NEXT IAS

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 08-12-2025

Table of Content

www.nextias.com

UNESCO'S 20TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Context

- India is hosting the 20th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2025 in Red Fort complex, New Delhi.

  - This will be the **first time** that India hosts the ICH Committee session and **the Ministry of Culture and Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA)** are the nodal agencies for hosting the Session.

About the Intangible cultural heritage

- **Intangible cultural heritage,** includes the practices, knowledge, expressions, objects, and spaces that communities see as part of their cultural identity.

  - Passed down over generations, this heritage evolves, strengthening cultural identity and appreciation of diversity.

- **Historical Background:** For the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO adopted the **2003 Convention** during its 32nd General Conference in Paris.

- India ratified the convention in **2005.**

Significance of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- **Preserves Cultural Identity and Continuity:** Intangible heritage anchors communities to their roots, reinforces identity, and strengthens belonging across generations.

- **Promotes Social Cohesion and Harmony:** Shared cultural practices create a sense of collective memory and mutual respect.

- **Supports Livelihoods:** Protecting ICH helps sustain rural economies, promotes cultural tourism, and creates employment opportunities.

- **Preserves Traditional Knowledge Systems:** Indigenous ecological knowledge, healing practices, agricultural wisdom, and craftsmanship offer sustainable solutions relevant for contemporary challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

- **Intergenerational Learning:** ICH carries values, ethics, local histories, and skills that enrich curricula, build cultural literacy, and strengthen intergenerational bonding.
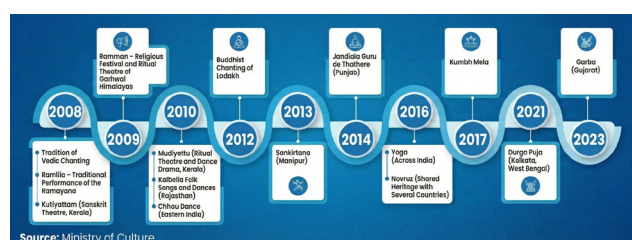
- **Boosts Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power:** Yoga, classical arts, festivals, and traditional crafts enhance India's global cultural presence, build goodwill, and strengthen international relationships.

Functions of the Intergovernmental Committee

- The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage **advances the objectives of the 2003 Convention** and ensures their **effective implementation** across Member States. The committee:

  - **Prepares and submits** to the General Assembly the draft plan for the use of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

  - **Examines periodic reports** submitted by States Parties and compiles summaries for the General Assembly.

  - **Evaluates requests from States Parties** and makes decisions regarding, Inscription of elements on UNESCO's ICH Lists (as per Articles 16, 17 and 18).

India's Intangible Cultural Heritage Inscribed by UNESCO

- To date, **15 Indian elements** have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List, and the country has served on the **UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for three terms.**

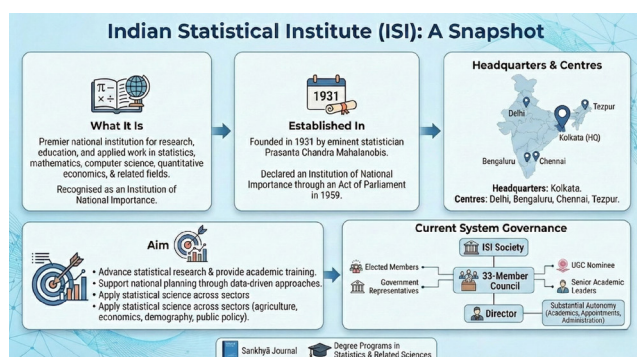Source: Ministry of Culture

Source: PIB

CONCERNS OVER THE DRAFT INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BILL 2025

In News

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the **draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025** for public consultation.

  - The Bill proposes a major restructuring of the **governance and functioning of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)**.

Draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025: Key Provisions

- **Transformation into a Statutory Body:** Replaces the ISI Act, 1959, and dissolves the existing society-based structure. ISI becomes a centrally supervised statutory institution, created directly by Parliament.

- **Changes in Governance Structure:** Board of Governance will wield most institutional powers. Majority of Board members are Central Government nominees; internal academic representation is reduced to only three seats.
  - The Academic Council becomes recommendatory rather than decision-making.

- **Administrative and Academic Controls:** The Board of Governors (BoG) gains powers to establish, merge, close, or relocate centers domestically or abroad, with no statutory protection for Kolkata headquarters, allowing potential shifts for operational efficiency. Central Government directly appoints, reviews performance, and removes the Director, centralizing leadership control previously shared.

- **Financial Reforms:** Section 29 mandates pursuit of self-sufficiency through revenue streams like increased student fees, consultancy services, sponsored research projects, intellectual property commercialization, patents, collaborations, and investments. Annual audited accounts follow CAG standards, with BoG empowered to manage funds, grants, and endowments independently.

Criticisms and Concerns

- **Fear of Government Overreach:** Academicians argue the Bill undermines the autonomy ensured by the 1959 Act.
  - The new governance structure heavily dominated by government nominees limits faculty participation and undermines academic independence.

- **Threat to Cooperative Federalism:** Replacing a society registered under a State Act without consultation is viewed as bypassing federal principles.

- **Impact on Long-term Research**: Critics fear pressures to raise revenue may shift focus from fundamental research to commercially viable projects.

- **Financial Burden on Students and Faculty:** Emphasis on revenue generation could increase fees and intensify dependence on sponsored research.

Government's Stand

- The Government argues that the reforms aim to modernise ISI and make it a "world-class scientific institution" by its centenary in 2031.

- A 2020 Review Committee, chaired by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, recommended restructuring ISI to improve:
  - Governance efficiency
  - Academic expansion
  - International competitiveness.

LEGALITIES INVOLVED IN ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

Context

- India's performance in deceased organ donation remains extremely low (0.77 per million in 2023, compared to 49.38 in Spain). Nearly 5 lakh Indians die annually waiting for transplants.

Organ Transplant and Donation

- **Organ Transplantation/Donation** is a **surgical procedure** in which an organ, tissue or a group of cells are removed from one person and surgically transplanted into another person.
  - **One person can save up to 8 lives** by donating heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestines.

- In India, the organ transplantation **is one of the lowest** in comparison with the western nations.
  - India's organ donation rate remains **under 1%** relative to the population.
  - India **ranks third globally** in organ transplantation.

- **In 2023,** more than three lakh citizens pledged to donate organs through the **National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).**

- **Eligibility for Organ Donation: Both living and deceased individuals** can donate organs. Living donors must meet specific medical and legal criteria to ensure donor safety and ethical practices.

> **National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO)**
> - It is a National level organization set up under the **Directorate General of Health Services**, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
> - **Functions:** It develops policy guidelines, conducts training, monitors transplant activities, maintains a national databank, and coordinates inter-regional organ allocations.

Laws and Rules Governing Organ Transplantation in India

- **Transplantation of Human Organs Act 1994:** It is the primary legislation related to organ donation and transplantation in India and is aimed at **regulation of removal, storage and transplantation** of human organs for therapeutic purposes and for prevention of commercial dealings in human organs.
  - **Makes Brainstem Death (BSD)** a legal definition of death and lays down procedures for certification.
- **Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act, 2011:** It allows swapping of organs and widens the donor pool by including grandparents and grandchildren in the list.
- **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Rules (THOT), 2014:** It has many provisions to remove the impediments to organ donation while curbing misuse/misinterpretation of the rules.

> **Facts Related to Organ Donation**
> - **13th August** is observed every year as **World Organ Donation Day** to raise awareness on Organ Donation.
> - **Indian Organ Donation Day** was celebrated every year on **November 27** but from 2023, the day is being celebrated on August 3 to commemorate the first successful deceased heart transplant in India on **3rd August 1994**.
> - NOTTO has declared **July** as the month of Organ donation.

Source: TH

EXPORT PROMOTION MISSION (EPM)

Context

- The Government has approved the **Export Promotion Mission (EPM)** with 25,060 crore to boost exports, especially for MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors.

Export Promotion Mission

- **In the Union Budget for 2025-26,** the Finance Minister announced an Export Promotion Mission.
  - It would facilitate easy access to export credit, cross-border factoring support, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets.
- **Time Span:** EPM will span **six years** covering FY 2025-26 to FY 2030-31.
- **Ministries and Institutions:** The Department of Commerce, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Finance, Export Promotion Councils, Commodity Boards, financial institutions, industry associations and state governments.
- **Implementing Agency: The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT),** as the implementing agency via a dedicated digital platform integrated with existing trade systems.
- **Two Integrated Sub-Schemes:** Niryat Protsahan & Niryat Disha.
- **Under EPM**, **priority support** will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products.
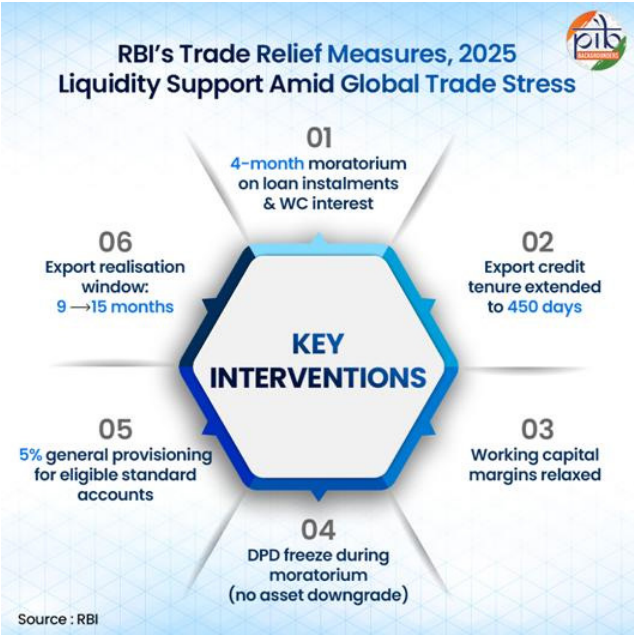
Major Components of EPM

Financial Support (Niryat Protsahan)

- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE):** Provides 100% coverage by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC).
  - Additional credit facilities up to 20,000 crore to eligible exporters (including MSMEs).
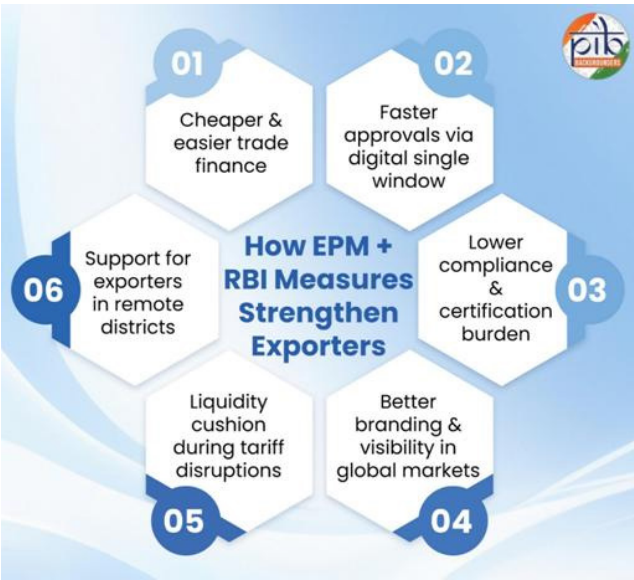 - Enables collateral-free credit, improving liquidity and competitiveness.

Non-Financial Support (Niryat Disha)

- **Addressing Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs):** Funding for compliance, certifications, and technical standards.
- **Market Acquisition & Branding:** Assistance for international exhibitions, packaging, and branding.
- **Logistics Cost Reduction:** Support for supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

RBI's Trade Relief Measures

RBI's Trade Relief Measures, 2025
Liquidity Support Amid Global Trade Stress

KEY INTERVENTIONS

01 – 4-month moratorium on loan instalments & WC interest
02 – Export credit tenure extended to 450 days
03 – Working capital margins relaxed
04 – DPD freeze during moratorium (no asset downgrade)
05 – 5% general provisioning for eligible standard accounts
06 – Export realisation window: 9 →15 months

Source : RBI

EPM and RBI Measures are expected to:

How EPM + RBI Measures Strengthen Exporters

01 – Cheaper & easier trade finance
02 – Faster approvals via digital single window
03 – Lower compliance & certification burden
04 – Better branding & visibility in global markets
05 – Liquidity cushion during tariff disruptions
06 – Support for exporters in remote districts

Conclusion

- The Export Promotion Mission marks a decisive step toward a coherent, technology-driven and inclusive export ecosystem.

- By merging fiscal incentives, financial facilitation, digital governance and regulatory flexibility into a single mission-mode framework, the government has created a powerful platform to enhance India's global trade competitiveness.

Source: PIB

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE GRID (NATGRID): STRENGTHENING INDIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Context

- The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has begun receiving nearly 45,000 requests per month, reflecting a significant rise in its use by central and state security agencies.

What is the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)?

- NATGRID is a **real-time intelligence and data-access platform** developed after the **26/11 Mumbai attacks (2008)** to enable seamless information-sharing across agencies.

- It functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and consolidates over **20 categories** of civil and commercial data, such as bank transactions, telecom usage, passport/immigration records, tax IDs, police FIRs (CCTNS), and other e-governance sources.

- **Data accessibility:** Initially restricted to Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) etc.

  ◆ Access to NATGRID is now available to **Superintendent of Police (SP)** rank officers.

Significance of NATGRID

- **Counterterrorism:** NATGRID enhances the ability to detect and disrupt terror networks by correlating travel patterns, financial transactions, telecom data and social contacts.

- **Improved Crime Detection:** The platform assists in investigations related to organised crime, narcotics, human trafficking, cybercrime, fake currency networks, and cross-border smuggling.

  ◆ In **2020**, NATGRID signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), gaining access to the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)**, which mandates all states to register FIRs on a unified digital platform.

- **Institutional Efficiency:** Every access is logged, which strengthens oversight and internal accountability.

- ◆ The existence of a unified data platform reduces duplication, delays and inter-agency friction.
- **Security Measures:** To protect data, NATGRID uses strict access controls. All queries are encrypted end-to-end and logged, and only vetted, authorised officers can run searches.

Key Concerns

- **Privacy Risks:** NATGRID aggregates large volumes of sensitive personal information, raising concerns about potential surveillance overreach.
- **Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities:** India reported over 20.5 lakh cyber incidents to CERT-In in **2024**, reflecting an increasingly hostile digital environment.
  - ◆ The extensive volume and value of NATGRID's integrated data make it an attractive target for cyberattacks.
- **Lack of Legislative Backing:** NATGRID was created through executive orders, not a dedicated parliamentary law.
  - ◆ While administrative flexibility allows rapid deployment, the absence of statutory oversight limits transparency and public debate.

Way Ahead

- **Enact Dedicated Legislation:** A comprehensive law governing NATGRID's scope, access protocols, data protection and oversight mechanisms will strengthen accountability.
- **Strengthen Cybersecurity:** Continuous investment in cyber-resilience, penetration testing and real-time monitoring is essential to protect integrated databases.
- **Expand Training for State Agencies:** Training district-level officers in digital forensics, data analysis and NATGRID protocols will maximize its utility.
- **Ensure Privacy Safeguards:** Stronger audit trails, independent review committees and alignment with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act is required to ensure proportional and ethical use.

Source: TH

NITI AAYOG & IBM UNVEIL ROADMAP TO MAKE INDIA A TOP-3 QUANTUM ECONOMY BY 2047

Context

- The NITI Aayog's Frontier Tech Hub, in partnership with International Business Machines-IBM,

has released a national roadmap to transform India into one of the world's top-three quantum economies by 2047.

About

- **Quantum technology** is a rapidly advancing field that leverages the principles of **quantum mechanics** to develop new technologies with unprecedented capabilities.
- By 2035, quantum technologies are projected to unlock **USD 1–2 trillion** in new global value across industries.
- India entered the global quantum race by launching the **National Quantum Mission (NQM) in 2023**, from 2023-24 to 2030-31.
  - ◆ **Aim:** To seed, nurture and scale up scientific and industrial R&D and create a vibrant & innovative ecosystem in Quantum Technology (QT).

Key pillars of quantum technologies

- **Quantum Computing:** Uses qubits and quantum information to perform computations exponentially faster than classical systems.
- **Quantum Communication:** Utilises quantum key distribution (QKD) and entanglement to enable ultra-secure communication that cannot be intercepted without detection.
- **Quantum Sensing & Metrology:** Uses quantum mechanical effects to achieve extremely high-precision measurements, such as in atomic clocks, magnetometers, and navigation sensors.
- **Quantum Materials:** Develops novel materials by exploiting quantum properties such as superconductivity, topological states, and quantum coherence.
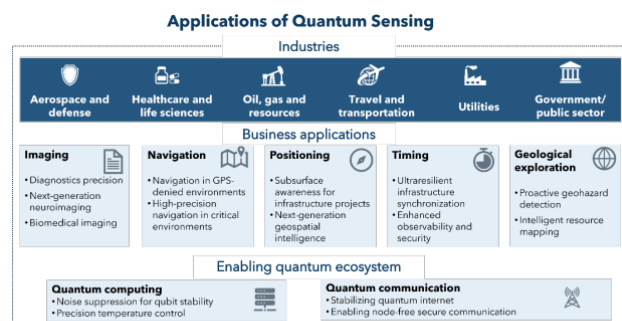

Figure 6: Potential applications of quantum sensing, where it is expected to provide substantial advancement over classical sensing in terms of precision and reliability.[24]

India's Vision for 2035

- Incubating at least **10 globally competitive quantum startups**, each surpassing **USD 100 million** in revenue,

- Capturing over **50% of the value in the global quantum software and services market** by harnessing our software and engineering strength,

- Achieving meaningful, **scaled deployment of quantum technologies**, home-grown and global, in strategic sectors across India,

- **Commanding critical positions** in the global quantum supply chain for both hardware and software, creating strategic dependencies and value,

- Becoming a **source of foundational scientific breakthroughs**, with world class research and intellectual property creation in quantum science and engineering.

SWOT analysis of Indian ecosystem in quantum technologies

Steps Needed to Become Quantum Economy

- **Expand the Quantum Workforce:** Grow the scientific, deep engineering and professional workforce that is deployment-ready by an order of magnitude in 2-3 years.

- **Accelerate Lab-to-Market Transition:** Significantly improve ease of doing research, of technology validation and of taking technology from lab-to-market, within 2 years.

- **Make Indian domicile attractive** for Indian startups so that >90% deep tech Indian startups choose to stay domiciled in India.

- **Lead in Global Standard Setting:** Engage actively with global standards bodies and take leadership in international standard setting to ensure Indian products access in global markets.

- **Strengthen trade:** Ensure strong trade relations and ease of technology export and import, especially in quantum related technology areas.

> **NITI Frontier Tech Hub**
> - The NITI Frontier Tech Hub is an action tank for Viksit Bharat.
> - In collaboration with over 100 experts from government, industry, and academia, it is shaping a 10-year roadmap across 20+ key sectors to harness frontier technologies for transformative growth and societal development.

Source: AIR

NEWS IN SHORT

11TH INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL (IISF)

In News

- The 11th India International Science Festival (IISF) commenced in Panchkula, Haryana.

India International Science Festival (IISF)

- It was launched in **2015** and has established itself as a major platform for scientific exchange, innovation, outreach, and public engagement, consistently expanding its scale through diverse programmes, wide participation, and landmark initiatives across each edition.

- **Theme** : The theme of IISF 2025 is Vigyan Se Samruddhi: for Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

- IISF 2025 focus on **five broad themes**:

  - Science, Technology and Ecology of North-West India and the Himalayan Region;
  - Science for Society and Education;
  - Atmanirbhar Bharat through Science and Technology;
  - Biotechnology and Bio-economy; and
  - Integration of Traditional Knowledge with Modern Science.

Source :DD

SARAS FOOD FESTIVAL 2025

In News

- The Saras Food Festival 2025 at Delhi's Sunder Nursery became a vibrant showcase of women's empowerment through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

Saras Food Festival 2025

- It features over 500 traditional dishes served across 62 stalls, representing states from Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Gujarat, and many more.

- It showcases women's entrepreneurship and self-reliance, with around 300

"Lakhpati Didis" from SHGs across India presenting food and rural products.

Do you know?
- SARAS Aajeevika Mela is organised by the Ministry of Rural Development under Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission.
- It provides rural women and self-help groups a national platform to sell their products directly, eliminate middlemen, and gain vital market exposure.
- It equips them with skills to upgrade their products, increase incomes, and connect with buyers from across the country and beyond through workshops on packaging, design, communication, and marketing, the Melas

Source :PIB

SHYOK TUNNEL

In News
- The Defence Minister inaugurated Shyok Tunnel in eastern Ladakh and 124 other strategic border infra projects.

Shyok Tunnel
- It is the **920**-metre cut-and-cover tunnel.
- It is of key strategic significance as it would provide all-weather connectivity to areas close to the LAC in eastern Ladakh, where India and China were locked in a military standoff between 2020-2024 before both sides decided to disengage from all friction points along the border.
- It will also likely reduce dependence on air maintenance and resolve logistical challenges in the difficult terrains.
- It is built in one of the world's toughest and most challenging terrain.

Source :IE

HINDU RATE OF GROWTH

In News
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently stated that the expression **"Hindu rate of growth"** reflected a colonial mindset that unfairly associated India's slow economic performance in earlier decades with the identity of its people.

What is the 'Hindu Rate of Growth'?
- The term refers to India's low and stagnant economic growth rate (around 3–3.5% per year) during the first three decades after Independence (1950s to 1970s).
- The phrase was coined by **economist Raj Krishna (University of Delhi)** in the late 1970s.
- As noted in paper "The New Oxford Companion to Economics in India", Raj Krishna used it as "a polemical device" to draw attention to India's persistently meagre growth, which appeared culturally "embedded" due to its stability across decades.
  - Importantly, the word "Hindu" does not imply a religious or communal meaning.

Why Was India's Early Growth Labeled So Low?
- Growth hovered around 3–3.5%, while population growth averaged 2% in these decades.
- India followed a state-controlled, import-substitution, license-permit-quota model, which limited private enterprise and productivity gains.
- Later, Post 1980s reforms reduced licensing, import easing, and technology upgrading escaped the "Hindu rate of growth".

Source: IE

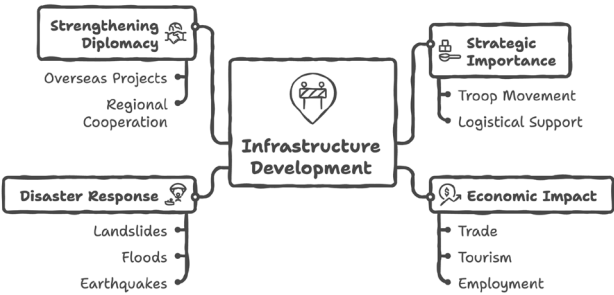## BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION (BRO)

In News
- Defence Minister unveils 5,000 crore BRO roads, bridges and key assets across Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir and seven states in major border infrastructure push.

About Border Roads Organisation (BRO)
- **Established:** 1960
- **Parent Ministry:** Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- **Motto:** *Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam* (Everything is achievable through hard work)
- **Nature:** A premier **road construction executive force** that develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and friendly neighbouring countries.
- **Structure:** Led by a Director General Border Roads (DGBR) — a senior officer of the rank of Lt. General (Army).
  - Works through Border Road Tasks Forces (BRTFs) and Projects (e.g., Project Himank,

Project Vijayak, Project Dantak, Project Vartak, Project Udayak, etc.).

Significance of Infrastructure Development in Border Areas

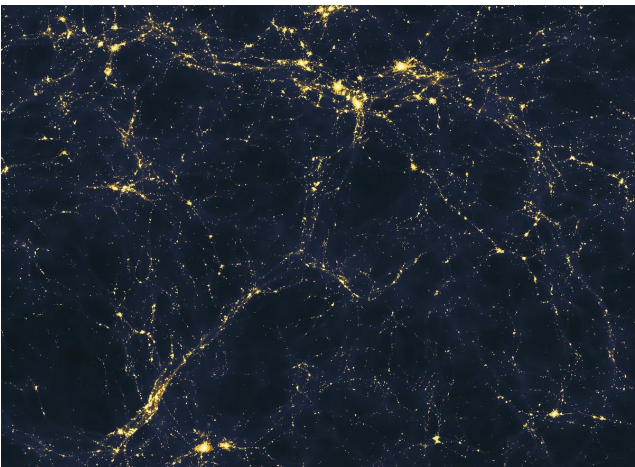- Strengthening Diplomacy
  - Overseas Projects
  - Regional Cooperation
- Infrastructure Development
- Strategic Importance
  - Troop Movement
  - Logistical Support
- Disaster Response
  - Landslides
  - Floods
  - Earthquakes
- Economic Impact
  - Trade
  - Tourism
  - Employment

Source: AIR

FILAMENTS: GENTLE GIANTS IN SPACE

Context

- Researchers reported a **~50-million-lightyear-long filament** traced by **at least 14 galaxies.**
  - The team has claimed it as "**one of the largest spinning structures ever found in the universe.**"

What are Cosmic Filaments?

- Cosmic filaments are **long, thin, thread-like structures** of the **cosmic web,** spanning hundreds of millions of lightyears.
- They form when **gravity pulls gas, dark matter, and galaxies** into elongated strands **linking massive galaxy clusters.**
- Filaments surround **cosmic voids** (vast, empty regions), acting as **boundaries of the cosmic web.**

How Do Filaments Form?

- They arise where **sheets of matter intersect and collapse, forming dense strands.**
- Filaments act as **highways for gas and small galaxies,** which flow toward **large gravitational hubs like clusters.**
- As matter falls in, it can induce **rotational motion** in both the filament and the galaxies embedded within it.

Role in Galaxy Evolution

- Filaments influence **where galaxies form,** their growth rate, and how much fresh gas they accrete over billions of years.
- They can also shape the **spin orientation of galaxies** along their length.

How Astronomers Study Filaments

- Astronomers map them by measuring galaxy positions and distances, then tracing the patterns.
- Computer simulations show similar filamentary networks, confirming they arise from initial ripples in the early universe that evolved under gravity.

Source: TH

■■■■