

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA'S MIGRATION GOVERNANCE NEEDS A WHOLE-OF-JOURNEY APPROACH

Context

- India's large-scale evacuation of its citizens from West Asia, highlights a deeper structural issue of migration governance which is reactive and crisis-driven, rather than continuous and comprehensive.

Significance of Migration for India

- **Economic Growth:** Migration plays a vital role in **efficient allocation of labour across regions and sectors.**
 - ♦ **Internal migration** supports industrialisation and urbanisation by supplying labour to construction, manufacturing, and services sectors.
- **External Sector Stability:** Indian migrants are among the largest contributors to global remittances.
 - ♦ **The Gulf Cooperation Council** contributes **37.9% of India's total remittance inflows** in **2023–24**, reflecting its importance for **Household incomes, State-level economies and National foreign exchange stability.**
- **Livelihood Diversification:** Migration provides employment opportunities when local labour markets are unable to absorb surplus labour.
 - ♦ It acts as a safety valve for unemployment and underemployment, particularly in agrarian regions.
- **Human Capital Formation:** Migration enables skill acquisition and exposure to new technologies and work practices. Returning migrants often bring back **enhanced skills and entrepreneurial experience.**
- **Diplomatic Importance:** The large Indian diaspora strengthens India's global presence and **soft power.**
 - ♦ **Migrants act as bridges for trade, investment, and cultural exchange** between India and other countries.

Key Challenges in Migration Governance

- **Crisis-Oriented Policy Approach:** The government's engagement with migration intensifies during emergencies such as conflicts or pandemics.
 - ♦ There is limited institutional focus on prevention, preparedness, and long-term welfare mechanisms.

- **Fragmented Institutional Architecture:** Migration governance is divided across multiple actors;
 - ♦ **The Ministry of External Affairs** handles emigration and diplomatic coordination.
 - ♦ **The Ministry of Labour and Employment** oversees worker welfare and recruitment regulation.
 - ♦ **State governments manage** skilling programmes and welfare schemes.
- **Incomplete Visibility of Migrants:** Migrants are **visible to different parts of the system** at different stages, but there is no integrated tracking or support mechanism.
 - ♦ This results in gaps in protection, especially during transitions between stages.
- **Data Deficiency:** India lacks **granular, real-time migration data**, particularly at the district level. This limits the state's ability to anticipate migration-related risks and deliver targeted welfare measures.
- **Hidden Vulnerabilities:** Migration systems often experience slow and cumulative stress, such as **rising cost of living, wage stagnation and tightening labour regulations abroad.**
 - ♦ These issues **do not immediately disrupt** production or remittance flows, but gradually increase worker precarity.

Policy Recommendations

- **Migration policy** must be designed to **cover the entire lifecycle of migration**, including origin, recruitment, transit, destination, and return.
- **Strengthen Migration Data Systems:** Develop a national migration database with district-level granularity. Use digital platforms to track migrant flows, skill profiles and employment status.
- **Reform Recruitment Systems:** Strengthen regulation of recruitment agencies to prevent exploitation, fraudulent practices and excessive fees.
- **Bilateral Labour Mobility Agreements:** India should deepen engagement with key destination regions such as the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to ensure standardised contracts, minimum wages and safe working conditions and social security and insurance coverage.

Concluding remarks

- India must move from a **reactive, crisis-driven approach to a proactive, continuous migration governance framework.**
- Recognising **migration as a connected and ongoing process**, rather than episodic movement, is essential.

- A whole-of-journey approach will **enhance worker welfare, strengthen economic resilience**, and ensure that **migration remains a driver of inclusive growth** rather than vulnerability.

Source: IE

HOW IS A CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL PASSED?

In News

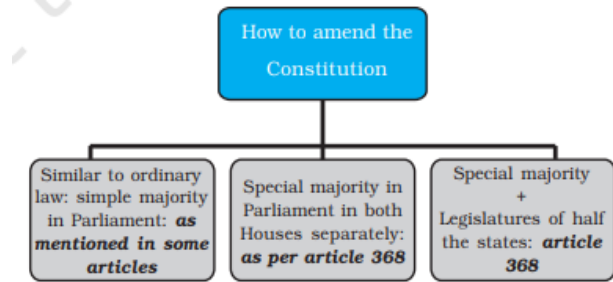
- The Lok Sabha is currently debating the **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026**, which proposes changes to increase the size and composition of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

About Constitution Amendment

- It is a legislative proposal introduced in Parliament to **modify, add, or repeal provisions of the Constitution of India**.
- Constitution Amendment Bill can be introduced in either House of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha).
- Only Parliament has the power to initiate (States cannot introduce such Bills).

Types of Constitutional Amendments

- The Constitution of India provides for **three types** of amendment procedures depending on the nature of the provision being amended:
 - ♦ **Simple Majority (Outside the scope of Article 368):** Amended by a simple majority of Parliament (more than 50% of members present and voting) — like ordinary legislation. **Example:** Changes related to creation of new states, boundary changes, etc. (e.g., Article 4).
 - ♦ **Special Majority (Main procedure under Article 368):** Most constitutional amendments require Majority of total membership of each House, and At least 2/3rd of members present and voting.
 - This is the most commonly used amendment route and forms the backbone of Article 368.
 - ♦ **Special Majority + State Ratification (Under Article 368):** Some important federal provisions require Special majority in Parliament and Approval by at least half of the State Legislatures.
 - These relate to the federal structure (e.g., powers of states, judiciary, representation).



Importance of Constitutional Amendments

- **Democratic Adaptation:** It keeps the Constitution relevant to changing socio-political realities.
- **Federal Balance:** It ensures representation aligns with population shifts (e.g., delimitation based on latest Census).
- **Social Justice:** It Enables reforms like reservation for women in legislatures.
- **National Integration:** It Facilitates initiatives such as “One Nation, One Election” for synchronized polls.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** It Provides mechanisms to expand Parliament and Assemblies to reflect India’s demographic growth.

Challenges in the Amendment Process

- **Political Consensus:** Sometimes Securing two-thirds majority is difficult in a fragmented polity.
- **Federal Sensitivities:** States may resist amendments perceived as centralizing power.
- **Risk of Overuse:** Frequent amendments could dilute constitutional stability.
- **Judicial Scrutiny:** Amendments must respect the basic structure doctrine upheld by the Supreme Court.
- **Population-Based Representation:** Delimitation may create regional imbalances, with populous states gaining more seats at the expense of smaller ones.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

- Constitutional amendments should be **guided by consensus building, where dialogue with the opposition and state governments** ensures broad-based support.
- The process should involve transparent deliberation through public consultations and meaningful parliamentary debate to strengthen legitimacy.
- At the same time, amendments must **safeguard federalism by promoting cooperative relations** between the Centre and states rather than weakening them.

- There should also be a provision for **periodic review of constitutional provisions** to keep pace with social and technological changes.
- The reforms must strike a balance between modernization of governance and the preservation of constitutional stability and core values.

Source :TH

URBAN CHALLENGE FUND (UCF): STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF ULBS

Context

- Recently, the **Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** launched the operational guidelines for the **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) programme** to strengthen the **financial capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)**.

About Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** with a **Central outlay of ₹1,00,000 crore (FY 2025–26 to 2030–31)**
 - ♦ It aims to catalyse nearly **₹4 lakh crore investment in the urban sector** over five years.
- It adopts a **'challenge-mode' competitive selection**, ensuring that only **transformative and bankable projects** are funded.
- A defining feature is its **innovative financing structure**:
 - ♦ **25% Central Assistance**
 - ♦ **Minimum 50% funding from market sources** (loans, bonds, PPPs)
 - ♦ Remaining **25% from States/ULBs or additional market borrowings**;
- It includes **creative redevelopment of cities; cities as growth hubs; water and sanitation**; and recognizes that **public finance alone is insufficient** to meet urban infrastructure needs and seeks to **crowd in private capital**.

Eligibility and Scope

- **All cities across India are eligible**
- Projects need to be **bankable and outcome-oriented**, aligned with UCF verticals, not already funded under schemes like **AMRUT 2.0 or SBM 2.0**.

Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme

- UCF includes a **₹5,000 crore Credit Repayment Guarantee Mechanism** to address the challenge of **limited access to finance for smaller cities**.

- It covers **cities with population <1 lakh and all cities in hilly & northeastern states**.
- It provides **70% guarantee (up to ₹7 crore)** for first-time loans and **50% guarantee (up to ₹7 crore)** for subsequent loans.
- It enables smaller ULBs to raise funds for projects of **₹20 crore (initial projects)**; and **₹28 crore (subsequent projects)**.

Encouraging Private Sector Participation

- UCF is explicitly designed to **crowd in private investment** by mandating **market-based financing**, encouraging **PPP-friendly project structuring**, supporting **project preparation (DPRs, financial modelling, advisory)**, and reducing risk through **credit guarantees**.
 - ♦ It transforms cities into **viable investment destinations**.

Key Challenges in Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)

- **Limited Financial Capacity of ULBs:** Many Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) lack **creditworthiness**, have weak **revenue bases and financial management systems**, and face difficulties in raising funds from capital markets.
- **Risk of Debt Burden and Fiscal Stress:** The shift toward **market-linked financing** introduces higher **borrowing and repayment obligations**, and exposure to **interest rate and revenue risks**.
 - ♦ If projects fail to generate expected returns, ULBs may face **debt stress**, affecting long-term fiscal sustainability.
- **Weak Project Preparation and Bankability Issues:** Many cities lack expertise in **DPR preparation, financial modelling, and PPP structuring**, and poorly designed projects may fail to attract investors.
- **Institutional and Governance Constraints:** Institutional inertia, fragmented responsibilities, and lack of skilled manpower can slow implementation of UCF.
- **Uneven Participation Across Cities:** Larger cities with better financial health and administrative capacity are more likely to succeed in **challenge-mode competition**
 - ♦ Smaller towns, despite support mechanisms, may be **left behind**, leading to regional disparities.
- **Challenges in Private Sector Participation:** Although UCF aims to crowd-in private investment:
 - ♦ Private players prefer **low-risk, high-return projects**
 - ♦ Urban projects (e.g., water, sanitation) often have **low commercial viability**

- ◆ Issues in **risk-sharing, regulatory clarity, and contract enforcement** may deter investors.
- **Implementation and Coordination Issues:** UCF involves multiple stakeholders like Centre, States/UTs, ULBs, financial institutions, private players.
 - ◆ It creates challenges in **inter-agency coordination**, timely approvals and clearances, monitoring and accountability.
- **Exclusion of Existing Scheme Projects:** Projects already funded under schemes like **AMRUT 2.0 and SBM 2.0 are not eligible**, which limits integration with ongoing urban initiatives, and may lead to **duplication or fragmentation of efforts**.
- **Capacity Constraints in Smaller and Special Category States:** Despite the **Credit Repayment Guarantee Scheme**, cities in **Hilly and Northeastern regions**, and smaller population centres still face geographic constraints, limited technical expertise, and lower economic base for revenue generation.

Conclusion

- The Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) is a **forward-looking reform in India's urban development strategy**, aligning infrastructure creation with **financial sustainability, governance reforms, and private participation**.
- If implemented effectively, it can **reshape Indian cities into engines of growth, innovation, and sustainability**, supporting the broader goal of **Viksit Bharat**.

Source: News On AIR

EU PLANNING TO INCLUDE 180 MORE PRODUCTS UNDER CBAM

Context

- The European Commission has proposed expanding the scope of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to include around 180 additional products from January 1, 2028.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- CBAM is the European Union's tool to put a fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.
- CBAM is one of the elements of the **EU Green Deal**, the goal of which is to reduce **GHG emissions by 55% by 2030**.
- CBAM is aimed at **equalizing the price of carbon paid for EU products** operating under the EU

Emissions Trading System (ETS) and imported goods.

- ◆ It refers to a phenomenon where a **EU manufacturer moves carbon-intensive production to countries outside the region with less stringent climate policies**. Its primary objective is to avert '**carbon leakage**'.

What are the Proposed Key Changes?

- The expanded list is expected to include **fabricated metal products, tubes, pipes, fasteners, machinery parts, aluminium containers**, and other semi-finished and finished goods.
- The proposal seeks to **extend CBAM beyond raw materials to cover products across the manufacturing value chain**.
- It also includes stricter carbon accounting rules, including emissions from pre-consumer scrap used in production.
- **Rationale Behind Expansion:**
 - ◆ The expansion aims to address the **risk of carbon leakage** in downstream sectors of manufacturing.
 - ◆ The expansion seeks to **prevent firms from shifting** emission-intensive stages of production to **countries with weaker climate regulations**.

Implications for India

- **Trade Competitiveness:** The expansion of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will affect India's exports worth **\$74.8 billion** to the European Union, reducing competitiveness in key sectors like steel and aluminium.
- **Macroeconomic Impact:** CBAM is projected to cause a **0.05% loss** in India's GDP, with carbon-intensive sectors forming **10%** of India's exports to the EU.
- **MSME Vulnerability:** MSMEs dominate sectors like **fabricated metals and engineering goods** but lack capacity for costly emissions monitoring and reporting systems, increasing risk of market exclusion.
- **Compliance Burden:** Exporters must invest in **carbon accounting, third-party verification, and supply-chain traceability**, which significantly raises transaction costs.
- **Trade Diversion:** Indian exporters may **shift away from the EU** to alternative markets, often with lower margins and demand stability.

Policy Recommendations for India

- **Targeted Support to MSMEs:** The government should provide **financial incentives, subsidies, and technical assistance** to MSMEs for

Emissions monitoring systems and Carbon reporting compliance.

- ♦ A dedicated **CBAM readiness fund** can prevent MSME exclusion from EU markets.
- **Accelerate Industrial Decarbonisation:** India should promote **low-carbon technologies** in hard-to-abate sectors like **steel, cement, and aluminium**. This includes scaling up Green hydrogen, Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF) and Renewable energy integration.
- **Domestic Carbon Pricing Framework:** India should establish a **credible carbon pricing mechanism (carbon market or tax)** to align with global standards and reduce the burden under the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Concluding remarks

- The expansion of the CBAM reflects a deeper shift in the global economic order, where **carbon efficiency** is emerging as a **new determinant of comparative advantage**.
- For India, this development is not merely a trade challenge but a **strategic inflection point** that demands alignment between industrial growth and climate responsibility.
- Ultimately, India's ability to transition from a **cost-driven to a carbon-efficient manufacturing economy** will determine its position in the evolving architecture of global trade.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

In News

- The Prime Minister paid tribute to former **PM Chandra Shekhar** on his birth anniversary, marking his **100th birth year**.

Chandra Shekhar (1927–2007)

- **Birth:** Chandra Shekhar was born on 17 April 1927 in Ibrahimhatti village, Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh, in a farmer's family.
- **Education:** He completed a Master's degree in Political Science from Allahabad University (1950–51).
- **Early political involvement:** He Joined the Socialist Movement during student life and worked closely with Acharya Narendra Dev.
 - ♦ He held key positions in the Praja Socialist Party at district and state levels in Uttar Pradesh.

- **Rise in politics (1950s–60s):** He Became Secretary/General Secretary in the Uttar Pradesh Praja Socialist Party. Elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1962.
- **Shift to Congress:** He Joined the Indian National Congress in 1965 and became General Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party in 1967.
- **Political ideology & reputation:** He was Known as a "Young Turk" leader for strong ideology, integrity, and opposition to monopoly power and vested interests.
 - ♦ He supported the politics of social change over personality-based politics.
 - ♦ He was Influenced by and closely associated with Jayaprakash Narayan during the 1970s opposition movement.
- **Journalism & writing:** He Founded and edited Young Indian (1969), a weekly publication. Wrote Meri Jail Diary and Dynamics of Social Change.
- **Emergency period (1975–77):** He was Arrested under (Maintenance of Internal Security Act)MISA during the Emergency despite being in the ruling party; Young Indian was shut down during this time.
- **Social work initiatives:** He established around 15 Bharat Yatra Centres across India for training social and political workers.
 - ♦ He undertook a 4260 km walk from Kanyakumari to Rajghat (New Delhi) to connect with people and understand grassroots issues.
- **Parliamentary career:** Member of Parliament for most of the period from 1962 onward, except 1984–1989. In 1989, won elections from Ballia and Maharajganj (later vacated one seat).
 - ♦ Chandra Shekhar served as Prime Minister of India from 10 November 1990 to 21 June 1991.

Source :PIB

MARINE HEATWAVES

In Context

- Tropical cyclones passing over **marine heatwaves (MHWs)** cause 60% more billion-dollar disasters through rapid intensification, warns a new study.

What Are Marine Heatwaves?

- A Marine Heatwave (MHW) is a prolonged period of anomalously high ocean surface temperatures in a specific region. They are characterised by two key parameters:
 - ♦ Duration: Lasting anywhere from several days to several months.

- ♦ Intensity: Measured as a deviation from the long-term seasonal average, known as a temperature anomaly.

Key Drivers

- **Climate Change:** Oceans absorb 90%+ of excess atmospheric heat, raising baseline temperatures
- **Ocean Currents:** Warm water pools shift into cooler regions.
- **Atmospheric Systems:** High-pressure systems like the North Pacific High trap surface heat
- **El Niño:** Elevates Pacific sea surface temperatures, triggering the largest recorded MHWs.

Source: TH

MEMORY PRICE INFLATION (MEMFLATION)

In News

- Gartner's 2026 global semiconductor revenue forecast of \$1.3 trillion cited **memflation** as a key driver of the industry's third consecutive year of double-digit growth.

About Memflation

- Inflation refers to a general rise in the overall prices of goods and services in an economy over time.
- Memflation refers to a structural economic trend where prices of semiconductor memory rise rapidly and persistently over time.

Source :TH

AMAZON RAINFORESTS

Context

- A recent study shows that consecutive droughts in **2023–2024 pushed Amazon rainforest moisture** and biomass to their lowest levels in over three decades, indicating severe ecological stress.

About Amazon Rainforest

- The Amazon Rainforest lies within the **Amazon River Basin**.
- The Amazon River is the **world's largest river by discharge volume** and the second-longest river globally, after the Nile. It originates in the Peruvian Andes and drains into the Atlantic Ocean.
 - ♦ **Major Tributaries:** Rio Negro, Madeira, and Xingu
 - ♦ **Watershed Coverage:** Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia

- The forest **stretches across 9 countries**, with approximately 60% of its cover located in Brazil. The remaining forest is distributed across Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana.
- The Amazon is one of the richest biodiversity hotspots on Earth, hosting approximately 10% of all known wildlife species.

Source: TH

KERALA BOTANIST'S INNOVATION IN TACKLING INVASIVE SPECIES

Context

- N. Alim Yusuf, a botanist from Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences, has received the **World Wide Fund for Nature National Award** for developing an application to **detect invasive plant species in Kerala**.

About the Innovation

- The application, **Neophyte ID**, is an AI-powered mobile tool that enables users to identify invasive plant species by capturing images.
- It is built using the advanced machine learning model **YOLOv11**, which allows real-time object detection.
- The app can **identify nearly 100 invasive plant species** found in Kerala.
 - ♦ It is available in **Malayalam and English**, making it accessible to local communities.
 - ♦ It integrates **geospatial tracking** to map the **spread of invasive species**, aiding scientific research and policy intervention.

What are Invasive Species?

- Invasive alien species are **non-native plants or organisms** that spread rapidly and disrupt local ecosystems. They often outcompete native species, leading to **biodiversity loss and ecological imbalance**.
- The characteristics of invasive alien species are:
 - ♦ Rapid reproduction and growth,
 - ♦ High dispersal ability,
 - ♦ Phenotypic plasticity (ability to adapt physiologically to new conditions), and
 - ♦ Ability to survive on various food types and in a wide range of environmental conditions.
- **Example:** Senna spectabilis, Lantana camara, Eupatorium and Dolichandra unguis-cati.

Source: TH

SHAHTOOSH WOOL

Context

- A Delhi court has convicted a Jaipur-based art gallery owner for attempting to illegally export Shahtoosh shawls.

About

- Shahtoosh Wool is derived from the hair of the **Tibetan Antelope**, also known as **Chiru**. The animal is killed to obtain the wool.
- Trade in Shahtoosh is strictly prohibited in India and has also been banned globally.

Tibetan Antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*)

- The Chiru is a **medium-sized bovid** endemic to the high-altitude alpine steppes of the **Tibetan Plateau (3,250–5,500m)**.
- **Habitat:** They inhabit the arid, cold grasslands of Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang in China, with a small population in **Ladakh (Changthang belt), India**.
- **Appearance:** They have a pale fawn to a **reddish-brown coat** with a white belly. Males have black markings on their faces and legs, which are absent in females.
- **Conservation Status:** It is currently classified as **Near Threatened (NT)** on the IUCN Red List. It has been listed under
 - ♦ **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,**
 - ♦ Appendix I (prohibiting international trade) of **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) since 1975.**



Source: DD News

MYTHOS AI MODEL

Context

- Anthropic has announced Mythos, its most advanced AI model, so powerful at detecting cybersecurity vulnerabilities that it will not be released publicly.

About Mythos

- Developed by Anthropic, creators of the **Claude LLM family**.
- Builds on earlier models like **Opus**, which detected bugs missed by human reviewers.
- Focuses specifically on **cybersecurity and vulnerability detection**, beyond general coding tasks.
- Capable of identifying **previously undetected bugs in legacy software systems**.
- Access restricted to a **consortium of 40+ companies**.

Do you know?

- **Project Glasswing** is a defensive cybersecurity initiative by Anthropic, in partnership with Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco, aimed at identifying and patching vulnerabilities before malicious exploitation.

Source: TH

OPERATION NUMKHOR

Context

- Operation Numkhor, a nationwide crackdown on vehicle smuggling and forged registration rackets, is likely to be discussed in the upcoming Indo–Bhutan Joint Customs Group meeting.

About Operation Numkhor

- Launched by the **Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Kochi** in September 2025.
- Targets the **smuggling of premium second-hand vehicles via Bhutan** and the use of forged registration documents, allegedly involving Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) officials.
- Involves **state-wide raids and seizures** across multiple states.

Source: TH

