

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA BELIEVED THAT PANCHSHEEL PACT SETTLED BORDER WITH CHINA: CDS

Context

- The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) mentioned that India believed the **1954 Panchsheel Agreement** effectively addressed the northern boundary question, even though China viewed it differently.

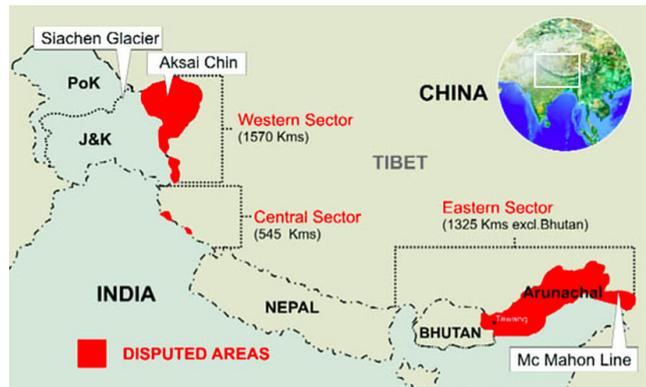
Panchsheel Agreement

- In 1954, India recognised Tibet as part of China, and both countries signed the **Panchsheel Agreement**.
- The Panchsheel Agreement** stated the five principles as:
 - Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
 - Mutual non-aggression.
 - Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
 - Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit.
 - Peaceful co-existence.
- It was designed to promote trade and friendly relations, forming the basis of the bilateral ties.
 - With this, India assumed that it had settled its **northern border**.
- In 2025** the Chinese President underscored that Panchsheel must be cherished and promoted by the two countries.
 - It came as India and China reset their ties and PM Modi visited China after seven years.

The India-China Borders

- India considers the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** to be **3,488 km long**, while the Chinese consider it to be only around **2,000 km**.
- It is divided into three sectors:** the eastern sector which spans **Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim**, the middle sector in **Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh**, and the western sector in **Ladakh**.
- Western Sector or Aksai Chin Sector:** The region is claimed by the Chinese government **post-1962 war** as an autonomous part of the Xinjiang region which was originally a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Middle Sector:** It is the less disputed section of the Indo-China border but the **recent Doklam standoff and Nathu La Pass trading issues** have brought distress at all levels.

- Eastern Sector or Arunachal Pradesh: McMahon Line** had differentiated India and China in this sector but in the 1962 war the People's Liberation Army covered 9000 sq. km. area.
 - The announcement of a unilateral ceasefire made them step back on the international borderline.
 - However, China has been claiming that area as their own and recently they have started to **claim the whole of Arunachal Pradesh** as their own.



India-China Relations

- 2025 marks the 75 Years** of India-China diplomatic ties.
- Historical Tensions:**
 - Strained since the **1962 Sino-Indian war**, deepened by recent clashes and mistrust.
 - In 2020**, the clash between both armies in Galwan Valley further strained the relationship.
 - India restricted Chinese investments, banned Chinese apps, and halted flights to China.
- Trade Relations:** In 2025, bilateral trade between China and India reached a record high of \$155.6 billion, registering a year-on-year growth of over 12 per cent. Despite tensions, economic ties continue to grow.
- Ongoing Mechanisms:** Despite tensions, mechanisms like the Special Representatives (SR) and Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) have been in place to address the boundary issue.
- Recent Developments:**
 - 2024 Disengagement:** India and China announced successful disengagement in eastern Ladakh.
 - October 2024 Meeting:** PM Modi and President Xi Jinping emphasized "mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual sensitivity."

- ◆ In 2025 both Nations resumed direct flights and the Indian PM also visited China for the SCO summit.

Areas of Concern

- **Ongoing Border Tensions:**
 - ◆ The unresolved border dispute spans over 2,000 miles, marked by frequent clashes that have strained the relationship.
- **Military Standoff and Infrastructure Build-up:** Large-scale troop deployment, rapid infrastructure construction, and militarisation along the LAC by both sides have increased the risk of escalation.
- **China–Pakistan Nexus:** Deepening strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan, especially under the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (part of the Belt and Road Initiative) which passes through the Indian territory of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Trade Imbalance:** India faces a significant trade deficit with China, with heavy dependence on Chinese imports in sectors such as electronics, APIs (pharmaceuticals), telecom equipment, and solar panels.
- **China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean Region:**
 - Sri Lanka:** China's presence at Hambantota Port and investments in an oil refinery raise concerns in India.
 - ◆ **Nepal:** China's investments in infrastructure (e.g., Pokhara airport) challenge India's strategic position.
 - ◆ **Bangladesh:** China's growing influence, including loan agreements, threatens India's regional influence.
 - ◆ **Myanmar:** China's deepening ties with Myanmar, including the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, strengthen its presence in India's backyard.

India's Efforts to Address these concerns

- **Strengthening Military Preparedness:** Enhanced troop deployment and infrastructure along the LAC, induction of advanced weapons systems, and improved surveillance in border areas like Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Strategic Partnerships in Indo-Pacific:** Active participation in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and deeper defence cooperation with the US, Japan, Australia, and France.
- **Technology & Cyber Security Safeguards:** Exclusion of high-risk vendors in telecom infrastructure

and promotion of trusted, indigenous digital ecosystems.

- **Maritime Security:** India has prioritized maritime security, expanding its naval capabilities and strengthening defense ties with the U.S. and Japan.
- **Joining Infrastructure Projects:** India joined infrastructure projects such as the Global Infrastructure Facility and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor to strengthen its economic expansion.
- **Trade Relations:** India seeks to reduce reliance on Chinese goods, especially in electronics and renewable energy.

Way Ahead

- India must maintain constant surveillance of border areas and the Indian Ocean Region, and closely monitor geopolitical and technological developments that may impact national security.
- The path forward lies in combining firmness on sovereignty and territorial integrity with calibrated diplomacy and strategic autonomy.

Source: TH

RURAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH DECENTRALIZATION

Context

- India's rural development trajectory over the past decade indicates a structural transition **from fragmented welfare provision towards an integrated, decentralised, and community-led development paradigm.**

Decentralisation in Governance

- **The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992)** institutionalised Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as vehicles of grassroots democracy, enabling communities to participate directly in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of development initiatives.
- **Participation is increasingly supported through** capacity building, technology-enabled engagement, strengthened community institutions, and participatory planning and budgeting processes.
- **Direct fiscal transfers to panchayats** have been increased from around ₹2.36 lakh crore under the 15th Finance Commission (2021-2026) to nearly ₹4.35 lakh crore under the 16th Finance Commission (2026-2031).

Need for Decentralisation

- **Deepening Grassroot Democracy:** Strengthens participatory democracy by empowering village-level institutions like the Gram Sabha to take decisions on local development.
- **Need-Based Local Planning:** Local bodies better understand region-specific issues related to agriculture, irrigation, drinking water, sanitation, and rural infrastructure.
- **Improved Service Delivery:** Enhances last-mile delivery and monitoring of schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
- **Greater Accountability and Transparency:** Proximity of elected representatives to citizens improves answerability and strengthens mechanisms like social audits.
- **Strengthening Cooperative Federalism:** Supports fiscal decentralisation through State Finance Commissions and grants recommended by the Finance Commission.

Challenges

- **Incomplete Devolution:** Many States have not fully devolved Functions, Funds, and Functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions despite the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- **Financial Dependence on Higher Governments:** PRIs rely heavily on grants recommended by the Finance Commission and State governments, with limited own-source revenue generation.
- **Capacity Constraints:** Lack of trained personnel, technical expertise, and administrative capacity hampers effective planning and implementation.
- **Elite Capture and Proxy Representation:** Local elites sometimes dominate decision-making; in some cases, women representatives face proxy control by male family members.
- **Weak Gram Sabha Functioning:** The Gram Sabha often suffers from low participation, irregular meetings, and limited awareness among citizens.
- **Poor Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms:** Weak auditing, irregular social audits, and limited digital governance increase risks of corruption and fund misutilisation.

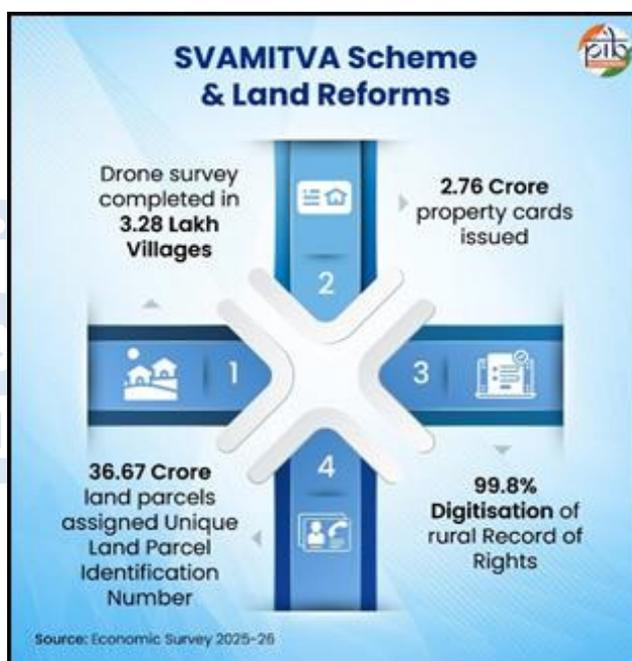
Achievements in Rural Development

- **Poverty has declined significantly,** with extreme poverty at 5.3% (2022-23), which is less than the global average, and multidimensional poverty has reduced to 11.28%.

- **Women-led collectives anchor last-mile delivery,** mobilizing 10.05 crore women across 90.09 lakh SHGs, supported by 9 lakh community cadres.
- **Rural connectivity is near-universal,** with budgetary allocations for Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana increasing from ₹12,581 crore in 2016-17 to ₹19,000 crore in 2026-27 (an increase of 51%).
- **Housing-led security has expanded at scale,** with 3.70 crore rural homes built over 11 years, budgetary allocations for PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen) increased by 266.1%.

Government Initiatives

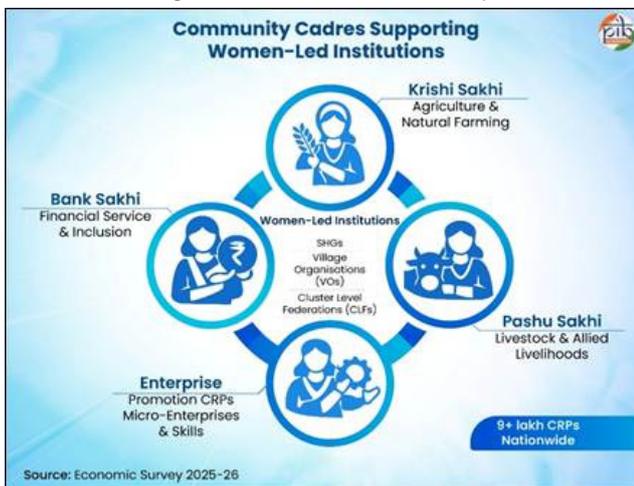
- **Rural Development Budget allocations** rose over 211% from ₹87,765 crore (2016-17) to ₹2.73 lakh crore (2026-27).
- **Land Reforms:**



- **The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS)** promotes democratic engagement and civic awareness by familiarising students with grassroots governance through simulated Gram Sabha processes in schools.
- **Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** strengthens decentralised governance by enhancing the institutional capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions through leadership development, e-governance, and deeper constitutional devolution.
- **Women-Led Institutions as Drivers of Rural Transformation:** Women-led institutions are central to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), positioning women as key drivers of rural transformation.



- **Community Resource Persons (CRPs)**, including Bank Sakhis, Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, and Enterprise Promotion CRPs, facilitate the smooth functioning of women-led community institutions.



Conclusion

- India's rural development trajectory over the past decade indicates a structural transition from fragmented welfare provision towards an integrated, decentralised, and community-led development paradigm.
- Collectively, these reforms position rural India not merely as a recipient of development interventions but as a pivotal driver of inclusive growth, democratic governance, and long-term socio-economic sustainability.

Source: PIB

REFRAMING INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN A FRAGMENTED GLOBAL ORDER

Context

- In Parliament, PM Modi acknowledged the undergoing structural shift from rules-based multilateralism to power-driven, transactional geopolitics.

Erosion of Multilateralism

- **Decline of Consensus-Based Institutions:** For decades, institutions like the **United Nations** and **World Trade Organization** anchored global rule-making through collective decision-making and diplomacy.
 - ♦ However, this rule-based order has weakened as **major powers increasingly bypass consensus mechanisms**, rendering institutions less effective.
- **Rise of Transactional Power Politics:** Multilateral platforms are being supplanted by transactional diplomacy where power and bilateral leverage outweigh collective norms.
 - ♦ The United States' recourse to unilateral tariffs and a retreat from collaborative frameworks reflects this trend.
- **Rise of Competitive Goeconomics:** China has become the largest trading partner of over **120 countries** and has **diversified supply chains** and markets. The United States, in response, has prioritised technological containment and supply-chain restructuring.
 - ♦ In this evolving environment, middle powers such as India face heightened vulnerability due to shifting economic alignments.

Evolution of strategic autonomy

- **Cold War Origins:** Strategic autonomy emerged during India's leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement. It allowed India to avoid bloc politics during the Cold War.
- **Post-Cold War Transition:** After 1991, the doctrine became less structural and more declaratory. India joined the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in 2017**, signalling alignment with Indo-Pacific security concerns.
 - ♦ India procured the **S-400 system from Russia** despite U.S. sanctions pressure.
 - ♦ **Swing State Narrative:** U.S. analysts increasingly describe India as a **"swing state"** in U.S.-China rivalry.

Current Policy of India

- India's current foreign policy is characterised by multi-alignment, economic diplomacy, and strategic flexibility. It seeks to;
 - ♦ Deepen **defence and technology cooperation** with the **United States** and Indo-Pacific partners.
 - ♦ Maintain **defence and energy ties** with **Russia**.

- ◆ Manage **competition and engagement** with **China** through dialogue and deterrence.
- ◆ Promote the **“Neighbourhood First” policy** and regional connectivity in South Asia.
- ◆ Advocate reform of global institutions to reflect contemporary power realities.
- India’s approach attempts to **preserve autonomy** while expanding partnerships that serve economic growth and technological advancement.

Way Ahead

- **Flexible Multilateral Engagement:** In a fragmented order, flexible coalitions and issue-based alignments can preserve India’s strategic space.
 - ◆ Platforms such as BRICS provide opportunities to promote economic cooperation, and reform of global financial governance.
- **Diversified Trade Strategy:** India’s exports remain concentrated in select markets. Reducing overdependence on any single partner requires deeper trade engagement with **ASEAN, Africa, and West Asia**.
 - ◆ Expanding comprehensive economic partnerships and integrating into global value chains will enhance resilience against tariff volatility.

Source: [TH](#)

RENEWABLES TO LEAD INDIA’S POWER MIX BY 2070

Context

- A study titled “Scenarios Towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero” by NITI Aayog projects a shift in India’s electricity mix from coal dominance to renewable leadership by 2070.

Present Electricity Landscape of India

- **Coal remains the backbone** of India’s power system, accounting for nearly **74%** of electricity generation, ensuring dependable and low-cost base-load supply.
- As per IRENA RE Statistics 2025, globally, **India stands 3rd in Solar Power** installed capacity, **4th in Wind Power** capacity and **4th in total Renewable Energy** capacity.
- India’s total installed capacity stands at **513 GW**, of which **48% is fossil-based, 50% is from renewable energy** sources and **1.7% is from nuclear energy**.
- However, renewable energy’s share in actual generation increased only from 19.6% (2013-14) to **22% (2024-25)**, reflecting utilisation challenges.

Projections Under Current Policy Scenario (CPS):

- ◆ Renewable energy’s share in electricity generation could rise from ~20% in 2024-25 to over **80% by 2070**.
- ◆ **Coal’s share** could **decline sharply to 6–10% by 2070**.

Constraints in Renewable Energy Generation

- **Low Capacity Utilisation Factor (CUF):** Clean energy sources are intermittent and weather-dependent. Hence, their actual output is much lower despite high capacity.
 - ◆ **Eg:** Solar CUF: ~20%, Wind CUF: ~25–30%, Coal CUF: ~60%, Nuclear CUF: ~80%.
- **Base Load Dependency on Coal:** Coal continues to supply over 75% of India’s electricity demand, especially at night when solar isn’t available.
 - ◆ India’s grid still depends heavily on thermal sources for round-the-clock (RTC) power.
- **Storage and Transmission Limitations:** Lack of grid-scale battery storage prevents storing surplus daytime solar energy.
 - ◆ Transmission planning is not in sync with the pace of RE (renewable energy) installation.
- **Time-Insensitive Tariff Structures:** India currently lacks time-of-day (ToD) pricing, discouraging daytime solar consumption.
 - ◆ Uniform tariffs provide no incentive for consumers or discoms to shift loads to peak solar hours.
- **Land and Regulatory Constraints:** Land aggregation issues for large-scale solar or hybrid projects.
 - ◆ Delays in regulatory clearances, especially for hybrid renewable systems and storage infrastructure.

Government Initiatives to Improve Clean Energy Utilisation

- **Green Energy Corridor (GEC):** Aims to strengthen the transmission infrastructure to evacuate renewable energy efficiently from generation points to demand centres.
- **PM-KUSUM Scheme:** Promotes installation of solar pumps and grid-connected solar power plants in rural areas to reduce diesel usage and support farmers.
- **National Green Hydrogen Mission:** Seeks to promote the production and use of green hydrogen to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in sectors like refining, steel, and fertilisers.

- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** Provides financial incentives for domestic manufacturing of high-efficiency solar photovoltaic (PV) modules and advanced battery storage systems.
- **Renewable Energy Hybrid Policy:** Encourages setting up of projects that combine solar and wind energy in the same location to increase capacity utilisation and reliability.

Way Ahead

- **Grid Modernisation and Smart Management:** Invest in smart grids with real-time demand-supply balancing.
 - ♦ Enable time-of-day pricing, especially to promote daytime solar usage.
- **Battery and Storage Infrastructure:** Accelerate deployment of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) through VGF (Viability Gap Funding) or PLI.
 - ♦ Hybrid Projects (solar-wind-hydro with BESS) should be fast-tracked.
- **Decentralised Renewable Energy:** Promote rooftop solar, solar pumps, and mini-grids to relieve base-load pressure.
- **Revamp Tariff and Market Design:** Introduce differential tariffs for peak vs off-peak periods.
 - ♦ Set up green power markets on energy exchanges with open access for industries.
- **Nuclear Power as a Strategic Pillar:** Nuclear capacity should be scaled in a phased and financially sustainable manner to provide firm, low-carbon base-load power.
 - ♦ Advanced reactors and **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** must be prioritised to ensure flexible deployment and enhanced safety.

Source: [IE](#)

INDIA'S AI STACK FOR POPULATION-SCALE IMPACT

In News

- India is hosting the **India AI Impact Summit** in New Delhi focusing on practical AI deployment and measurable societal outcomes rather than broad policy discussions.

Developments and Applications

- **Agriculture:** AI-driven advisory tools are being used to guide sowing decisions, optimise input use and improve yields.
 - ♦ AI innovations are helping farmers make data-driven, sustainable decisions.

- ♦ Neoperk provides rapid soil health analysis for optimized fertiliser use,
 - CottonAce offers pest detection and localized pesticide guidance,
 - Niqo Robotics enables real-time pest and weed control with selective spraying, and
 - Cropin creates a digital ecosystem for farm monitoring, credit analytics, and climate-smart predictive farming, improving productivity and reducing costs.
- **Education:** The National Education Policy 2020 has incorporated AI literacy and applied learning through CBSE curricula, the DIKSHA digital platform and programmes such as YUVAi.
 - ♦ The stated objective is to build foundational AI skills at scale rather than confining training to specialist institutions.
 - ♦ PadhaiWithAI provides personalised math support, improving pass rates in government schools, Rocket Learning's AI companion Appu delivers interactive literacy and numeracy activities for young children via WhatsApp, and Belagavi Smart City's deep learning eBooks adapt in real time to user behaviour, boosting reading comprehension and speed.
- **Healthcare:** AI tools are being deployed to support early detection of tuberculosis, cancer, neurological disorders and other conditions, strengthening preventive screening and diagnostic workflows within public health systems.
 - ♦ AI-based thermal imaging is being used for low-cost, non-invasive breast cancer screening.
 - ♦ Qure.ai rapidly analyses X-rays and CT scans to detect multiple diseases in resource-poor settings.
 - ♦ AISteth enables accurate remote diagnosis of heart and lung conditions, empowering frontline health workers and strengthening rural healthcare delivery.
- **Judicial administration** is also adopting AI-enabled systems.
 - ♦ Under e-Courts Phase III, machine learning tools are being used for translation, case scheduling and workflow management, with an emphasis on improving access through vernacular languages.
- **Environmental:** The India Meteorological Department is using AI for forecasting rainfall, cyclones, fog, lightning and wildfire risk.

- ◆ Tools such as Mausam GPT are designed to support farmers as well as disaster response agencies.

India's present Approach and Initiatives

- The Economic Survey 2026 stresses that India's AI strategy must prioritize human welfare and economic inclusion, ensuring AI adoption serves domestic needs and benefits all sectors and citizens.
- **IndiaAI Mission** supports 12 India-specific AI models with subsidised compute (25% cost offset).
- **BharatGen** develops India-focused foundation and multimodal models (billions–trillions of parameters).
- **IndiaAIKosh** hosts 5,722 datasets and 251 AI models from 54 organisations across 20 sectors.
- **Bhashini** offers 350+ AI models for speech recognition, translation, OCR, text-to-speech, and language detection.
- **Startups** like Sarvam AI are building sovereign AI models, e.g., Sarvam Vision, outperforming Google Gemini and ChatGPT in some benchmarks.
- **Compute Capacity & Semiconductor Ambitions:** ₹10,300+ crore allocated over 5 years for AI compute; shared access to 38,000 GPUs and 1,050 TPUs.
 - ◆ Dedicated secure GPU cluster (3,000 processors) for strategic AI use.
- **India Semiconductor Mission:** ₹76,000 crore for fabrication, packaging, and indigenous processors (SHAKTI, VEGA).
- **National Supercomputing Mission:** 40+ petaflops deployed via IITs, IISERs, national labs; systems like PARAM Siddhi-AI and AIRAWAT support NLP, weather, drug discovery.
- **Digital Infrastructure & Data Centres:** Nationwide optical fibre and 5G cover nearly all districts and 85% of the population.
 - ◆ India has ~3% of global data centre capacity (960 MW), projected to reach 9.2 GW by 2030.
 - ◆ Major hubs: Mumbai–Navi Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi NCR, Pune, Kolkata.
- **Energy & Sustainability:** Power is key for AI scale in India. As of FY 2025–26, peak demand reached 242.49 GW with negligible shortages (0.03%), and total generation capacity was 509.7 GW, over half from non-fossil sources.

- ◆ Plans include 57 GW pumped storage and 43,220 MWh battery storage to stabilise grids for data centres.
- ◆ The **SHANTI Act** promotes nuclear power, including small and micro-reactors, as a continuous low-carbon energy source for compute-intensive infrastructure.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- India's AI strategy emphasizes human welfare, economic inclusion, and contextual innovation, targeting scalable solutions in health, agriculture, and education.
- The government acts as a catalyst and ecosystem orchestrator by facilitating procurement of domestic AI, setting standards for trust, integrating applications into the India AI Applications Stack, and ensuring governance aligns with international standards for global deployment.

Source :[IE](#)

NEWS IN SHORT

KERALA DECLARES BACILLUS SUBTILIS 'STATE MICROBE'

Context

- Kerala has become the first Indian state to designate an official "State Microbe," selecting *Bacillus subtilis*, a beneficial, soil-dwelling bacterium.

About *Bacillus subtilis*

- It is a **non-pathogenic, rod-shaped, gram-positive bacterium** found commonly in **soil, water, and the human gut**.
- *Bacillus subtilis* is a probiotic or **good bacterium** that plays a vital role in improving gut health and strengthening immunity.
- The bacterium is widely **used in agriculture as a biofertilizer** and biocontrol agent to enhance crop productivity and suppress plant diseases.
- Due to its **resilience and spore-forming ability**, it has significant industrial and biotechnological applications.

Centre of Excellence in Microbiome

- The Centre of Excellence in Microbiome (CoEM), established by the Government of Kerala under the **Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment**.

- Located in **Thiruvananthapuram**, is **India's first** dedicated multi-domain research institution for microbiome studies.

Source: [TH](#)

QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE (QUAD)

Context

- Recent remarks from senior U.S. officials describing the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) as a “very important platform” and India as an “active participant” underline the grouping’s centrality to India’s Indo-Pacific strategy.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

- It is an **informal multilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan** aimed at cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- **Origin:** The Quad began as a loose partnership after the **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** when the four countries joined together to provide humanitarian and disaster assistance to the affected region.
 - ♦ It was formalized by former Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe in 2007**, but then fell dormant.
- After a decade it was **resurrected in 2017**, reflecting changing attitudes in the region toward China’s growing influence.

Strategic Significance for India

- **Maritime Security and Indo-Pacific:** The Quad strengthens coordination in safeguarding Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).
 - ♦ It complements India’s **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** vision.
- **Balancing Regional Power Asymmetry:** The Quad is viewed as a response to growing assertiveness by China in the South China Sea and the broader Indo-Pacific.
- However, India maintains that the **Quad is not a military alliance** but a platform for cooperative security.

Source: [TH](#)

AFRICAN UNION

Context

- The **African Union** is hosting its annual summit in Ethiopia to discuss the future of the continent, as the organization faces widespread discontent.

African Union

- **The African Union (AU)** is a continental body consisting of the **55 member states** that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- It was officially launched in **2002** as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).
- **Aim:** To realise Africa’s potential and to focus towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa’s growth and economic development.
- **Headquarters:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **Initiatives of the AU include** the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, aiming to create a single market for goods and services across the continent, and Agenda 2063, a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years.

Source: [IE](#)

SEVA TEERTH

In News

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the Seva Teerth complex in New Delhi, along with Kartavya Bhavan-1 and 2.

Seva Teerth and Kartavya Bhavan-1 and 2

- Seva Teerth houses the Prime Minister’s Office, the National Security Council Secretariat, the Cabinet Secretariat, all of which were previously located across different locations.
 - ♦ It consolidates administrative functions within modern, and future-ready facilities.
- Kartavya Bhavan-1 and 2 accommodate several Key ministries including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
 - ♦ Both building complexes feature digitally integrated offices, structured public interface zones and centralised reception facilities.

Importance

- These features will foster collaboration, efficiency, seamless governance, improved citizen engagement and enhanced employee well-being.

Source: [Air](#)

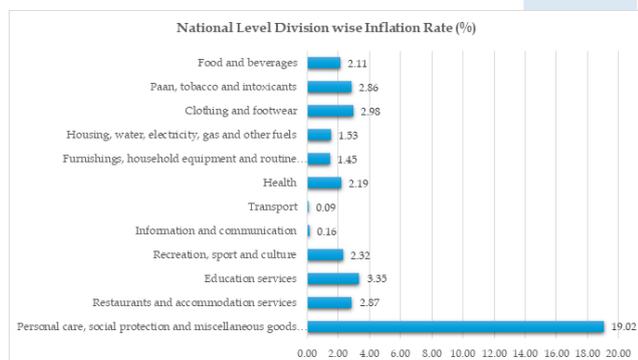
CPI JANUARY, 2026 (PROVISIONAL) AT BASE YEAR 2024=100 RELEASED

Context

- The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has released the provisional Consumer Price Index (CPI) with Base 2024=100.

About

- The base has been revised from 2012 to 2024 using **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24**.
- 12 Divisions in place of 6 Groups** in accordance with Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP) 2018.
 - COICOP is the international classification of household expenditure developed by the United Nations Statistics Division.
 - The objective of the COICOP is to provide a framework of homogeneous categories of goods and services from the point of view of its usage by the households.
 - Its adoption ensures that India's CPI is comparable with CPIs worldwide.



Consumer Price Index (CPI):

- CPI measures the **average change in prices** paid by consumers for a basket of goods and services over time i.e., it tracks retail inflation.
 - Tracks cost of living and purchasing power.
 - Includes items like food, housing, clothing, transport, etc.
 - It is published **monthly**, the **earlier base year: 2012** which is revised to 2024.
 - Released By:** NSO, MoSPI.

Revision of Base Year

- It has been introduced to ensure that the index remains representative of current household consumption patterns, price structures, and the evolving nature of the Indian economy.

- The Base Year** is a chosen year taken as a reference point (index = 100) to compare prices over time.
- It is important because it helps measure how much prices have increased or decreased and keeps inflation figures relevant.
- The base updation exercise** mainly involves revising the CPI item basket and updating item weights based on the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES).

Source: **PIB**

MANGROVE CLAM

In News

- The ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has successfully achieved induced breeding of the **mangrove clam (Geloina erosa)** under captive conditions.

Mangrove clams

- It is commonly known as **mud clams** and it is **ecologically important**.
- It typically inhabits organic-rich muddy substrates in intertidal mangrove zones.
- It is a dwindling bivalve species distributed across mangrove and estuarine ecosystems in South and Southeast Asia.
- It continues to be a valued local delicacy in several parts of India, particularly in northern Kerala, where the species is popularly known as **“Kandal Kakka”**.

Source : **DD**

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE LEAD BANK SCHEME (LBS)

In News

- The RBI's proposed guidelines aim to strengthen and streamline the Lead Bank Scheme by clearly defining the structure, membership, and roles of various committees.

Lead Bank Scheme (LBS)

- The Lead Bank Scheme (LBS) originated from the 1969 Gadgil Study Group, which highlighted the inadequate rural presence and orientation of commercial banks and recommended an “Area Approach” for developing rural banking and credit structures.
- This was endorsed by the Nariman Committee, which proposed that each public sector bank act as a “Lead Bank” in specific districts to fulfill social responsibilities.

- Based on these recommendations, the RBI introduced the LBS in December 1969 to coordinate banks and development agencies at the district level.
- It aims to enhance credit flow to priority and rural sectors, and promote overall rural development through designated Lead Banks.

RBI's Proposed Guidelines

- It reinforces the functioning of State Level Bankers' Committees (SLBCs) and Lead District Manager offices.
- A designated commercial bank will act as the Lead Bank in each district to coordinate credit institutions, government bodies, and stakeholders to improve priority sector lending and financial inclusion.

- SLBC Convenor Banks will oversee banking activities at the state level and address operational lending issues with state governments.
- The scheme will operate through a three-tier structure—Block Level Banker's Committee (BLBC) at block level, District Consultative Committee (DCC) and District Level Review Committee (DLRC) at district level, and SLBC/UTLBC at the state/UT level.
- Banks are also required to monitor and aim for a 60% Credit-Deposit ratio in rural and semi-urban branches nationwide.

Source: TH

