

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA FLAGS THE INDIGENOUS LIGHT WATER REACTOR (LWR) AS NUCLEAR PRIORITY

Context

- As India opens its **nuclear power sector** to **private players** and explores export opportunities, the nuclear establishment has stressed the **need to fast-track the fabrication** of **indigenous Light Water Reactors (LWR)**.

Light Water Reactors

- Light Water Reactors** form a mainstay of the **global nuclear program** currently account for over **85% of the civil nuclear reactor capacity in the world**.
 - They use **ordinary (light) water** as both a **coolant and a neutron moderator**.
- LWRs** entail **simpler design and engineering** compared to heavy water reactors given that they use normal water as **both coolant and moderator**.
- Low Cost:** It usually involves lower construction costs due to economies of scale, as LWRs form the bulk of global nuclear capacity, and they are considered more thermally efficient.

Need of LWRs for India

- Leverage in Imports:** Having an indigenous LWR, alongside the existing fleet of pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR), is expected to boost India's leverage in dealing with foreign vendors to secure better terms in imports.
- Global Supply Chain:** LWRs constitute the bulk of the international reactor market, and without integrating Indian companies into the global supply chain, making a breakthrough in the export segment is likely to be difficult.
- Shanti Act:** The legal changes brought by **SHANTI Act** are seen as necessary to tap the dominant global LWR ecosystem, even as India retains its core strengths in other reactor types.
 - SHANTI Act** allows public and private companies to set up nuclear power plants and undertake activities related to the transport, storage, import and export of nuclear fuel, technology, equipment and minerals.
- Dominance of Heavy Water Reactors:** India's civil nuclear programme has deep expertise in manufacturing heavy water reactors from 220 MWe PHWRs to the new 700 MWe units.

- However, these are increasingly out of sync with LWRs, which now dominate the global market.

Challenges

- Limited Indigenous Experience:** India's nuclear programme has historically focused on PHWRs and fast breeder reactors, leading to limited domestic expertise in LWR design and operation.
- Technology Access & IPR Issues:** LWR technologies are largely controlled by a few countries and firms, posing challenges related to technology transfer, intellectual property rights, and localisation.
- Fuel Supply Constraints:** LWRs require enriched uranium, making India dependent on imports and vulnerable to geopolitical and supply-chain uncertainties.
- High Capital Costs:** LWRs involve high upfront costs, long gestation periods, and financing challenges, especially without a mature domestic supply chain.
- Export Competitiveness:** Without a proven indigenous LWR design and operating track record, India faces hurdles in entering the global reactor export market.

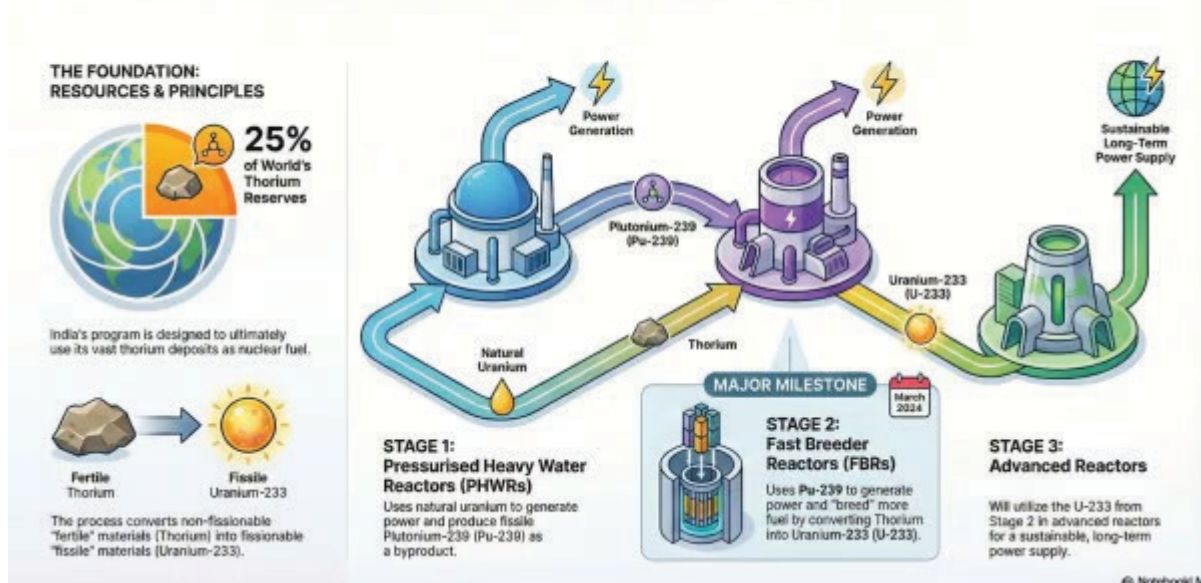
Government Initiatives

- Nuclear Energy Mission & Capacity Targets:** The Government has launched a Nuclear Energy Mission aimed at expanding nuclear power capacity to about 100 GW by 2047.
 - This mission emphasises enhancing domestic capabilities and adopting advanced technologies including LWRs.
- Indigenous Reactor Development:** Such as Bharat Small Reactors are under development to support scalable deployment.
 - While these are PHWR and SMR variants, they lay the groundwork for a broader nuclear innovation ecosystem that can benefit future LWR fabrication.
- Research & Development Funding:** The Union Budget 2025-26 allocated significant funding (around 20,000 crores) for R&D in advanced nuclear technologies.
- International Cooperation & Tech Access:** The government is working on international partnerships and technology transfer mechanisms that can help bridge experience gaps in LWR technologies.

India's Three-stage nuclear programme

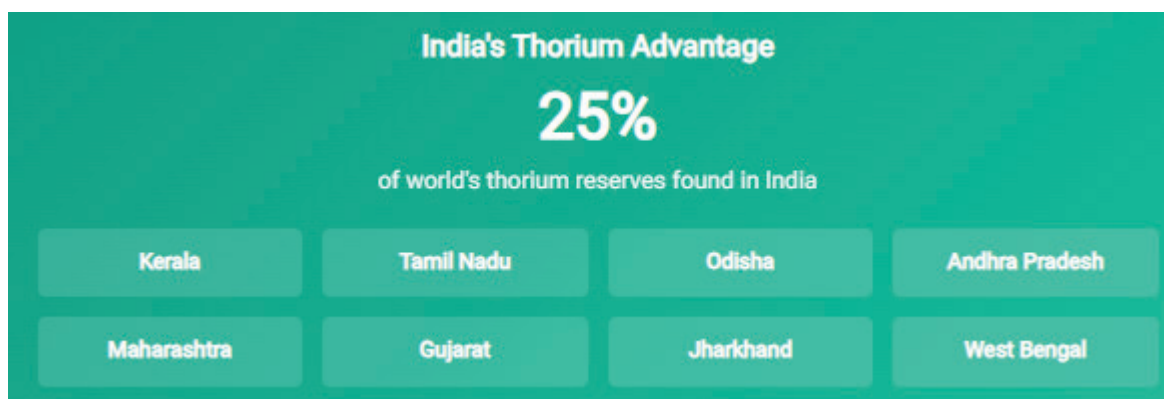
- **Establishment:** India's nuclear journey began shortly after Independence with the establishment of the **Atomic Energy Commission in 1948**.
 - ♦ In 1956, Asia's first research reactor, **Apsara**, was commissioned at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) in Trombay.
 - ♦ India was the **second Asian nation** to build a nuclear power plant in 1969 at Tarapur, just after Japan and long before China.
- India has a three-phase programme of nuclear power envisioned by **Dr Homi J Bhabha**, the father of India's nuclear programme.
- **First Stage (Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors - PHWRs):** India's nuclear program initially focused on establishing a fleet of PHWRs.
 - ♦ These reactors use natural uranium (**U-238**), which contains minuscule amounts of **U-235**, as the fissile material.
 - ♦ Heavy water (deuterium oxide) as **both moderator and coolant**.
 - ♦ The primary purpose of this stage was to **produce plutonium-239 as a byproduct from the uranium fuel**.
 - ♦ **Plutonium-239 is a fissile material** used as fuel in nuclear reactors.
- **Second Stage (Fast Breeder Reactors - FBRs):** The second stage of the program involves the deployment of Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs).
 - ♦ FBRs are designed to produce **more fissile material than they consume** by utilizing a fast neutron spectrum.
 - ♦ In this stage, **plutonium-239** produced in the first stage is used as fuel along with **U-238** to produce energy, **U-233**, and more **Pu-239**.
 - ♦ **Uranium-233 is another fissile material** that can be used as fuel in nuclear reactors.
- **Third Stage (Advanced Heavy Water Reactors - AHWRs):** The final stage of the program entails the deployment of Advanced Heavy Water Reactors (AHWRs).
 - ♦ **Pu-239 will be combined with thorium-232 (Th-232)** in reactors to **produce energy and U-233**.
 - ♦ Thorium is abundantly available in India, and this **stage aims to harness its potential as a nuclear fuel**.

India's 3-Stage Path to Nuclear Energy Security



India's Thorium Reserves

- India has one of the largest reserves of thorium in the world.



- Together, **Kerala and Odisha account for over 70%** of India's thorium.
- India has been developing a **three-stage nuclear program**, with thorium-based reactors being a critical part of the third stage.
- Challenges:** Extracting thorium from ores requires high amounts of energy and creates significant waste.
 - While India has large thorium reserves, extracting it for nuclear energy use has faced challenges, including the need for advanced reactor technology and economic viability.

Source: IE

FREEBIES' DIFFERENT FROM INVESTING IN WELFARE FOR THE MARGINALISED: SC

Context

- The SC has distinguished **welfare schemes from freebies**, stating that large-scale distribution of state money to individuals is different from investing in public welfare.

About

- A batch of petitions seek a **judicial declaration that irrational freebies offered by political parties** to lure voters during poll time should be considered a "corrupt practice".
- SC Observations:** Welfare schemes like **free healthcare and education** are a constitutional obligation under the **Directive Principles of State Policy**.
 - The Court expressed concern that unregulated freebies strain State finances, increase public debt, and reduce funds for long-term development.
 - The Bench warned that excessive freebies may encourage dependency, discouraging work and participation in economic growth.

What are Freebies?

- Freebies** are non-merit, consumption-based benefits that do not create long-term public

assets and are usually meant for immediate relief or electoral appeal.

- Often the practice is used by political parties offering free goods, services, or subsidies to the public, particularly during election campaigns, in an attempt to garner votes.
 - The word "**revdi**" is used metaphorically to describe the free handouts, as it evokes the image of distributing free gifts.
- Section 123 of the RP Act deals with 'corrupt practices'**, it says that it is deemed a corrupt practice if any gift, offer or promise of gratification is made to voters directly or indirectly by a candidate or his agent or any other person acting on their consent.

Arguments in Favour of Freebies:

- Social Welfare:** Freebies can provide immediate relief to economically disadvantaged sections, helping reduce poverty and inequality.
- Empowerment:** They can empower marginalized groups, especially women, students, and low-income families, by providing opportunities they might otherwise not afford, like free education or cash transfers.
- Boost to Consumption:** Offering free goods or services, like free electricity or gas, can increase disposable income, allowing people to spend more on other necessities, thereby stimulating the economy.

- **Incentive for Governance:** Freebies can also act as a measure of how well a government is meeting the basic needs of its citizens, acting as a direct reflection of governance efficiency.

Arguments Against Freebies

- **Financial Burden:** The cost of providing freebies can strain government finances, diverting resources from long-term development projects like infrastructure, healthcare, and education.
- **Dependency:** Freebies may create a dependency on the state, discouraging self-reliance and a culture of entitlement, instead of encouraging people to seek sustainable opportunities.
- **Inefficiency:** Freebies often do not address the root causes of poverty or economic inequality, focusing on short-term solutions rather than creating lasting opportunities for growth and employment.
- **Populist Politics:** The distribution of freebies can be seen as a way for political parties to manipulate voter sentiment and secure votes, undermining the integrity of elections and democratic processes.
- **Unsustainable:** The long-term sustainability of freebies is questionable, as governments may struggle to maintain such schemes without affecting fiscal health or leading to increased taxes for the general population.

Important SC Judgements Related to Freebies:

- **S. Subramaniam Balaji vs. State of Tamil Nadu (2013):** The Supreme Court upheld the right of political parties to offer freebies but emphasized that the distribution of freebies should be done responsibly.
 - ♦ It stated that only an individual candidate, not his party, can commit a 'corrupt practice' under the RP Act by promising free gifts.
- **Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on Freebies (2022):** In this case, the Supreme Court refrained from passing any immediate judgment but asked the Election Commission of India to look into the matter and come up with recommendations.
 - ♦ The court also raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of such promises and their impact on governance.

Way Ahead

- **Regulation:** The government could introduce clear guidelines to regulate the distribution of freebies, ensuring they are targeted and aligned with long-term welfare goals rather than just electoral promises.
- **Electoral Reform:** The Election Commission could enforce stricter rules on the distribution of freebies during election periods, limiting

excessive promises and ensuring they do not affect the fairness of elections.

- **Fiscal Responsibility:** States and the central government need to adopt more fiscally responsible policies to ensure that any welfare schemes are financially sustainable and do not lead to a debt burden.
- **Public Awareness:** Educating the public about the implications of freebies and encouraging a demand for policies that provide long-term solutions, such as infrastructure development and job creation, could shift the focus toward growth-oriented governance.

Source: TH

CHINA'S MILITARY DRILL AROUND TAIWAN & INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Context

- Recently, China's **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** conducted a large-scale military exercise around Taiwan named '**Justice Mission-2025**'.

About the 'Justice Mission-2025'

- It was a large-scale **military exercise conducted by China's PLA** around Taiwan.
- It was the **second major drill of the year**, launched to demonstrate China's **resolve to defend its sovereignty and national unity** while sending a **warning to Taiwanese separatist forces** and **foreign interference**, particularly the USA.
- **Objectives:**
 - ♦ Safeguard China's sovereignty and national unity;
 - ♦ Deter Taiwan's independence moves;
 - ♦ Counter foreign interference (especially from the U.S. and Japan)
- It is linked to the **Trump administration's \$11 billion arms deal with Taiwan**, involving **self-propelled howitzers, advanced rocket launchers, and missile systems**, pending **US Congress approval**.

Key Features

- **Multi-Domain Focus:** The exercise emphasized '**three-dimensional deterrence**' — coordinated operations across **land, sea, and air**.
 - ♦ It aimed to improve the PLA's **blockade capability, combat readiness, and comprehensive superiority**.
- **Air Operations:** Over **130 aircraft sorties** were carried out on the first day.

- ♦ **90 of these crossed the Taiwan Strait centreline**, a rare and provocative move that broke previous tacit boundaries.
- **Rocket and Missile Exercises:** On the second day, China conducted **long-range rocket firing**.
- ♦ **10 rockets landed in Taiwan's contiguous zone**, the **closest proximity ever recorded** in such drills.

Impact on India's Strategic Interests

- **Strategic Implications for India's Security Architecture:** India views the **PLA's operations near Taiwan** as part of a broader pattern of **Chinese military expansionism**. It is evident from:
 - ♦ Aggressive PLA behavior along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** in **Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh**, and
 - ♦ Assertive posturing in the **South China Sea and East China Sea**.
- **Implications for India's Indo-Pacific Strategy:** The Taiwan drill reinforces India's belief in the necessity of **collective deterrence mechanisms** through the **QUAD Alliance** (India, Japan, the US, and Australia).
 - ♦ It underscores the need for **greater coordination in maritime domain awareness**.
 - ♦ It may accelerate **joint naval exercises** like **Malabar**, focused on countering blockades and maintaining freedom of navigation.
- **Deepening Cooperation with Japan:** Japan's **declaration** that a Chinese attack on Taiwan would **threaten Japan's survival**.
 - ♦ India and Japan are likely to intensify **bilateral defence and intelligence cooperation**, especially under frameworks like **India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership**, and **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** as an **economic alternative to China's BRI**.
- **Maritime and Trade Concerns:** Any escalation in the Taiwan Strait directly endangers critical **Indo-Pacific maritime trade routes**, through which **over 55% of India's trade** and **nearly all energy imports from East Asia** transit. It could:
 - ♦ Disrupt shipping lanes between **India, Japan, and South Korea**;
 - ♦ Increase **insurance and freight costs**; and
 - ♦ Strain **energy supply chains** dependent on the South China Sea routes
- **India's Role Expansion:** The Indian Navy's strategic doctrine may evolve to ensure **continuous presence and surveillance** in

the **Malacca Strait** and **South China Sea approaches**.

- ♦ India's cooperation with **Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines** could expand under logistics support agreements and joint patrols.
- **Diplomatic Balancing Between China and Taiwan:** India officially adheres to the '**One-China Policy**', but its **informal relations with Taiwan** have grown stronger, especially in **semiconductor technology, trade and investment, and education and skill partnerships**.
 - ♦ India's likely course is to **maintain strategic ambiguity**, publicly reaffirming the **One-China stance**, while **quietly strengthening ties with Taiwan**.
- **Influence on India's Defence Modernization:** The demonstration of PLA's **joint-force capabilities** serves as a **wake-up call** for India's own modernization drive:
 - ♦ It highlights the need for **network-centric warfare systems** and **integrated tri-service commands**.
 - ♦ India's upcoming **Theatre Command System** could benefit from lessons in **PLA's joint training integration**.
 - ♦ The PLA's long-range missile demonstrations near Taiwan may push India to **accelerate indigenous missile programs**, such as **Agni-V MIRV and hypersonic systems**.

Conclusion and way forward

- China's military drills around Taiwan pose strategic, economic, and security challenges for India, highlighting the need to balance ties with the U.S. and Quad partners while managing relations with China.
- Risks include disruptions to semiconductor supply chains, threats to regional stability, and the necessity to strengthen India's naval presence in the Indo-Pacific.
- India is expected to adopt a cautious but firm approach, supporting a rules-based order, deepening Quad partnerships, and bolstering its maritime and technological resilience.

Source: TH

BORDER FENCE ISSUE AND FARMERS CONCERNS

In News

- The Union government has agreed in principle to shift the border security fence in Punjab closer to the International Border.

Present status

- Punjab shares a 532-kilometre-long border with Pakistan and is fenced with barbed wire, with the distance from the International Border varying from a few feet to 2 km.
- The electrified barbed wire fence was first installed in 1988 in Gurdaspur, Amritsar, and Ferozepur to prevent infiltration, militancy, and drug smuggling during Punjab's militancy.

Issues and concerns

- About 21,500 acres of farmland and 10,000 acres of government land lie between the fence and the border, where farmers face restrictions.
- Access is limited to a few hours on certain days, with limits on the number of workers and tractors, and BSF rules require two Kisan Guards per tractor, further restricting daily field access.

Recommendations various Committee

- The Kapoor Committee, established in 1986, recommended compensating farmers whose land lay beyond the border fence.
- In 1988, the first payment of Rs 2,500 per acre was made, but compensation has been irregular and not provided annually.
- In 1992, the Border Area Sangharsh Committee was formed to advocate for farmers' rights, but no solution has been found.
 - ♦ The fence now affects six districts, including the newly carved Tarn Taran, Fazilka, and Pathankot.

Impacts of Latest Move

- The farmers of the border have long been demanding that the fence be moved closer to the IB, arguing that improved surveillance makes it feasible.
- Despite repeated proposals, progress remains limited, and the current fence restricts access to farmland, causing delays.
- Relocating it would ease access and allow unhindered cultivation of thousands of acres, offering major relief to farmers in Punjab's border areas.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The move to shift the Punjab border fence nearer to the International Border is a significant relief for farmers, resolving long-standing issues over limited access to their land.
- However, it also brings new security concerns that demand careful planning, upgraded technology, and close coordination between the Centre, state government, and BSF.
- Achieving a balance between national security

and farmers' interests will be crucial for the initiative's success.

Source :IE

BOMBAY HIGH COURT QUASHES DETENTION OF ADULT TRAFFICKING VICTIM

Context

- The Bombay High Court quashed a one-year detention order of an adult woman rescued during a police raid under the **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (PITA)**.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (PITA)

- **Section 17:** PITA lays down strict timelines to ensure that rescue does not result in prolonged or arbitrary confinement. Immediately after rescue;
 - ♦ A person may be **kept in temporary safe custody for a maximum of 10 days** if **production before a magistrate** is not immediately possible.
 - ♦ After production before the magistrate, an inquiry is mandatory, during which interim custody can continue up to **three weeks**.
- **Long-term placement (1–3 years):** Permissible only if the magistrate records a finding that the person is "in need of care and protection."
- **Protective Home vs Corrective Institution:**
 - ♦ **Protective Home (Section 2(g)):** It is intended for care, rehabilitation, and support of victims of trafficking.
 - ♦ **Corrective Institution (Section 2(b) read with Section 10A):** It is meant exclusively for offenders convicted under PITA. It involves detention for correction following a finding of guilt.

Key Observations of Court

- **PITA is not punitive towards victims:** The Act is aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and trafficking, not at punishing victims.
- **Personal liberty has primacy:** Any restriction must pass the test of Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution.
 - ♦ Fundamental freedoms do not stand suspended merely because a person has been trafficked.
- **Poverty, lack of livelihood, or absence of family or caretakers** may justify the need for state support and rehabilitation, but cannot be used as a legal basis to curtail the personal liberty of an adult.

- **Consent is central for adults:** Once an adult expresses a clear wish to leave a protective home, continued confinement becomes detention, not care.
- **Key Legal Principle Established:** "PITA 1956 was not meant to punish a victim of sexual exploitation.
 - ♦ The victim cannot be subjected to unreasonable restrictions on the basis of bald assertion that she may again indulge in immoral acts."

Way Ahead

- **Strengthening Non-custodial Support:** Expand access to community-based rehabilitation, including **temporary shelters, counselling, legal aid, and skill development**, without compulsory institutionalisation.
- **Capacity Building of Law Enforcement:** Train police and judicial officers to adopt a victim-centric and constitutional approach, avoiding moralistic or paternalistic assumptions.
- **Legal Awareness for Survivors:** Promote awareness among rescued persons about their legal rights, choices, and available support mechanisms, enabling informed decision-making.

Source: IE

NITI AAYOG REPORTS ON GREEN TRANSITION IN CEMENT, ALUMINIUM AND MSME SECTORS

Context

- NITI Aayog has released three reports outlining decarbonisation roadmaps for the cement, aluminum and MSME sectors.

Decarbonisation of Cement Sector

- **Growth:** Cement production is projected to increase from **391 million tonnes in 2023** to about 2,100 million tonnes by 2070, reflecting India's infrastructure and urbanisation needs.
 - ♦ India is the world's **second-largest** cement producer after China, contributing about **13%** of global annual cement output.
 - ♦ The sector contributes about **7%** of India's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Decarbonisation Targets:** The roadmap envisages reducing carbon intensity from 0.63 tCO₂e per tonne of cement at present to **0.09–0.13 tCO₂e** per tonne by 2070.
- **Key Decarbonisation Strategies:**
 - ♦ **Prioritising refuse-derived fuels (RDF)** to reduce coal dependence.

- ♦ **Clinker substitution** through greater use of supplementary cementitious materials.
- ♦ **Scaling up Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)** for residual process emissions.
- ♦ Effective implementation of the **Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)** to incentivise low-carbon production.

Decarbonisation of Aluminium Sector

- **Production Outlook:** Aluminium production is projected to rise sharply from **4 million tonnes** in 2023 to **37 million tonnes** by 2070.
- **Phased Decarbonisation Pathway:**
 - ♦ **Short term:** Transition to **Renewable Energy–Round the Clock (RE-RTC)** power and strengthening grid connectivity and reliability.
 - ♦ **Medium term:** Adoption of nuclear power to provide stable, low-carbon baseload electricity.
 - ♦ **Long term:** Integration of CCUS to address remaining emissions.

Decarbonisation of MSME Sector

- **Economic Significance:** MSMEs contribute nearly **30% of India's GDP**, employment to over **250 million people**, and around **46% of India's exports**.
- **The Roadmap for Green Transition** of MSMEs is built around three key levers:
 - ♦ Deployment of **energy-efficient equipment** to reduce energy intensity.
 - ♦ Adoption of **alternative fuels** to cut fossil fuel dependence.
 - ♦ **Integration of green electricity** through renewable power procurement and self-generation.

Initiatives taken by India

- **Udyam Registration & MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification:** Promote resource efficiency, energy efficiency and cleaner production practices among MSMEs.
- **Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) Scheme:** A flagship initiative under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency, PAT targets energy-intensive industries like cement by setting specific energy consumption reduction targets.
- **National Smart Grid Mission & Green Open Access Rules (2022):** Facilitate renewable energy procurement, especially for energy-intensive industries and MSMEs.

- **India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)** creates a market for reducing emissions in heavy industries like cement and aluminum by setting **mandatory intensity targets**, rewarding overachievers with credits (CCCs) for trading, and encouraging innovation in low-carbon technology.

Challenges in Green Transition

- **Hard-to-abate emissions:** Cement process emissions from limestone calcination and electricity-intensive aluminium smelting limit mitigation through renewables alone.
- **High capital costs:** Technologies such as CCUS, RE-RTC power and nuclear **integration require large upfront investments with long payback periods.**
- **Green finance constraints:** MSMEs face limited access to affordable credit, weak balance sheets and high borrowing costs.
- **Clean power availability:** Lack of reliable round-the-clock renewable energy and grid constraints hinder deep decarbonisation.

Way Ahead

- **Scaling green finance:** Expand blended finance, credit guarantees and concessional lending, especially for MSMEs.
- **Technology development and localisation:** Accelerate domestic manufacturing of clean industrial technologies.
- **Strengthening carbon markets:** Ensure transparent and credible implementation of the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme.

Source: PIB

FACTS IN NEWS

GOLDILOCKS ECONOMY

In News

- India's 2025 agricultural year benefited from a rare "Goldilocks" combination of surplus monsoon rainfall and moderate temperatures, unlike 2024, which was the warmest year on record despite a good monsoon.

Goldilocks economy

- It is an ideal but temporary state of balanced growth, low inflation, and full employment, supported by stable interest rates.
- It offers a favorable environment for investment, particularly in equities

- It is maintained through careful monetary and fiscal policies, with central banks playing a key role in balancing growth and inflation.

Statistics for India

- In 2025, near-normal temperatures and abundant rainfall led to a strong rebound in farm output, pushing food inflation into negative territory after high levels in 2023–24.
- High water availability and favorable conditions boosted rabi sowing to record levels, with most crops, including wheat and potatoes, performing well, though mustard faces some pest issues.
- Large domestic grain stocks and record global crop production further support low food prices, making a return of food inflation unlikely unless extreme weather occurs.

Source :IE

RIGHT OF GOVERNOR TO ADDRESS AND SEND MESSAGES TO THE HOUSE

Context

- Recently, the Kerala Chief Minister alleged that the Governor altered his policy address to the Assembly by changing or omitting key paragraphs, particularly those related to the State's fiscal stress, pending Bills, and issues of tax devolution.

Governor

- The Governor is the executive head of a State under Articles 153 and 154, exercising executive authority directly or through subordinate officers.
- Generally, under Article 163, the Governor functions on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers while performing duties such as summoning or proroguing the Legislature, giving assent to Bills, promulgating Ordinances, and appointing Ministers.
- However, in certain matters—like sending reports to the President under Article 356 or reserving Bills for the President's consideration under Article 254(2)—the Governor may act at their discretion.

Governor power related to delivering speech

- **Articles 175 and 176** of the Constitution outline the Governor's communication with the State Legislature.
- **Article 175 gives the Governor** the right to address either or both Houses of the State Legislature and to require members' attendance. The Governor can also send messages to the Legislature on any matter, including pending bills, which must be considered promptly.

- **Article 176 of the Constitution** mandates a special address by the Governor to State legislatures at the commencement of the first session after a General Election to the Assembly and at the commencement of the first session of each year.

Source :TH

BOARD OF PEACE FOR GAZA

In News

- The government is considering its response to US President Donald Trump's invitation to join the proposed Gaza Peace Board

The Board of Peace

- It is an international body chaired by US President Donald Trump, created to oversee the October 2025 ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and manage Gaza's post-war transition.
- The initiative was proposed in October 2025 and was endorsed the following month by the United Nations Security Council.

Members

- Around 35 global leaders have agreed to join the proposed Board of Peace, out of about 50 invited.
- Participants include key Middle Eastern allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar and Egypt, along with NATO members Turkey and Hungary. Several other countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America—including Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Morocco, Armenia and Azerbaijan—have also joined.
- Membership terms would run for three years, with the option of renewal.
- Countries seeking to extend their participation beyond the initial term may be required to contribute \$1 billion, while short-term participation would not involve any financial commitment.

Mandate of Board

- The Board will supervise a transitional Palestinian technocratic administration in the Gaza Strip, known as the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG).
- The Board's mandate also includes efforts to disarm Hamas and oversee the deployment of an International Stabilization Force (ISF), a multinational peacekeeping mission tasked with maintaining security and training a new Palestinian police force.

Source :ET

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF ATAL PENSION YOJANA (APY)

Context

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister approved the continuation of Atal Pension Yojana (APY) up to FY 2030-31 along with extension of funding support for promotional and developmental activities and gap funding.

About the Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- **Launch:** APY was launched in **2015** with the objective of providing old-age income security to workers in the **unorganised sector**.
- **Target Group:** Initially available to all citizens of India between 18 and 40 years of age.
 - ♦ With effect from 1st October 2022, individuals paying income tax are **not eligible** to join the scheme.
- **Scheme Features:** APY offers a guaranteed minimum pension of **Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000** per month starting at age 60, based on contributions.
- **Administering Body:** Administered by **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
 - ♦ Managed under the **National Pension System (NPS)** architecture.
- **Progress:** As of January, 2026, over 8.66 crore subscribers have been enrolled, making APY a cornerstone of India's inclusive social security framework.
- **Need for Extension:** Sustained government support is essential for continued awareness, capacity building, and bridging of viability gaps to ensure the scheme's sustainability.

Source:PIB

KALADI TO BE UPSCALED USING ADVANCED FOOD TECHNOLOGIES

Context

- The Union Minister of State for Science & Technology has directed the upscaling of Kaladi, a **traditional dairy product of Udhampur** district, Jammu & Kashmir.
 - ♦ The initiative is aligned with the **One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme to enable value addition.

About Kaladi

- Kaladi is a **traditional dairy product** prepared from raw full-fat milk, using **whey water as a coagulant**.

- It is known for its milky flavour, stretchable texture, and soft mouthfeel, often referred to as the “**mozzarella of Jammu**”.
- It has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, enhancing its economic and cultural significance.

Key Challenges

- **Very short shelf life**, especially under non-refrigerated conditions, limiting wider market access.
- **Lack of standardised processing methods**, as preparation varies across regions.
- **Constraints in packaging, preservation, and scalability** without altering traditional characteristics.

Source: PIB

JAPAN TO RESTART KASHIWAZAKI-KARIWA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Context

- Japan has restarted operations at the world's largest nuclear plant (Kashiwazaki-Kariwa) for the first time since the **2011 Fukushima disaster**.
 - ♦ **Only one reactor** is scheduled to restart initially, while the remaining units will require separate approvals.

About

- **Location:** It spans the towns of Kashiwazaki and Kariwa in **Niigata Prefecture**, (Island of **Honshu**) Japan, on the coast of the **Sea of Japan**.
- **Capacity:** Approximately **8,200 MW**, making it the largest nuclear power plant globally.
- **Operator:** Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO).

Japan's Focus on Nuclear Energy

- **Japan is the world's fifth-largest single-country emitter of carbon dioxide**, after China, the United States, India and Russia, and is heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels.
 - ♦ **Nearly 70% of Japan's power needs in 2023** were met by power plants burning coal, gas and oil.
- Before the 2011 quake and tsunami, nuclear power generated **about a third of Japan's electricity**.
 - ♦ Fourteen reactors, mostly in western and southern regions, have resumed operation since the post-Fukushima shutdown after strict safety standards were imposed.

- Japan aims to make renewables its top power source by **2040**.
 - ♦ Under the plan, nuclear power will account for around 20% of Japan's energy supply by 2040 – up from 5.6% in 2022.

Source: TH

C-295 AIRCRAFT

In News

- The first 'Made in India' C-295 aircraft from the Airbus-Tata Vadodara assembly line is set to roll out before September 2026, highlighting deepening India-Spain defence collaboration.

C295

- It is a versatile, reliable tactical transport aircraft capable of troop/cargo transport, maritime patrol, surveillance, medical evacuation, and firefighting.
- It carries up to 8 tonnes or 70 troops, cruises at 260 knots, and operates from short, unpaved runways.
- It offers 13-hour endurance, excellent maneuverability, and fuel efficiency.
- The Airbus C295 (previously CASA C-295) is a medium-range twin-engine turboprop tactical transport aircraft that was designed and initially manufactured by the Spanish aerospace company CASA, which is now part of the European multinational Airbus Defence and Space division.

India's Agreements

- In 2021, India signed a Rs 21,935 crore deal with Airbus Defence and Space to procure 56 C295 aircraft. Under the agreement, Airbus was to deliver the first 16 aircraft in 'fly-away' condition from its final assembly line in Seville, Spain, within four years and the subsequent 40 aircraft were to be manufactured by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd in India.

Source :TH

MOZAMBICAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST TO GET INDIRA GANDHI PEACE PRIZE

Context

- **Mozambican rights activist and humanitarian Graca Machel** has been selected for the **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025**, announced by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
 - ♦ Ms. Machel was chosen for her “path-breaking work” in the fields of education, health and nutrition, economic empowerment and humanitarian action.

About

- It is an **annual award** established by the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust in India**.
- The prize is named in honor of the **late Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi**, and it was instituted in **1986**.
- The award is presented to individuals or organizations that have made **significant contributions** to the promotion of international understanding and peace, the development of new international economic order, and the strengthening of democracy.
- The award carries a cash prize of **₹1 crore** along with a citation and a trophy.
- Categories:** The award is presented in three categories:
 - Peace:** Recognizes efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security.
 - Disarmament:** Acknowledges contributions to the reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction.
 - Development:** Honors work in promoting economic and social development.
- The award ceremony typically takes place on **November 19th**, the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi.

Source: TH

ISRAEL FULLY LEGALISES WEST BANK OUTPOST AS NEW SETTLEMENT

Context

- Israel has fully legalized the West Bank outpost as a new settlement called **Yatziv**.

About

- The newly legalized Jewish settlement called Yatziv **sits adjacent to the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour in the West Bank**.
- The recognition of Yatziv followed **years of advocacy by residents and local leaders**.
- The establishment of Yatziv comes amid ongoing debate over settlement policy, which remains a central issue in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

West Bank

- The West Bank lies to the **west of the Jordan River**, bordered by Israel to the west, Jordan to the east, and Jerusalem to the south-west.
- Major cities include Ramallah (administrative capital of the Palestinian Authority), Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, and Bethlehem.



- 1948:** After the Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank was occupied and later annexed by Jordan (1949–1967).
- 1967:** During the Six-Day War, Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, and it has remained under varying degrees of Israeli control since.
- 1993–1995 Oslo Accords:** These agreements created the Palestinian Authority (PA) and divided the West Bank into three areas:
 - Area A:** Full Palestinian civil and security control.
 - Area B:** Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli–Palestinian security.
 - Area C:** Full Israeli control (about 60% of the West Bank).
- The Palestinians seek the West Bank, captured by Israel in 1967, as part of a future state.

Source: TH

TANTYA MAMA BHIL

Context

- The installation of a statue of tribal freedom fighter Tantya Mama Bhil in Khargone on Tribal Pride Day caused embarrassment for the administration, as a fibre-reinforced polymer (FRP) statue was erected instead of the planned marble or metal one.

About Tantya Mama Bhil

- Born:** 1840, Badda village, Khandwa district (Madhya Pradesh).
- Original name:** Tanti Bhil
- He earned the name **“Tantya”**, meaning *fighter*, due to his early resistance against British rule.
- Inspiration:** He idolised **Tatya Tope**, the 1857 revolt leader, and adopted **guerrilla warfare tactics** from him.
- Tantya Bhil carried out swift attacks on British targets, including trains, and **redistributed the looted wealth among the poor**, earning him the reputation of a **Robin Hood-like figure**.

- His ability to strike and disappear quickly made him a persistent challenge for the British administration.
- Beyond armed resistance, he played a significant **social role** by helping the poor, assisting women, arranging marriages for underprivileged girls, and standing with people in times of distress. This deep connection with the masses earned him the honorific “**Mama**” (Uncle).
- **Martyrdom:** On **December 4, 1889**, the British executed Tantya Bhil by hanging. His body was

later dumped near **Patalpani station** on the Khandwa railway line.

Do You Know?

- **Tribals constitute about 21% of Madhya Pradesh’s population**, the highest among Indian states.
- Tantya Bhil belonged to the **Bhil community**, which accounts for nearly **40% of the state’s 1.53 crore tribal population**.

Source: IE

