

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 10-09-2025

### Table of Content

C.P. Radhakrishnan Elected as the 15th Vice-President of India  
National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025  
Governors Role as Guides and Philosophers to the States  
Kerala's Urban Policy Commission: Lessons for India  
Political Crisis in Nepal and Its Implications for India  
India Projects five-fold Growth in Space Economy to \$44 Billion by 2033  
EnteroMix - mRNA Cancer Vaccine  
India Need to Build Climate-Resilient Cities

### NEWS IN SHORT

Rajasthan Assembly Passes 'Anti-Conversion' Bill  
Langkhon Festival  
National Scheduled Tribe Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)  
Scope of Social Security to Expand with SPREE-2025 and AMNESTY Scheme  
Ethiopia Opens Africa's Largest Dam Across Nile  
Vembanad Lake  
EXERCISE ZAPAD 2025

## C.P. RADHAKRISHNAN ELECTED AS THE 15TH VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

### In News

- C.P. Radhakrishnan was elected as the 15th Vice-President of India.

### Vice-President of India

- The Vice-President of India, established under **Article 63 of the Constitution**, holds the second-highest constitutional office after the President.
- As per **Article 64**, the Vice-President serves as the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- **Under Article 65**, the Vice-President assumes the role of Acting President in case of a vacancy due to death, resignation, removal, or other reasons, and also discharges presidential functions during the President's temporary inability.
  - ♦ During such periods, the Vice-President enjoys all powers, immunities, and privileges of the President, including emoluments and allowances.
- **Article 66** lays down the process of the election of the Vice-President.
  - ♦ Under the Constitution, the Vice-President cannot be a member of Parliament or any State Legislature. If elected while holding such a position, the person is deemed to have vacated their seat upon assuming office as Vice-President.

### Eligibility and term of office

- To be eligible for Vice-President, a person must be an Indian citizen, at least 35 years old, and qualified to be a Rajya Sabha member.
- They must not hold any office of profit under the government.
- The Vice-President serves a five-year term but continues until a successor takes over.
  - ♦ They may resign to the President or be removed by a Rajya Sabha resolution approved by the Lok Sabha.

### Vice-Presidential Election

- The Vice-President is elected by an **Electoral College** comprising members of both Houses of Parliament, including **nominated members**.
  - ♦ State legislatures play no role in this election.
- As per **Rule 8 of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974**, the poll for the election will be taken in the Parliament House.

- The election is conducted through the **system of proportional representation using the single transferable vote**, as prescribed under **Article 66 of the Constitution**.
- The election is conducted by secret ballot, using the single transferable vote (STV) system of proportional representation.
  - ♦ Each MP ranks the candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3, etc).

### Declaration of winner

- A candidate must secure a majority of valid votes to win; if no one achieves this initially, the lowest-ranked candidate is eliminated and votes are redistributed until a winner emerges.

### Disputes

- **Article 71 of the Constitution assigns the Supreme Court** the authority to resolve disputes related to the election of the President or Vice-President, with its decisions being final.
  - ♦ If an election is declared void, actions taken during the term remain valid. Parliament can also legislate on matters related to these elections.

### Salary, pension and other perks

- In 2018, the salary of the Vice President was raised to Rs 4 lakh, up from Rs 1.25 lakh, and the President's to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 1.5 lakh.
- The provisions under the **Vice-President's Pension Act, 1997** ensure 50% of the salary as lifetime pension, and half of that to the spouse after their death.
  - ♦ Former Vice-Presidents also receive a rent-free residence, medical and travel benefits, and secretarial staff support.

Source: BS

## NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT & INDEX ON WOMEN'S SAFETY (NARI) 2025

### Context

- The **National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025**, released by the National Commission for Women (NCW), provides a city-wise ranking of women's safety in India.

### Key highlights from NARI 2025

- **Safest cities:** Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, Mumbai.

- **Least safe cities:** Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, Ranchi.
- **The national safety score** was pegged at **65 per cent**, serving as the benchmark for assessing city performance.
- **In 2024, 7 per cent of women** experienced harassment in public spaces, while the figure rose to 14 per cent among women under the age of 24, indicating **greater vulnerability in younger demographics**.
  - ♦ **Neighbourhoods (38 per cent)** and **public transport (29 per cent)** emerged as the most reported hotspots of harassment for women.
- **Only 25 per cent** of women expressed confidence that authorities would act effectively on complaints related to safety and harassment.

#### Barriers to Gender-Safe Cities

- **Institutional and governance deficits:** Multiple agencies functioning in silos, leading to weak enforcement of women's safety measures.
  - ♦ Slow judicial response: Delayed investigations and prolonged trials dilute deterrence, allowing repeat offences.
- **Transport vulnerabilities:** Overcrowded buses, unsafe last-mile connectivity and limited female staff in transport services increase insecurity.
- **Under-reporting:** Only one in three women report incidents, reflecting both social stigma and weak trust in authorities.
- **Persistence of patriarchal norms:** Social attitudes trivialise harassment and often shift blame to women, discouraging complaints.
- **Over-reliance on data:** Official statistics fail to capture perception-based insecurities, which remain invisible in policy frameworks.

#### Government Initiatives for Women Safety

- **Nirbhaya Fund:** Ministry of Women and Child Development has established the fund for financing safety projects across the country.
- **SHe-Box Portal:** Launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Sexual Harassment Electronic Box (SHe-Box) is an initiative to provide a single-window platform for women to register workplace sexual harassment complaints.
  - ♦ It is accessible to all women, regardless of their work sector (organized/unorganized, public/private).
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act,**

**2013**, applies to all women, regardless of age, job type, or work sector.

- ♦ It mandates employers to create an Internal Committee (IC) in workplaces with over 10 employees, while the Appropriate Government sets up Local Committees (LCs) for smaller organizations or cases against employers.



#### Way Ahead

- **Short-term Measure:**
  - ♦ **Integrate 24x7 women helplines** with local police, ambulance and municipal services for coordinated response.
  - ♦ **Conduct rapid compliance audits of POSH arrangements** in large employers and publish anonymised compliance statuses.
- **Medium-term measure:**
  - ♦ **Make gender audits mandatory** under central urban schemes and link city grants to measurable safety indices.
  - ♦ **Upgrade public transport** with mandatory CCTV, grievance redressal timelines and operator accountability.
- **Long-term Measure:**
  - ♦ **Launch multi-year gender-sensitisation programmes** across schools, colleges and workplaces with measurable behavioural outcomes.
  - ♦ **Embed gender-sensitivity** in police training and evaluation, and promote men's programmes that challenge patriarchal norms.
  - ♦ **Invest in community-led safety initiatives** that rebuild trust between citizens and institutions.

Source: BS



## GOVERNORS ROLE AS GUIDES AND PHILOSOPHERS TO THE STATES

### Context

- Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, observed that Governors must act as “true guides and philosophers” to State governments.

### Supreme Court observation

- Governor's role:** The CJI emphasized that Governors are part of the legislature and share responsibility for ensuring governance functions smoothly.
- Impact on democracy:** Prolonged inaction on Bills undermines the mandate of elected legislatures and disturbs the balance of federalism.

### Constitutional Framework of Governor's Assent to Bills

- Article 200:** It outlines the Governor's role in the assent process. When a bill is presented to the Governor after being passed by the State Legislature, they have four options;
  - Grant Assent:** The Governor may approve the bill, making it a law.
  - Withhold Assent:** The Governor may reject the bill, effectively stopping it from becoming law.
  - Return the Bill for Reconsideration:** The Governor can send the bill back to the legislature with suggestions. However, if the legislature passes the bill again without modifications, the Governor is bound to give assent.
  - Reserve the Bill for Presidential Assent:** If the bill is contrary to the Constitution, affects the powers of the High Court, or contradicts central laws, the Governor may reserve it for the President's decision.
- Article 201:** If a bill is reserved for the president's consideration, the President has two options;
  - Give Assent:** The bill becomes law.
  - Withhold Assent or Direct Reconsideration:** The President may send the bill back to the State Legislature for reconsideration. If the Legislature re-passes the bill, the President is not bound to give assent.

### What are the concerns?

- Current ambiguity:** Both provisions use the phrase “as soon as possible”, which has led to delays in several Opposition-ruled States.

- Delays in Bill Assent:** Kerala submitted that eight Bills had been pending with its Governor for **7 to 23 months**.
  - Similar complaints were raised by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab, and West Bengal.
- Instances of prolonged delays** and the use of the ‘pocket veto’ (withholding assent without returning the bill) have raised concerns about the Governor's impartiality and adherence to constitutional norms.

### Judicial Interventions

- Shamsher Singh Case (1974):** The Supreme Court ruled that the Governor must act on the advice of the Council of Ministers in most cases.
- Rameshwar Prasad Case (2006):** The court held that a Governor's refusal to give assent can be challenged in court and overturned if found unconstitutional.
- Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker Case (2016):** Affirmed that the Governor's discretionary powers are subject to judicial review, preventing arbitrary decision-making.
- Punjab Case (2023):** Governor is an unelected authority and cannot stall the legislative process.
  - Withholding assent requires following constitutional procedures.
- Supreme Court Observation (2024):** The Governor's role is primarily ceremonial, and he should not obstruct the governance of an elected state government.

### Way Ahead

- Strengthening cooperative federalism:** Institutional mechanisms, such as regular consultation between Governors and State governments, could reduce friction.
- Revisiting Sarkaria and Punchhi Commission recommendations:** Both commissions stressed the need for Governors to act impartially and within constitutional limits.

Source: TH

## KERALA'S URBAN POLICY COMMISSION: LESSONS FOR INDIA

### Context

- Recently, **Kerala Cabinet** decided to tackle the rapid urbanisation with the **Kerala Urban Policy**

**Commission (KUPC)**, in response to projections indicating that **over 80% of Kerala** will be **urbanised by 2050**, outpacing the country's average.

#### About the Kerala Urban Policy Commission (KUPC)

- It is **India's first State-level urban commission**, was set up in December 2023, with a **25-year roadmap** for reimagining cities as **climate-aware, people-centred ecosystems**.
- It aims to build resilient, inclusive, and climate-ready cities tailored to Kerala's unique realities, reflecting a **shift from reactive governance to strategic planning**.
- KUPC submitted its **report in March 2025**, which laid out a blueprint for:
  - ♦ A digital data revolution;
  - ♦ Governance reforms;
  - ♦ Financial empowerment for municipalities;
  - ♦ Reviving cultural and ecological identity.

#### Key Recommendations of the KUPC

- **Climate-Responsive Planning:** Hazard-based zoning integrating flood, landslide, and coastal risk maps.
  - ♦ Planning that anticipates disasters rather than reacting afterward.
- **Data-Driven Governance:** A **Digital Data Observatory** at KILA to centralise LIDAR, satellite, tide, and weather data.
  - ♦ Real-time intelligence accessible to every municipality.
- **Financial Empowerment: Municipal bonds** for major cities like Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.
  - ♦ **Pooled bonds** for smaller towns.
  - ♦ **Green fees and climate insurance** to fund resilience and ensure pre-approved payouts for disasters.
- **Governance Overhaul: City cabinets led by mayors**, replacing bureaucratic inertia.
  - ♦ Specialist municipal cells on climate, waste, and mobility.
  - ♦ '**Jnanashree**' program to embed youth tech talent in governance.
- **Place-Based Economic Revival:**
  - ♦ **Thrissur-Kochi:** FinTech hub;
  - ♦ **Thiruvananthapuram-Kollam:** Knowledge corridor;
  - ♦ **Kozhikode:** City of literature;
  - ♦ **Palakkad & Kasaragod:** Smart-industrial zones.

- **Commons, Culture, and Care:** Revival of wetlands and waterways; Protection of heritage zones.
  - ♦ **City health councils** for migrants, gig workers, and students.

#### Key Innovations in Kerala's Urban Policy

- The **KUPC report** and the **Kerala Urban Conclave 2025** introduced several pioneering ideas like City Cabinets; Local Economic Development Departments; Green Fees; Decentralised Waste Management; and Climate-Risk Insurance & Carbon Sink Zones.
- A feedback loop where **citizen stories fuel data, and data fuels policy**.
  - ♦ These dismantle silos in planning, finance, and governance, creating a **360° urban intelligence system**.

#### Lessons for Other States & India

- **Long-Term Vision:** Planning for 25 years, not just electoral cycles.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Inclusive consultations with citizens, experts, and civil society.
- **Climate Integration:** Embedding resilience into every urban decision.
- **Decentralised Governance:** Empowering local bodies with autonomy and resources.
- **Policy-Research Synergy:** Linking academic insights with practical implementation.
- **Other lessons include:**
  - ♦ Constitute time-bound urban commissions.
  - ♦ Merge technical data with community knowledge.
  - ♦ Institutionalise citizen dialogue through data observatories.
  - ♦ Empower local bodies with fiscal tools like bonds and risk premiums.
  - ♦ Embed youth and specialists in governance systems.

Source: TH

## POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

#### In News

- Mass protests led by Nepal's Generation Z erupted prompting widespread violence, including the burning of government buildings and attacks on politicians.

### Reasons for Crisis in Nepal

- **Gen Z Discontent:** Frustration over corruption, the luxurious lifestyles of leaders, lack of accountability, and youth unemployment (above 20%) fueled mass discontent, especially as remittances form a major part of the economy but job prospects in Nepal remain bleak.
- **Suppression of Dissent:** The government banned 26 major social media platforms, citing regulatory reasons, but this was widely seen as an attempt at censorship. Social media is a main channel of expression for young Nepalis, and its removal triggered immediate nationwide demonstrations.
- **Extreme State Response:** Protesters faced excessive force—police fired live rounds, rubber bullets, and enforced harsh curfews, resulting in over 20 deaths and hundreds wounded.

### Impacts of India's Troubled Neighborhood

- **Security Threats:** Instability and the rise of extremist ideologies in neighboring countries directly threaten India's internal security. The porous border with Nepal, for example, is a concern for the movement of radical groups.
- **Diplomatic Challenges:** India's foreign policy bandwidth is often consumed by managing crises in its immediate vicinity, leaving less room to focus on its "extended neighborhood" and its aspiration to be a global power.
- **Economic Consequences:** Instability can disrupt trade routes and tourism, as seen in the recent Nepal crisis which affected flights and border movements. Additionally, India may face the burden of economic support and humanitarian aid.
- **Domestic Political Spillover:** Issues from neighboring countries, such as ethnic or communal conflicts, can sometimes influence domestic politics in India, especially in border states with shared populations and cultural ties.

Source: TH

## INDIA PROJECTS FIVE-FOLD GROWTH IN SPACE ECONOMY TO \$44 BILLION BY 2033

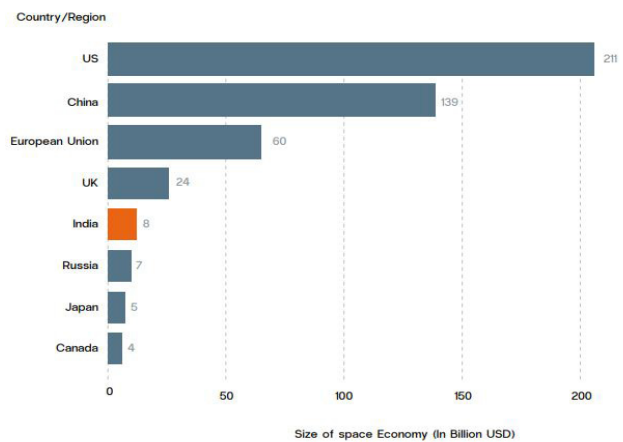
### Context

- **India's space sector** is projected to surge from **USD 8.4 billion** in 2022 to **USD 44 billion by 2033**, aiming to capture **8% of the global market**.

### India's share in the Space Industry

- India's space economy contributes **2-3%** of the global space economy, and this is expected to rise to **8% by 2030** and further to **15% by the year 2047**.

- With over **400** private space companies, India ranks **fifth globally** in the number of space companies.



- **Private players in the Space Industry:** The number of space startups in India increased to nearly 200 in 2024 from just one in 2022.
  - ♦ The funding received by these start-ups reached a total of \$124.7 Mn in 2023 from \$67.2 Mn in 2021.
  - ♦ Skyroot have launched India's first privately built rocket, Vikram-S, into space, with plans to revolutionise satellite launches.

### Roles and responsibilities of Various Organizations Under the Indian Space Policy 2023:

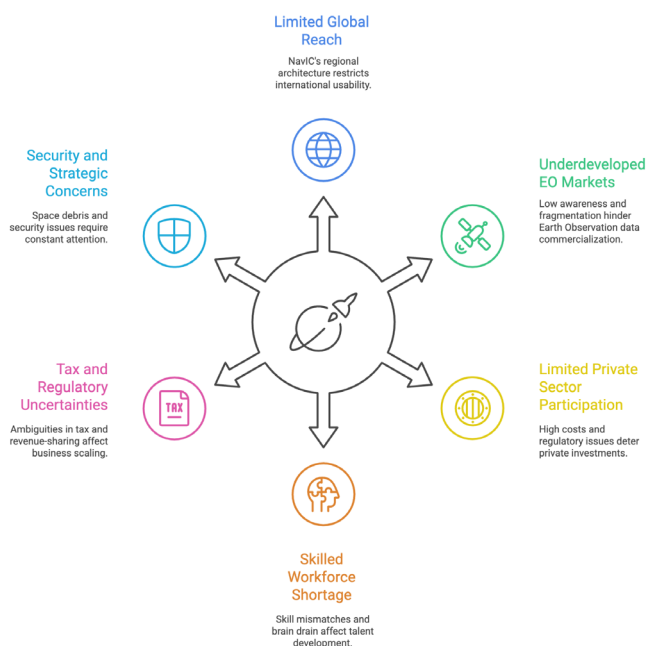
- **IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center):** It is an **autonomous single-window agency** responsible for:
  - ♦ Authorizing all government and private space activities.
  - ♦ Promoting industry clusters, incubation centers, and accelerators.
  - ♦ Facilitating technology transfer from ISRO to private players.
  - ♦ Approving remote sensing data dissemination and launch manifests.
- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) refocused on:**
  - ♦ **R&D** in new space technologies, human spaceflight, and scientific exploration.
  - ♦ Transitioning operational space systems to industry.
  - ♦ Providing open access to remote sensing data.
  - ♦ Supporting academia and industry collaboration.
  - ♦ Enabling long-term human presence in space.

- **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL):** Acts as the **commercial arm** of the Department of Space:
  - ♦ Commercializes space technologies developed by ISRO.
  - ♦ Manufactures and procures space assets.
  - ♦ Serves both government and private sector clients on commercial terms.
- **Department of Space (DoS):** Acts as the **policy coordinator**:
  - ♦ Ensures smooth role distribution among stakeholders.
  - ♦ Oversees implementation of the policy.
  - ♦ Coordinates international cooperation and compliance.
  - ♦ Ensures safe operations and resolves disputes.
  - ♦ Maintains global standards and interoperability in navigation systems.

### Steps Taken by the Government

- **Space Sector Reforms (2020):** The Government allowed private sector participation, defining the roles of IN-SPACe, ISRO, and NSIL.
- **Venture Capital (VC) Fund:** The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of a Rs.1,000 crore Venture Capital (VC) Fund dedicated to supporting India's space sector.
- **ISRO's Structural Strength & Cost-Effectiveness:** ISRO's track record of high-impact, cost-efficient missions—such as Chandrayaan-3 and the Mars Orbiter Mission—has positioned India favorably on the global stage.
- **Space Vision 2047:** Aims for Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2035 and an Indian Moon landing by 2040.
  - ♦ Gaganyaan programme has entered its final phase, with the first human spaceflight now scheduled for the first quarter of 2027.
  - ♦ Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) first module by 2028.
  - ♦ Next Generation Satellite Launch Vehicle (NGLV) by 2032.
  - ♦ Chandrayaan-4 by 2027, to collect moon samples and demonstrate return technology.
  - ♦ Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM) by 2028, to study Venus.
- **Indian Space Policy, 2023:** Ensures a level playing field for Non-Government Entities (NGEs) in space activities.
- **SpaceTech Innovation Network (SpIN):** SpIN is a one-of-its-kind public-private collaboration for start-ups and SMEs in the space industry.
- **Under the amended FDI policy, 100% FDI is allowed** in the space sector.
  - ♦ Up to 74% (Automatic route) for satellite-related activities; beyond that, government route.
  - ♦ Up to 49% (Automatic route) for launch vehicles and spaceports; beyond that, government route.
  - ♦ 100% (Automatic route) for manufacturing components and sub-systems for satellites and ground/user segments.

### Challenges in Space Economy



### Way Ahead

- Private entities are now actively involved in crucial aspects of research, manufacturing, and fabrication of rockets and satellites, fostering a vibrant ecosystem of innovation. It is expected to integrate Indian companies into global value chains.
- With this, companies will be able to set up their manufacturing facilities within the country, duly encouraging 'Make In India (MII)' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives of the Government.

Source: ET

## ENTEROMIX - MRNA CANCER VACCINE

### Context

- **Russia** has unveiled **EnteroMix**, a new vaccine reported to show **100% efficacy in early clinical trials for cancer treatment**.

### About the Vaccine

- As per the Russian Federal Medical and Biological Agency (FMBA), **the Russian EnteroMix cancer vaccine is now ready for clinical use**.
- The **oncolytic vaccine** was developed by the **Ministry of Health's National Medical Research Radiology Centre (NMRR)** in collaboration with the Engelhardt Institute of Molecular Biology under the Russian Academy of Sciences.
- **The mRNA-based vaccine** had successfully passed preclinical trials, demonstrating both safety and high effectiveness.
  - ♦ It is to **shrink aggressive tumours, slow their growth**, and do so without the **harsh side effects** of chemotherapy or radiation.
- The vaccine will be **tailored to each patient's RNA**, making it a **fully personalised therapy**.
- **How Vaccine Works:** EnteroMix uses a combination of four harmless viruses to target and destroy cancer cells while simultaneously activating the body's immune defences.

### What is Vaccination?

- **Vaccination stimulates the formation of an immune response** to a particular **pathogen**. This gives the body a head start in the fight against disease in the event of a later exposure.
- **Vaccines based on killed or weakened viruses have long been available**, exemplified by the vaccines against **polio, measles, and yellow fever**.
  - ♦ In **1951, Max Theiler** was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine** for developing the **yellow fever vaccine**.
- As technology evolved, instead of the whole virus, **just a part of the viral genetic code** began to be introduced through vaccines.
  - ♦ But the **large-scale development** of such vaccines requires cell culture (growing of cells under controlled conditions) and takes time.

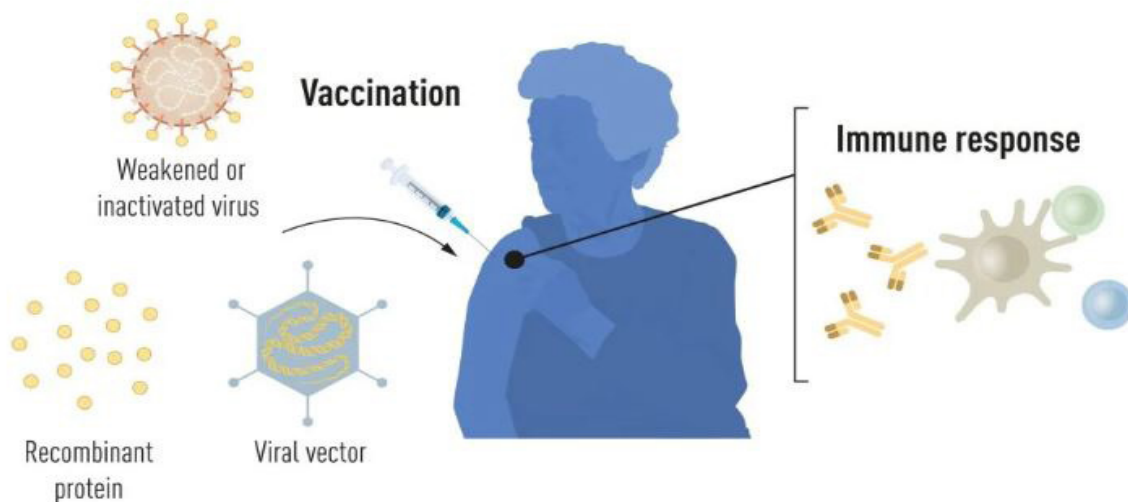


Figure 1. Methods for vaccine production before the COVID-19 pandemic.



### What are mRNA vaccines and how do they work?

- This technology had been known **since the 1980s**, but had not been perfected enough to **create vaccines at a viable scale**.
  - ♦ Basically, instead of putting an inactivated virus in the body to activate an immune response, vaccines using this technology **use messenger Ribonucleic Acid, or mRNA**, to deliver a message to the immune system.
- **Genetically engineered mRNA** can **instruct cells** to make the **protein** needed to fight a **particular virus**.
- **During Covid-19**, this technology enabled scientists to rapidly design vaccines that prevented severe illness and death, making it a game-changer in modern medicine.
  - ♦ **mRNA does not alter human DNA**, as it never enters the cell's nucleus and is naturally broken down within days.
- **With proven safety and effectiveness, researchers** are now expanding the use of mRNA vaccines to other diseases, **including flu and even personalised cancer treatments**.

### Significance of EnteroMix

- **Fully personalized design:** Each vaccine is crafted based on the genetic makeup of an individual's tumour, improving target specificity and immune engagement.
- **mRNA platform:** This allows rapid development and scalability, something decades-long efforts in cancer vaccines have lacked. The mRNA-based method can also be adapted for different cancers quickly.
- **For global patients:** A shift from harsh treatments to safer, tailored immunotherapies could reduce side effects and improve outcomes.
- **For India:** With colorectal and cervical cancer among the leading causes of cancer mortality, access to an effective, personalized cancer vaccine could transform care, if cost, infrastructure, and regulatory support are in place.

Source: BS

## INDIA NEED TO BUILD CLIMATE-RESILIENT CITIES

### In News

- India's urban transformation is accelerating, with cities poised to generate new jobs and host billions of people.

### The Need for Climate-Resilient Urban Futures

- India is undergoing an unprecedented urban transformation. By 2030, cities are expected to generate over **70% of new jobs**, and by **2050, nearly a billion people will reside in urban areas**.
- This demographic shift presents both an opportunity and a challenge: while cities can be engines of innovation and growth, they are also increasingly vulnerable to climate-induced risks such as floods, heatwaves, cyclones, and water stress.

### Steps toward building climate-resilient cities

- It includes integrated **urban planning that incorporates climate** risk assessments, promotes compact mixed-use development, and manages urban water through catchment-based planning.
- **Nature-based solutions** focus on restoring wetlands, lakes, and mangroves, expanding urban forests, and encouraging permeable surfaces and green roofs to handle excess rainwater.
- **Climate-responsive infrastructure** involves upgrading drainage systems, installing flood warning systems, retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and disaster resilience, and investing in solar-powered transport projects.
- **Inclusive governance** emphasizes empowering local bodies with climate mandates, engaging citizens in planning, and strengthening institutional capacity at various government levels.
- **Financing and innovation** are critical, with a focus on mobilizing funds through green bonds and public-private partnerships, aligning national urban missions with climate goals, and supporting climate-tech startups and viable projects.

### Challenges

- **Flooding threatens two-thirds of urban residents**, with projected losses reaching **\$30 billion by 2070**, necessitating integrated solutions such as no-build zones, improved drainage, nature-based interventions, and real-time warning systems—exemplified by Kolkata and Chennai.
- **Extreme heat**, intensified by urban heat islands, demands scalable measures like cool roofs, tree canopies, and adaptive work schedules.
- **Housing Vulnerability:** With over 144 million new homes and extensive infrastructure yet to be built by 2070.

- **Transportation systems**, vulnerable to flooding, require risk mapping, drainage upgrades, and alternative routing to maintain economic continuity.
- **Waste & Pollution:** Inefficient municipal services contribute to poor air, water, and soil quality, undermining urban livability.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- To address climate challenges, cities need to build institutional capacity, promote collaboration, and get the support of both the government and the citizens.
- Early investments in adaptive infrastructure and inclusive urban planning can prevent billions in damages and save lives.
- Housing must be designed to withstand floods, heat, cyclones, and earthquakes, focusing on compact and forward-looking city layouts.
- Modernizing municipal services, such as waste-to-energy projects, will improve environmental quality and boost urban productivity.

Source :IE

## NEWS IN SHORT

### RAJASTHAN ASSEMBLY PASSES 'ANTI-CONVERSION' BILL

#### Context

- The Rajasthan Legislative Assembly passed the "Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Bill, 2025".

#### Background

- As of 2025, **11 states** have passed laws to regulate religious conversion on the ground of public order.
- **Article 25** of the Constitution provides for the fundamental right to freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.
- **The Supreme Court, 1977** ruled that this fundamental right does not include the right to convert another person to one's own religion, but to transmit or spread one's religion by an exposition of its tenets.

#### Key Features

- **The Bill prohibits religious conversions by force, coercion, misrepresentation,** undue

influence, allurements, marriage, or any fraudulent means.

- The person undergoing conversion and the converter **must make declarations before the DM.**
  - ♦ The DM will conduct inquiry and invite objections.
- **Persons who can lodge an FIR against** a forced conversion include the victim, parents, brother, sister, or anyone related by blood, marriage, or by adoption.
- **General offences:** Unlawful conversions will invite imprisonment of **seven to fourteen years** and a minimum fine of **₹5 lakh**.
- **Vulnerable groups:** If the converted person is a minor, woman, differently abled, or from SC/ST communities, the punishment will be **ten to twenty years** of imprisonment and a fine of **₹10 lakh**.
- **Mass conversions:** In cases of mass conversions, guilty parties face **twenty years to life imprisonment** along with a minimum fine of **₹25 lakh**.

#### Key Issues

- Details of conversion and personal details of the person converting will be put on public notice. This may violate a person's right to privacy.
- Re-conversion to a person's previous religion will not be considered as conversion. This may violate the right to equality.

Source: IE

### LANGKHON FESTIVAL

#### Context

- **The Tiwa tribesmen** celebrated the Langkhon (Langkhun) Festival in Umsowai village of Karbi Anglong district, Assam.

#### About

- The festival involves the **worship of bamboo over four days**, symbolizing fertility, resilience, and the close bond between nature and human life.
- It is primarily celebrated in the **Karbi Anglong district of Assam**, but also holds importance in other Tiwa-inhabited regions.
- The tribe celebrates the **annual harvest festival** to offer their sacrament to **Ramsa Devota** and other Gods seeking wellbeing of their paddy from pests and a good yield.

Source: TH

## NATIONAL SCHEDULED TRIBE FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NSTFDC)

### In News

- Coal India Limited (CIL) and the **National Scheduled Tribe Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at empowering tribal students enrolled in **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)**.

### About NSTFDC

- Established:** NSTFDC was set up in 2001 under the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.
- Objective:** Its core goal is the socio-economic and educational upliftment of Scheduled Tribes (STs) by providing better self-employment opportunities to help them become economically independent and self-reliant.
- Role in Training:** NSTFDC also provides grants for conducting skill development and training programs aimed specifically at tribal youth.

Source: TH

## SCOPE OF SOCIAL SECURITY TO EXPAND WITH SPREE-2025 AND AMNESTY SCHEME

### In News

- The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has launched two key initiatives — SPREE-2025 and the AMNESTY Scheme-2025 — to expand social security coverage and ease compliance for industries.

### SPREE-2025

- SPREE-2025 (Scheme for Promoting Registration of Employers and Employees) will be active until 31st December 2025.
- It allows unregistered industries and employees to enroll with ESIC via the ESI Portal, Shram Suvidha Portal, or Company Affairs Portal without paying past dues.
- Registered employers will be covered from their chosen date, and employees will receive ESIC benefits from the registration date.
- The scheme promotes voluntary compliance over punishment, aiming to reduce litigation and build trust between employers and employees.

### AMNESTY Scheme-2025

- It is a one-time dispute resolution initiative by ESIC, effective from 1st October 2025 to 30th September 2026.
- It aims to reduce the backlog of court cases and promote compliance under the ESI Act by allowing employers to settle legal disputes with ESIC through out-of-court settlements.

Source :PIB

## ETHIOPIA OPENS AFRICA'S LARGEST DAM ACROSS NILE

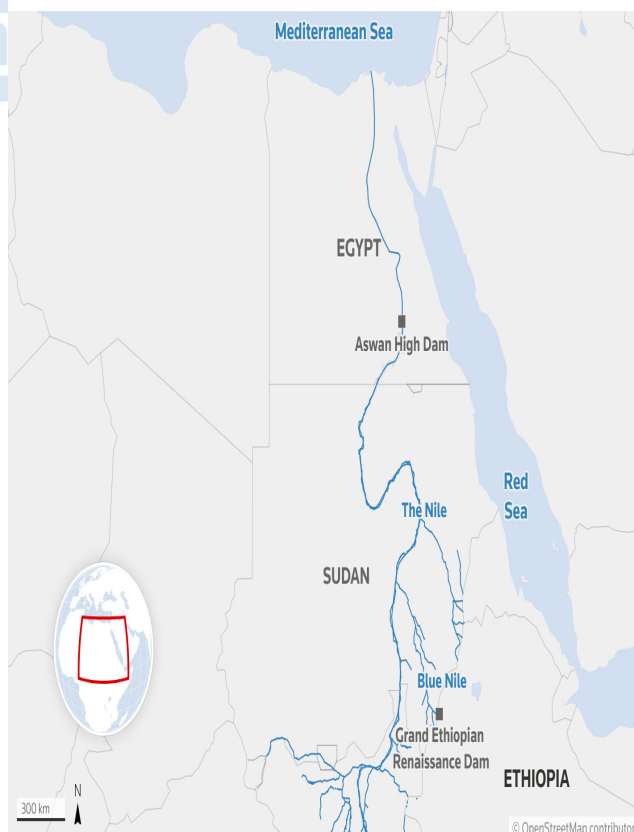
### Context

- Ethiopia has inaugurated the **Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)**, Africa's largest hydro power project.

### About the GERD

- Location:** Guba, Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile (a major tributary of the Nile).
- Installed capacity:** 6,450 MW, placing it among the world's top 20 hydroelectric dams.
- The dam remains contentious among downstream nations including **Egypt and Sudan**.

### Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam



Source: Natural Earth, Humanitarian Data Exchange, Reuters

### About the Blue Nile

- The **Blue Nile** originates in **Lake Tana**, located in the **Ethiopian Highlands** of eastern Africa.
- It joins the **White Nile** at **Al-Muqrin** in **Khartoum** (the capital of Sudan). From this confluence, the river flows north through Sudan and Egypt, eventually emptying into the **Mediterranean Sea** as the Nile.
- The **Nile River** is the **longest river in the world**, flowing through **11 countries**: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Tanzania, Sudan and Egypt.



Source: BBC

## SEMBANAD LAKE

### In News

- Vembanad Lake of Kerala is facing a severe ecological crisis.

### About Vembanad Lake

- It is the longest lake in India and the largest in Kerala, is a Ramsar site and a wetland of international importance.
- It is fed by 10 rivers including Pamba, Meenachil, Achankovil, Manimala, and Periyar and eventually opens into the Arabian Sea.

Source: DTE

## EXERCISE ZAPAD 2025

### Context

- An Indian Armed Forces contingent departed for Russia to take part in the **multilateral joint military exercise ZAPAD 2025**.

### About the Exercise

- More than **20 countries**, including China, are participating in the exercise. Notably, for the first time since **Operation Sindoor**, the Indian and Pakistani armies will take part in the same military drill.
- The exercise aimed at enhancing military cooperation, improving interoperability, and providing a platform for participating armies to exchange tactics, techniques and procedures in the domains of conventional warfare and counter-terrorism operations.

Source: PIB

