

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (SEBI) ON MARKET MANIPULATORS

### Context

- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** will enhance surveillance and enforcement on market manipulators and cyber fraudsters through technology and use Artificial Intelligence (AI).

### Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

- It is the **regulatory authority** for the securities and capital markets in India.
- It was established in **1988** and given statutory powers through the SEBI Act of **1992**.
- It falls under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Finance**.
- **Objective:**
  - ♦ Protect the interests of investors in securities.
  - ♦ Promote the development of the securities market.
  - ♦ Regulate the securities market in India.
- **Composition:** SEBI consists of:
  - ♦ A Chairperson (appointed by the Central Government).
  - ♦ Two members from the Ministry of Finance.
  - ♦ One member from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
  - ♦ Five other members (at least three whole-time members).

### Powers of SEBI

- **Quasi Judicial Powers:** In cases of fraud and unethical practices in the securities market, SEBI India can pass judgements.
  - ♦ The said power of SEBI facilitates transparency, accountability and fairness in the securities market.
- **Quasi Executive Powers:** SEBI can examine the Book of Accounts and other vital documents to identify or gather evidence against violations. If it finds one violating the regulations, the regulatory body can impose rules, pass judgements and take legal actions against violators.
- **Quasi Legislative Powers:** To protect the interest of investors, it has been entrusted with the power to formulate pertinent rules and regulations.
  - ♦ Such rules tend to encompass listing obligations, insider trading regulations and essential disclosure requirements.

### Challenges Faced by SEBI

- **Rising Market Complexity:** Growth of derivatives, algorithmic trading, high-frequency trading (HFT) and complex financial instruments.
  - ♦ Monitoring sophisticated market manipulation techniques has become more difficult.
- **Insider Trading & Market Manipulation:** Detecting insider trading through encrypted communications and offshore accounts is challenging.
- **Regulation of Digital & Emerging Assets:** There is an ambiguity over regulatory jurisdiction in areas like crypto-assets, fintech platforms, and digital investment advisory services.
- **Overburdened Enforcement Mechanism:** Large number of pending investigations and adjudication cases.
  - ♦ There is also delay in legal proceedings due to appeals in tribunals and courts.
- **Balancing Regulation and Market Growth:** Excessive regulation may discourage innovation and investment.
  - ♦ Under-regulation may expose investors to fraud and systemic risks.
- **Technological & Cybersecurity Risks:** Due to risk of cyberattacks on stock exchanges and intermediaries, there is a need for constant upgradation of surveillance systems.

### Steps Taken by SEBI

- **Strengthening Market Surveillance:** Introduction of Integrated Market Surveillance System (IMSS).
  - ♦ Use of AI and data analytics to detect insider trading and price manipulation.
  - ♦ Tightened norms for algorithmic and high-frequency trading (HFT).
  - ♦ Stricter penalties and settlement mechanisms.
- **Development of SEBI Check:** It is a tool within the UPI interface that identifies registered intermediaries for investors before they make a payment.
  - ♦ The tool is expected to rein in fraudulent brokers or traders who promise unreal gains to investors and dupe them.
- **Corporate Governance Reforms:** Implementation of recommendations of the Uday Kotak Committee (2017). It recommended reforms in board composition, independence, related party transactions, and auditing.

- **Regulation of Market Intermediaries:** Strict registration and compliance requirements for brokers, mutual funds, credit rating agencies.
- **Investor Protection Measures:** Establishment of Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF).
  - ♦ SCORES (SEBI Complaints Redress System) for online grievance redressal.
- **Cybersecurity & Technology Framework:** Cybersecurity guidelines for stock exchanges and intermediaries.
  - ♦ Mandatory system audits and business continuity plans (BCP).

#### Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 in Lok Sabha

- The Union Finance Minister introduced the Securities Markets Code Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha.
- **The Bill proposes to consolidate the;**
  - ♦ Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956,
  - ♦ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992, and
  - ♦ The Depositories Act, 1996.
- It endeavours to build a **principle-based legislative framework** to reduce the compliance burden, improve regulatory governance, and enhance the dynamism of technology-driven securities markets.
- The Bill aims to **strengthen investor protection** and improve the ease of doing business in the country's financial markets.
- By consolidating laws and rationalising penalties, it supports India's objective of becoming a globally competitive financial market.

Source: TH

## CONCERNS OVER SIXTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Context

- The Sixteenth Finance Commission presented its recommendations amid concerns over rising cess and the balance between efficiency and equity, raising questions about effective devolution and equalisation.

### What is the Finance Commission?

- The Finance Commission is a **constitutional body** constituted by the **President of India** under

**Article 280**, that recommends how tax revenues collected by the Central government should be distributed among the Centre and various States in the country.

- The Commission is **reconstituted every five years** and usually takes a couple of years to make its recommendations to the Centre.
- The Sixteenth Finance Commission was chaired by **Arvind Panagariya** and its recommendations cover the five-year award period from **2026–27 to 2030–31**.
  - ♦ The Centre is not legally bound to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.

### Tax Devolution

- The Finance Commission decides what proportion of the Centre's net tax revenue goes to the **States overall (vertical devolution)** and how this share for the States is distributed among various **States (horizontal devolution)**.
- **The horizontal devolution** of funds between States is usually decided based on a formula created by the Commission that takes into account a **State's population, fertility level, income level, geography**, etc.
  - The vertical devolution of funds, however, is not based on any such objective formula.
  - The Centre also aids States through **additional grants for certain schemes** that are jointly funded by the Centre and the States.

### Key Provisions of the Sixteenth Finance Commission

- **Vertical Devolution:**
  - ♦ The FC retained the States' share in the **divisible pool at 41%** which was adjusted following the reorganisation of **Jammu and Kashmir**.
  - ♦ The Commission suggested that the centre should **merge a substantial portion of cesses and surcharges into shareable taxes**. However, no firm recommendation was made to limit or phase out excessive cesses and surcharges.
  - ♦ The 16th FC has **discontinued the grants** recommended by the 15th FC which is **revenue deficit grants, sector-specific grants, and state-specific grants**
- **Horizontal Devolution:**
  - ♦ A new efficiency-based criterion was introduced. It measured contribution through

a **State's share in total all-State Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)**. To moderate extreme effects, the square root of GSDP was used instead of GSDP directly.

- ◆ The earlier criterion of **tax effort/fiscal discipline was dropped**.

### Concerns with the Sixteenth Finance Commission

- **On Cesses and Surcharges:** Cesses and surcharges are not part of the divisible pool. Their growing share reduces effective transfers to States.
  - ◆ The Commission did not strongly assert its constitutional role under **Articles 270 and 280** in addressing this issue.
- **Missed Opportunity on Equalisation:** Devolution formulae alone cannot capture cost and need differentials across India's diverse States.
  - ◆ **Article 275** allows for grants to **address specific needs** and **equalise public services**.
  - ◆ **The discontinuation of revenue gap and State-specific grants** reduces the equalisation function.

### Concluding remarks

- While the Sixteenth Finance Commission preserved the **41% vertical share** and introduced a contribution-based efficiency criterion, it narrowed the scope of grants and did not decisively address the growing use of cesses and surcharges.
- The shift from equalisation-oriented grants toward **formula-based and performance-linked transfers** has raised important questions about equity, fiscal balance, and the constitutional spirit of federalism.

Source: TH

## US-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

### Context

- Following the launch of **Operation Epic Fury (U.S.)** and **Operation Roaring Lion (Israel)**, the geopolitical landscape has shifted fundamentally with the confirmed death of **Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**.

### More About the News

- Iran retaliated with missile and drone attacks on **U.S. facilities in Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, and Jordan**.

- **Iran has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz** through threats and strikes on tankers, reducing shipping traffic by 70% and risking global oil supply disruptions.



### Background of the Current Escalation

- **Long-standing Hostility & Ideological Rivalry:** Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the U.S. and Iran have been locked in a "Cold War" posture. This relationship has been defined by severe economic sanctions, the labeling of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism.
- **Collapse of the Nuclear Deal (JCPOA):** The withdrawal of the U.S. from the 2015 Nuclear Deal in 2018 triggered a "maximum pressure" campaign. Iran responded by gradually breaching enrichment limits, leading the U.S. and Israel to view a nuclear-armed Iran as an imminent existential threat that could no longer be contained by diplomacy alone.
- **The "Gray Zone" and Proxy Warfare:** For years, the conflict was fought in the shadows via proxies. Iran's support for the "Axis of Resistance" ( Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis) expanded its influence across Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

### Global Implications

- **Energy Shock & Inflation:** Oil prices likely to surge beyond sustainable levels. Higher transportation and insurance premiums.
  - ◆ Risk of global stagflation (slow growth + high inflation).
- **Global Supply Chain Disruption:** Oil, LNG, fertilizers, petrochemicals affected. Shipping

rerouted via longer routes which led to increased freight costs.

- **China & Russia Factor:** China is the largest buyer of Iranian oil. Russia may benefit from high oil prices.

#### Impact on India

- **Energy Inflation:** As India imports 85% of its crude, the “war surcharge” on shipping and rising oil prices are putting immense pressure on the rupee.
- **Diaspora Safety:** With 8–9 million Indians in the Gulf, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has met to discuss potential large-scale evacuations as commercial flights to the region are being suspended.
- **Trade Disruptions:** Exports of agricultural goods and imports of essential fertilizers are currently at risk due to maritime insecurity.
- **Strategic Connectivity:** Chabahar Port (Iran) for Central Asia access; I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA grouping); IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor); Gulf partnerships (UAE, Saudi Arabia), and Israel relations.

#### Way Forward for India

- Diversify energy sources (Africa, Latin America).
- Strengthen Strategic Petroleum Reserves.
- Diplomatic engagement with all factions in Iran.
- Enhance maritime security in Arabian Sea.
- Protect diaspora through contingency planning.
- Push for ceasefire through multilateral platforms (UN, SCO, BRICS).

#### About West Asia & Its Significance To Global Politics

- **West Asia (Middle East)** is a subregion of Asia that is bordered by Europe to the west, Central Asia to the north, South Asia to the east, and Africa and the Arabian sea to the south.
- The region of West Asia **roughly includes** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Iran, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

- It is strategically vital due to:
  - ♦ **Energy resources** (oil & gas reserves);
  - ♦ **Chokepoints:** Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Suez Canal;
  - ♦ **Religious significance** (Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina);
  - ♦ **Geo-strategic location** linking Asia, Africa, and Europe;
  - ♦ **Major external power involvement** (US, Russia, China);
- The region is **currently undergoing structural transformation** marked by power realignments, proxy wars, and strategic competition.

Source: IE

## STRENGTHENING ALLIED SECTOR AND MARKET ACCESS

#### Context

- India’s agricultural progress is **increasingly supported by the expansion of allied sectors** such as livestock, dairy, poultry, and fisheries.

#### Allied Sectors in India

- Within allied agricultural activities, livestock and fisheries have demonstrated relatively stable growth rates of **approximately 5-6 %**.
- **Between FY15 and FY24**, the sector’s Gross Value Added (GVA) increased by nearly 195%, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.77% at current prices.



- The dairy network encompasses:
  - ♦ 22 milk federations, 241 district unions, 28 marketing dairies,
  - ♦ 25 Milk Producer Organisations (MPOs), covering approximately 2.35 lakh villages and 1.72 crore farmer-members.
  - ♦ India is strengthening value addition through the planned expansion of milk processing capacity to 100 million litres per day by 2028–29.

### Significance of India's Allied Sector

- **Enhances Farmers' Income:** It provides supplementary and regular income unlike seasonal crop agriculture. It reduces dependence on monsoon-dependent crop production.
- **Major Contributor to Agricultural GVA:** Allied sectors contribute over 40% of Agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA).
  - ♦ The livestock sector alone contributes around 30% of agri-GVA, making it a high-growth segment.
- **Employment Generation:** Labour-intensive sectors like dairy, fisheries, and poultry generate large-scale rural employment.
- **Women Empowerment:** High participation of women in dairy, poultry, and small livestock rearing strengthens SHGs and rural entrepreneurship, especially under cooperative models like Amul.
- **Nutritional Security:** It provides protein-rich food (milk, eggs, fish, meat, honey) and supports food and nutrition security goals, addressing malnutrition.
- **Export Potential:** India is among the top producers of milk and fish globally. The marine exports contribute significantly to forex earnings.

### Concerns

- **Low Productivity:** Milk yield per animal in India remains lower than global averages.
  - ♦ Fisheries and livestock productivity suffer due to poor breed quality and limited scientific management.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Inadequate cold storage, processing, and transportation facilities.
- **Disease Outbreaks:** Frequent livestock diseases such as Lumpy Skin Disease and avian influenza coupled with weak veterinary infrastructure and limited insurance coverage increase farmers' vulnerability.

- **Credit & Insurance Constraints:** There is a limited access to institutional credit for small and marginal farmers.
- **Climate Change Impact:** Coastal fisheries are vulnerable to cyclones, sea-level rise, and ocean warming.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Overfishing and depletion of marine resources and methane emissions from livestock contribute to greenhouse gases.

### Government Initiatives

- **The National Livestock Mission** promotes livestock-based entrepreneurship, improves breed productivity, and boosts production of meat, eggs, milk, and fodder.
- **The Rashtriya Gokul Mission** focuses on conserving indigenous bovine breeds, enhancing milk productivity, and making dairying more remunerative for rural farmers.
- **The National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP)** focuses on controlling Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis through 100% vaccination of cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, and pigs.
- **The Union Budget 2026-27** allocated a record 2,761.80 crore to fisheries, reinforcing sustained investment initiated under the Blue Revolution.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** promotes fisheries development through infrastructure, modernization, and value chain strengthening to boost production, exports, jobs, and fishers' incomes.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)**, a sub-scheme of PMMSY, supports sector formalisation through insurance, credit, performance incentives, and traceability to improve income security and sustainability for fish farmers.
- **National beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM):** It is a Central Sector Scheme launched in 2020 under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan for overall promotion and development of **scientific beekeeping & to achieve the goal of "Sweet Revolution"**.
- **Mission-Driven Reservoir Development and Fisheries Value Chain Expansion:** India possesses one of the world's largest inland reservoir networks, spanning approximately 31.5 lakh hectares, which presents significant potential for expanding inland fisheries.

- Under Mission Amrit Sarovar, the Government of India has facilitated the development of 68,827 Amrit Sarovars, including 1,222 water bodies integrated with fisheries activities, thereby promoting fish culture, livelihood diversification, and the enhancement of aquatic ecosystems.

### Conclusion

- The agriculture and allied sectors are not just about food production, they are the **backbone of India's economic resilience, social equity, and ecological sustainability**.
- Strengthening these sectors is vital for **achieving SDGs, ensuring inclusive growth, and making India Atmanirbhar (self-reliant)**.

Source: PIB

## MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEMS

### Context

- The renewed hostilities between the United States-led coalition (including Israel and United Arab Emirates) and Iran have tested a newly integrated regional air and missile defence network in West Asia.

### What is a missile defence system?

- Missile defence refers to an integrated military system designed to **detect, track, intercept, and destroy** incoming missiles before they reach their intended targets, thereby protecting **civilian populations, military installations, and critical infrastructure**.
- Missile defence systems **rely on a network of satellites, radars, command centres, and interceptor missiles** that work together in real time to neutralise threats.
- Modern missile **defence architecture is layered**, meaning that multiple opportunities are created to intercept an incoming missile at different phases of its flight.

### How an Interceptor Works?

- An interceptor is a defensive missile that is launched to destroy an incoming threat, and its functioning involves several coordinated steps such as;
  - Detection:** Satellites detect the launch, and radars track the missile's speed, direction, altitude, and projected impact point.

- Decision:** Data is analysed at the command centre to assess the threat and decide whether to launch an interceptor.
- Launch and Guidance:** The interceptor is fired and guided midcourse using radar updates to align it with the target.
- Destruction:** The interceptor destroys the target either by exploding nearby (proximity fuse) or by direct high-speed collision (hit-to-kill).
- Assessment:** Radar confirms destruction, and additional interceptors are launched if required.

### India's Missile Defence Architecture

- Multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system under DRDO:
  - The Prithvi Air Defence (PAD)** interceptor is designed for exo-atmospheric interception to intercept incoming missiles at altitudes of **50 km to 180 km**.
  - The Advanced Air Defence (AAD) interceptor** is intended for endo-atmospheric interception during the terminal phase to neutralise threats within the Earth's atmosphere at altitudes up to **30 km**.
- Layered Air Defence Shield:
  - The S-400 Triumf** is a highly advanced, mobile, Russian-developed **surface-to-air missile (SAM)** system inducted by India to enhance **long-range** air defence capability.
  - Medium-Range (70–100 km):** The Barak-8 (MRSAM/LRSAM), co-developed with Israel, provides **360-degree protection** for both land and naval assets.
  - Short-Range (25–50 km):** The indigenous **Akash system** and Israel's **SPYDER** protect strategic points and mobile army units.
- Mission Sudarshan Chakra:** Announced as a comprehensive vision for 2035, Mission Sudarshan Chakra aims to create an all-encompassing, AI-enabled national shield.

### Key Air-Defence Systems of other countries

Country/Region	Key Systems
Russia	S-400 Triumph, S-300VM, S-350 Vityaz, S-500 Prometheus

USA	THAAD, Patriot (PAC-3 MSE), Golden Dome (in development)
Israel	Iron Dome, David's Sling, Iron Beam
China	HQ-9, HQ-22, HQ-16
European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)	Skyranger, IRIS-T SLM

### What are the challenges?

- Missile interceptors are **extremely expensive**, costing millions of dollars per unit, creating cost asymmetry when facing cheaper offensive missiles.
- Saturation attacks involving large numbers of missiles and drones can **overwhelm defence systems**.
- Hypersonic weapons with manoeuvrability and high speeds **reduce interception probability**.

### Way Ahead

- Missile defence systems have become **indispensable components of modern national security** architecture. Although no system guarantees complete protection, layered interception capability significantly enhances defensive resilience.
- For India, development of indigenous missile defence systems, integration of advanced sensors, and strengthening of domestic manufacturing capacity will be critical to ensuring long-term strategic security in an increasingly missile-centric security environment.

Source: TH

## INDIA'S TRANSFORMATION INTO A GLOBAL HEALTH POWERHOUSE

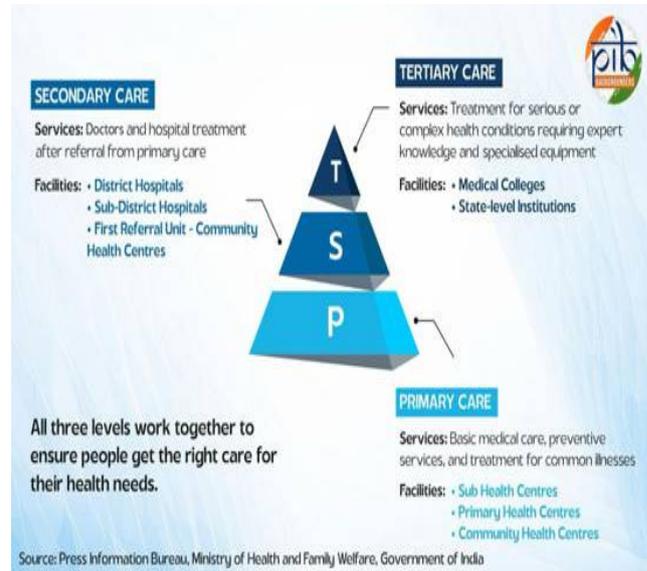
### In Context

- India is emerging as a global health leader through visionary governance, universal healthcare, and strong infrastructure, aiming for a prosperous Viksit Bharat by 2047.

### Present status of India's Health care

- India has emerged as a global health powerhouse through strong government leadership, expanding healthcare infrastructure, and a focus on universal health coverage.
- Flagship schemes provide public health insurance, free healthcare services, and subsidised

medicines, aiming to ensure affordable and quality healthcare for all, especially vulnerable populations, as part of the vision for a developed India by 2047.



- The country's **medical education system** has expanded significantly, while its pharmaceutical sector—third largest globally by volume—supplies affordable medicines worldwide, including COVID-19 vaccines.
- The rapidly growing **biopharmaceutical industry** is supported by public investment and private innovation.
- **Medical tourism** has also surged, rising from about 112,000 visitors in 2009 to over 600,000 in 2024.
  - ♦ To strengthen this sector, the Union Budget 2026–27 announced five integrated medical hubs with advanced diagnostics and rehabilitation services. Overall, India is increasingly positioned as a major contributor to global public health.

### Steps and Progress

- The **Ayushman Bharat (AB)** scheme is India's flagship initiative for universal health coverage, targeting socio-economically vulnerable populations. It integrates four key components:
  - ♦ **AB-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** – the world's largest public health insurance scheme, providing up to 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary care, covering over 120 million people with more than 434 million Ayushman cards issued.
    - Budget 2026–27 allocates ₹9,500 crore (~\$1.05 billion USD) to expand coverage and improve services.

- ♦ **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs)** – upgraded sub-health and primary health centres providing preventive, promotive, and general healthcare close to communities.
    - There are 1,84,235 AAMs nationwide, including extensive coverage in tribal and aspirational districts.
    - Teleconsultations and wellness programs, including yoga, have reached millions, while screenings cover hypertension, diabetes, oral and breast cancers.
  - ♦ **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)** – strengthens health infrastructure from grassroots to district levels, including AAMs, block public health units, integrated district labs, and critical care hospital blocks.
    - It also develops real-time disease surveillance for pandemic preparedness, with Rs. 32,928.82 crore (~\$3.63 billion USD) approved for 2021–26.
  - ♦ **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** – a citizen-centric digital health ecosystem assigning unique health IDs (ABHA) to securely store medical records.
    - Over 863 million ABHAs have been created, enabling teleconsultations and last-mile healthcare access. Tele MANAS provides 24x7 mental health support across India in multiple languages.
  - **Drone-Based Medical Services:** Pilot projects under the i-DRONE initiative demonstrated the use of drones for delivering vaccines, TB and pathological samples, blood products, and other critical supplies, improving last-mile healthcare in remote and high-altitude regions.
  - **National Health Mission (NHM):** NHM, including the National Rural and Urban Health Missions, strengthens public health through disease prevention, maternal and child care, adolescent health, and communicable/non-communicable disease management.
  - **Key programs:** Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) provides free vaccines to ~26.7 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women annually.
    - ♦ **HPV Vaccination (2026):** Single-dose Gardasil-4 for 14-year-old girls, covering ~11.5 million girls to prevent cervical cancer.
    - ♦ **Mission Indradhanush:** Targets children and pregnant women who missed routine immunisations, reducing zero-dose children from 0.11% (2023) to 0.06% (2024).
  - **Achievements & Infrastructure:** COVID-19: 2.2 billion doses administered
    - ♦ Maternal Mortality Ratio: 83% decline since 1990
    - ♦ Under-5 Mortality Rate: 75% decline since 1990
    - ♦ TB incidence: Reduced from 237 to 195 per 100,000 (2015–2023)
    - ♦ Dialysis, sickle cell screening, measles-rubella immunisation, and tobacco control also show strong progress
  - **AI Integration (SAHI 2026):** AI supports healthcare delivery via triaging, predictive analytics in TB, diabetic eye screening, and electronic prescriptions, improving efficiency and proactive care.
  - **Affordable Medicines:** Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP): 17,990 outlets offering 2,000+ medicines at 50–90% lower prices, saving ~30,000 crore (~\$3.31B USD).
  - **AMRIT Pharmacies:** Focus on tertiary care medicines and surgical products; 255 outlets with plans to expand.
  - **Pharmaceutical & Biopharma Leadership:** India: 3rd largest pharma producer, supplying 20% of global generics and 70% of anti-retrovirals.
    - ♦ Biopharma SHAKTI & National Biopharma Mission boost domestic biologics, clinical trials, and innovation, e.g., first DNA COVID vaccine ZyCoV-D, MRI scanner, and biosimilars.
  - **Health Education Expansion:** 23 AIIMS institutes, 2,045 medical colleges (780 allopathy, 323 dental, 942 AYUSH)
    - ♦ MBBS seats increased 130% (51,348 to 118,190); postgraduate seats 138% (31,185 to ₹ 74,306).
- Challenges**
- Public health spending in India remains under 2 per cent of GDP, despite repeated commitments to raise allocations.
  - **Infrastructure Deficits and Workforce Shortages:** Healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas, remains inadequate with shortages of beds, medical equipment, and trained doctors, nurses, and paramedics.
  - Urban-rural healthcare gaps remain, with rural areas lacking professionals and high private costs increasing out-of-pocket expenses.

- Private sector dominance leads to high out-of-pocket expenditure.
- Rising NCDs like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are straining healthcare, highlighting the need for prevention and chronic care management.

### Conclusion

- India's healthcare has transformed through government initiatives, digital innovation, and public health programs, improving access and affordability.
- But challenges in funding, infrastructure, and equity remain, requiring continued investment to achieve universal, resilient healthcare.

Source :PIB

## PM INAUGURATES INDIA'S FIRST SEMICONDUCTOR PLANT

### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first semiconductor facility at Sanand in Gujarat.

### More About the News

- The semiconductor plant has been set up by **Micron Technology** (an American chipmaker) as an Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) facility, with an investment of 22,516 crore at Sanand, Gujarat.
- The facility will manufacture memory and storage products including: **DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory), NAND Flash memory, and SSD (Solid State Drive)** storage devices.
- India had approved **10 projects under the Semicon India programme**, and besides the Micron plant, three more would start production very soon, in Noida (Uttar Pradesh), Assam, Odisha and Punjab.

### Why Does It Matters for India?

- **Atmanirbhar Bharat Alignment:** This project directly tackles India's 100% import reliance on semiconductors (India heavy dependence on China, Taiwan, and South Korea). Hence, it fits self-reliance goals by building domestic capabilities, reducing import bills, and fostering innovation.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Shields against disruptions like US-China trade tensions or pandemics, localizing critical backend processes.

- **Strategic Sectors:** Powers defense (e.g., missiles, radars), telecom (5G/6G networks), AI computing, space tech (ISRO satellites), and digital economy (data centers, EVs).
- **Economic Boost:** Projected to create 5,000+ direct high-skill jobs (engineers, technicians) and 15,000+ indirect ones. Aims to help India grab 5-10% of the \$1 trillion global semiconductor market by 2030, drawing FDI and spurring exports.

Source: IE

## NEWS IN SHORT

### SRI GURU TEGH BAHADUR

#### In News

- The Prime Minister addressed the **350th Martyrdom Year (Shaheedi Samagam) of Guru Tegh Bahadur**, paying tribute to his sacrifice and highlighting India's legacy of bravery, harmony, and social unity.

#### Guru Tegh Bahadur

- He was born in 1621 in Amritsar to Guru Hargobind, the **sixth Sikh Guru**.
- Originally named Tyag Mal for his ascetic nature, he was trained in scriptures and martial arts.
- At age 13, his bravery in battle earned him the name **"Tegh Bahadur" (Brave of the Sword)**.
- He spent years in meditation at Bakala before being recognized as the **ninth Sikh Guru in 1664**, after being identified by the trader Makhan Shah.
- His son, Guru Gobind Singh, later honored him as one who gave his head but not his faith, cementing his legacy as "Hind di Chadar" — the protector of India's conscience and dharma

#### Contributions

- He founded **Chak Nanki (now Anandpur Sahib)** and travelled widely across North and East India, spreading spiritual teachings that emphasized fearlessness (nirbhau), equality, and devotion to one God.
- His message resonated widely during the reign of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, a period marked by religious tensions and forced conversions.
- When Kashmiri Brahmins sought his protection against persecution, Guru Tegh Bahadur stood

up for their religious freedom, challenging Mughal authority.

#### Death

- He was arrested in Delhi and, after refusing to convert to Islam, was publicly executed in 1675 at Chandni Chowk along with his companions.
- His martyrdom is remembered as a supreme sacrifice for religious liberty.

Source : [PIB](#)

## CONTROLLER GENERAL OF ACCOUNTS (CGA)

#### In News

- The Controller General of Accounts (CGA) launched the Government Bank Dashboard and the Government Bank Manual to strengthen the governance and efficiency of banks handling government transactions.

#### Controller General of Accounts of India (CGA)

- It is under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance
- It is the Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India and is responsible for establishing and maintaining a technically sound Management Accounting System.
- The CGA prepares monthly and annual analyses of government expenditure, revenues, borrowings, and key fiscal indicators.
- It submits the Annual Appropriation Accounts (Civil) and Union Finance Accounts to Parliament under Article 150 of the Constitution, along with an M.I.S Report titled 'Accounts at a Glance' is prepared and circulated to Hon'ble Members of Parliament.

Source : [PIB](#)

## CABINET COMMITTEE ON SECURITY (CCS)

#### Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the evolving situation in West Asia.

#### About Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)

- It is the apex decision-making body in India responsible for matters related to national security and defence.

- It is **chaired by the Prime Minister**, it typically includes **key ministers** such as the Home Minister, Defence Minister, Finance Minister, and External Affairs Minister.

- The **National Security Advisor (NSA)** acts as a secretary-level coordinator for issues within its purview.

#### Key Functions of the CCS

- **Defence and Security:** Addresses internal and external security challenges, including military strategies and intelligence operations.
- **Foreign Affairs:** Deals with diplomatic policies and international security collaborations.
- **Nuclear and Space Policy:** Oversees critical decisions related to nuclear energy and space exploration.
- **Major Appointments:** Approves high-level appointments in defence and intelligence agencies.

Source: [AIR](#)

## COCONUT PROMOTION SCHEME

#### Context

- The 2026-27 Union budget announced a 'Coconut Promotion Scheme'.

#### About

- **Aim:** Improving productivity by rejuvenating old, non-productive gardens with high yielding coconut varieties and establishing new plantations along the coast.
- **The Coconut Development Board (CDB)** is already implementing a similar scheme, which has helped rejuvenate old gardens and expanded cultivation into non-traditional areas, including in parts of Gujarat, Assam, and other non-peninsular regions.

#### Coconut Production

- India is the **world's largest producer and consumer of coconuts**.
- **Type of Plant:** Coconut is a perennial plantation crop and a **monocotyledonous palm** belonging to the family **Arecaceae**.
  - ◆ Coconut is native to the **Indo-Pacific region**, with its origin commonly traced to **Southeast Asia**.
- **Climatic Requirements:** Coconut requires a warm and humid tropical climate for optimal

growth. It grows best in regions with temperatures ranging between 25°C and 30°C and requires high and evenly distributed rainfall.

- **Soil Requirements:** Coconut thrives in **well-drained sandy loam, alluvial, laterite,** and coastal soils.
- **Distribution in India:** It predominantly grows in **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, and West Bengal.**
  - ♦ **India is the world's largest producer of coconuts,** supporting livelihoods of nearly **30 million** people, including around **10 million** farmers.

Source: TH

## BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMMEMORATES 25TH FOUNDATION DAY

### Context

- The **25th Foundation Day** of the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** was celebrated at the India Habitat Centre.

### About

- The Government of India has set up the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in 2002** under the provision of the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
- **Mission:** To assist in **developing policies and strategies** with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles with the primary objective of reducing **energy intensity of the Indian economy.**
- This will be achieved with **active participation of all stakeholders,** resulting in accelerated and sustained adoption of energy efficiency in all sectors.

### Major Programs & Initiatives

- **Standards & Labelling (S&L) Scheme:** Provides star-rating labels on appliances (e.g., refrigerators, ACs) to inform consumers about energy efficiency and savings potential.
- **Perform, Achieve & Trade (PAT):** A market-based mechanism under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) that incentivizes large energy-intensive industries to meet efficiency targets.
- **Energy Conservation Building Codes (ECBC):** Guidelines for efficient building design.

- **Assistance in Deploying Energy Efficient Technologies in Industries and Establishments (ADEETIE) Scheme:** Assists MSMEs in adopting energy-efficient technologies with technical and financial support.
- **National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA):** Annual recognition for exemplary energy efficiency achievements.

Source: PIB

## RICE FORTIFICATION SCHEME SUSPENDED

### In News

- The Government of India has decided to temporarily discontinue rice fortification under the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** and other welfare schemes after a review of its implementation.

### Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

- It was launched with the specific purpose of ameliorating the hardships faced by the poor and needy due to economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the country.
- It aims to distribute foodgrains free of cost to the households already identified and covered by the NFSA.

### Rice fortification

- It is a process of **adding micronutrients** like iron, folic acid and vitamin B12
- It is an effective, preventive and cost-efficient complementary strategy to address the nutrition problem within a short period.
- Several technologies—coating, dusting, and extrusion—are used to fortify rice with micronutrients, with extrusion considered the most suitable for India.
  - ♦ In the extrusion method, dry rice flour is mixed with micronutrient premix and water, then processed through a twin-screw extruder with heating zones to produce fortified rice kernels (FRKs) that closely resemble regular milled rice.
- Rice fortification is a cost-effective and culturally suitable way to address micronutrient deficiencies in countries like India, where rice is widely consumed. Costs depend on factors such as industry capacity, supply chains, regulations, and programme scale.

**Latest Suspension**

- A study conducted by IIT Kharagpur found that the shelf life and stability of Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) and Fortified Rice (FR) are significantly affected by factors such as moisture, temperature, storage conditions, humidity, and packaging.
- Prolonged storage (2–3 years), combined with handling practices, leads to micronutrient loss, reducing the intended nutritional benefits.

Source : [PIB](#)

