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Time: 45 Min

Date: 05-09-2025

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INDIA–SINGAPORE 2025 SUMMIT

In News

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong in New Delhi.

Key Outcomes of the Summit

- **Maritime Security & Malacca Strait Patrol:** India expressed interest in patrolling the Malacca Strait, a strategic chokepoint connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.
  - Collaboration in submarine rescue operations, support for the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- **Defence & Emerging Technologies:** Joint research and cooperation in quantum computing, artificial Intelligence, automation & unmanned vessels etc.
- **Economic & Infrastructure Cooperation:** Agreement to export green energy from India to Singapore through dedicated ports.
  - Enhanced cooperation in space research and applications.
  - India–Singapore policy dialogue on semiconductors established.
- **Skilling & Advanced Manufacturing:** Agreement to set up a National Centre of Excellence for Skilling in Advanced Manufacturing in Chennai.
- **Counter-Terrorism & Security Cooperation:** Both sides reiterated cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels, including in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to combat cross-border terrorism.

Strategic Importance of Malacca Strait

- **Global Trade Artery:** Nearly 40% of India's trade and 80% of China's oil imports pass through it.

Indian Ocean to Pacific Ocean maritime chokepoints

- **Energy Security:** Ensures uninterrupted oil and gas flows from the Middle East to East Asia.
- **Geostrategic Leverage:** India's Andaman & Nicobar Command provides proximity to this chokepoint, enhancing its role in Indo-Pacific maritime security.

Brief India–Singapore Relations

- **Historical Context:** Ties go back to ancient times through maritime trade and Buddhism.
  - Modern relations strengthened after Singapore's independence in 1965.
  - Singapore was among the first ASEAN countries to support India's Look East Policy (1990s), now Act East Policy.
- **Political & Defence Ties:** 2015 marked 50 years of diplomatic relations.
  - Regular joint exercises are SIMBEX (naval), Bold Kurukshetra (army), Agni Warrior (artillery).
- **Economic & Trade Relations:** Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) – 2005 covers trade, services, and investments.
  - Singapore is among India's largest trade and investment partners in ASEAN and accounted for 27.83 % of our overall trade with ASEAN in 2024-25. Singapore is the leading source of Foreign Direct Investment into India.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Strong partners in ASEAN, East Asia Summit, IORA, IONS, FATF, WTO, UN, and Commonwealth.

Source: TH

FRAME GUIDELINES TO REGULATE SOCIAL MEDIA

Context

- The Supreme Court urged the Union government to frame guidelines for **regulating social media**, noting that **influencers often commercialise free speech** in ways that may **offend the sentiments of vulnerable groups.**
- SC directed that these regulations be drafted in consultation with the **National Broadcasters and Digital Association.**

Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression

- **Article 19(2) of the Indian Constitution** deals with the reasonable restrictions that can be placed on the **fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a).**
- **Conditions under which speech can be restricted by the state:**
  - Security of the State, Public Order, Decency or Morality, Contempt of Court, Defamation, Incitement to Offense.
- **Right to Take Offense:** Article 19(2) of the Constitution does not recognise offensive speech as a distinct category.

- Therefore, the notion of a right to take offence lies beyond the ambit of constitutionally permissible limitations.
- **Constitutional Morality:** It's a nuanced, evolving concept, not an inherent sentiment.
  - Must be cultivated and developed over time.
  - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed the legislature, not the Constitution, should decide forms of administration.

> **Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India (2016)**
> - The Supreme Court upheld **criminal defamation as valid.**
> - It **upheld criminal defamation,** ruling that reputation is part of **Article 21,** and **free speech under Article 19(1)(a)** can be **reasonably restricted** to protect dignity.

Need for Regulating Digital/Commercial Speech

- **Protecting vulnerable groups:** Derogatory remarks against persons with disabilities, minorities, or women perpetuate stigma.
  - Regulations can ensure inclusivity and dignity in public discourse.
- **Accountability of influencers:** Influencers and comedians earn from monetised platforms. Their speech is not purely private; it is a public service with commercial stakes.
  - Guidelines can create responsibility proportional to reach and influence.
- **Preventing harm and disorder:** Fake news, hate speech, and derogatory jokes can trigger violence or social unrest, reasonable limits may prevent escalation.
- **Aligning with global trends:** EU's Digital Services Act and UK's Online Safety Act already regulate harmful online content.
  - India cannot remain unregulated when speech directly affects millions of internet users.

Concerns

- **Existing laws already cover misconduct:** Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023), IT Act (2000), and IPC provisions already provide remedies.
- **Risk of overreach and chilling effect:** Vague terms like "dignity" or "decency" may be misused to silence satire, art, or political criticism.
  - Fear of prosecution may push comedians, journalists, and influencers towards self-censorship.
- **Contradicts Global Free Speech Norms:** Democracies like the US adopt the "marketplace of ideas" model, protecting even offensive speech unless it incites violence.

- Over-regulation in India risks isolating its digital creators and undermining global competitiveness in creative industries.
- **Threat to Democratic Culture:** Excessive regulation weakens democracy's ability to tolerate dissent and discomfort.

Way Ahead

- The focus of laws can be directed only on hate speech, incitement to violence, and deliberate misinformation.
- A transparent and independent oversight body can review the content takedown cases.
- Industry codes of conduct and content rating systems can become the first line of control.

Conclusion

- Free speech in India **has always been limited, not absolute**—shaped by constitutional norms and social sensitivities.
- The **digital era intensifies these tensions** making the speech instant, global, and monetised.
- While protecting dignity and preventing harm are legitimate aims, **over-regulation risks suppressing creativity, satire, and political criticism.**
- The challenge is to **strike a balance:** regulations must be transparent, proportionate, and participatory—protecting both vulnerable groups and the constitutional promise of free expression.

Source: TH

NITI AAYOG RELEASES STRATEGY FOR BUILDING A SELF-RELIANT PULSES SECTOR

Context

- A report titled "Strategies and Pathways for Accelerating Growth in Pulses towards the Goal of Atmanirbharta" was released by the NITI Aayog.
  - India is the **largest producer and consumer**, accounting for **~38%** of global area and **~28%** of production. India remains the **second-largest importer** of pulses, after **China.**
  - Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan account for over **55%** of production.

Importance of Pulses in India

- **Catering Nutritional Security:** They are rich in **protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals**, benefiting both human and animal health, and support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)** and **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).**

- **Sustainable Development:** Pulses enhance **soil health**, conserve water, and help to mitigate climate change. Their low carbon footprint and nitrogen-fixing ability aid in reducing synthetic fertilizer use, aligning with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

Challenges Highlighted by the Report

- **India's Low Yield:** Despite this, **India's average yield (0.74 t/ha)** is below the global average **(0.97 t/ha)** .
  - **India ranks lowest** in yield among the top ten pulse producers.
- **Technological Gaps:** Limited progress in developing and adopting high-yielding varieties compared to cereals.
  - **Weak extension support and inadequate farmer access** to quality seeds and modern production technologies.
  - Poor management of pests and diseases in pulse crops.
- **Environmental Constraints:** Predominance of rainfed cultivation with inadequate irrigation infrastructure.
  - **High vulnerability to climatic vagaries** such as droughts, erratic rainfall, and El Niño/La Niña shocks.
- **Economic and Market Challenges:** Volatile market prices and frequent supply-demand fluctuations discourage farmers.
  - **Lower profitability of pulses** compared to cereals reduces farmer incentives.
  - **Weak and fragmented marketing** channels restrict farmer access to stable markets.

Recommendations for Achieving Self-Sufficiency

- **Area Retention and Diversification:** Retain existing pulse area and diversify cultivation through targeted crop-wise clustering.
  - Develop strategies tailored for specific agro-ecological sub-regions.
- **Seed and Technology Interventions:** Ensure high-quality seed distribution and seed treatment kits, with special focus on **111 high-potential districts** contributing 75% of national output.
  - Promote the concept of **"One Block–One Seed Village"** to build cluster-based hubs, supported by Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
- **Climate Adaptation:** Mainstream proactive climate adaptation measures to reduce risks from El Niño, La Niña, and other climate-induced shocks.

- **Data-Driven Transformation:** Establish comprehensive monitoring systems and decision-support tools for planning, early warnings, and market intelligence.
  - **Use technology-driven platforms** to strengthen transparency and traceability across the value chain.

Mission for Atmanirbharta in Pulses

- **The Union Budget 2025–26** announced a **six-year Mission**, Mission Atmanirbharta in Pulses, focusing on tur, urad and masoor, was set up with the following **five pillars:**
  - **Assurance of Procurement:** NAFED and NCCF will assist with procurement for farmers, under four-year agreements to sell any quantity to NAFED at assured prices.
  - **Seed Systems and Traceability:** Quality seeds will be distributed in 111 high-potential districts for major pulses under the "One Block–One Seed Village" model.
  - **Strengthening FPOs:** to ensure improved bargaining capacity, access to seeds, and better market linkages.
  - **Nutrition Factor:** expanding the role of pulses in the Public Distribution System (PDS) and mid-day meals.
  - **Value Chain Development:** mechanisation, value addition, post-harvest loss management.

Source: PIB

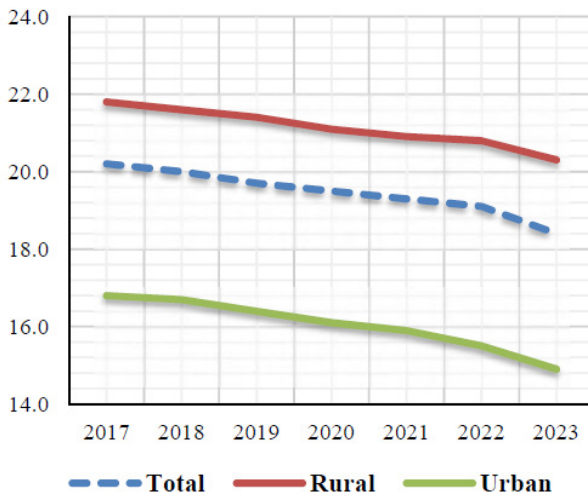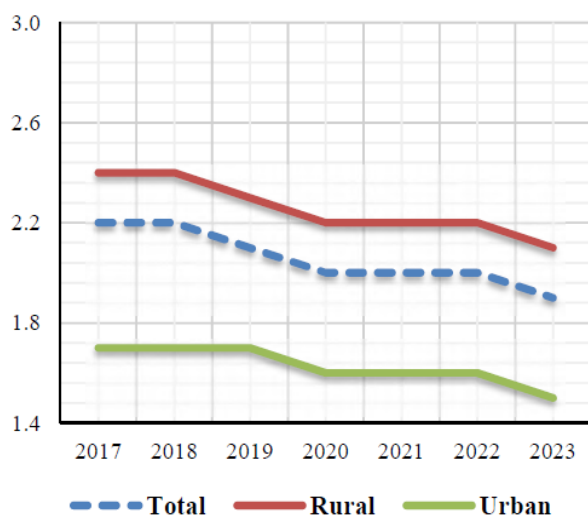## INDIA'S FERTILITY AND BIRTH RATES CONTINUE TO DECLINE

Context

- The latest **Sample Registration Survey (SRS) Statistical Report 2023**, released by the **Office of the Registrar General of India**, points to falling fertility and birth rates, improved survival outcomes, and a rising elderly population.

Methodology

- **Sample Registration Survey (SRS)** uses a **dual-record system:** continuous enumeration and retrospective half-yearly surveys.
- It covers over 8.1 million people across all States and Union Territories.
- It ensures high reliability through field verification and cross-checking of birth and death events.
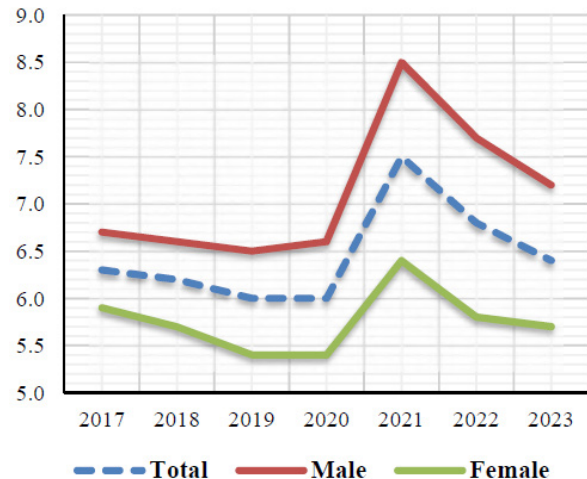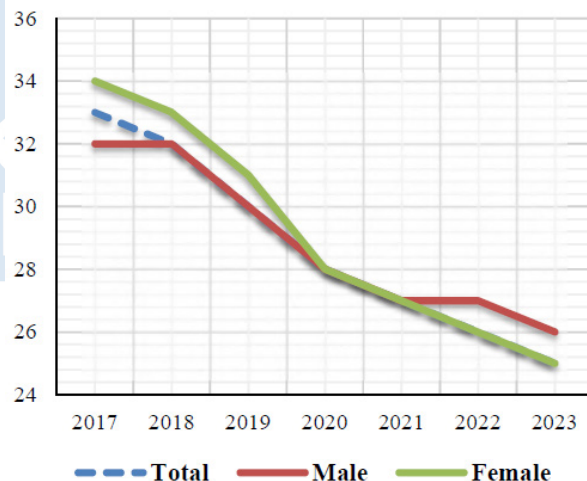
Key Highlights From the Report 2023

- **State-Wise Variations in CBR and TFR:**
  - **Crude Birth Rate (CBR):** Fell from **19.1 in 2022 to 18.4 in 2023**, marking a 0.7-point decline.
- **Highest in Bihar (25.8)** and **Lowest in Tamil Nadu (12);**
  - **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):** Dropped to **1.9 in 2023**, after remaining steady at **2.0 in 2021 and 2022**.
- It is the first decline in TFR in two years, pushing India further below the replacement fertility level of **2.1 children per woman**.
- **Highest TFR in Bihar (2.8)** and **Lowest TFR in Delhi (1.2);**

Birth Rate

Total Fertility Rate

- **Mortality Trends:**
  - **Crude Death Rate (CDR):** Declined from **6.8 in 2022 to 6.4 in 2023**.

- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR):** Fell to **25 in 2023**, a one-point drop from 2022 and a **seven-point decline over five years**.
- **One in every 40 infants dies** before completing the first year of life.

Death Rate

Infant Mortality Rate

- **Rising Elderly Population:**
  - The proportion of the elderly (aged 60+) increased by **0.7 percentage points**, reaching **9.7% of the total population** in 2023, indicating a gradual move towards population ageing.
- **Highest elderly share:** Kerala (15%)
- **Lowest elderly share:** Assam (7.6%), Delhi (7.7%), and Jharkhand (7.6%)
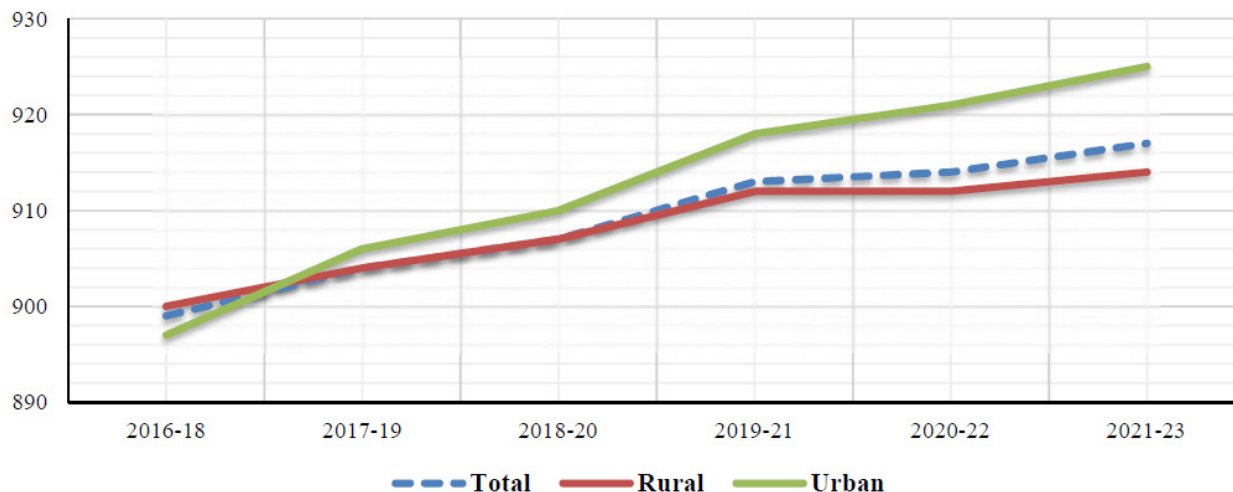- **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB):**
  - **National SRB: 917 girls per 1,000 boys** in 2023, reflecting a three-point improvement from the previous period.
- **Highest SRB:** Chhattisgarh (974), Kerala (971)
- **Lowest SRB:** Uttarakhand (868)

- However, **Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Haryana** remain among the States and UTs with SRBs below 900. Bihar's SRB continues to decline, falling from **964 in 2020 to 897 in 2023**.

Sex Ratio at Birth

Understanding Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

- It measures the average number of children a woman is expected to have during her reproductive years.
- A **TFR of 2.1** is considered the **replacement level,** meaning the population size remains stable across generations.
- A drop below this threshold suggests:
  - Slower population growth
  - Potential future aging of the population
  - Shifts in family planning and societal norms
- **Why Is Fertility Declining?**
  - Increased female literacy and workforce participation;
  - Delayed marriages and childbearing;
  - Urbanization and rising cost of living;
  - Greater reproductive autonomy and access to contraception;
  - Migration of youth for education and employment abroad;

Significance of Sample Registration Survey (SRS) Report 2023

- **Reliable Vital Statistics:** Indicators like Birth rate, Death rate, IMR, MMR, and TFR are essential for tracking population growth, health outcomes, and development goals.
  - **For example, decline in TFR** in two years signals a demographic transition with long-term implications for **labor markets, aging, and social services.**

- **Policy and Funding Decisions:** SRS data is used by the Ministry of Health, NITI Aayog, and State governments to:
  - Allocate health budgets;
  - Design maternal and child health programs;
  - Monitor progress toward UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Source: TH

EXCESSIVE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS IMPACTS MENTAL HEALTH

In News

- According to recent studies, the unchecked use of antibiotics poses a hidden threat in India by disrupting the **gut-brain axis,** a critical link between gut microbiota and mental health.

Antibiotics

- They are medicines used to treat bacterial infections by killing bacteria or inhibiting their growth.
- They can be taken orally, topically, or through injections.
- India ranks among the **highest consumers of antibiotics globally**. Several systemic and behavioral factors drive this trend.

Causes of Antibiotic Overuse in India

- **Over-the-counter availability:** Antibiotics are often sold without prescriptions, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.

- **Self-medication culture:** A lack of awareness and reliance on quick fixes leads to indiscriminate use.
- **Unregulated pharmacies:** Many operate outside legal frameworks, dispensing potent drugs without oversight.
- **Economic incentives:** Fee-for-service models may encourage over-prescription to satisfy patient expectations.

Impacts on Mental Health

- Misuse of antibiotics contributes to **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** and disrupts the **gut-brain axis**, leading to **gut microbiota imbalance (dysbiosis).**
  - This disruption is increasingly linked to mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.
- **Neuroinflammation:** The gut microbiome helps produce key neurotransmitters (e.g., serotonin, dopamine), and its disturbance affects brain function through inflammation, immune changes, and reduced beneficial metabolites.
  - Research from NIMHANS and AIIMS further supports this gut-mental health connection.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The growing field of **psychobiotics** highlights the mental health benefits of probiotics and prebiotics, yet public awareness, especially in rural India, remains low amidst widespread antibiotic misuse.
  - **Psychobiotics** are defined as probiotics that confer mental health benefits to the host when ingested in a particular quantity through interaction with commensal gut bacteria
- Therefore , a multi-pronged strategy is essential—focusing on public education, policy reform, clinical integration of gut health, promotion of traditional fermented foods, and investment in local microbiome research.

Source :TH

INDIA JOINS HEALTH AI GLOBAL REGULATORY NETWORK

In News

- India has joined the **HealthAI Global Regulatory Network (GRN)** to strengthen oversight of **Artificial Intelligence in healthcare.**

About

- India will work with HealthAI, alongside members such as the UK and Singapore, to **share safety protocols and monitor AI performance in clinical settings.**

- The move supports making India a **global hub of skilled AI workforce**, while using AI in public services, startups, and job creation.

HealthAI and GRN

- HealthAI is a **Geneva-based, independent nonprofit organization** that promotes equitable access to AI-powered health innovations.
- It works with **governments, international organizations, and global health leaders.**
- Its major focus is on **AI governance and regulation to make healthcare safe, secure, and inclusive.**
- **Global Regulatory Network (GRN)** is a platform for regulators to share safety standards, best practices, and oversight mechanisms.
- Members get access to the Global Public Repository of AI-related Registered Solutions for Health.

Significance for India

- **Global Leadership**: Advances India's role in shaping ethical and responsible AI in healthcare.
- **Public Health Benefits:** Stronger use of AI in disease surveillance, telemedicine, and affordable diagnostics.
- **Collaboration Gains:** Access to global best practices, standards, and expertise.
- **Regulatory Strengthening:** Aligns India's AI oversight with advanced international norms.
- **Startup & Innovation Push:** Enhances credibility for Indian health-tech startups in global markets.

Challenges

- **Data localisation vs. need for cross-border data sharing**.
- **Algorithmic bias** due to unrepresentative data inputs.
- **Over-regulation risks** that may slow down startup growth.
- Ethical concerns on patient rights, privacy, and informed consent.

Way Forward

- **Develop a robust national health AI framework** aligned with GRN standards.
- **Invest in AI literacy and health digital infrastructure** across states.
- **Promote public-private partnerships** in AI-based health innovation.
- Ensure diverse and representative datasets for clinical models.
- **Collaborate with WHO's Global Initiative on AI in Health** for training and capacity building.

Source: TH

ENVIRONMENT AUDIT RULES, 2025

Context

- The **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has introduced a major reform through the **Environment Audit Rules, 2025.**

About

- **Environment Audit** means a systematic audit, verification, examination, inspection, or analysis of any project, activity or process having a bearing on the environment.

- This scheme **aims** to **bridge the manpower and infrastructure deficits** faced by regulatory authorities.
    - To ensure **greater transparency, accountability, and credibility** in the compliance monitoring process, fostering trust among stakeholders and promoting sustainable environmental governance.

Main Features of Environment Audit Rules, 2025

- Under the new rules, **private agencies can get themselves accredited as auditors.**

- **Auditors** to be Certified and Registered by MoEFCC notified **Environment Audit Designate Agency (EADA).**
    - **EADA** is responsible for certification and registration of EAs, monitoring their performance, taking disciplinary action, facilitating capacity building, and maintaining online registration.

- **Certification of Environmental Auditors** to be based on either scrutiny of their qualification and experience or by conducting an exam.

- **Registered Environment Auditors (REAs)**: Responsible for compliance evaluation and related activities of sampling, analysis, compensation calculation, verification under Green Credit Rules, audit under waste management rules, and under various other environment and forest related legislations.

Key Regulatory Stakeholders under the Rules:

- **Certified Environment Auditor:** Individuals who qualify through either Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or the National Certification Examination (NCE).

- **Registered Environment Auditor:** Those certified individuals officially registered to perform audits.

- **Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA):** The body responsible for certification, registration, oversight, and training of auditors.

- **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** will oversee the implementation of the Rules and issue necessary guidelines from time to time.

- **CPCB/SPCB/ROs:** To continue with their existing role of inspection and verification, as and when required and to assist MoEFCC in overseeing the implementation of the Rules.

- **Oversight Mechanism:** A Steering Committee, led by an Additional Secretary from MoEFCC, along with representatives from relevant divisions and regulatory bodies, monitors progress, addresses implementation challenges, and suggests reforms.

Source: TH

═══ NEWS IN SHORT ═══

200TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF DADABHAI NAOROJI

In News

- The 200th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji known as '**The Grand Old Man of India** 'was recently observed .

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917)

- **Dadabhai Naoroji** was born in Bombay on 4 September 1825 in a priestly Parsi family.

- He was a pioneering figure in **India's freedom struggle.**

- He was the **first Indian to be elected to the House of Commons (1892).**

Contributions:

- He formulated the **famous drain-of-wealth theory,** which became India's cornerstone argument against British rule. He argued that British rule impoverished India by transferring wealth to Britain.
    - He used statistics on wages, prices, trade, and taxation to argue that **British policies increased poverty in India—culminating in his seminal work Poverty and Un-British Rule in India (1901).**

- He was the **first to give expression to the demand for Swaraj** from the platform of **Indian National Congress (1906)**.

- He was an **active member of the Bombay Association (1852)**, the first association in the western India to consider political issues

- In **1851, he founded Rast Goftar (Truth Teller)**, a Gujarati fortnightly with a Persian name.

◆ It was a progressive journal educating readers on duties of citizenship.

- **In 1867,** he founded the **East Indian Association** which was a political advocacy group for India having both British and Indians on its membership roll.

    ◆ It was th**e first political organization with members from different provinces of India.**

- Two young law students viz. W.C. Bonnerji (1844-1906) and Pherozeshah M. Mehta (1845-1915) became his disciples

- Dadabhai Naoroji was appointed a**s Justice of the Peace in 1883, started a newspaper called 'Voice of India'.**

- He twice served as the President of Indian National Congress (1886 and 1893) besides representing India at the International Congress of Social Democrats at Amsterdam in 1905.

Death and Legacy

- He permanently returned to India from Britain in 1908 at the ripe age of 83.

- He passed away in Bombay on June 30, 1917 leaving a weighty bequest of experience and achievements behind.

- Dadabhai Naoroji's legacy lies in combining intellectual rigor with political activism, laying the foundation for India's nationalist movement.

Source :PIB

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

In News

- Bhutan's Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay recently visited **Nalanda University.**

Nalanda University

- It was originally established in 427 CE by Emperor Kumaragupta and ancient Nalanda was the **world's first residential university,** hosting 2,000 teachers and 10,000 students for over 800 years, and attracting scholars from across Asia.

- It is located near the Rajgir hills and symbolizes a unique blend of nature, spirituality, and learning, drawing from its ancient heritage where great thinkers like **Buddha, Mahavira, Nagarjuna, and Aryabhatta** once taught or meditated.

Revival

- The idea to revive Nalanda was proposed by **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 2006**, with support from the **East Asia Summit,** the Singapore government,

and Indian leadership. The Nalanda University Act was passed in 2010, and the first students enrolled in 2014.

- The revived Nalanda University aspires to be futuristic and global, rooted in ancient wisdom while addressing modern challenges, making it a beacon of sustainable and inclusive education welcomed worldwide.

Source :PIB

SAMHITA CONFERENCE ON SOUTH ASIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND MATHEMATICS

Context

- The Minister of External Affairs of India inaugurated the **SAMHiTA Conference** on South Asia's Manuscript Traditions and Mathematical Contributions in New Delhi.

About SAMHiTA (South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive)?

- SAMHiTA is an initiative to create a **relational database and digital archive** of Indian and broadly South Asian manuscripts housed in **libraries, archives and other repositories outside India**, through collaboration with institutional partners.

- **Focus areas:** Mathematics, astronomy, linguistics, philosophy, medicine, literature in manuscripts.

- **Significance:** Helps reclaim India's intellectual traditions, prevents cultural erasure, and strengthens research in history of science.

Other Initiatives to safeguard the Manuscripts

- **The Ministry of Culture** established the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)** in **2003** to document, conserve, and promote access to Indian manuscripts.

- **The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** is a premier Indian institution and autonomous trust under the **Ministry of Culture**, functions as a vast repository for manuscripts and other cultural resources, and as a hub for academic research.

- **The National Digital Library of India (NDLI), the Bharatavani Project, and the Indian Culture Portal** are all digital archives initiated by the Government of India.

- UNESCO's **Memory of the World Programme** (global preservation of documentary heritage).

Source: AIR

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK (NIRF) 2025

Context

- The **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025** rankings were announced by the **Ministry of Education**.

About

- For the seventh straight year, the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras,** claimed the **top overall position.**

- **IISc Bengaluru** retains its position as the **top-ranked university.**
  - **JNU** holds the 2nd spot, followed by Manipal Academy of Higher Education at 3rd, making it the **first private institution to enter the top three** in this category.

- **Hindu College (DU)** continues ranking 1st among all colleges for at least the second consecutive year followed by Miranda House and Hans Raj College.

- **Other Notable Leaders by Category:**
  - **Management:** IIM Ahmedabad leads this category.
  - **Medical:** AIIMS Delhi maintains the top rank in this field.
  - **Law:** National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru remains the leading law institution.

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

- NIRF was launched in **2015** by the **Ministry of Education,** to rank institutions of higher education in India.

- **Five broad categories** of parameters identified in the NIRF;
  - Teaching, Learning & Resources
  - Research and Professional Practice
  - Graduation Outcome
  - Outreach and Inclusivity
  - Perception

- Each of these five parameters have 2 to 5 sub-parameters and a total number of 18 parameters are used for ranking of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
  - The overall score is computed based on the weightage allotted to each parameter and sub-parameter.

Source: TH

RARE REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR ENHANCED ANTI-DOPING TESTING IN SPORTS

Context

- India has developed a rare and high-purity Reference Material (RM), Methandienone Long-Term Metabolite (LTM), for advanced anti-doping testing.

About

- **Reference Materials (RMs)** are highly purified and scientifically characterized forms of drug substances or their metabolites, essential for accurate analytical testing.

- In the context of anti-doping, they are crucial for the **detection of over 450 substances** that are currently prohibited by the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).**
  - These RMs are produced by only a few manufacturers globally, making them scarce and often expensive.

- These metabolites help in **identifying athletes** who have used Methandienone, even **if they ceased usage months or years prior to testing.**

How RMs Detect Doping?

- When a banned drug is taken, the body breaks it into metabolites, some of which (LTMs) stay for months or years.

- Labs use techniques like Mass Spectrometry to compare an athlete's urine/blood sample with the Reference Materials (RMs).

- If there is a match, it confirms the presence of the banned drug or its metabolite.

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

- WADA is a **Swiss private law, not-for-profit Foundation**. WADA was established in **1999** as an international independent agency to lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport.

- It was created as a result of a joint initiative by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** and various governments.

- **Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada

- **Seat:** Lausanne, Switzerland

Source: PIB

NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (NIA)

Context

• The Supreme Court criticized the Union Government for not establishing **exclusive National Investigation Agency (NIA) courts,** urging budget allocations to ensure timely trials and **prevent bail for serious offenders.**

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

• **Established under:** NIA Act, 2008 after 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

• **Function:** Central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency.

• **Mandate:** Investigates offences affecting India's sovereignty, security, international treaties, etc.

• **NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019:**

  ◆ **Jurisdiction extended:** Can investigate scheduled offences committed outside India involving Indian citizens/interests.

  ◆ **Expanded mandate:** Covers offences under Explosive Substances Act, 1908 Human Trafficking, Cyber Terrorism Arms Act, 1959.

• **Headquarters:** New Delhi

• **Special Courts:** Total NIA Special Courts: 51

  ◆ Exclusive NIA Courts: 2 (Ranchi & Jammu)

Source: HT

BALTIC SEA

In News

• Sweden has accused Russia of being behind a significant rise in instances of GPS signal jamming recorded over the Baltic Sea, raising concerns for aviation in the region.

  ◆ **GPS jamming**, also known as GPS intervention, involves a device (jammer) emitting strong radio signals on GPS frequencies in order to overpower weaker signals.

  ◆ Unlike GPS jamming, which disrupts signals entirely, GPS spoofing deceives the receiver into trusting false data.

Baltic Sea

• The Baltic Sea is **one of the seas of the Atlantic Ocean.**

• It is located in Northern Europe, enclosed by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.

• It is one of the planet's largest bodies of brackish water, where salt water from the North-East Atlantic blends with fresh water from the surrounding rivers and streams.

Source :TH

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