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NITI AAYOG RELEASES REPORT ON APPRENTICESHIP IN INDIA

Context

- NITI Aayog launched a policy report titled “Revitalizing Apprenticeship Ecosystem: Insights, Challenges, Recommendations and Best Practices.”

About

- The report presents a comprehensive analysis of India’s apprenticeship landscape.
- It provides critical insights, identifies challenges, and outlines actionable

recommendations to strengthen the apprenticeship system as a cornerstone of India’s skilling and employment strategy.

Apprenticeship

- Apprenticeship training serves as a **critical conduit between formal education and employment**, enabling youth to acquire **job-relevant skills through structured, work-based learning**.
- Apprenticeships boost productivity and innovation for businesses by giving them access to a pool of talented people specifically matched to their requirements.

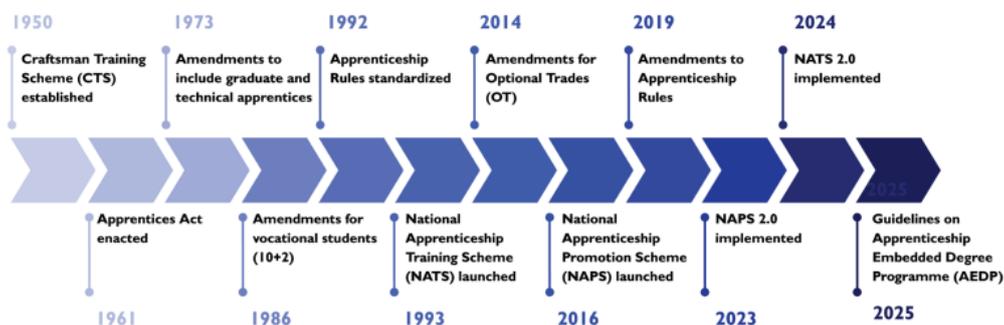
Fig 1.1. Apprenticeship Career Journey



Need for Apprenticeship

- The **youth aged 15–29 years** constituted **27.2%** of the population in **2021** and in absolute terms, India will continue to have a youth population of **approximately 345 million by 2036**, the largest in the world.
- To translate this youth bulge into a demographic dividend**, India must ensure that its young population is equipped with the necessary skills, education, and employment opportunities.
- At the heart of this transformation lies the **imperative to strengthen the skilling ecosystem**.

Figure 2.1: India's Apprenticeship Journey through 20th to 21st Century (1950-2025)



Current Landscape

- **Gap in Registration and Engagement:** In 2024-25, there were 1.31 million registrations for apprenticeships, but only 985,000 people engaged and 251,000 people actually completed their training.
- **Drop in Registration:** There is a marginal drop in registrations in recent years, and a need to continuously monitor drop-out rates between registration, engagement, and completion.
- **Contribution of Establishments:** While medium and large enterprises account for less than 30% of active establishments (AEs), they account for over 70% of total apprenticeship engagement. There is low participation by MSMEs, start-ups and informal sectors.
- **Gender Gap in Participation:** The male participants have a consistently higher share of both registrations and engagements over the years.
 - ♦ There is insufficient targeted support for women and marginalised groups.
- **Regional & Institutional Disparities:** Top 10 states account for 79–84% of engagement; North East and UTs contribute very little. Performance within states varies significantly across districts.

NITI Aayog Recommendations

- **Policy Reforms:** It recommends creating a National Apprenticeship Mission and a unified National Apprenticeship Portal to streamline governance.
 - ♦ It also calls for targeted incentives to promote apprenticeship engagement among aspirational districts, North East states, and women apprentices.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Establishing an Apprenticeship Engagement Index to benchmark and enhance apprenticeship efforts of States and Union Territories.
 - ♦ It also calls for robust evaluation of apprenticeship programmes and apprentice competencies.
- **State and District level interventions:** It calls for state- and district-level interventions, suggesting targeted support for “high-potential, yet low-performing special districts”.
 - ♦ Introduce recognition/reward initiative for top 25 districts based on apprenticeship growth metrics.
- **Participation by Establishments:** It seeks deeper participation by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) through cluster-based approaches, integration with the start-up ecosystem, and aligning apprenticeships with the gig and platform economy.

- **Stronger Support for Marginalised Section and Women :** It calls for stronger apprentice support including travel and accommodation assistance for marginalised candidates, expanded insurance coverage, structured career counselling, international mobility pathways, and specific measures to enhance women’s inclusion.

Initiatives

- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) 2016:** Launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, NAPS aims to provide on-the-job training to candidates between **14 and 35 years of age across sectors**.
 - ♦ NAPS incentivized employers to engage apprentices by sharing up to 25% of prescribed stipends (up to 1,500/month).
 - ♦ It also reimbursed basic training costs for designated trades, fostering greater participation in apprenticeship programmes.
- **National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS):** It is administered by the Ministry of Education, which focuses on graduate and diploma holders and offers six months to one year of structured on-the-job training.

Source: PIB

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

Context

- **International Mother Language Day** is observed on **February 21**, under the theme “**Youth voices on multilingual education**”.

About

- International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in **1999**, it was the initiative of **Bangladesh**.
- The UN General Assembly welcomed the **proclamation of the day in its resolution of 2002**.

India as a Multilingual Society

- **According to the 2011 Census**, India is home to more than **1,300 mother tongues and 121 constitutionally recognised languages**.
- Each year, UNESCO publishes the **State of the Education Report for India**, focusing on a specific theme.

- ♦ The 2025 edition, brought together global research, new national evidence and practical lessons to explore the state of Mother Tongue and Multilingual Education in India.
- **In 2022, in India, nearly 44% of children** enter school speaking a language that is different from the medium of instruction, according to the NCERT.
 - ♦ For these children, learning begins with the added burden of decoding an unfamiliar language before grasping academic concepts.
- ♦ It emphasizes that, as far as possible, children should be taught in their mother tongue or regional language in the early stages of education.
- **Article 350B – Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities:** To safeguard and promote the interests of linguistic minorities, including the protection and development of their language and culture.

Government Initiatives to Promote Education in Mother Tongue:

Significance of Education in Mother Tongue

- **Improved Comprehension and Learning:** When children are taught in their mother tongue, they can understand and retain information more effectively.
- **Cognitive Development:** Learning in a familiar language supports cognitive skills, including problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity.
- **Stronger Communication Skills:** Mother tongue education helps children develop strong language skills, which are crucial for both oral and written communication.
- **Cultural Identity and Preservation:** It strengthens children's connection to their community and identity, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.
- **Emotional Well-being:** It allows children to express themselves more freely and participate in social and academic activities.
- **Social Inclusivity:** It promotes equality by ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, can access education effectively.

Constitutional Provisions related to Promotion of Mother Tongue in India

- **Article 29 (1) – Protection of Interests of Minorities:** It ensures that any section of citizens, including linguistic minorities, have the right to conserve their language, script, and culture.
- **Section 29(f) of Chapter V under Right to Education Act, 2009** clearly states that, the medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue.
- **Article 30 (1) – Right of Minorities to Establish and Administer Educational Institutions:** It allows minorities, whether based on religion or language, the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- **Article 350A – Facilities for Instruction in Mother Tongue at the Primary Stage:** This article directs that the state shall provide facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary level of education.

- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** It provides, wherever possible, for medium of instruction to be in the home language/ mother tongue/ local language upto at least class 5 and preferably upto class 8.
 - ♦ It also provides for making available high quality text books in home language/ mother tongue and encouraging teachers to use a bilingual approach while teaching.
- **Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Pariyojana (BBPP):** Announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, this scheme aims to produce digital and printed textbooks in 22 Indian languages for school and higher education.
- **Under the Grants for Promotion of Indian Language (GPIL) scheme,** the Government provides grants for the promotion of **Hindi, Veda, Classical Tamil, Sindhi and Urdu respectively.**
- **There are separate organisations** for development and promotion of **Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi and Sanskrit languages.**
- **All India Council for Technical education (AICTE)** has issued guidelines permitting technical education institutions to offer their courses in local languages also. So far 19 institutions from 10 states have started offering such courses.
- **National initiatives:** PM eVIDYA, Adi Vaani (developed by a national consortium), BHASHINI (BHash-based ANd Intelligent Node for Inclusion in India) and AI4Bharat's community-developed language technologies show how digital platforms and artificial intelligence can help document endangered languages, and support teachers with multilingual resources.
- **DIKSHA Portal:** Course material including text books and teaching resources for Grades 1-12 are available on DIKSHA portal of the Government in 33 Indian languages and Indian Sign language.

Conclusion

- The emphasis on mother tongue education is not a new concept. Historically, several countries have adopted this approach to enhance the learning experience of young children.

- ♦ For instance, in the early 20th century, the Soviet Union implemented a policy of nativization that promoted education in the mother tongue of various ethnic groups.
- ♦ Similarly, in the 1950s, China introduced a policy to promote mother tongue education among its ethnic minorities.
- Embracing multilingualism is not merely an educational endeavour; it is a commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
- India's education system can foster a generation of individuals who are not only academically proficient but also culturally enriched and globally competent.

Source: TH

GOVT. ANNOUNCES 7 ADDITIONAL MEASURES UNDER EXPORT PROMOTION MISSION

Context

- The Ministry of Commerce introduced **seven additional interventions under the Export Promotion Mission**.
 - ♦ These are meant to **strengthen micro, medium and small enterprises (MSMEs) to compete in global markets**.

Export Promotion Mission

- **In the Union Budget for 2025-26**, the Finance Minister announced an Export Promotion Mission.
 - ♦ It would facilitate easy access to export credit, cross-border factoring support, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets.
- **Ministries:** Driven jointly by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the Ministry of Finance.
- **Under EPM, priority support** will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products.
- **The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** will act as the implementing agency, with all processes from application to disbursement.
 - ♦ It will be managed through a dedicated digital platform integrated with existing trade systems.

Major Components of EPM

Financial Support

- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE):** Provides 100% coverage by the

National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC).

- ♦ For additional credit facilities up to 20,000 crore to eligible exporters (including MSMEs).
- ♦ Enables collateral-free credit, improving liquidity and competitiveness.
- **Integration of Schemes:** Interest Equalisation Scheme (interest subvention for exporters).
 - ♦ Market Access Initiative (MAI) (support for trade fairs, market promotion).
 - ♦ Both merged under a digitally driven EPM framework.

Non-Financial Support

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

The Mission is expected to:

- Facilitate access to affordable trade finance for MSMEs.
- Enhance export readiness through compliance and certification support.
- Improve market access and visibility for Indian products.
- Boost exports from non-traditional districts and sectors.
- Generate employment across manufacturing, logistics, and allied services.

Source: TH

SUPREME COURT'S ETHICAL PUSH FOR SENSITIVE JUDICIARY

Context

- The Supreme Court of India has constituted an expert committee to develop guidelines that infuse **sensitivity and compassion in judicial functioning**, especially in cases involving sexual offences and vulnerable victims.

Background

- The issue arose from a **2025 order of the Allahabad High Court** that used explicit language while narrating sexual assault on a minor.
 - ♦ The High Court had diluted charges from attempt to rape to a lesser offence.
- Following a petition by civil society groups, the **Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance**.

- The Court set aside the High Court order and **restored the summons** issued by the Special Court.

Key Mandate of the Committee

- **Promote Compassionate Judicial Language:**
 - ♦ Frame guidelines on appropriate courtroom language in sensitive cases.
 - ♦ Emphasise dignity and privacy of survivors.
- **Address Cultural and Linguistic Issues:**
 - ♦ Identify offensive expressions in regional languages and dialects.
 - ♦ Clarify that casual use of such words may constitute legal offences.
 - ♦ Enable victims to narrate trauma without humiliation.
- **Accessibility of Judicial Guidance:**
 - ♦ Report to be written in simple, non-technical language.
 - ♦ Translation into regional languages to ensure wider understanding.

Role of Compassion in Judicial Functioning

- **Protecting Vulnerable Sections:** Cases involving women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities demand heightened sensitivity. Compassion enables judges to:
 - ♦ **Prevent intimidation or humiliation** of victims.
 - ♦ Ensure **meaningful participation** in the justice process.
- **Humane Courtroom Conduct:** Judicial behaviour, language, and tone shape public perception of justice. Compassionate conduct includes:
 - ♦ Polite and respectful communication.
 - ♦ Patience with distressed litigants or witnesses.
 - ♦ **Avoidance of stereotypes** and insensitive remarks.
- **Sentencing and Relief:** Compassion plays a critical role in determining appropriate punishment and remedies. It allows judges to consider:
 - ♦ **Circumstances of the offender and victim.**
 - ♦ Possibility of **reform and rehabilitation.**
 - ♦ Proportionality between crime and punishment.

Importance of Compassion for the Rule of Law

- **Enhancing Public Trust:** Citizens are more likely to respect and comply with judicial decisions when they perceive courts as humane and fair.
- **Improving Access to Justice:** Fear of humiliation or insensitivity discourages victims from approaching courts. Compassion reduces this barrier.

- **Preventing Miscarriage of Justice:** Insensitive attitudes can distort fact-finding and lead to unjust outcomes. Compassion ensures careful and attentive adjudication.
- **Strengthening Democratic Governance:** A compassionate judiciary reinforces constitutional values of equality, dignity, and justice.

Way Ahead

- The Supreme Court's initiative marks a significant step toward humanising the justice system.
- By emphasising empathy, dignity, and accessibility, it seeks to ensure that courts not only deliver legal justice but also uphold the emotional and psychological well-being of victims—an essential requirement for a fair and inclusive rule of law.

Source: TH

INDIA JOINS PAX SILICA, A US-LED TECH ALLIANCE

Context

- Recently, India has formally entered the **US-led Pax Silica coalition**, marking a significant moment in the geopolitics of semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and critical mineral supply chains.

About 'Pax Silica'

- Pax Silica (*launched in December, 2025*) is a coalition comprising the **United States, Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the UAE, the UK, and now India.**
- **Key Objectives:** Securing semiconductor supply chains, coordinating AI innovation standards, strengthening critical mineral processing networks, reducing dependence on non-aligned or adversarial states, and building a durable AI-driven economic order.

Do You Know?

- The term '*Pax Silica*' derived from Latin '*Pax*' (**peace**) and '*Silica*' (**a core compound in semiconductors**).
- It symbolizes the pursuit of **technological peace and prosperity** through **resilient, transparent, and cooperative supply chains.**

Strategic Importance of Pax Silica for India

- **Supply Chain Security:** Membership diversifies India's access to critical minerals like lithium and rare earth elements from partners such as Australia, countering China's dominance in processing and exports.

- **Investment and Manufacturing Boost:** India gains opportunities for billions in joint investments in semiconductor fabrication, AI infrastructure, and data centers, accelerating the India Semiconductor Mission.
- **Geopolitical Alignment:** Pax Silica strengthens India-US ties under the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, positioning India among trusted democracies for standard-setting in tech.
- **Alliance-Based Industrial Policy:** It hedges against supply disruptions and political pressures, enhancing India's strategic autonomy in defense, energy transition, and frontier technologies.

Concerns Over India Joining Pax Silica

- **Strategic Autonomy Risks:** Closer alignment with US technology policy may limit India's independent foreign policy flexibility.
- **Strain on China Relations:** Given China's dominance in electronics components and critical minerals, deeper participation in a US-led tech bloc could trigger trade or supply disruptions.
- **Export Control Pressures:** India may face expectations to align with US semiconductor and AI export controls, potentially affecting trade with other partners.
- **Critical Mineral Dependence:** India still relies heavily on imported rare earths and lithium, which could constrain semiconductor ambitions.
- **AI Governance Questions:** Harmonizing 'trusted AI' standards with domestic data and regulatory frameworks could create policy tensions.

Source: TH

MARITIME SECURITY OF INDIA

In News

- Recently, the Defence Minister called on the global maritime community to cooperate in addressing evolving and complex challenges at sea while inaugurating Exercise MILAN 2026 in Visakhapatnam, emphasizing mutual trust, shared responsibility, and adherence to international law.

Maritime Security of India

- Maritime security involves protecting the nation's sovereignty from threats arising from the oceans and seas.
- It includes protecting coastal areas, safeguarding the available ocean resources such as fish, offshore oil and gas wells, port facilities, etc.
- It also means maintaining freedom at sea for movement of our ships and facilitating and protecting trade

Importance

- It is vital to India's economy and energy security, with most trade and energy supplies passing through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- India's coastline—including mainland, Andaman & Nicobar, and Lakshadweep—poses multiple security challenges such as piracy, smuggling, infiltration, and threats to ports and defense installations.
- Protecting the maritime domain is essential for security, safeguarding resources, and ensuring sustainable trade and economic growth.

Challenges and Issues

- **Geopolitical Rivalries:** Rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, especially with China's naval expansion, pose strategic challenges.
- **Maritime Terrorism & Piracy:** Threats from non-state actors, piracy in the Indian Ocean, and potential terror strikes on ports and offshore assets remain pressing concerns.
- **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Vulnerability of sea lanes to blockades or cyber-attacks can impact India's trade and energy security.
- **Illegal Activities :** Smuggling, cyber threats, human trafficking, and illegal fishing undermine maritime governance.
- **Climate Change & Natural Disasters:** Rising sea levels, cyclones, and environmental degradation threaten coastal infrastructure and livelihoods.

Indian Steps and Initiatives

- **India's MAHASAGAR vision** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) builds on the earlier SAGAR policy, reflecting a commitment to collaborative maritime security and prosperity.
- **Naval Modernization:** Expansion of the Indian Navy with aircraft carriers, submarines, and advanced surveillance systems.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Exercises like MILAN bring together navies from across the world to strengthen interoperability and collective security.
 - ◆ MILAN 2026, held at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, brought together naval chiefs and delegations from 74 countries, highlighting India's role as a trusted maritime partner.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** India has signed security and defence pacts with partners like the EU, enhancing cooperation in maritime security and counter-terrorism.
- **Sagarmala & Smart Ports:** Government initiatives to modernize ports, improve logistics, and integrate green technologies for sustainable maritime growth.

- **Coastal Security Measures:** Strengthening the Indian Coast Guard, coastal radar chains, and coordination with state marine police.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- India's maritime security goes beyond protecting its coastline, aiming to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific.
- Addressing challenges like piracy and geopolitical rivalries requires naval modernization, international cooperation, and sustainable development.
- A secure maritime domain is crucial for India's emergence as a major global economy and strategic power while balancing economic and ecological responsibilities.

Source :PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

SKILL ACQUISITION AND KNOWLEDGE AWARENESS FOR LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION (SANKALP) SCHEME

Context

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament criticised the government for implementation of the **Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) scheme**.
 - ♦ The panel was examining a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report that highlighted significant delays and shortfalls in both financial and physical progress under the scheme.

SANKALP Scheme

- It is a flagship programme of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.
- It was launched in **2018**, SANKALP was originally scheduled for completion by **2023 but was later extended to 2024**.
- It was designed to strengthen **short-term skill training** through better institutional frameworks, enhanced industry linkages, and targeted inclusion of marginalised communities.
- **Funding:** The scheme was slated to be financed through a World Bank loan of ₹3,300 crore, State leverage of ₹660 crore, and industry leverage of ₹495 crore.

Source: TH

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Context

- The Vice President of India, stated that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has moved from being a peripheral activity to becoming central to national progress, at the National CSR Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

What Is Corporate Social Responsibility?

- It is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.
- **Types of Corporate Social Responsibility:**
 - **Environmental responsibility:** Sustainability, climate action, waste management, and conservation.
 - **Ethical responsibility:** Fair business practices, transparency, and governance.
 - **Philanthropic responsibility:** Donations, education, healthcare, and community welfare.
 - **Economic responsibility:** Long-term value creation while supporting social objectives.

CSR Applicability in India

- The CSR in India is **statutory obligation** and is governed by **Section 135** of the **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - ♦ It encourages companies to spend **2%** of their average net profit in the previous three years on CSR activities.
- The provisions of CSR applies to every **company fulfilling** any of the following conditions in the preceding financial year:
 - ♦ Net worth of more than **Rs.500 crore**,
 - ♦ Turnover of more than **Rs.1000 crore**,
 - ♦ Net profit of more than **Rs.5 crore**.

Source: AIR

INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY ECONOMIC POWERS ACT (IEEPA)

In News

- The US Supreme Court ruled that President Trump lacked authority under the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) of 1977** to impose broad import tariffs, citing limits on presidential power over taxation and the "major questions" doctrine.

About

- Enacted in 1977, IEEPA empowers the President to address "unusual and extraordinary" foreign

threats to national security, foreign policy, or the economy after declaring a national emergency.

- It has been used historically for sanctions, asset freezes, and blocking transactions, but the Court held it does not extend to unilateral tariffs, which encroach on Congress's constitutional taxing authority.
- In response, the President invoked Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 to proclaim a new 10% temporary tariff on goods from all countries, effective immediately, as a balance-of-payments measure.

Source: TH

INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM (IONS)

In News

- India assumed the chairmanship of the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) from Thailand.**

About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- It is a **voluntary naval forum** launched by the **Indian Navy in 2008** to boost maritime cooperation among littoral states of the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**
- IONS promotes **mutual understanding** among navies through biennial conclaves of chiefs, working groups, and activities like workshops and exercises.
 - ◆ Key focus areas include maritime security (anti-piracy), Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), and capacity building to address regional threats collaboratively.
- It features a rotating chairmanship (India held it multiple times) and divides 25 member states into four sub-regions: South Asian (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Maldives), West Asian, Southeast Asian/Australian, and East African. Nine observers participate; no fixed headquarters exists.

Source: PIB

SMOOTH-COATED OTTERS

In News

- The Uttarakhand Forest Department recently confirmed the presence of **smooth-coated otters** in Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary, signaling a healthy freshwater ecosystem as these animals serve as key bio-indicators.

About Smooth-Coated Otters

- **Smooth-coated otters (Lutrogale perspicillata)** thrive only in pristine rivers and wetlands with abundant fish and minimal pollution.

- In India, the populations are mostly located in protected areas like **Corbett, Kaziranga, and southern reserves.**
- They are **classified as vulnerable by IUCN** and under Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- The species faces threats from habitat loss, pollution, and human-wildlife conflict.

Source: TH

BELA GRAM EMERGE AS FIRST NET-ZERO VILLAGE

In News

- Recently, Bela Gram has become India's first net-zero panchayat.

Do you know?

- **Net zero** means reducing carbon emissions to a minimal level that can be absorbed by nature or other removal methods, leaving no excess in the atmosphere.
- Achieving net zero requires a major transformation in production, consumption, and transportation.
- The energy sector, responsible for about three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions, is crucial; switching from coal, gas, and oil to renewable energy like wind and solar can significantly cut emissions and help combat climate change.

Bela Gram

- It is situated in the Bhandara district of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.
- It was recognized as **India's first net-zero panchayat during Mumbai Climate Week 2026** for its sustainable and carbon-neutral initiatives.
- The panchayat leadership plays a vital role in shaping localised climate action and combating climate change.
- It planted over 90,000 trees, transitioned from smoky chulhas to LPG.
- It installed solar panels, promoted waste segregation, and eliminated single-use plastics.
- It received the 2024 **Rashtriya Panchayat Puraskar.**

Other panchayat-led climate initiatives across India

- **Perinjanam, Kerala** – "Solar Gramam" project: 850 households became rooftop solar prosumers, reducing bills by 80% and lowering emissions.

- **Siyari, Jharkhand** – Water conservation, revived lakes, solar irrigation, streetlights, and plantation of thousands of fruit and shade trees using District Mineral Fund support.
- **Badakichab, Odisha** – Indigenous women mapped commons and planted over 16,000 trees on 10 hectares of unused land, restoring forests.
- **Garhi, Bihar** – Built 45 mud check dams, 90 boulder dams, and ponds to tackle water scarcity, flash floods, and soil erosion.
- **Kolar, Karnataka** – Revived lakes and groundwater, reduced chemical fertilizer use, and implemented climate-resilient agriculture practices.

Source :TH

RED SANDERS

Context

- The busy Tirupati pilgrimage route has made Red Sanders smuggling easier in southern Andhra Pradesh.

Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*)

- **Endemic Species:** Found only in three districts of southern Andhra Pradesh — Chittoor, Nellore, and YSR Kadapa.
- **Largest Reserve:** Located in the Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve, part of the Eastern Ghats, covering about 4,755 sq km.
- **Growth:** A slow-growing species that takes 25–40 years to reach maturity.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - ◆ Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
 - ◆ Included under CITES, which strictly regulates international trade.
 - ◆ Protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Do you know?

- Red Sanders gained global attention in the 1960s when Japanese instrument makers discovered its exceptional tonal quality for crafting the shamisen.

Source: DTE

