

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## PM CHAIRS 50TH MEETING OF PRAGATI

### Context

- The Prime Minister chaired the **50th meeting of PRAGATI**.

### About

- PRAGATI** (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation) is a **technology-driven governance and monitoring platform** launched by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in **2015**.
- Aim:** To improve **public administration and accelerate implementation** of government programmes and projects.
- PRAGATI functions as a tripartite platform integrating three hierarchical levels:** the Prime Minister's Office at the apex, Union Government Secretaries as the middle tier, and State Chief Secretaries as the operational base.
- Salient Features of PRAGATI:**



- The primary purposes of PRAGATI are:**
  - Project Monitoring:** Track progress of high-value and critical infrastructure projects and resolve delays or bottlenecks.
  - Programme Implementation:** Ensure timely and efficient execution of government schemes and missions.
  - Grievance Redressal:** Address persistent public grievances by integrating with systems like Centralised Public Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) for citizen complaints.

### Key Achievements

- 377 projects have been reviewed under PRAGATI, and across these projects, 2,958 out

of 3,162 identified issues - i.e. around **94% have been resolved**.

- Several projects that had remained stalled for decades** were completed or decisively unlocked after being taken up under the PRAGATI platform.

### Conclusion

- PRAGATI represents an **institutional innovation** that addresses fundamental challenges in India's developmental governance—project execution delays, inter-governmental coordination failures, and accountability deficits.
- The platform exemplifies how **strategic technology deployment combined with high-level accountability** can transform governance effectiveness.

Source: PIB

## RBI FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

### Context

- The Reserve Bank of India's December 2025 Financial Stability Report (FSR) assesses systemic risks to India's financial sector and evaluates the resilience of banks amid domestic strength and global uncertainties.

### Key highlights of the report

- Growth outlook remains positive:** The RBI noted that real GDP growth surprised on the upside in the first two quarters of FY 2025-26, registering **7.8% in Q1 and 8.2% in Q2**.
  - Growth was supported by strong private consumption and public investment.
- Improvement in Banks' Asset Quality:** The asset quality of **Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs)** has improved further. The Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio declined to **2.1%** in September 2025.
  - Strong recoveries, prudent lending practices, and better risk management have supported this improvement.
- Capital buffers remain adequate:** The **capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR)** remained strong as of September 2025, with public sector banks at **16%** and private sector banks at **18.1%**.
- Unsecured Loans Emerging as a Key Vulnerability:** Unsecured loans accounted for 53.1% of total retail loan slippages. Unsecured loans contributed nearly 76% of slippages for private banks, compared with 15.9% for public sector banks.

- **Fintech Lending:** The RBI flagged elevated impairment among borrowers who have taken unsecured loans from **five or more lenders**, highlighting the role of fintech firms.
  - ♦ **Over 70%** of fintech loan portfolios consist of unsecured loans.
- **Stablecoins risks to monetary sovereignty:** The RBI reiterated concerns that stablecoins could undermine central banks' ability to regulate money supply and financial stability.
  - ♦ The risks posed by stablecoins, especially those denominated in foreign currencies, could erode monetary sovereignty and weaken monetary policy transmission.
- **Rupee Depreciation:** The rupee depreciated against the US dollar due to falling terms of trade, high tariffs and a slowdown in capital flows.

#### Financial Stability Report (FSR)

- The Financial Stability Report (FSR) is a **biannual publication** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that assesses the stability and resilience of the Indian financial system.
- It offers insights into the health of various components of the financial sector, including **banking, non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs), mutual funds, insurance companies, and financial markets**.

Source: TOI

## FARMER SUICIDES IN INDIA: 28 YEARS OF DATA

### Context

- According to **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** data, the period between 1995 and 2023 saw **over 3.9 lakh farmer and agricultural laborer suicides** in India.
  - ♦ **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana** together accounted for **over 70%** of all suicides.

### About

- After a decade of gradual decline, **2023 saw a 75% increase** in farmer suicides compared to 2022, totaling **10,786 deaths**.
  - ♦ Of these, **6,096 were agricultural labourers**, overtaking cultivators (**4,690 deaths**) for the first time.
- It underscores deeper rural distress, labourers suffer from **wage insecurity, seasonal**

**unemployment, rising food prices, and limited social protection**, leaving them especially vulnerable to economic shocks.

### Root Causes of Farmer Suicides in India

- **Indebtedness and Credit Crisis:** Over 11,000 farmer suicides annually are linked to **unpaid debts**, often from private moneylenders charging 24–60% annual interest.
  - ♦ Many farmers are trapped in cycles of debt due to high input costs, crop failures, and lack of institutional credit.
  - ♦ Institutional credit remains inaccessible for smallholders.
- **Crop Failures & Climate Stress:** Erratic monsoons, prolonged droughts, and pest attacks have caused repeated crop failures.
  - ♦ Maharashtra, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh are hotspots due to **climate-induced yield collapse**.
- **Input Cost Inflation:** Rising costs of fertilizers, seeds, and diesel have outpaced the Minimum Support Price (MSP).
  - ♦ Farmers investing 20,000–30,000 per acre often recover less than half.
- **Market Distortions & Price Volatility:** Absence of assured procurement, dependence on middlemen, and market glut for perishable crops push prices below production cost.
- **Institutional Failure & Delayed Compensation:** Compensation schemes (**PMFBY, Kisan Credit Cards**) often face delays or mismanagement, leading to despair post-harvest losses.
- **Socio-Psychological Factors:** Long-term debt, lack of social security, and cultural stigma around bankruptcy trigger mental health issues among farmers.
- **Land Fragmentation and Low Productivity:** 85% of holdings are under 2 hectares, making them economically unviable for mechanization or irrigation investment.
- **Policy Gaps:** Inadequate implementation of support schemes, lack of crop insurance penetration, and insufficient procurement at Minimum Support Prices (MSP) have left farmers vulnerable.
  - ♦ India's rural distress is a crisis of **structural inequality, policy neglect, and market vulnerability** along with the crop failure or debt, that demands long-term systemic change rather than temporary fixes.



### Regional Concentration of Agrarian Distress

- **Southern and Western India account for 72.5%** of all farmer suicides recorded since 1995.
  - ♦ **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana** together have reported **over 170,000 suicides** during this period.
  - ♦ After Telangana's creation in 2014, the new state quickly emerged as a **high-crisis zone**, inheriting the most vulnerable cotton-growing districts.
- **Madhya Pradesh** ranks among the top contributors, highlighting that agrarian distress transcends regional boundaries.

### Key Government Efforts to Prevent Farmer Suicides

- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):** Aims to reduce financial distress and dependency on informal credit.
  - ♦ Covers losses due to natural calamities, pests, and diseases.
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme:** Offers short-term credit to farmers at subsidized interest rates.
  - ♦ Helps reduce reliance on high-interest informal loans, a major factor in farmer indebtedness.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):** Provides direct income support of 6,000 per year to small and marginal farmers.
  - ♦ Intended to supplement income and ensure basic financial security.
- **National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022):** India's first comprehensive suicide prevention policy, aiming to reduce suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.
  - ♦ Includes rural mental health outreach through programs like:
    - **Tele-MANAS:** A 24/7 tele-mental health helpline.
    - **District Mental Health Programme (DMHP):** Offers community-based mental health services.
    - **Manodarpan:** Focuses on adolescent mental health and school-based counseling.
  - ♦ **Legal and Policy Frameworks:**
    - **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** Decriminalizes suicide and mandates mental health care access.
    - **Health Policy 2014:** Recognizes mental health as a critical component of public health.

### State-Level Interventions:

- ♦ **Maharashtra:** Special packages for distressed farmers, loan waivers, and counseling centers.
- ♦ **Andhra Pradesh & Telangana:** Focused studies and policy reforms to address regional agrarian crises.

### MGNREGA and the Period of Relief

- From **2010 to 2019**, farmer suicides declined significantly across multiple states.
- The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** was pivotal in this turnaround, providing wage security during droughts and non-farming seasons.
- Other measures like **expanded crop insurance** and **debt relief schemes** helped stabilize rural incomes.
  - ♦ **Kerala** saw suicides fall from **1,118 (2005)** to **105 (2014)**.
  - ♦ **West Bengal** reported **zero suicides by 2012**.
  - ♦ **Madhya Pradesh** experienced a sustained reduction after years of crisis.

### Way Forward

- **Institutional Credit Access:** Strengthening rural banking and reducing dependence on informal lenders.
- **Legal Backing for MSP:** As recommended by the Supreme Court panel, legally guaranteeing MSP could provide a safety net for farmers.
- **Mental Health Support:** Expanding rural mental health services and destigmatizing mental illness.
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Promoting sustainable practices and crop diversification to mitigate climate risks.

Source: DTE

## TRANSFORMING INDIA WITH AI

### In News

- India is entering an AI-driven era where technology is transforming daily life by improving healthcare, supporting farmers and enhancing education.

### What is Artificial Intelligence?

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.

- It enables systems to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, and solve complex problems independently.
- It uses datasets, algorithms, and large language models to analyse information, recognise patterns, and generate responses.
  - ♦ Over time, these systems improve their performance, allowing them to reason, make decisions, and communicate in ways similar to humans.

### Applications

- **AI in daily life:** Artificial Intelligence is improving healthcare, agriculture, education, governance, and climate services by making processes faster, smarter, and more accessible.
  - ♦ Large Language Models power chatbots, translation tools, and virtual assistants, helping people access information, government services, and learning in their own languages.
- **Healthcare:** Early disease detection, medical image analysis, and personalised treatment support.
  - ♦ AI-enabled telemedicine connects rural patients with specialists.
  - ♦ Global collaborations and participation in HealthAI promote ethical and safe AI use.
- **Agriculture:** AI predicts weather, detects pests, and advises on irrigation and sowing.
  - ♦ Initiatives like Kisan e-Mitra, National Pest Surveillance System, and Crop Health Monitoring improve farm productivity and income security.
- **Education and Skilling:** AI education introduced under NEP 2020 from Class VI onwards.
  - ♦ DIKSHA platform uses AI for accessibility, including read-aloud and search tools.
  - ♦ YUVAi programme enables students (Classes 8–12) to apply AI across social and development themes.
- **Governance and Justice Delivery:** AI supports translation, case management, scheduling, and citizen services under the e-Courts Project.
  - ♦ Judgments are translated into regional languages, improving transparency and access to justice.
- **Weather Forecasting and Climate Services:** AI models improve prediction of rainfall, cyclones, fog, lightning, and fires.
  - ♦ Tools like the Advanced Dvorak Technique and upcoming MausamGPT support farmers and disaster management.

### AI Ecosystem in India at Present

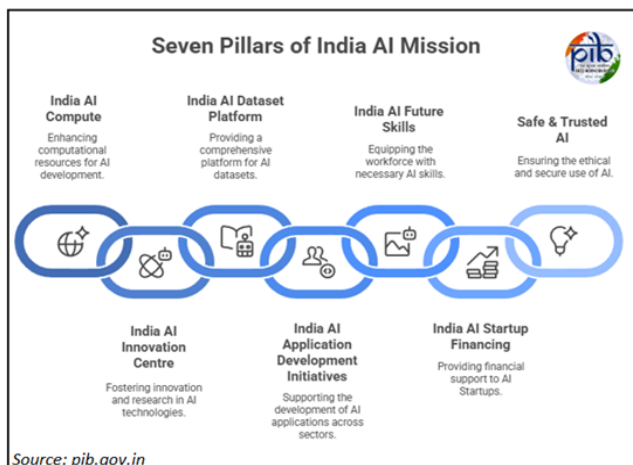
- India's technology sector is expanding rapidly, with **annual revenues projected to cross USD 280 billion this year.**
- **Over 6 million people** are employed in the tech and AI ecosystem.
- India hosts 1,800+ **Global Capability Centres**, including more than 500 focused on AI.
- India has around **1.8 lakh startups, and nearly 89% of new startups launched last year used AI** in their products or services.
- **Artificial Intelligence** is often seen as a threat to jobs, but in reality, it is creating new kinds of opportunities.
  - ♦ According to NASSCOM's report "Advancing India's AI Skills" (August 2024), India's AI talent base is expected to grow from about 6 to 6.5 lakh professionals to more than 12.5 lakh by 2027, at a **compound annual growth rate of 15 percent.**
- Leading sectors in AI adoption include industrial and automotive, consumer goods and retail, banking, financial services and insurance, and healthcare.
  - ♦ Together they contribute around **60 percent of AI's total value.**
  - ♦ About 26% of Indian companies have achieved **AI maturity at scale, according to a recent BCG survey.**

### Global Rankings

- India has secured the **3rd position globally in Artificial Intelligence competitiveness**, according to a report by Stanford University's 2025 Global AI Vibrancy Tool. The ranking emphasises India's rapid growth in the global AI landscape.

### Related Steps

- The **India AI Mission, approved in March 2024** with a budget of 10,371.92 crore over five years, aims to make India a global leader in Artificial Intelligence under the vision "Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India."
  - ♦ It has significantly expanded AI computing infrastructure, increasing GPU availability from an initial target of 10,000 to 38,000, enabling affordable access to advanced AI resources.



- **Artificial Intelligence** was a key focus at the **9th India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2025**, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the theme “Innovate to Transform,”.
- The Government of India is actively implementing its **AI vision** through **comprehensive initiatives** that combine policy, infrastructure, research, and skill development to build an inclusive AI ecosystem.
  - ♦ Key efforts include establishing Centres of Excellence in Healthcare, Agriculture, Sustainable Cities, and Education, along with National Centres of Excellence for Skilling to prepare a future-ready workforce.
- The **AI Competency Framework** trains government officials in applying AI to governance, while partnerships like Sarvam AI with UIDAI are enhancing public services through secure, sovereign AI models.
- **Platforms such as Bhashini** promote digital inclusion by enabling multilingual access to services, and BharatGen AI represents India's first government-funded, homegrown multimodal large language model supporting 22 Indian languages.

### Concerns and Issues

- **AI-powered facial recognition** and policing raise civil liberty concerns due to lack of regulation.
- **Next-gen AI models** may pose high Cybersecurity Risks if misused for hacking or fraud.
- **IndiaAI notes** hurdles like affordability, data quality, and infrastructure gaps that slow AI adoption.
- **AI systems risk** perpetuating biases in credit scoring, recruitment, and governance if not carefully monitored.

### Conclusion and Way Forward

- Artificial Intelligence offers immense potential to accelerate India's development across sectors like justice and education, but unregulated use can threaten privacy, fairness, and accountability.
- To harness its benefits responsibly, India must balance innovation with strong ethical frameworks, invest in skilling and inclusion to address job displacement, build global partnerships while protecting national interests, and ensure transparency and accountability in AI deployment.
- Key initiatives such as the IndiaAI Mission and foundational model development ensure that AI benefits every citizen, strengthens skills and research, and positions India as a global AI leader aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Source :PIB

## NEWS IN SHORT

### WOMAN'S EARNING CAPACITY DOES NOT ABSOLVE FATHER OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES: HC

#### Context

- The Delhi High Court has underlined that **child maintenance is a recognition of shared parental responsibility** and the child's right to be supported.
  - ♦ It has observed that it **is neither a favour nor a punitive measure** against the **non-custodial parent**.

#### About

- While deciding a plea the court order noted that a child's daily needs extend far beyond what can be precisely quantified in legal pleadings.
  - ♦ These include school-related requirements, minor medical expenses, hobbies, social interactions and even ordinary activities.
- The court also held that a **woman's earning capacity does not absolve the father of his parental responsibilities**.

### Child Custody in India

- Child Custody in India is governed by a mix of personal laws, the **Guardians and Wards Act, 1890**, and **judicial principles** developed by courts.

- **The overarching principle** unifying all Indian child custody law is that the welfare and best interests of the child supersede all other considerations, including parental rights, statutory preferences, and traditional hierarchies.
- **Types of Child Custody:**
  - ♦ **Sole Custody:** The child lives with one parent and the other parent may get visitation rights.
  - ♦ **Joint Custody:** The child alternates between parents, it is increasingly preferred by courts to ensure balanced upbringing.
  - ♦ **Third-Party Custody:** Granted to grandparents or relatives if both parents are unfit.
- **Guardianship ceases when** the child attains majority (at eighteen years), when a guardian dies, is removed, or resigns, or in the case of a female ward, upon her marriage to a husband.

Source: TH

## HIMACHAL PRADESH MOVES TOWARDS REGULATED CANNABIS CULTIVATION

### Context

- Himachal Pradesh is finalising a policy to legalise and regulate cannabis cultivation for medicinal and industrial purposes.

### About Cannabis

- Cannabis cultivation involves growing the **Cannabis sativa plant** for its **fibers (hemp)** or **psychoactive compounds (marijuana)**.
- **Legal and Regulatory Framework:** Cannabis cultivation is prohibited under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.
  - ♦ However, the **Act permits states to allow cultivation** of cannabis for **medicinal, industrial, and scientific purposes under strict regulation**.
- Cannabis-based medical treatment utilizes compounds like **tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)** and **Cannabidiol (CBD)** to manage conditions like **chronic pain, nausea, muscle spasms, and epilepsy**, interacting with the body's endocannabinoid system.

Source: TH

## HANIMAADHOO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

### Context

- The Centre has asked the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to study a request from Maldives seeking assistance from Indian companies to manage its recently upgraded **Hanimaadhoo International Airport**.

### About Hanimaadhoo International Airport (HAQ)

- Hanimaadhoo International Airport is a key international airport located on Hanimaadhoo Island, part of the **Haa Dhaalu Atoll**, in the **northern Maldives**.
- It serves as a **primary gateway to the northern atolls**, approximately 300 kilometers north of the capital, Malé.
- Hanimaadhoo Airport was initially developed as a **domestic airport** in 1986 and was later upgraded to international status in **2012**.
- India supported the redevelopment and expansion works at Hanimaadhoo airport with a **\$800 million line of credit** issued by EXIM Bank of India.
- ♦ The upgradation work includes a **2,465-metre runway** capable of landing an Airbus A320 aircraft and a new passenger building to handle 1.3 million flyers annually.

Source: TH

## KEY SIX-LANE GREEN CORRIDOR IN MAHARASHTRA APPROVED

### Context

- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the **construction of a six-lane, access-controlled greenfield corridor** connecting **Nashik, Solapur and Akkalkot in Maharashtra**.

### About

- The **374-kilometre-long project** will be developed on a **Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) toll mode**.
  - ♦ A **Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model is a project framework** where a private company builds, finances, and runs a large project for a set period, recovers costs/makes profit, and then transfers ownership back to the government.
- This will improve regional and **inter-state connectivity** while strengthening India's



integrated transport infrastructure under the **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan**.

#### PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP)

- It was launched in **2021** for providing multimodal connectivity infrastructure to **various economic zones** and improving logistics efficiency across India.
- It is **not under a single ministry** but is coordinated by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The plan will provide seamless and efficient connectivity for the movement of people, goods, and services across various modes of transport, thereby enhancing last-mile connectivity and reducing travel time.
- **PM GatiShakti is driven by seven engines:** Railways, Roads, Ports, Waterways, Airports, Mass Transport and Logistics Infrastructure.
- 57 Central Ministries/Departments including 8 Infrastructure, 22 Social and 27 Economic & other Ministries/Departments have been onboarded on PMGS NMP.

Source: TH

## DRDO CONDUCTS SALVO LAUNCH OF TWO PRALAY MISSILES

#### Context

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted a salvo launch of two 'Pralay' missiles off Odisha coast in quick succession.

#### About

- **Pralay**, is an indigenous **surface-to-surface** short-range **quasi-ballistic missile**.
- **Range and Payload:** Pralay has an operational range of approximately **400 km** and carries a payload capacity of **500 to 1,000 kg**.
- **Propulsion:** It is powered by a **solid-propellant** rocket motor.
- The missile is equipped with a **state-of-the-art navigation system** and **integrated avionics**, ensuring precision targeting even in challenging terrains.
  - ♦ **It is capable of carrying multiple types of warheads** to engage a wide range of targets.

Source: PIB

## NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY READINESS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (NTRAF)

#### In News

- Recently, Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India launched the **National Technology Readiness Assessment Framework (NTRAF)**.

#### NTRAF

- The National Technology Readiness Assessment Framework (NTRAF) is a standardised, objective framework to assess the maturity of technologies from early laboratory research to full commercial deployment using **9 Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)**.
- It aims to serve as the operational backbone for various **R&D funds launched under National Missions**.

#### Key Features of the Framework

- **Global Best Practices:** Adapted from global standards (such as NASA) but tailored to the specific needs of the Indian R&D ecosystem.
- **Objectivity over Subjectivity:** Replaces qualitative estimation with a structured, evidence-based checklist for every stage of development.
- **Sector-Specific Nuances:** Includes specialised annexures for distinct sectors like Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals and Software, acknowledging that development pathways differ across domains.
- **Self-Assessment Tool:** Empowers Project Investigators to realistically gauge their standing and identify technical gaps before seeking funding.

Source :PIB

## AMAZONIAN STINGLESS BEES TO GET LEGAL RIGHTS

#### In News

- Stingless bees have become the first insects in the world to be **granted legal rights** considering the bees' ecological and cultural importance.

#### Stingless bees

- They are native to the **Peruvian part of the Amazon rainforest**, who have no sting unlike their European counterparts.



- **Ecological Role:** They are key rainforest pollinators, sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem health.
  - ♦ They are the oldest bee species on the planet and are responsible for pollinating over 80 per cent of Amazonian flora, including globally cherished crops like coffee, chocolate, avocados, and blueberries.
- **Threats:** They face a deadly confluence of climate change, deforestation and pesticides, as well as competition from European bees.
- **Rights granted:** The Declaration of Rights for Native Stingless Bees recognizes their right to exist, thrive, maintain healthy populations, live in pollution-free habitats, regenerate natural cycles, and be legally represented if harmed.

Source :DTE

## MITOCHONDRIA EVOLUTION IN INSECTS

### In News

- Researchers from the University of Guelph have discovered that the way insects produce males and females influences the **rate of mitochondrial DNA evolution**.

### What is Mitochondria?

- Mitochondria are **membrane-bound cell organelles** (mitochondrion, singular) that generate most of the **chemical energy needed to power the cell's biochemical reactions**.
- Chemical energy produced by the mitochondria is stored in a **small molecule** called **adenosine triphosphate (ATP)**.
- Mitochondria contain their **own small chromosomes**.
- Mitochondria originated from an ancient bacterium and retain a small genome.
- Most mitochondrial proteins are now encoded by nuclear DNA. Mitochondrial DNA is inherited **maternally (from females only)**.

### Key Findings of recent study

- In haplo-diploid (HD) species, such as ants, bees, and wasps, males are haploid and females are diploid, while in diplo-diploid (DD) species, both sexes are diploid.
- The recent study surveyed 86,000 species across 783 families and found that HD species show about 1.7 times more changes in the mitochondrial COI

gene (cytochrome c oxidase subunit I), including more insertions and deletions, compared to DD species.

- This faster evolution is thought to result from HD males carrying only one copy of each nuclear gene, which exposes mutations immediately to selection and pushes interacting mitochondrial genes to adapt more quickly.

### Impacts

- The findings reveal a link between reproductive biology and mitochondrial evolution, with implications for tracking insect biodiversity, as COI barcodes may evolve at different rates across species.

Source: TH

## NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY (NIA)

### Context

- In 2025, the NIA achieved a conviction rate of over 92%, secured the extradition of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana, and intensified its crackdown on terrorism and organised crime across the country.

### 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: TH

## VILLAGE DEFENCE GUARDS (VDG)

### Context

- Amid growing focus of terrorists on the **Chenab Valley in the Jammu region**, the Army provided

a step-by-step training to **local civilians** who offered to work as **Village Defence Guards (VDG)**.

#### About

- **Aim:** Enhancing their operational readiness and coordination with security forces.
- **Training:** The VDG were provided basic training in self-defence and taking position in bunkers. They were also trained in mountain combat.
- ♦ VDGs were also trained to enhance their operational capabilities, with a focus on weapon handling, firing practices and basic battle drills.
- **Significance:** Training initiatives play a vital role in strengthening coordination between the armed forces and local defence groups, thereby contributing to overall security and resilience at the grassroots level.

**Source: TH**

