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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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NEWS IN SHORT

INDIA'S URBAN DEFINITION IS FAILING ITS GROWING TOWNS

Context

- India's next Census in 2027 is set to retain the 2011 definition of "urban," as announced by the Registrar General of India.

How India Defines Urban Areas?

- In the 2011 Census, an urban unit was defined as either a statutory town or a census town.
- **Statutory Towns:** Notified by State governments; governed by urban local bodies (municipal corporations, councils, nagar panchayats).
- **Census Towns:** Remain administratively rural, but they function like urban areas. It satisfies the following criteria;
  - A minimum population of at least **5,000.**
  - At least **75%** of the male main working population engaged in non- agricultural activities
  - Density of **400 persons per sq. km** or more.

Limitations of the Current Definition

- **Binary Framework:** Settlements are classified only as "urban" or "rural," ignoring peri-urban and transitional areas.
- **Governance Gap:** Census towns function like cities but remain under Panchayati Raj institutions, which lack the financial autonomy of urban local bodies.
  - In India, **urban local bodies are more autonomous** and have more freedom and control over their finances, while **Panchayati Raj institutions are limited** to implementing centrally designed welfare schemes.
- **Outdated Criteria:**
  - The **75%** male workforce rule ignores women's unpaid and informal work.
  - Semi-urban residents often juggle both farm and non-farm jobs, blurring the rural–urban divide.
- **Mismatch with Ground Realities:** Many villages have urban lifestyles and dense populations yet remain administratively rural.

Implications of Misclassification

- The outdated urban definition leads to a significant **underestimation of India's urban population.**
  - While the official 2011 Census reported that **31% of India's population lived in urban areas,** research using alternative density-based criteria (Population & Environment, 2019) suggests that the actual urban population could have been, ranging between **35% and 57%.**
- **Policy Blind Spots:** Settlements excluded from the "urban" category receive fewer resources for housing, transport, sanitation, and social infrastructure.
- **Planning Deficit:** Peri-urban areas become the informal urban clusters with no proper governance, resulting in unplanned sprawl.
- **Labour Market Distortions:** Growth of service sector and gig economy in smaller towns remains unacknowledged in official classifications.

Way Ahead

- **Broaden Criteria:** Move beyond rigid population size and male workforce benchmarks to include:
  - Population density and contiguity.
  - Occupational diversity (beyond agriculture vs non-agriculture).
  - Functional linkages with nearby urban centres.
- **Periodic Review:** Regularly update classification criteria to reflect changing economic and demographic realities.
- **Governance Reform:** Gradual municipalisation of census towns to provide them with elected bodies and urban-level services.
- **Gender-Sensitive Measures:** Recognise women's unpaid and informal work in defining occupational structures.
- **Global Learning:** Adopt multi-dimensional definitions like those used by OECD or UN-Habitat, which consider density, built-up area, and commuting patterns.

Global Perspective of Urbanization

- There is **no universally accepted definition of urban**.
- **DEGURBA Method:** To address this, six international organizations – **the European Union, FAO, ILO, OECD, UN-Habitat, and the World Bank** – jointly developed the Degree of Urbanization (DEGURBA) method.
  - Endorsed by the **UN Statistical Commission in March 2020**, this harmonized approach allows international and regional comparisons of urbanization.
- **DEGURBA Classification System:** Uses population density and size on a **1 km²** grid to classify the entire territory of a country into **three broad categories and seven sub-categories:**

- ◆ **Urban Centre,**
- ◆ **Urban Cluster**: subdivided into dense, semi-dense, and suburban/peri-urban cells,
- ◆ **Rural Areas:** subdivided into rural clusters, low-density rural grids, and very low-density rural grids.

Source: TH

CUSTODIAL DEATHS IN INDIA

Context

- The Supreme Court castigated the Madhya Pradesh government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for failing to arrest two police officers **allegedly responsible for the custodial death of a 25-year-old.**

Custodial Deaths in India

- According to the National Human Rights Commission, there were 1**1,650 deaths in custody in India between 2016 and 2022.**
  - ◆ **Uttar Pradesh** alone has reported 2,630 custodial deaths, the highest in the country.
- **Magisterial Inquiries:** A 2023 analysis of NHRC and government data reveals between 2017 and 2022, only 345 magisterial inquiries were ordered nationwide into custodial deaths, resulting in just 123 arrests.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** NHRC data reveals that 71% of custodial deaths between 1996 and 2018 involved detainees from poor or vulnerable backgrounds.

Why Custodial Deaths are Rampant in India?

- **Colonial Legacy of Policing:** The Indian police system is still heavily influenced by the Police Act of 1861, designed for control rather than service.
  - ◆ This creates an authoritarian mindset where force is often prioritized over lawful procedures.
- **Weak Accountability Mechanisms:** Investigations into custodial deaths are often carried out by the same police department, leading to bias.
- **Torture as a Tool of Investigation:** Due to poor training and lack of forensic infrastructure, police often resort to third-degree methods to extract confessions.
- **Marginalisation and Vulnerable Groups:** Most victims come from weaker socio-economic backgrounds.

- ◆ Lack of legal literacy and resources prevents families from seeking justice.
- **Poor Implementation of Safeguards:** Safeguards under Article 21 & 22 of the Constitution, D.K. Basu guidelines (1997), NHRC directives, and Supreme Court judgments are often ignored.
  - ◆ Mandatory requirements like medical examinations, arrest memos, and informing relatives are routinely violated.

Implications

- **Erosion of Rule of Law:** It shows that constitutional safeguards that Article 21 – Right to Life, Article 22 – Protection against arbitrary arrest are being routinely violated.
  - ◆ This undermines public confidence in the justice system.
- **Human Rights Image:** Internationally, India faces criticism in UNHRC, Human Rights Watch reports. This weakens India's moral authority when it speaks about human rights issues in other countries.
- **Police-State Perception:** High custodial deaths may create a perception of India as a police state rather than a welfare-oriented democracy.
- **Weak Criminal Justice System**: This projects inefficiency in adopting modern policing, forensics, and technology-driven methods.

International Legal Frameworks for Protection

- **United Nations Charter (1945):** It sets out the purposes and principles of the UN, including the promotion of human rights.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** It prohibits torture and ensures the presumption of innocence.
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966):** It protects right to life and prohibits torture.
- **The Nelson Mandela Rules,** officially known as the **UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners 2015,** establish minimum standards for the humane treatment of all individuals deprived of their liberty.
- **European Convention on Human Rights (1950):** It recognises individual dignity and access to justice mechanisms.

Legal Initiatives to Curb Custodial Deaths in India

- **Supreme Court Guidelines (D.K. Basu vs. State of West Bengal, 1997):** It laid down mandatory arrest and detention safeguards: informing

relatives, maintaining arrest memo, medical examination, legal counsel, production before magistrate within 24 hours.

- These guidelines are treated as enforceable law under Article 141.

- **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) – Section 176:** It mandates judicial inquiry by a magistrate in cases of custodial deaths, this ensures an investigation outside police control.

- **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):** NHRC requires mandatory reporting of all custodial deaths within 24 hours.

  - Issues advisories and seeks compliance reports from states.

- **Supreme Court Directions on CCTV Cameras (2020, Paramvir Singh Saini Case):** Directed installation of CCTV cameras with night vision and audio in all police stations and prisons.

  - Ordered independent committees at state and district levels for monitoring.

- **Judicial Oversight:** High Courts and the Supreme Court regularly intervene in custodial death cases, order compensation, and monitor police reforms.

- **Criminal Law Reforms (2023):** Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 (replacing CrPC) introduces provisions for greater transparency in arrests, use of forensic methods, and citizen-centric procedures.

  - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023 modernise penal and evidentiary laws, reducing dependence on confession-based policing.

Recommendations for Reform

- **Law Commission Reports:**

  - **69th Report (1977) of Law Commission of India:** It proposed introducing Section 26A in the Indian Evidence Act to make confessions before senior police officers admissible.

  - **273rd Report of Law Commission of India** recommended an anti-torture law, affirming that India's existing legal safeguards are insufficient.

- **Police Reforms:** Implement the Supreme Court's **Prakash Singh vs. Union of India (2006) directives**, including:

  - Separation of the investigation and law and order functions of the police

  - Establishment of Police Complaints Authorities.

- **Mandatory Use of Technology:** CCTV coverage in interrogation rooms, digital records of questioning, and body cameras must become the norm.

- **Judicial Reforms:** Fast-track courts for custodial crimes, along with stringent penalties for complicit officials, are essential.

Conclusion

- Custodial deaths remain a concern for India's democratic and constitutional values.

- While the government has introduced legal safeguards, judicial directions, and institutional mechanisms, their effectiveness depends on strict enforcement, police reforms, and a shift towards technology-driven investigations.

Source: TH

DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN GRAM PANCHAYATS

Context

- **The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** has launched a **series of digital reforms to strengthen Gram Panchayats.**

Need for the Digital Transformation of Villages

- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Rural India still faces low internet penetration and digital illiteracy, digital transformation helps ensure inclusive growth and reduces inequality.

- **Improved Governance and Service Delivery:** Digital platforms enable direct benefit transfers (DBT), e-Governance, and online grievance redressal.

- **Boost to Rural Economy:** Promotes digital payments, e-commerce, and online marketplaces for farmers and artisans.

- **Agriculture Transformation:** Use of digital tools for weather forecasts, soil health, crop advisories, and precision farming.

- **Healthcare Access:** Telemedicine and digital health records provide affordable and timely healthcare, reducing the need for travel to distant hospitals.

Challenges

- **Poor Digital Infrastructure:** Patchy internet connectivity, low broadband penetration, and unreliable electricity supply in rural areas hinder the progress.

- **Digital Literacy Gap:** A large section of villagers, especially elderly lack digital skills leading to the fear of technology adoption.

- **Language and Content Barriers:** Most digital platforms are in English or Hindi, leaving out regional language users.
- **Cybersecurity and Trust Deficit:** Rural citizens are more vulnerable to digital frauds and scams due to the low awareness about data privacy and online safety.
- **Resistance to Change:** Preference for traditional cash-based transactions and offline systems.

Government Initiatives

- **SabhaSaar: AI for Gram Sabha Meetings:** Launched in 2025, SabhaSaar is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool that creates structured minutes of meetings from the audio or video of Gram Sabha and other Panchayat gatherings.
- **The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme** was launched in 2020.
    - The scheme gives rural households legal ownership papers for the homes and land they occupy.
    - Using drones and advanced mapping tools, it clearly marks property boundaries.
- **BharatNet:** It was launched in 2011, to bridge the digital divide.
    - The project aims to deliver affordable, high-speed internet to every Gram Panchayat.
- **eGramSwaraj:**

Source: Ministry of Panchayati Raj

- **Meri Panchayat App:** Meri Panchayat App serves as an integrated mobile governance platform, designed and developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
    - It empowers rural communities by promoting transparency, accountability and citizen participation in Panchayat affairs.
- **Gram Manchitra: Geo-Spatial Planning Tool:** The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched the Gram Manchitra Geographic Information System (GIS) application.
    - It offers a unified digital map where officials can visualise developmental works across different sectors and align them with the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Conclusion

- These reforms aim to make governance faster, more transparent and more inclusive.
- Tools now range from artificial intelligence (AI) meeting summarisers to geo-spatial mapping platforms, digital accounting systems and citizen-facing mobile apps.
- This shift also reflects the Government's broader vision under Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Source: PIB

NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON WATER SECURITY

In News

- The Government of India has launched the **'National Initiative on Water Security,'** making water conservation a top national priority and introducing mandatory minimum spending on water-related works **under MGNREGA.**

Key Features of the Initiative

- **Fund Allocation Mandates:**
    - **'Over-exploited'/'Dark zone' blocks:** 65% of MGNREGA funds must be spent on water-related works (rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge).
    - **'Semi-critical' blocks**: 40% of funds for water conservation.
    - **All other blocks:** 30% minimum for such activities.
- **Budgetary Focus**: Out of the 88,000 crore annual MGNREGA budget (2025–26), a fixed share is now earmarked for water security.
- **Groundwater Assessment Basis:** Fund distribution and block categorisation are based on the Dynamic Ground Water Resources Assessment Report (2024), as classified by the **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB).**

What Qualifies as Water Conservation Works?

- Construction of check dams, farm ponds, community tanks, and percolation tanks.
- Desilting, renovation of traditional water bodies, groundwater recharge pits, soak wells.
- Building irrigation channels, watershed management structures, afforestation and plantation works to increase water retention.

Rationale

- **Groundwater depletion:** India is the world's largest user of groundwater (~25% of global extraction).
- **Rural dependence:** 80% of rural drinking water and nearly two-thirds of irrigation rely on groundwater.
- **Climate stress:** Erratic monsoons and rising drought frequency exacerbate water scarcity.
- **PM's directive:** Following the Prime Minister's instruction to earmark funds specifically for water, this step institutionalises water conservation as a national rural priority.

Significance

- **Water Security:** Strengthens groundwater recharge and rainwater harvesting.
- **Rural Livelihoods:** Ensures sustainable employment + improved farm productivity.
- **Women Empowerment:** Rising participation in MGNREGA aligns with SDG 5.
- **Climate Adaptation:** Improves resilience of rural communities against droughts and floods.
- **Synergy with National Missions:** Supports Jal Jeevan Mission, Catch the Rain, Amrit Sarovar, and Doubling Farmers' Income goals.

Source: PIB

RISING CANCER BURDEN: LANCET STUDY

Context

- An analysis of the *'Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2023',* published in **The Lancet**, presents updated estimates of the **cancer burden in 204 countries** and territories from **1990 to 2023**, along with **projections up to 2050.**

Global Cancer Burden (2023)

- **New Cancer Diagnoses** projected to increase by **60.7%, 30.5 million cases** annually by 2050;
- **Cancer deaths are** projected to **increase by 74.5%,** amounting to **18.6 million** per year by 2050, with **low and middle income countries (LMICs)** bearing the heaviest burden.

Cancer Burden in India

- About **26.4% surge in cancer incidence rates** over the past three decades, increasing from **84.8 cases per 100,000 people in 1990 to 107.2 in 2023.**

- Cancer mortality has risen by **21.2%**, climbing from **71.7 deaths per 100,000 to 86.9** during the same period.
    - **India ranks 168th out of 204 nations** in cancer death rates.
- **Leading Cancer Types in India** *(Deaths per 100,000):* Breast cancer (8.5); Lung cancer (8.4); Oesophageal cancer (8.2); Stomach cancer: 6.9; Oral cavity cancer (6.5).

Demographic and Socioeconomic Patterns

- In general, cancer incidence is **highest in countries with higher life expectancy, education, and living standards**.
- Certain cancers such as **cervical cancer** remain more common in **low-HDI (Human Development Index) countries**.

Risk Factors

- The study found that **41.7% of cancer deaths** were linked to known risk factors, including **behavioral, environmental, and metabolic determinants**, strongly linked to **modifiable lifestyle factors**, including poor diet, obesity, alcohol consumption, and tobacco use.

India-Specific Risk Factors

- **Betel nut and pan consumption**: Oral cancer
- **Tobacco use (smoking and smokeless forms):** Lung, oral, head, neck, bladder, and kidney cancers
- **Hot beverages**: Oesophageal cancer
- **Pickled and preserved foods**: Stomach cancer

Breakthroughs in the Fight Against Cancer

- **Personalized Cancer Vaccines:** These vaccines train the immune system to target cancer cells, using **mRNA technology.**
    - Trials are underway in the UK, Germany, Belgium, Spain, and Sweden.
- **Blood Test for 18 Early-Stage Cancers:** It analyzes blood proteins and identifies 93% of stage 1 cancers in men and 84% in women during trials.
- **Seven-Minute Cancer Treatment Injection:** It is a **fast-administered injection** that replaces hour-long IV infusions, improving patient experience and hospital efficiency.
- **CRISPR Gene Editing:** CRISPR is being explored to correct genetic mutations that cause cancer, offering potential for targeted therapies.
- **Thermal Ablation:** A minimally invasive technique that uses heat to destroy tumors, especially useful for liver and kidney cancers.

- **CAR-T Cell Therapy Expansion:** It is being adapted for solid tumors like brain and lung cancers, originally used for blood cancers.

India's Response to Cancer

- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS):** It focuses on screening and early detection of oral, breast, and cervical cancers.
- **National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP):** Tracks cancer trends and informs policy decisions.
- **Day Care Cancer Centres:** Planned in district hospitals to improve access to treatment.
- **Cancer AI & Technology Challenge (CATCH):** It supports startups and hospitals in deploying AI tools for screening, diagnostics, and treatment planning across the **National Cancer Grid.**
- **Union Budget 2025–26:** 99,858 crore was allocated with specific funding for cancer care infrastructure and research.

About Cancer

- It is a group of diseases characterized by the **uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells.**
- These cells can invade nearby tissues and, through the **bloodstream or lymphatic system**, spread to other parts of the body (a process called **metastasis**).
- It is **not infectious** and **cannot be transmitted from one person to another.**
- It is a non-communicable disease, often caused by genetic mutations, environmental exposures, or lifestyle factors

Types of Tumors

- **Benign:** Non-cancerous and generally do not spread;
- **Malignant**: Cancerous, aggressive, and capable of spreading to other organs.

Source: HT

INDIA'S OUTWARD REMITTANCES DIPS 11% UNDER LIBERALISED REMITTANCE SCHEME

Context

- Outward remittances by resident individuals under the Reserve Bank of India's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) fell nearly **11%** year-on-year in July 2025, totalling **$2,452.93 million** against **$2,754.05 million** in the same period last year.

What are Remittances?

- **Remittances** are a way to electronically send funds to people, often family, in another country.
    - Usually sent by individuals working in foreign countries, especially those employed in blue-collar or skilled jobs.
- **Remittances are a significant source** of income for many countries, contributing to their **economic stability,** supporting local economies, and sometimes helping to **finance national trade deficits.**
- **Modes of Transfer:** Remittances can be sent through banks, money transfer operators, or digital platforms.
- **Outward Remittance:** Outward remittance refers to the **transfer of money in foreign currency** by a resident of India to a person or entity outside India, for purposes such as education, travel, medical treatment, investment, or gifting.

India's Remittances: Key Facts

- **India's remittances have more than doubled** from $55.6 billion in 2010-11 to $118.7 billion in 2023-24.
- **As per the World Bank,** India has been the **top recipient of remittances since 2008,** with its share in world remittances rising from around 11 per cent in 2001 to about 14 percent in 2024.
- Remittances from the U.S. and U.K. nearly doubled to **40% of total inward remittances in FY24**, up from 26% in FY17.
- The U.S. became the top source of remittances in FY21, contributing 23.4% followed by the UAE contributing 19.2%.
- Half of the remittances went to Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Other states like Haryana, Gujarat, and Punjab had smaller shares (below 5%).

Why did student remittances decline?

- **Global Visa Restrictions:** Major destinations like US, UK, Canada saw **25–31% declines** in Indian student visas.
- **Economic Uncertainty:** Families postponed study and travel plans due to global financial volatility.
- **High Base Effect:** Remittances were at peak levels in FY24, making a decline statistically likely.

What is the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)?

- LRS was introduced in **2004** by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI).**
- It allows resident individuals (including minors) to remit up to **$250,000 per financial year** for permissible current or capital account transactions.
- Initially launched with a $25,000 limit, later increased to current levels.
- Remittances can be made for;
    - Education and studies abroad,
    - Travel and tourism,
    - Medical treatment abroad,
    - Purchase of property,
    - Investment in foreign securities or businesses.
- LRS is governed under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.**

Source: TH

GROWING INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN ENERGY AND AI WORLDWIDE

Context

- In a 2024 report, the International Energy Agency (IEA) highlighted the **growing interconnections between energy and AI worldwide.**

Global Data Centre Energy Outlook

- **Rising Demand:** Data centre electricity demand projected to more than double by 2030 to 945 TWh.
    - AI-optimised data centres demand to quadruple by 2030.
- **Global Share:** Data centres currently consume 1–2% of total power, expected to rise to 3–4% by 2030.
    - **Comparison:** Steel industry consumes 7% of total power.
    - **Water Stress:** Rising freshwater use for cooling servers is a parallel concern.
- **IEA Projection:** Renewables and natural gas to dominate supply due to cost-competitiveness and availability.

India's Data Centre Landscape

- **Current & Future Growth:** The demand is projected to rise from 1.2 GW (2024) to 4.5 GW (2030) (McKinsey Report).

- AI-driven data centres alone will consume 40–50 TWh annually by 2030.
- **Regional Distribution:** Mumbai – 41%, Chennai – 23%, NCR – 14% of total capacity.
- **Energy Mix:** India is the 3rd-largest energy consumer, dominated by coal, crude oil, and natural gas.

How AI adoption world wide impacts the Environment?

- **High Energy Demand:** Training large AI models (like GPT, image generators) consumes massive electricity, often concentrated in data centres.
    - Global data centre demand could triple by 2030, with AI as the main driver. If powered by fossil fuels, this raises CO_2 emissions.
- **Water and Resource Use:** Data centres require huge water volumes for cooling — sometimes millions of litres per day.
- **E-Waste and Hardware Turnover:** Frequent upgrades of GPUs/TPUs for AI accelerate electronic waste, adding pressure on waste management systems.

Positive Impacts of AI on Environment

- **Optimising Energy Systems:** AI helps forecast solar and wind better, enabling higher renewable integration and reducing curtailment.
    - AI-managed smart grids, batteries, and demand-response systems reduce energy wastage.
- **Climate Modelling & Adaptation:** Enhances climate predictions, extreme weather forecasting, and precision agriculture to cut fertilizer/water use.
    - AI supports disaster risk management and climate-resilient infrastructure planning.
- **Efficiency in Industries:** AI-driven optimization reduces emissions in transport (fuel routing, logistics), buildings (smart HVAC), and manufacturing (process automation).
- **Policy Framework:** Energy Conservation Building Code & National Energy Efficiency Roadmap integrate AI in renewable energy, and sustainable design.
- **Smart Real Estate:** AI-driven solutions such as smart lighting, predictive Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), automated building controls energy savings up to 25%.

Way Ahead

- The rapid adoption of AI worldwide is set to transform both the energy sector and the environment.

- AI-driven data centres are projected to multiply electricity and water demand—raising concerns of higher CO_2 emissions, resource stress, and e-waste.

- AI also offers powerful solutions by enabling energy efficiency, renewable integration, and climate adaptation.

- The challenge ahead lies in ensuring that AI's energy-hungry growth is powered by clean, sustainable sources while leveraging its potential to build a greener, more resilient future.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA

In News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid rich tributes to **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya** on his birth anniversary, calling him a guiding force in India's journey toward a **"Viksit Bharat."**

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916–1968)

- He was a political thinker, economist, and leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

- He was an exceptional scholar and dedicated nationalist.

- He studied in Kanpur and joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and became a full-time pracharak in 1942.

Ideology

- He was a visionary thinker, known for his doctrine of **Integral Humanism((Ekatma Manav Darshan)** which emphasized a **balance between spiritual and material development** and promoted decentralization and self-reliant village-based economy.

- He advocated **constructive politics** — supporting the government when right and opposing it when wrong — always prioritizing national interest.

Contributions

- He contributed to ideological journalism by starting **'Rashtra Dharma' (monthly), 'Panchajanya' (weekly), and 'Swadesh' (daily)**.

- In 1951, he became the **first General Secretary of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) in Uttar Pradesh,** later serving as All India General Secretary.

- His organizational brilliance and dedication impressed leaders like Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who credited him with building the party after Mookerjee's death in 1953.

Legacy

- He tragically died under mysterious circumstances on February 1, 1968, while traveling by train.

- His legacy endures through his call for national unity and upliftment, with his dream of a strong, prosperous, and enlightened Bharatmata continuing to inspire generations.

Source :PIB

FOREIGNERS TRIBUNALS

Context

- The Supreme Court of India has recently decided to **examine a petition challenging the standard of proof applied by Foreigners Tribunals in Assam.**

About Foreigners Tribunals

- **Foreigners Act, 1946** empowers the Government to detect, detain, and deport illegal foreigners.

- **Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964** was issued under this Act to create tribunals to decide on questions of citizenship.

- **Composition & Appointment:**
  - FTs are quasi-judicial bodies.
  - Appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
  - Members can be retired district judges, additional district judges, or advocates with at least 10 years' experience.

- **Jurisdiction & Powers:**
  - Decide whether a person is a foreigner (illegal migrant) under the Foreigners Act, 1946.
  - **Have powers similar to a civil court:** Summon witnesses, Take evidence on oath, Order production of documents, Issue commissions for witness examination.

Source: TH

FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION REGULATION ACT, 2010

Context

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) licence** of the Students Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL), founded by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk.

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010

- **FCRA aims** to regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions to prohibit activities detrimental to the national interest.
- **Origin:** It was first enacted in **1976** but repealed and later replaced with new legislation in 2010.
  - It was further amended in 2020.

Key Provisions of the FCRA, 2010

- **Registration of NGOs:** To receive foreign funds, NGOs, trusts, societies, and Section 8 companies must register with the Ministry of Home Affairs and have a valid certificate.
  - Registered groups can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic and cultural programmes.
  - The Act prohibits receipt of foreign funds by candidates for elections, journalists or newspaper and media broadcast companies, judges and government servants, members of legislature and political parties or their office-bearers, and organizations of a political nature.
- **2020 Amendment:** Prohibiting the transfer of foreign contribution to any other person or organization.
  - Reducing the limit of usage of foreign contribution for administrative expenses from **50% to 20%.**
- **Validity:** The registration is valid for five years, after which the NGO has to apply for a renewal.
- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** monitors the implementation of the FCRA to ensure that such funds do not adversely affect the country's internal security.

Source: TH

PROVINCIAL CITIZENSHIP

In News

- A recent study introduces the **concept of "provincial citizenship"** to explain how domicile-based identity politics in States like Jharkhand challenge India's constitutional ideal of unified national citizenship.

Provincial Citizenship

- It is rooted in **nativist sentiment** and this form of citizenship gains traction in **regional politics**, often marginalising internal migrants and complicating democratic adjudication.

- It is a growing political phenomenon in India where **domicile status within individual States** becomes a key factor in political identity and mobilization, challenging the idea of a singular national citizenship.
- It has evolved into a significant political reality, sparking debates about migration, identity, and citizenship rights within India's federal structure.

Key Highlights of recent study

- The study highlights how States like Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Assam use domicile policies for political leverage, often rooted in nativist and majoritarian sentiments.
- In Jharkhand, domicile politics serve as a tool to assert regional identity and grievances, undermining the constitutional ideal of "one nation, one citizenship."

Source :TH

INDIA-RUSSIA DISCUSS BRICS GRAIN EXCHANGE PLAN

Context

- India-Russia discussed plans of creating a common agricultural food exchange that will help in boosting agriculture trade among the BRICS member-countries.

About

- At the **BRICS Summit in Kazan in 2024,** the President of Russia proposed the creation of a **BRICS Grain Exchange as a strategic initiative.**
- The proposal was subsequently endorsed in the **Kazan Declaration**, which called for establishing a fair and transparent agricultural trading system.

Objectives

- **Create a new pricing index:** Establish **independent benchmarks for grain pricing** to counter the market influence of Western exchanges like the **Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME)**, where prices are often set in U.S. dollars.
- **Facilitate trade in national currencies:** Reduce the bloc's dependence on the U.S. dollar by allowing member countries to settle grain trade in their own currencies.
- **Enhance food security:** Create a more resilient and reliable supply chain for BRICS members and other countries in the Global South.

Source: TH

COFFEE BOARD OF INDIA

In News

- The **Coffee Board of India** is conducting extensive awareness and capacity-building programmes to boost registrations on its mobile app for compliance with **the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) which requires proof that coffee is not linked to deforestation post-December 2020.**

The Coffee Board

- It is a **statutory organization** constituted under **Section (4) of the Coffee Act, 1942** and functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

- The Board has a Central Coffee Research Institute at Balehonnur (Karnataka) .

- The Board comprises 33 Members including the Chairperson. The remaining 32 Members representing various interests are appointed as per provisions under Section 4(2) of the Coffee Act read with Rule 3 of the Coffee Rules, 1955.

- The Board is mainly focusing its activities in the areas of research, extension, development, market intelligence, external & internal promotion and welfare measures.

> **Do you know?**
> - India is now the seventh-largest coffee producer globally with exports reaching $1.29 billion in FY 2023-24, almost double the $719.42 million in 2020-21
> - India's coffee is primarily grown in the **ecologically rich Western and Eastern Ghats**, areas famous for their biodiversity.
> - **Karnataka leads in production**, contributing 248,020 MT in 2022-23, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Source :TH

UAE'S FIRST SOVEREIGN MOBILITY CLOUD

In News

- The UAE has unveiled its **first Sovereign Mobility Cloud** at the Dubai World Congress for Self-Driving Transport, marking a significant advancement in the country's **autonomous mobility strategy.**

About

- **Sovereign Mobility Cloud** is a sovereign-enabled platform providing trusted infrastructure for mobility data and autonomous systems, ensuring all data is securely hosted within UAE jurisdiction and governed under national regulations

- **Autonomous mobility** revolves around autonomous vehicles, which operate with little or no human input using advanced technologies like **LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging), AI (Artificial Intelligence), and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).**

- These technologies enable vehicles to perceive their **surroundings, make decisions, and navigate safely without manual control.**

Source: AIR

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT-INDIA (FIU-IND)

Context

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the **Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND)** signed a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to prevent financial crimes.

Financial Intelligence Unit-India

- FIU-IND is the **central national agency** responsible for **receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information** relating to suspect financial transactions and coordinating efforts against **money laundering and financing of terrorism.**

Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU)

- Digital Intelligence Unit of Department of Telecom is a specialized wing established to devise comprehensive systems for **curbing the misuse of telecom resources for cyber-crime and financial fraud.**

- DIU is credited with implementation of several AI and big data analytics based technological solutions like;

  - **ASTR** (an indigenous AI tool that identifies multiple SIM cards under varying names or forged KYC documents),

  - **CIOR** (real time international spoofed calls detection and blocking system) system,

  - **Sanchar Saathi portal** & Mobile App and FRI (Financial Fraud Risk Indicator).

Source: PIB

AGNI-PRIME MISSILE

Context

- India successfully tested the Intermediate Range Agni-Prime Missile from a **rail-based mobile launcher system.**

About Agni-Prime (Agni-P)

- **Developed by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Type:** Two-stage, solid-fuel propelled ballistic missile.
- **Range:** Up to **2000 km**.
- **Payload:** Can carry **high explosive, thermobaric, or nuclear warheads**.
- **Unique Feature:** First Indian missile tested from a **rail-based mobile launcher** – offers mobility, short reaction time, and reduced detectability.
- **Significance:** Only Russia, US, China, and possibly North Korea had such rail-based launch capability before; India has now joined this group.

Source: TH

TEJAS MARK-1A

Context

- **The Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract **to buy 97 light combat aircraft**, of the **Tejas Mark-1A variant,** for the Indian Air Force from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
  - This procurement aims to **replace the aging MiG-21 fleet** soon to be phased out.

Tejas Mk-1A

- **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is a 4.5 generation,** all weather and multi-role fighter aircraft.
- The aircraft is designed to be a **multi-role aircraft** capable of taking up offensive air support, close combat and ground attack roles at ease.
- **LCA Mk1A** is the most **advanced version of the LCA Tejas.**
- **It is equipped with** AESA Radar, EW suite consisting of radar warning and self-protection jamming, Digital Map Generator (DMG), Smart Multi-function Displays (SMFD), Combined Interrogator and Transponder (CIT), Advanced Radio Altimeter and other advances features.

Source: TH

INDIA'S FIRST DUGONG RESERVE

In News

- **India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay**, Tamil Nadu, has received **international recognition** after the IUCN formally adopted a motion endorsing it at the **World Conservation Congress 2025 in Abu Dhabi.**

About the Dugong Conservation Reserve

- It was established in 2022 by the Tamil Nadu government under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- It is home to 12,250 hectares of **seagrass meadows**, crucial feeding grounds for dugongs.
- Seagrasses support carbon sequestration, prevent coastal erosion, and provide habitat for fish, turtles, and other marine fauna.

About Dugong

- The **dugong is a large, herbivorous marine mammal** found throughout the Indo-Pacific region, including the warm coastal waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- In India, **dugongs inhabit the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Gulf of Kachchh, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- They are highly **dependent on seagrass meadows**, both as habitat and for food, and prefer warm, shallow bays or mangrove channels.
- They are listed as **Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and in Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- Major threats include habitat degradation, destructive fishing practices, hunting, and climate change.

Source: TH

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