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Time: 45 Min

Date: 04-10-2025

Table of Content

Heritage Management & Conservation: Policy Shift in India
Draft Rules for Online Gaming
NITI Aayog Launches Tax Policy Working Paper to Boost Foreign Investment
RBI Rolled Out Liquidity Measures
India Emerges as the Fastest-Growing Dairy Producer Worldwide
India- Russia Celebrate 25 Years of Strategic Partnership

NEWS IN SHORT

Pandit Chhannulal Mishra
NATO Pipeline System (NPS)
Stablecoins
Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme
Aspirational Agriculture Districts to be developed under the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)
H125 Helicopters
India Conferred with Prestigious ISSA Award 2025
Snow Leopards

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION: POLICY SHIFT IN INDIA

Context

- The government plans to open up conservation of protected monuments — so far the mandate of only the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** — to private entities, marking the beginning of a **public-private partnership model in heritage management**.

Background: ASI's Exclusive Mandate

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** was established in **1861** under the **Ministry of Culture**, responsible for **archaeological research and the protection of India's cultural heritage**.
- It plays a central role in the **maintenance, conservation, and preservation** of ancient monuments, archaeological sites, and remains of **national importance**.
- It enforces the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958** and the **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**.
- Organizational Structure of ASI:** ASI operates through **37 regional Circles across India**, each responsible for fieldwork, conservation, and research in its jurisdiction. Specialized branches include:
 - Science Branch:** Focuses on conservation science and material analysis;
 - Horticulture Branch:** Maintains gardens around heritage sites;
 - Underwater Archaeology Wing:** Explores submerged cultural heritage;
 - Temple Survey Projects:** Documents temple architecture and iconography.



- The ASI has so far been **solely responsible for the conservation** of around **3,700 protected monuments across India**.
 - It often led to **delays and limited capacity to manage** the vast number of heritage structures requiring attention.

New Public-Private Partnership Model

- The new initiative aims to introduce a **public-private partnership (PPP)** model in heritage conservation. The move seeks to:

- Enhance capacity** for conservation work.
 - Accelerate project timelines** that have historically been slow under ASI's single-agency approach.
 - Encourage private participation** while maintaining professional and regulatory oversight.
- All conservation projects will continue to be supervised by the ASI and must comply with the **National Policy for Conservation (2014)**.

Framework and Implementation

- Role of the National Culture Fund (NCF):** Funds for all projects will be routed through the **NCF**, established in 1996 with a government corpus of ₹20 crore.
 - The **NCF's structure** allows donors to contribute funds directly for conservation projects while receiving **100% tax exemptions** under CSR initiatives.
- Empanelment of Conservation Architects:** The Union Ministry of Culture aims to issue a **Request for Proposal (RFP)** to empanel more than a dozen conservation architects across India, as the first step.
 - Donors will select from this panel to guide their conservation projects.
 - The architect and donor will jointly hire external implementing agencies with experience in heritage conservation.
 - The **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** for each project needs to be approved by the ASI.
 - It effectively means that while the ASI retains its supervisory role, **private players can now become implementing agencies**.

Track Record of the National Culture Fund

- The NCF has attracted **₹140 crore** in donations from corporate and public sector donors, financing over **100 conservation projects**, since its inception in 1996.
- Completed Projects:** Bhuleshwar Temple (Pune), British Residency (Hyderabad), monuments at Mandu, and works at Purana Qila and Red Fort (New Delhi).
- Ongoing Projects:**
 - Deobaloda (Bhilai, Chhattisgarh): funded by SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant.
 - Tourist facilities at Kala Amb (Panipat) and Singorgarh Fort (MP): funded by Indian Oil Corporation.
 - Excavated remains at Vikramshila (Bihar): funded by NTPC.

Checks, Balances, and Eligibility

- Only **qualified conservation architects** with proven track records will be empanelled.

- **Implementing agencies** need to demonstrate prior experience in restoring structures over 100 years old.
- Conservation proposals need to adhere strictly to the **National Policy for Conservation (2014)**.
- Initially, a **list of 250 monuments** needing urgent conservation will be published.
 - ♦ Donors may choose from this list or request specific sites based on regional or thematic interests.

Benefits for Corporates and the Heritage Sector

- **For Donors:**
 - ♦ Direct participation in conservation efforts.
 - ♦ Full **CSR tax benefits**.
 - ♦ **Public recognition** at monument sites for contributions.
- **For the Heritage Sector:**
 - ♦ Increased **funding inflow** for conservation projects.
 - ♦ Expanded **implementation capacity** beyond ASI.
 - ♦ Faster project execution and **enhanced accountability**.

Comparison with 'Adopt a Heritage' Scheme

- Earlier, the government's 'Adopt a Heritage' initiative allowed corporate bodies to **act as** monument mitras, focusing on developing tourist amenities such as cafes, ticket counters, and restrooms.
- The new plan, however, goes further — **allowing private participation in core conservation work**, marking a major policy shift in heritage management.

Safeguarding Jurisdictions: Constitutional Mandates

- **Union:** Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological sites and remains, **declared by Parliament**, by law to be of national importance.
- **State:** Ancient and Historical Monuments **other than those declared by Parliament** to be of national importance.
- **Concurrent:** Besides the above, both the Union and States have concurrent jurisdiction over archaeological sites and remains **other than those declared by law and Parliament** to be of national importance
- **Article 253:** It enables Parliament to legislate for the implementation of any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries, or any decision, made at any international conference, association or other body.

- ♦ Any such legislation can be enacted even if the subject matter of the legislation is an item in the **State List of the Constitution of India**.

Source: IE

DRAFT RULES FOR ONLINE GAMING

Context

- The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has released **draft rules for online gaming**.

About

- They are intended to **operationalise the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming (PROG) Act, 2025**.
- It **bans real money gaming (RMG) platforms** such as online poker, rummy and fantasy sports while permitting only social games and e-sports.

Major Provisions

- **Online Gaming Authority of India:** It proposes the creation of the Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI) as a **dedicated regulator to oversee online gaming**.
 - ♦ The authority will have **quasi-judicial powers**, including summoning individuals, examining evidence, and issuing binding orders.
 - ♦ **Composition:** Chairperson and 5 members from different ministries.
 - ♦ **Functions:** To decide whether a game is an "online money game".
 - It will register online games.
 - Impose penalties and issue directions.
 - Cancel registration if a game changes its model to involve betting or wagering.
- **Scope of the Act:** It includes all forms of online money games e.g., poker, fantasy sports, betting.
 - ♦ It allows only "online social games" and e-sports — games meant for recreation, education, or skill development.
- **Registration:** Both e-sports and social games will require compulsory registration with the authority. A certificate of registration will be valid for up to five years.
- **Regulation:** Companies must register their games with the Authority.
 - ♦ They must provide details of revenue model and user safety features.
 - ♦ Proof that revenue comes from ads, subscriptions, or access fees — not from wagers or stakes.

- **Penalties and Offences:** Offering online money gaming services may attract up to three years' imprisonment and fines of up to ₹1 crore.
 - ♦ Advertising such platforms could lead to two years' imprisonment and fines up to ₹50 lakh.
 - ♦ Violations are non-bailable offences and entire company staff can be held liable for facilitating breaches.
- **Penalty Depends on:** The gain from violation, loss to users and repetition of offence.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism (Three-tiered):** Internal mechanism of the game company.
 - ♦ Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC) — under IT Rules, 2021.
 - ♦ Online Gaming Authority of India — final appeal.
- **The Role of Various Authorities:** E-sports will fall under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs**, while **social games** will be regulated by the **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**.
 - ♦ MeitY will hold overall **regulatory responsibility**.
 - ♦ The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B)** will issue codes of practice and guidelines for classifying online social games (recreational, educational, skill-based, etc.).

Significance

- It will establish a **uniform and national-level legal framework** in the public interest.
- It will **protect the country's youth** from predatory online Real Money Gaming apps which manipulate them through misleading monetary return promises.
- It seeks to **curb gambling, addiction, and financial risks**, while **promoting ethical, skill-based gaming**.

Source: AIR

NITI AAYOG LAUNCHES TAX POLICY WORKING PAPER TO BOOST FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Context

- NITI Aayog released the first working paper under the NITI Tax Policy Working Paper Series-I, titled **Enhancing Tax Certainty in Permanent Establishment and Profit Attribution for Foreign Investors in India**, focusing on improving tax certainty and attracting more foreign investment.

Importance of Tax Certainty

- **Foreign investment is important:** India has received rising FDI inflows, from about **USD 6 billion** in 2005–06 to **USD 50 billion** in 2024–25.
- **Unclear rules create problems:** Foreign companies often do not know if they will be taxed in India or not, because of unclear definitions of Permanent Establishment (PE) and profit attribution.
- **Litigation takes years:** Tax disputes in India often last **10–12 years**, which is costly and discourages investors.

What is Permanent Establishment (PE) and Profit Attribution?

- **Permanent Establishment (PE):** A situation where a foreign company is considered to have a "fixed presence" in India (like an office, branch, or even through digital business). If PE exists, the company must pay tax in India.
- **Profit Attribution** is deciding how much of the company's profit should be taxed in India. This is complicated when business happens partly in India and partly abroad.

Key Proposals in the Working Paper

- **Optional Presumptive Taxation Scheme:** Foreign companies can choose to pay tax at a fixed percentage of their Indian revenue depending on industry.
 - ♦ This avoids long disputes and provides clear expectations.
- **Legislative Clarity:** Codify PE definitions and attribution rules aligned with OECD/UN models.
 - ♦ Avoid retrospective taxation and provide due process safeguards.
- **Robust Dispute Resolution:** Strengthen **Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs)** and **Mutual Agreement Procedures (MAPs)**.
 - ♦ Explore mandatory arbitration in unresolved cases.
- **Capacity Building:** Train tax officers in complex international tax issues to ensure consistency and fairness.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Mandatory public consultations before tax law changes.
 - ♦ Enforce a **Taxpayer Charter** to guarantee rights and transparency.
- **Administrative Efficiency:** Expand safe harbour rules to cover PE attribution.
 - ♦ Streamline withholding tax relief using OECD's TRACE system.

Supreme Court's Role in Tax Law

- Over the years, the Supreme Court has played a key role in shaping how PE and profit attribution are interpreted.
 - ♦ **Formula One case (2017):** The Court held that even temporary arrangements, like a race track used by Formula One in India, could create a Permanent Establishment. This showed that the **substance of business activity matters more than the legal form**.
 - ♦ **Hyatt International case (2025):** The Court held that even if a multinational is making a global loss, its Indian operations can still be taxed separately. This reflected the **"separate enterprise" principle** and expanded India's power to attribute profits to local activities.

India and International Tax Reforms

- India participated in global tax reforms under **BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting)**. It is a project led by OECD and G20 to stop multinational companies from avoiding taxes. It has **15 "Actions"** (recommendations) and one of these is Action 7.
 - ♦ **Action 7:** Earlier, companies avoided paying taxes by operating through agents instead of opening offices. Action 7 tightened rules so that such arrangements are also taxed.
- **In 2019**, countries agreed that more reforms were needed, especially for digital companies like Google, Facebook, Amazon. Hence Pillar One and Pillar Two were introduced.
 - ♦ **Pillar One:** Even if a company like Amazon or Google has no office in India, it still earns revenue from Indian customers. Pillar One ensures that part of such profits are taxed in India.
 - ♦ **Pillar Two (Global minimum corporate tax):** Sets a **15% minimum tax** for all big multinational companies worldwide. This stops them from shifting profits to tax havens with very low or zero taxes.

Way Ahead

- The NITI Aayog's working paper paves the way for a **future-ready tax system** by introducing clear rules making India's tax regime fairer, more transparent, and globally competitive.
- By cutting litigation and attracting foreign investment, these reforms strengthen the tax base and accelerate the journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047.

Source: PIB

RBI ROLLED OUT LIQUIDITY MEASURES

In News

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** rolled out a **set of liquidity measures** designed to **make capital more accessible for investors and companies**.

Key Measures by RBI

- **Acquisition financing:** For the first time, banks can now give **loans to companies for buying other companies**. This allows them to fund mergers, buyouts, and consolidation deals—something banks had been requesting for years.
- **Enhanced Lending Limits:** The RBI has dramatically increased **individual loan limits against shares** from **₹20 lakh to ₹1 crore**, representing a **fivefold increase**.
 - ♦ This substantial raise in the ceiling had not been revised since 1998 and reflects inflation-adjusted realities.
- **IPO Financing Boost:** The central bank raised **IPO financing limits** for retail investors from **₹10 lakh to ₹25 lakh per person**, more than doubling the previous limit.
 - ♦ This enhancement comes at a crucial time as India's IPO market is experiencing several high-profile offerings in the pipeline.
- **Debt Securities Lending:** The RBI has completely removed the regulatory ceiling on **lending against listed debt securities**, giving banks **unprecedented flexibility to extend credit backed by these instruments**.
 - ♦ This measure is expected to deepen market activity and enhance overall liquidity.
- **Rolling back curbs on large borrowers:** The central bank plans to **withdraw the old framework that penalized banks** for lending to very large corporations (with system-wide exposure above Rs 10,000 crore).
 - ♦ RBI said the systemic risks will now be managed through macroprudential tools, while banks continue to face individual exposure caps under the Large Exposure Framework.

Need for the Measures

- **Addressing Liquidity Pressures:** Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have withdrawn \$21 billion from Indian equities over the past year, pressuring the rupee and dampening market sentiment.

- **Global Uncertainties:** The measures come against the backdrop of trade tariff tensions with the US, curbs on H1-B visas, and geopolitical flashpoints in West Asia and Europe that have kept investors cautious.
 - ♦ The RBI's relaxations are specifically aimed at offsetting liquidity shortfalls and strengthening domestic participation in capital markets.
- **Credit growth boost:** Corporate lending has been the weakest part of overall bank credit growth.
 - ♦ Allowing acquisition financing helps banks capture a bigger share of consolidation-led growth, especially in core sectors where fresh capacity creation is muted.
- **Leveling the field with NBFCs:** Historically, banks were capped at modest limits on loans against shares (Rs 20 lakh) and faced stricter loan-to-value rules.
 - ♦ NBFCs, on the other hand, could set higher limits at their discretion.
 - ♦ By raising the cap to Rs 1 crore and lifting ceilings on lending against debt securities, RBI has given banks a fairer playing field.
- **Re-engaging with big corporates:** Rolling back the 2016 restrictions signals RBI's willingness to let banks lend more freely to large groups.

Expected Outcomes

- **Enhanced Participation:** Analysts believe these measures will significantly boost investor confidence, particularly among retail participants who often face funding constraints.
 - ♦ High-net-worth individuals and institutional investors are expected to benefit from improved liquidity against their holdings.
- **Market Deepening:** The reforms are designed to widen retail and institutional participation in both primary and secondary markets, improve liquidity flows, and deepen financial intermediation.
 - ♦ With ₹8 billion anticipated from IPOs in the final quarter of 2025, these measures are well-timed to support increased market activity.
- **Economic Growth Support:** The RBI emphasized that while expanding credit access, systemic risks will continue to be managed through macroprudential tools, ensuring financial stability while spurring market growth.
 - ♦ These measures align with the broader Viksit Bharat 2047 agenda of credit deepening and financial inclusion.

Conclusion

- These reforms mark the RBI's biggest capital market change in over 10 years, allowing Indian

banks to take a bigger role in funding and supporting the capital market.

- Experts believe the changes will make foreign borrowing cheaper and easier for Indian companies, while still keeping strong safeguards to manage risks.

Source: IE

INDIA EMERGES AS THE FASTEST-GROWING DAIRY PRODUCER WORLDWIDE

Context

- India's dairy sector has expanded by **70%** in the past 11 years, with milk production rising from 146 million tonnes in 2014-15 to **239 million tonnes** in **2023-24**.

Dairy Sector of India

- **Global Leadership:** India is the **world's largest milk producer**, contributing **24.76%** of global milk output.
- **Economic Contribution:** Dairy is India's single largest agricultural commodity, contributing **5% to GDP** and employing over 8 crore farmers.
- **Growth Performance:** Livestock sector grew at a **CAGR of 7.9%** (2014-15 to 2020-21), outpacing the agriculture sector.
- **Per Capita Availability:** Rose to **471 g/day** in **2023-24**, substantially above the world average of 322 g/day.
- **Top Producing states:** Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh.

Key Enablers of India's Dairy Success

- **Institutional Support:**
 - ♦ **The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** was established in **1965** at Anand to replicate the Amul cooperative model across India.
 - ♦ **The launch of Operation Flood in 1970** transformed India into the world's largest milk producer by creating a nationwide cooperative structure for procurement and distribution.
 - ♦ In recognition of its contribution, NDDB was declared an **Institution of National Importance** in **1987** by an Act of Parliament.
- **Growth in Bovine Productivity:**
 - ♦ India possesses **303.76 million** bovines, which form the backbone of dairy production.
 - ♦ Between **2014 and 2022**, bovine productivity in India increased by **27.39%**, the highest globally, surpassing countries such as **China, Germany, and Denmark**.

- **Cooperative Network:** India's dairy cooperatives are supported by a strong network consisting of 22 milk federations, 241 district cooperative unions, 28 marketing dairies, and 25 Milk Producer Organisations (MPOs).
- **Contribution of Women:** Nearly **70%** of the workforce in dairy farming consists of women, and about **35%** are active in dairy cooperatives.



Structural Weaknesses in Indian Dairying

- **Breed Productivity Gaps:** Yields still lag behind advanced dairy nations, especially among indigenous breeds.
 - ♦ **Average yield of Indian cows is 1.64 tonnes/year** vs. 7.3 tonnes in EU and 11 tonnes in US.
- **Land & Fodder Constraints:** Unlike New Zealand, India lacks abundant pasture land.
 - ♦ Reliance on crop residues and purchased feed makes dairying costly.
- **Dependence on Cheap Labour:** Dairy sector has labour-intensive tasks such as feeding, milking, bathing cattle, cleaning sheds. The model survives on unpaid family labour with little opportunity cost.
- **Climate Impact & Market Volatility:** Extreme heat reduces yields and drives up prices.

- **Slowing Growth:** Production growth has slowed, from **~6%** in earlier years to 3.78% in 2023–24, with buffalo milk output declining **16%**.
- **Post-Harvest Losses:** Inadequate cold-chain and processing infrastructure cause wastage.

Concluding remarks

- India's dairy sector is the backbone of rural livelihoods and a symbol of inclusive growth.
- As the largest milk producer in the world, the country has combined farmer-led cooperatives, women's participation and scientific practices to achieve remarkable progress.
- With the momentum of White Revolution 2.0, the sector is poised to boost productivity, expand opportunities and continue transforming rural prosperity.

Source: PIB

INDIA- RUSSIA CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In News

- **Russia and India** have significantly advanced their 25-year strategic partnership amid a changing global landscape.

Background

- In 2000, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed the declaration on strategic partnership, which opened a new chapter in bilateral relations.
- In December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was upgraded to a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership."
- Multiple institutional dialogues, including the Intergovernmental Commission and 2+2 Dialogue, ensure strong cooperation across politics, defense, trade, science, and culture.

Leadership-level engagements

- The **India-Russia** Annual Summit is the highest dialogue mechanism, with 22 meetings held alternately in both countries.
- The summit in July 2024 in Moscow resulted in joint statements on partnership and economic cooperation until 2030, alongside 9 signed MoUs.
- The Indian PM received Russia's highest honor, the Order of Saint Andrew.
- The leaders maintain regular contact through frequent phone calls to discuss bilateral and global issues.
- **India and Russia** maintain regular ministerial contacts, with frequent meetings between the External Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov and other key ministers.

Multilateral engagement

- **India and Russia** closely cooperate in multilateral forums like the UN, G20, BRICS, and SCO.
- In 2023, during India's G20 and SCO presidencies, both countries engaged in multiple high-level meetings.
- Russia supports India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.
- Russia chaired BRICS in 2024, hosting extensive events including the Leaders' Summit in Kazan, with India actively participating.

Trade & Economic relations

- **India and Russia** aim to boost bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2030 and investment to \$50 billion by 2025.

- In FY 2023-24, trade hit a record \$65.7 billion, with India exporting pharmaceuticals and machinery, and importing oil, fertilizers, and minerals from Russia.
- ♦ Services trade remains stable, and investments are strong in oil, gas, petrochemicals, banking, railways, and pharmaceuticals.

Defence & Security Cooperation

- **India and Russia** have strong defence cooperation under the IRIGC-M&MTC, including joint military exercises like INDRA and Vostok.
- Key projects include S-400 systems, T-90 tanks, Su-30 MKI jets, MiG-29 and Kamov helicopters, INS Vikramaditya, AK-203 rifles, and BrahMos missiles. Cooperation has evolved from buyer-seller to joint research and development.

Science & Technology Cooperation

- **India and Russia** have strong science and technology cooperation, including joint work in spaceflight, nanotech, quantum computing, and nuclear energy (Kudankulam plant).
- Guided by a 2021 roadmap, their collaboration focuses on innovation, technology commercialization, and joint projects, coordinated through regular working group meetings.

Source :DD

NEWS IN SHORT

PANDIT CHHANNULAL MISHRA

Context

- The Prime Minister has expressed deep sorrow at the passing away of **Padma Vibhushan Pandit Chhannulal Mishra ji**.

Pandit Chhannulal Mishra (1936–2025)

- **Born:** He was born on August 3, 1936, in Azamgarh U.P.
- He was a renowned **Indian Hindustani classical music singer**.
- He learned not only **khayal but also absorbed nuances of the Kirana gharana**, making him versatile in **multiple classical styles**.
 - ♦ Known for his mastery in **thumri, dadra, and bhajans as well**.
- **Major Honours:** Padma Bhushan (2010), Padma Vibhushan (2020), Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship
- **Legacy:** He is known for rigorous discipline in **riyaz** and deep devotion to accuracy.

Source: GOI

NATO PIPELINE SYSTEM (NPS)

In News

- Recently, Poland announced plans to join NATO Pipeline System (NPS) with a 4.7 billion investment.

NATO Pipeline System (NPS)

- It was established during the **Cold War**, and supplies fuel and lubricants to NATO forces with modern flexibility.
- It spans about 10,000 km across 12 countries, has a storage capacity of 4.1 million cubic meters, and connects depots, air bases, airports, refineries, and transport points.
- While most networks are managed nationally, the Central Europe Pipeline System (CEPS) is a multinational system overseen by NATO's Support and Procurement Agency.

Do you know?

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a **political and military alliance** which was founded in 1949 and is a group of 32 countries from Europe and North America that exists to protect the people and territory of its members.
- It is founded on the principle of collective defence, meaning that if one NATO Ally is attacked, then all NATO Allies are attacked.

Source :TH

STABLECOINS

Context

- The Finance Minister said that countries would have to "prepare to engage" with stablecoins whether they welcome the change or not.

What are stablecoins?

- Stablecoins are **cryptocurrencies designed to maintain price stability** by pegging their value to underlying assets such as:
 - Fiat currencies (e.g., USD, Euro),
 - Commodities (e.g., gold),
 - Other cryptocurrencies, or
 - Algorithm-based systems.
- Stablecoins are **different from or Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs)**, which are digital currencies officially issued and controlled by a government's central bank.
 - Meanwhile, stablecoins can be privately issued and can also be pegged to foreign currencies.

Global Scenario in stablecoins

- The U.S.** passed the **Genius Act**, which mandates that stablecoins be **fully backed by liquid assets** (like cash or Treasury bills) and requires regular disclosures.
- Japan & Singapore** have introduced targeted regulations for stablecoins.
- China** has long prioritized the development of its **sovereign digital yuan**, however it is now also examining the rising use of **yuan-backed stablecoins**.

Source: TH

ELECTRONICS COMPONENT MANUFACTURING SCHEME

Context

- The Union Minister for Electronics and IT announced that under the ECMS, the government has received **investment proposals worth ₹1.15 lakh crore**, indicating strong industry response to India's push for self-reliance in electronics manufacturing.

Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme

- Objective:** To develop a robust component manufacturing ecosystem by attracting investments (global / domestic) across the value chain by integrating its domestic electronic industry with the Global Value Chains (GVCs).
- The Target Segment Category under Scheme includes;**
 - Sub-assemblies
 - Bare components
 - Selected bare components
 - Supply chain ecosystem and Capital equipment
 - Sub-assembly - Telecom.
- Types of Incentive:** Turnover linked incentive, capex incentive and hybrid incentive.
- Tenure of the Scheme:**
 - Turnover Linked Incentive: Six years with one year of gestation period.
 - Capex Incentive: Five years.

Source: AIR

ASPIRATIONAL AGRICULTURE DISTRICTS TO BE DEVELOPED UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER DHAN-DHAANYA KRISHI YOJANA (PMDDKY)

In News

- The Centre announced 100 Aspirational Agriculture Districts to be developed under the **Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)** across 29 states and UTs.

- ♦ Uttar Pradesh leads with 12 districts, followed by Maharashtra (9), Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (8 each) and Bihar (7).

About Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

- The Union Cabinet approved the **Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)** in July 2025.
 - ♦ It is designed on the lines of the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)**.
- It is a transformative agricultural initiative announced in the Union Budget 2025–26. With an annual outlay of ₹24,000 crore over six years, PMDDKY aims to boost growth in **100 agri-districts by converging 36 existing Central schemes across 11 Ministries**, alongside state programmes and private sector partnerships.
 - Instead of launching new schemes, it focuses on **coordinated, saturation-based delivery to last-mile farmers, minimizing duplication and maximizing impact**.
 - The **PMDDKY** aims to boost rural development with five key goals: increase agricultural productivity, promote crop diversification and sustainability, expand post-harvest storage at local levels, improve irrigation infrastructure, and enhance farmers' access to agricultural credit.

Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)

- It was launched in 2018 to develop backward and remote areas, and has significantly improved key development indicators.
- Building on its success, the **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)** was launched in 2023 to expand essential government services across 500 blocks in areas like health, education, sanitation, agriculture, financial inclusion, and infrastructure.

Aspirational Districts Programme	Aspirational Blocks Programme
Launched in January 2018 by Hon'ble Prime Minister	Launched in January 2023 by Hon'ble Prime Minister
Aims to quickly and effectively transform 112 districts across the country	Aims for saturation of essential government services in 500 Blocks (329 Districts) across the country
Focuses on five themes: Health & Nutrition Education Agriculture & Water Resources Financial Inclusion & Skill Development Infrastructure	Focuses on five themes: • Health & Nutrition • Education • Agriculture and Allied Services • Basic Infrastructure • Social Development
Progress is measured on 81 indicators of development	Progress is measured on 40 indicators of development Block Profile can be accessed from here .

Source :IE

H125 HELICOPTERS

Context

- Airbus Helicopters, in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems, is setting up a final assembly line for the **Indian made H125 utility helicopter** in **Vemagal, Karnataka**.

About H125 Helicopters

- The **Airbus H125** is a light, single-engine utility helicopter known for its versatility and exceptional performance in high-altitude and high-temperature conditions.
 - ♦ The H125 was formerly known as the **Eurocopter AS350**.

- The H125 will cater to civil needs like emergency medical services, tourism, disaster relief, and law enforcement, while its **military version (H125M)** will serve India's armed forces, especially in high-altitude areas like the Himalayas.

Source: IT

INDIA CONFERRED WITH PRESTIGIOUS ISSA AWARD 2025

In News

- India has been awarded the prestigious International Social Security Association (ISSA) Award 2025 for 'Outstanding Achievement in

Social Security' at the World Social Security Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

The International Social Security Association (ISSA)

- It is the world's leading international organization for social security institutions, government departments and agencies.
- The ISSA, founded in 1927 under the International Labour Organization, promotes excellence in social security administration worldwide.
- It supports over 320 member institutions from 160+ countries by providing a professional community, developing standards and research, offering practical services, fostering innovation, and advocating for comprehensive social security systems globally.

India's Achievements

- International Social Security Association (ISSA) Award recognized India's expansion of social security coverage from 19% in 2015 to 64.3% in 2025, now reaching over 940 million citizens.

Source : PIB

SNOW LEOPARDS

In News

- Himachal Pradesh's snow leopard population has risen by 62 per cent over the past four years.

About Snow Leopards (*Panthera uncia*)

- They are often called the “**ghost of the mountains,**” a reclusive feline native to the mountainous regions of Central and South Asia.
- They are sparsely distributed across **12 countries in central Asia**, from southern Russia down to the Tibetan plateau, including Mongolia, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, **India** and Nepal.
- They are classified as ‘**Vulnerable**’ by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list and listed in **Schedule-I species of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- The snow leopard is the state animal of **Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh.**
- **Project Snow Leopard** was launched by the Government of India in 2009 to ensure scientific and community-focused conservation of the species.

Source: IE

