number of legislators with serious criminal cases since that year. Here's a look:

Year	No of MPs analysed	MPs with criminal cases	MPs with serious criminal cases
2009	543	162 (30%)	76 (14%)
2014	542	185 (34%)	112 (21%)
2019	539	233 (43%)	159 (29%)
2024	543	251 (46%)	170 (31%)

Serious crimes

Four MPs have declared cases related to murder. Fifteen have cases related to crimes against women, including two with rape cases. Four have cases related to kidnapping.

(Source: Association of Democratic Reforms)

  - **In the Assemblies,** the share was **29% in 2024**, which accounts for more than **1,200 MLAs.**

- **Telangana** had the **highest share of MPs** with serious criminal cases (71%), followed by **Bihar (48%)**.
  - **Uttar Pradesh** recorded the highest absolute number at 34.
- **Andhra Pradesh** had the highest share of MLAs with serious criminal cases at **56%**, followed by **Telangana (50%).**
  - **Uttar Pradesh** recorded the highest absolute number (154 MLAs or 38% of its total).

Reasons of Criminalisation of politics

- **Weak Disqualification Laws:** The Representation of the **People Act, 1951 (RPA)** disqualifies candidates only after conviction.
  - Since trials take years, tainted candidates contest multiple elections before any judgment.
- **Money and Muscle Power:** Criminals with financial resources and local influence are seen as "winnable" candidates.
- **Low Voter Awareness:** Affidavits disclose candidate details, but many voters remain unaware or vote on caste/religious lines.
- **Party Complicity:** Parties often justify fielding tainted candidates by citing "popularity" and "electoral chances."
- **Judicial Delays:** Frequent adjournments and politically motivated withdrawal of cases allow criminals to escape conviction.
- **Nexus Between Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Criminals:** First highlighted by the Vohra Committee Report (1993), which warned of deep collusion between crime syndicates, politicians, and state machinery.

Impact of Criminalisation of Politics

- **Erosion of Democratic Values:** It undermines the principle of free and fair elections and voters are left with restricted choices, weakening the spirit of representative democracy.
- **Corruption:** The presence of criminal elements escalates **electoral malpractices** such as voter **intimidation, booth capturing, and the use of black money** in campaigns.
- **Decline of Public Trust:** Repeated election of tainted representatives, lead to **declining voter turnout** and weakening people's faith in democratic institutions.
- **Distortion of Policy-Making:** Elected representatives use political power to protect personal and criminal networks and divert policy-making away from public interest and **encourage clientelism.**

Key Committee Recommendations

- **The Law Commission's 244th Report (2014)** recommended disqualifying politicians from contesting elections as soon as charges are framed against them for offenses that carry a maximum punishment of **five years or more.**
  - The report specifically recommended **expediting trials for sitting MPs and MLAs** by establishing fast-track courts.
- **The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution** in its **2002** report recommended measures to enhance the accountability of political parties, including the statutory audit of party expenses and the disclosure of candidates' assets and liabilities.
- **Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998) & 2nd ARC (2007)** recommended partial state funding of elections to curb the use of black money and reduce corruption.

Supreme Court Interventions

- **In Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013),** the Court ruled that any sitting MP, MLA, or MLC would be **immediately disqualified** upon conviction for a crime with a sentence of **two years or more.**
- In **Public Interest Foundation v. Union of India (2018),** the Court directed political parties to publicize the criminal records of candidates, detailing the nature of offences and charges.
- **In 2020, the Supreme Court of India** ordered political parties to publish details of candidates with pending criminal cases on their websites, social media, and in newspapers, along with the reasons for their selection, **within 48 hours** of candidate selection.

Way Ahead

- **Implement Law Commission recommendations**, disqualify candidates at charge-framing stage for heinous offences.
- **Fast-track courts**, Ensure trial completion **within 1 year** for cases against legislators.
- **Political Party Accountability**: Parties must be penalised for repeated selection of tainted candidates.
- **State Funding & Transparency**: Reduce money power by funding recognised parties and improving campaign finance disclosures.

Source: TH

UNDERSTANDING INDIA'S INTERNAL DIASPORAS

Context

- The concept of being a 'foreigner or videshi' typically reserved for international migrants, is **increasingly used by internal migrants in India** to describe their experience of **cultural displacement.**

Defining Diaspora

- The term **'diaspora'** has become **central in policy and academic discussions** after the **High-Level Committee** on the **Indian Diaspora** published its report in **2001–02.**

- It has been **defined through national borders**, and evokes images of **overseas communities** — Punjabis in Canada, Tamils in Malaysia, Gujaratis in East Africa etc.

  - It was then estimated at over 20 million and is **now pegged at over 30 million.**

- In India, words like pravasi **and** videshi apply not only to international migrants but **also to those moving across states.** For example:

  - **Migrants from Odisha working in Surat** often refer to their workplace as videsh, because they've crossed into a vastly different cultural zone.

  - **In Madurai, Tamil Nadu,** over 60,000 people speak Gujarati, despite the Census recording virtually no Gujarati migrants, suggesting long-standing settlement and cultural retention.

Scale of Internal Diasporas

- According to a recent study, the number of Indians living in culturally distinct zones within India **exceeds 100 million** — more than triple the size of India's international diaspora *(based on language Census data, excluding border districts).*

- **Key Findings:**

  - **Most Dispersed Groups:** Punjabi, Malayalam, and Tamil speakers (over 10% dispersed), followed by Telugu and Gujarati.

  - **Largest Group:** Hindi speakers (including Bhojpuri and Marwari) dominate numerically but are less dispersed relative to size.

  - **Least Dispersed:** Marathi, Kannada, and Bengali speakers.

  - **Urban Spread:** A third of the internal diaspora resides in India's ten largest cities.

Aspect	Internal Diaspora	Internal Migration
Nature	Long-term settlement in distinct cultural zones	Temporary or cyclical movement
Identity	Maintains distinct language, customs, associations	May assimilate or remain transient
Policy status	Largely overlooked, not formally recognised	Addressed in labor laws, welfare schemes
Perception	Often feel like videshi in own country	Seen as peripheral/ seasonal migrants

Why Recognise Internal Diasporas?

- **Cultural Preservation and Identity:** Internal diasporas maintain distinct languages, customs, and festivals even after generations of settlement in new regions.

- **Community Building and Social Capital:** Diasporic groups often form associations (e.g., Bengali Associations, Marathi Mandals, Gujarati Samaj) that foster solidarity, mutual aid, and cultural continuity.

  - These networks can support education, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement.

- **Policy Relevance:** Recognizing internal diasporas helps tailor welfare schemes, urban planning, and language education policies.

- **Economic Contributions:** Many internal diasporas are rooted in trade and business migration, contributing to regional economies (e.g., Odia workers in Surat's textile industry).

- **Social Integration with Diversity:** Diasporas enrich host regions with culinary, artistic, and linguistic diversity, fostering multicultural urban spaces.

Challenges of Internal Diasporas

- **Cultural Alienation:** Migrants often feel excluded due to linguistic and cultural barriers.

- **Discrimination & Stereotypes:** Host communities may marginalise diasporic groups.

- **Political Ambiguity:** Unlike international diaspora, internal diasporas lack formal recognition in policy.

- **Data Gaps:** Census/PLFS capture recent migration but miss long-settled diasporic communities.

- **Identity Struggles:** Younger generations face assimilation pressures and risk losing linguistic/cultural roots.
- **Urban Strain:** Large diasporic clusters in cities may add to housing, infrastructure, and service pressures.

Conclusion & Way Forward

- India's diasporic reality is not confined to 30 million abroad, but extends to 100+ million within its borders.
- Limiting diaspora to national boundaries overlooks the cultural and economic role of internal diasporas.
- They shape India's food, language, art, and commerce, enriching both host communities and national identity.
- Policy must embrace a borderless understanding of diaspora, recognising that being videshi can mean crossing state boundaries as much as international ones.

Source: IE

CALL FOR INDIA TO TRANSFORM INTO 'A PRODUCT NATION'

Context

- There is a growing consensus that India must transition from being **primarily a service-driven economy** to a **product nation amid US punitive tariff action.**

What is Product Nation?

- A "product nation" is a term often used to describe a country that moves beyond being primarily **a service provider or outsourcing hub** and instead becomes a **creator of globally competitive products.**
- **Key Features of a Product Nation:**
  - **Focus on Innovation:** Strong emphasis on research, development, and intellectual property creation rather than just providing labour or services.
  - **Globally Scalable Products:** Building products that can be sold worldwide, not just customized for a single client.
  - **Ecosystem Development:** Supportive policies, venture capital, incubators, and strong collaboration between government, industry, and academia.
  - **Talent Utilisation:** Leveraging a skilled workforce for product design, engineering, and entrepreneurship rather than primarily for back-end or outsourced work.

  - **Export Orientation:** Products become a significant contributor to exports, enhancing national competitiveness.

Need for India to Become a Product Nation

- **Strategic Leverage in Global Geopolitics:** Current US tariff action shows India's vulnerability — unlike China, India does not control any strategic products or supply chains that can be leveraged in negotiations.
  - To avoid being a soft target in great power rivalries, India must create irreplaceable, high-value products.
- **Reducing Import Dependence:** Excess reliance on imports of critical technologies (chips, rare earths, batteries) weakens economic security.
  - Solely focusing on manufacturing/assembly risks trapping India in low-value segments; profits lie in IP, design, and innovation.
- **Economic Competitiveness & Value Creation:** Services-led growth has limitations; India needs IP-driven, globally competitive products to boost exports and climb global value chains.
  - Like Taiwan (chips) and the Netherlands (EUV machines), owning niche products ensures sustained economic resilience.
- **Employment & Talent Utilization:** India produces a large pool of engineers but most work for foreign specifications.
  - Harnessing talent for home-grown design and innovation can create high-skilled jobs and prevent brain drain.
- **Diplomatic & Strategic Autonomy:** Earlier, India's diplomatic heft came from ideals and moral leadership. Today, economic and product strength is essential for global respect.
  - Owning strategic products enhances bargaining power, ensuring India is taken seriously in trade and security negotiations.
- **National Security:** Critical technologies (AI, semiconductors, defence, biotech, batteries) are increasingly weaponised in global trade wars.
  - Without strong product capabilities, India risks economic coercion and strategic vulnerability.

Challenges for India in Becoming a Product Nation

- **Innovation & R&D Deficit:** India spends less than 1% of GDP on R&D (vs 2–3% in advanced economies).
- **Skewed IT Ecosystem:** Dominance of IT services outsourcing leads to service mindset persists.
- **Funding & Risk Capital Constraints:** Venture capital still favors proven service/startup models over risky deep-tech products.

- **Talent Gaps:** Abundance of engineers, but shortage of product managers, designers, chip developers, AI researchers.
  - "Brain drain" of top talent to Silicon Valley and other innovation hubs.
- **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** Inadequate hardware manufacturing ecosystem (semiconductors, electronics).
  - Logistics and supply-chain inefficiencies increase cost of product scaling.
- **Global Competitiveness Challenges:** Indian products often face branding, quality perception, and global market access issues.
  - Intense competition from China, USA, South Korea in electronics, AI, biotech, EVs.
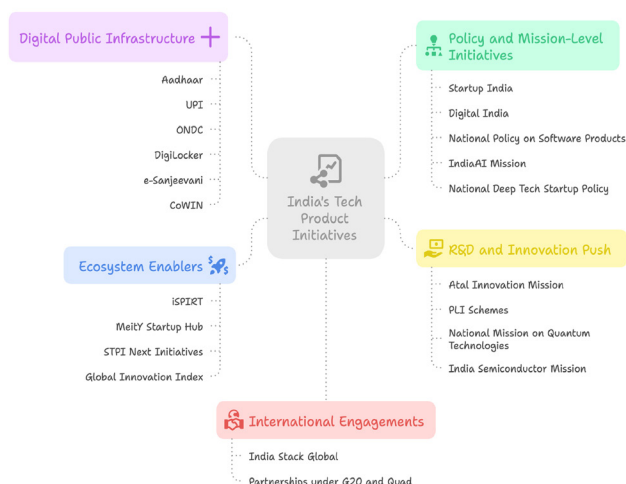
Way Ahead

- India must enhance R&D investment, strengthen IP protection, and nurture deep-tech talent to build globally competitive products.
- Greater access to risk capital, world-class infrastructure, and innovation clusters is essential.
- A "Made in India, Designed for the World" approach, supported by simplified policies and global branding, will accelerate India's transition into a true Product Nation.

Source: IE

GLOBAL SHIFT TOWARDS YOUNGER FORESTS

Context

- A recent study highlights a global shift towards younger forests, disrupting the carbon balance as older, carbon-rich forests decline.
  - Between **2010–2020**, the area of forests aged 21–40 years increased by 17% (0.03 billion hectares), but this came at the cost of older forests.

Importance of Forest Age

- **Young Forests grow rapidly** and can **absorb up to 20 times more CO_2** than older forests, especially less than 20 years old. However, they **store much less carbon** compared to old-growth forests.
- Old Forests act as **long-term carbon reservoirs** and provide irreplaceable ecological services like biodiversity conservation, water regulation, and climate resilience.
- **Carbon Balance Disturbance:** Replacement of old forests by younger ones reduces the planet's overall carbon storage capacity, pushing some regions from carbon sinks to carbon sources (e.g., eastern Amazon).

Drivers of Younger Forest Dominance

- **Human Activities:** Deforestation and clear-cutting, Slash-and-Burn Agriculture, Forest Management Practices, Land-Use Change.
- **Natural Disturbances:** Wildfires, Droughts, Insect Outbreaks, High Burning Frequency.

Implications

- **Climate Change:** Younger forests cannot fully compensate for the loss of carbon-rich old forests.
  - This undermines global climate targets, including the **Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C.**
- **Biodiversity:** Younger forests support fewer species compared to old-growth ecosystems.
- **Regional CO_2 Dynamics:** Deforestation hotspots risk turning into net CO sources.
- **Forest Policy:** Heavy reliance on afforestation/reforestation without protecting old-growth forests could provide only limited climate benefits.

Way Ahead

- **Prioritize protection of old-growth forests**, safeguarding long-term carbon reservoirs and biodiversity.
- **Balance Afforestation with Conservation**, while young forests are valuable, they cannot substitute mature forests.
- **Strengthen International Commitments:** Support initiatives like **REDD+** (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).
  - Encourage global cooperation in **tackling transboundary forest fires and illegal logging.**
- Community-Based Conservation, promoting **alternatives to slash-and-burn** and incentivising traditional forest stewardship.

Source: DTE

NEWS IN SHORT

TAWI RIVER

In News

- India recently warned Pakistan of a potential flood in the **Tawi River** as a humanitarian gesture.
  - The communication was made through diplomatic channels, **not via the Indus Waters Commission** as required under the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), 1960.**

About River Tawi

- **Origin:** Kailash Kund glacier (Kali Kund) near Bhaderwah in Doda district, J&K.
- **Tributary:** Left bank tributary of the Chenab River.
- **Importance:** Known as the "Lifeline of Jammu city", flows through Jammu before joining Chenab.
  - Provides water for drinking, irrigation, and is culturally revered.

About Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- Signed in **1960 between India & Pakistan**, brokered by the **World Bank.**
- **Allocated rivers:**
  - **Western rivers** (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab): Pakistan's rights (India limited use – irrigation, hydropower, etc.).
  - **Eastern rivers** (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej): India's rights.
- Flood-related information sharing is a key obligation.

Source: TH

SWITCH FACILITY FROM UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME (UPS) TO THE NATIONAL PENSION SYSTEM (NPS)

In News

- The Finance Ministry introduced a one-time, one-way switch facility from the newly introduced **Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to the National Pension System (NPS).**

What is the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)?

- The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) closely mirrors the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), assuring retirees **50% of their last year's basic pay as pension after completing at least 25 years of service**.

- For service less than 25 years (with a minimum of 10 years), the pension is proportionately reduced, but not below ₹**10,000 per month**.
- Family pension is set at **60% of the retiree's pension, and all pensions are inflation-indexed.**
- It is funded—employees contribute 10% of their salary, while the government contributes 18.5%, with adjustments based on actuarial reviews.
  - The scheme is retrospective and applies to those who **joined after January 1, 2004**, and retired under NPS.

National Pension Scheme (NPS)

- It was launched in 2004, replacing the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) due to rising pension liabilities.
- It follows a Defined Contribution model with two tiers.
  - **In Tier 1**, Central Government employees (except Armed Forces) who joined after the cutoff date contribute 10% of their basic pay and DA, matched equally by the government.
  - **Tier 2** is optional, allowing voluntary contributions with flexible withdrawals.
- At retirement (age 60), 40% of the corpus must be used to buy an annuity for lifetime pension; this increases to 80% for premature retirement.
- NPS is regulated by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA),** with fund managers like **SBI, UTI, and LIC** investing in a mix of government securities, debt, equity, and other instruments.
- NPS applies to all central government employees joining on or after January 1, 2004.

Source:TH

INDIA PARTNERS WITH WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME TO FIGHT GLOBAL HUNGER

Context

- The Government of India and the **World Food Programme (WFP)** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** to collaborate in **addressing global hunger.**
  - India will provide **WFP fortified rice** to support nutritional needs of vulnerable populations in food-insecure regions.

About World Food Programme

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, **established in 1961** by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN General Assembly.**

- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy.
- **Executive Board:** The Executive Board is WFP's supreme governing body.
  - It consists of **36 Member States** and provides intergovernmental support, direction and supervision of activities.
- **WFP is headed by an Executive Director**, appointed for **fixed five-year terms** and is responsible for the administration of WFP as well as the implementation of its programmes, projects and other activities.
- The WFP operates in over **120 countries and territories**, relying on voluntary contributions from governments, organizations, and individuals to fund its work.
  - The first development programme was launched in **Sudan in 1963.**
  - WFP was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020.**

Source: PIB

SUPER GARUDA SHIELD EXERCISE

Context

- The United States and Indonesia have launched the largest-ever edition of the Super Garuda Shield military exercise.

About

- The **Garuda Shield exercise** originally began as a bilateral **U.S.–Indonesian army** exercise in **2007.**
  - **In 2022,** the exercise was expanded and rebranded as Super Garuda Shield, involving multiple Indo-Pacific partners and transforming into a multinational exercise.
- **Multinational Participation:** Troops from **12** other countries such as Japan, Australia, Singapore, the UK, France, Canada, South Korea, Thailand, Brunei, Brazil, India, and New Zealand.
  - Observer teams include Cambodia, India, and Papua New Guinea.
- **Geographical Spread:** Drills conducted in and around Jakarta, Sumatra, and the Riau archipelago.

Source: TH

RAN SAMWAD-2025

Context

- 'RAN SAMWAD-2025', **tri-service dialogue on war, warfare and warfighting** commenced at the Army War College in Madhya Pradesh.

About

- **Aim:** To enhance interaction, communication and cooperation among military communities on issues critical to warfighting.
- It has been curated by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, under the guidance of CDS.
- A few **Joint Doctrines and the Technology Perspective & Capability Roadmap** will also be released during the event.

Source: PIB

AI-ENABLED X-GUARD FIBRE-OPTIC TOWED DECOY (FOTD) SYSTEM

In News

- During Operation Sindoor, India is believed to have deployed the **AI-enabled X-Guard FOTD system** to enhance survivability of its fighter aircraft against hostile radar and missile threats.

AI-enabled X-Guard Fibre-Optic Towed Decoy (FOTD) system

- It is developed by **Israel's Rafael** and The X-Guard is a 30 kg, retractable, reusable decoy system designed to mimic a Rafale's radar signature, doppler velocity, and electronic countermeasures across multiple radar bands.
- Its **360-degree jamming signal capability** integrates seamlessly with the Rafale's SPECTRA (Self-Protection Equipment Countering Threats to Rafale Aircraft) EW suite.
  - SPECTRA manages threat detection, blocking, and onboard defensive measures
- It adds a trailing expendable layer, jointly forming a multi-tiered defensive shield.
  - Following its reported success in Operation Sindoor, the IAF is fast-tracking more units via emergency procurement.

> **Do you know?**
> - **Land forces** have long used decoys—such as inflatable, radar-reflective, and heat-emitting dummy tanks, artillery, and command posts—to mislead enemy ISR and divert precision strikes.
> - These decoys have proven effective from the **1991 Gulf War** through to the **Ukraine conflict**, where they absorb costly munitions and disrupt attacks.
> - **Modern battlefield saturation** by drones and loitering munitions has driven decoys to become more sophisticated, like Russia's

Inflatech simulating entire armored formations, Ukraine's wooden and 3D-printed fakes, and U.S. trials of decoy vehicles to fool advanced missiles.

- India recently sought physical decoys replicating its T-90 tanks' thermal and acoustic signatures.
- **Navies also use layered decoys**—from floating chaff to active missile decoys like the Nulka system, which mimics larger ships to divert radar-guided missiles.
    - Overall, decoys on air, land, and sea remain crucial, offering high-value protection for relatively low cost in modern warfare.

Source :TH

NATIONAL YOUTH AWARD (NYA) 2024

Context

- **The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports** has invited nominations for the **National Youth Award (NYA) 2024.**

About

- The Award is designed to inspire young individuals **aged 15 to 29** to strive for **excellence in national development and social service.**
- The National Youth Award, usually conferred during the **National Youth Festival,** is given in **two categories:** Individual and organisation.
- The **maximum number of awards** given each year is **20** for individual categories and **5** for organisational categories.
    - It may, however, vary at the **discretion of the sanctioning authority** in deserving cases.
- **Award to individuals** will comprise a medal, a certificate and award money of ₹1,00,000.
    - **Award to voluntary youth organisations** will comprise a medal, a certificate and award money of ₹3,00,000.

Source: PIB