

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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HIGH-VALUE CROP DIVERSIFICATION IN INDIA

In Context

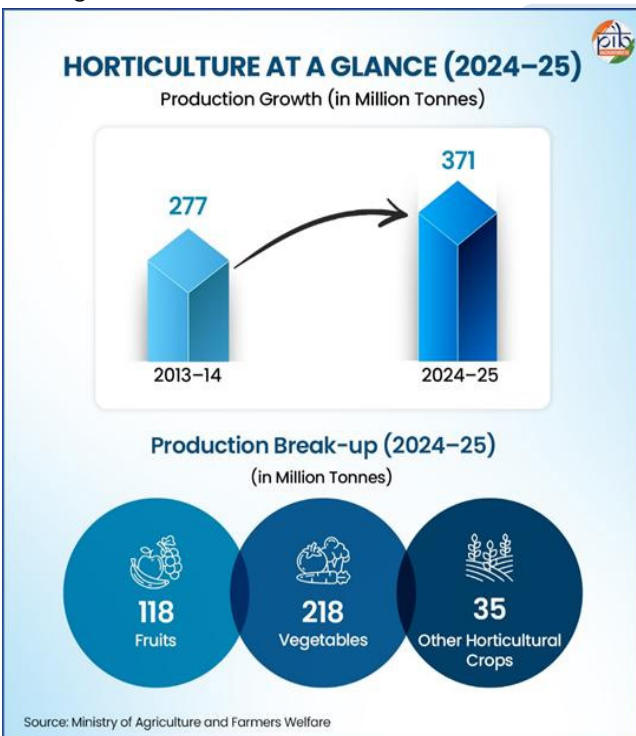
- Union Budget 2026-27 introduced a crop-specific, regionally differentiated strategy to accelerate **diversification into high-value crops** across India's coastal, North Eastern, and Himalayan regions.

What Are High-Value Crops (HVCs)?

- HVCs refer to **horticultural produce** like fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, and medicinal and aromatic plants that generate **significantly higher net returns per unit of land** compared to traditional staples like wheat and rice.

Horticulture as a Driver of Agricultural Growth in India

- The horticulture sector accounts for approximately **37 percent of the Gross Value Output (GVO)** within the agricultural crops sub-sector of Agriculture and Allied sectors.



- India ranks second worldwide** in the production of vegetables, fruits and potatoes. Fruits account for 9.18 percent and vegetables account for 8.18 percent of global production.
- India is the world's largest producer of onions and shallots** (dry excluding dehydrated), contributing close to 22.42 percent of global production.

Regionally Anchored Strategies for High-Value Crop Development

- Coastal Region (Coconut, Cashew, Cocoa, Sandalwood)**
 - Coconut:** India ranks 2nd globally, 22.44% of world production; supports 30 million people including 10 million farmers.



- Institutional support is given through the Coconut Development Board** — active across 22 states and UTs.

- Cashew (Gold Mine of Wasteland):** Introduced in India in the 16th century; thrives on degraded and wasteland soils.



- Cultivation across States such as Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala West Bengal and parts of the North Eastern region.

- ♦ **Cocoa:** Grown almost exclusively as an intercrop under coconut and arecanut utilising 40–50% sunlight penetration.



- The budget targets Indian Cocoa as a premium global brand by 2030.
- ♦ **Sandalwood (*Santalum album*):** *Santalum album*, commonly known as Indian sandalwood or chandan, is a highly valuable and culturally significant tree species in India.
 - Over 90% of India's resources are concentrated in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- **Hilly Region & North Eastern Region (Agarwood, Walnuts, Almonds, Chilgoza)**
 - ♦ **Agarwood:** India hosts 150 million agarwood trees (as of January 2026) — 90% in Northeast, primarily Tripura and Assam.
 - Also known internationally as Oud — used in traditional medicine, religious practices, and luxury perfumery
 - Tripura's agarwood market alone carries a potential annual turnover of ₹2,000 crore
 - Exports regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
 - ♦ **Walnuts, Almonds, Chilgoza:** India's hilly regions cultivate several nut crops suited to cooler climates and specific agro-ecological conditions, including walnuts, almonds, and pine nuts.
 - Among these, Walnut is the most important temperate nut crop in the country.
 - Jammu & Kashmir accounts for the majority of its cultivation, whereas Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur make only a minimal contribution in comparison.
 - Chilgoza pine grows in the inner arid valleys of the north-western Himalayas.



Benefits of Crop Diversification

- **Economic Benefits:**
 - ♦ **Higher farmer incomes:** HVCs generate 3–4x returns per unit land compared to cereals, directly addressing agrarian distress
 - ♦ **Export revenue:** Like Coconut (USD 513 mn), cashew (USD 369 mn), cocoa (USD 295 mn) collectively represent significant forex earnings
 - ♦ **Tribal and rural livelihoods:** Agarwood, Chilgoza, and nut crops create income streams in India's most economically marginalised regions.
- **Structural Benefits:**
 - ♦ **Reduces monoculture dependence:** Diversification away from rice-wheat belt reduces vulnerability to price shocks and procurement failures
 - ♦ **Agro-processing linkages:** HVCs feed downstream industries like coconut oil mills, cashew processing units, cocoa chocolate factories & creating multiplier employment effects.
 - ♦ **Intercropping efficiency:** Cocoa under coconut demonstrates that diversification can increase per-acre income without additional land.
- **Environmental Benefits:**
 - ♦ **Cashew on wastelands:** Transforms degraded land into productive assets while reducing soil erosion and supporting afforestation.
 - ♦ **Agroforestry integration:** Agarwood cultivation within existing forest systems preserves biodiversity while generating income.
- **Geopolitical and Strategic Benefits:**
 - ♦ **Northeast integration:** Agarwood development connects the region's tribal economy to global luxury markets, reducing economic alienation

- ♦ **Export brand building:** Indian Cashew, Indian Cocoa, Indian Sandalwood as premium brands strengthen India's position in global agricultural trade

- ♦ **5F Vision alignment:** Farm Fibre Factory Fashion Foreign — HVCs operationalise this framework most directly.

Challenges

Challenges in High-Value Crop Sector



Way Ahead

- **Cold chain scaling and public-private partnerships:** Particularly critical for Northeast and Himalayan produce
- **FPO-led aggregation:** Especially in coconut and cashew sectors to overcome fragmentation and strengthen market linkages.
- **Gaon to Global value chains:** Positioning rural youth in value-added processing.
- **Geospatial mapping:** Real-time yield monitoring and sustainable harvest planning
- **Building Brand India for HVCs:** Indian Cashew, Indian Cocoa, Indian Sandalwood as premium global brands by 2030.

Source: PIB

LEADERSHIP GAP AMID RISING FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Context

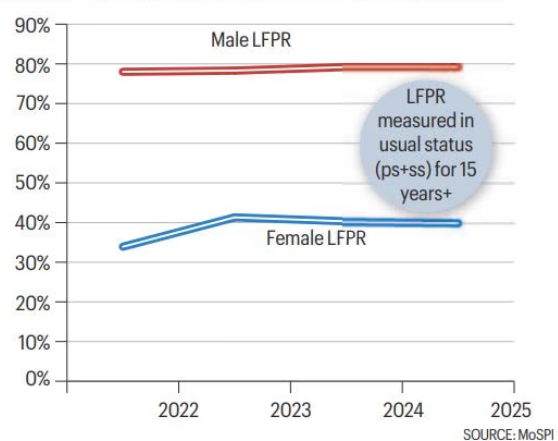
- Women's participation in India's economy has improved in recent years, but their representation in leadership roles remains severely limited.

Status of Female Labour Force Participation

- India's **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** increased from **33.9% in 2022** to about **40% in 2025**, indicating gradual improvement.

- However, this **level remains below the global average of 49%** and significantly behind emerging economies such as **Brazil (53%) and Vietnam (69%)**.
- The World Bank has highlighted that **sustaining nearly 8% annual growth** is essential for India to become a **developed economy by 2047**, which is unlikely without higher female workforce participation.

Female LFPR has risen to half that of men...



Economic Significance of Women's Participation

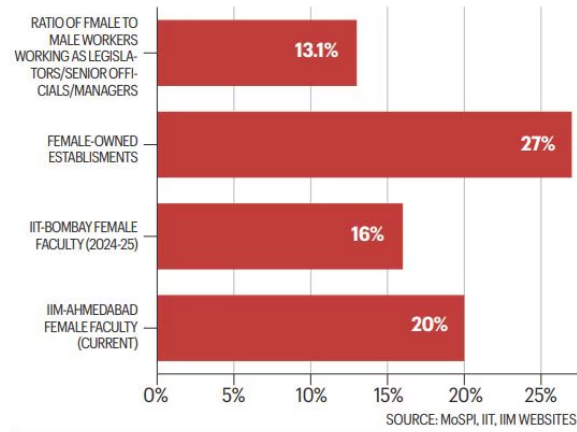
- Higher participation of women in the workforce leads to **greater labour supply, improved productivity, and inclusive growth**.
- Women's employment contributes to **better household welfare, improved child nutrition, and enhanced educational outcomes**.

- Empirical evidence suggests that constituencies represented by women legislators have experienced **higher economic growth by nearly 1.8 percentage points annually**, indicating the broader developmental impact of gender inclusion.

Underrepresentation in Leadership Positions

- **Academia:** At the national level, women in professor and equivalent positions have increased from 25.9% in 2011-12 to 29.5% in 2021-22, reflecting slow structural change.
 - ♦ In premier higher educational institutions female faculty constitute only about **14% in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)** and **19% to 31% in Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)**.
- **Corporate Sector:** The share of **female-owned proprietary establishments** stands at only **27%**, indicating limited entrepreneurial control.
 - ♦ According to labour force data, for every **100 men in senior roles, there are only 13 women**, highlighting a sharp leadership gap.
 - ♦ Women account for only **7% of board chairpersons in BSE 200 companies** and **5% in NSE 500 companies**, indicating limited influence in strategic decision-making.
- **Issue of tokenism:** The **mandate of appointing at least one woman director** on company boards often results in minimal compliance by firms, leading to **tokenistic inclusion rather than substantive participation**.
 - ♦ Women remain too few to influence decisions meaningfully, as effective participation requires a critical mass of around **30% representation**.
- The presence of a **glass ceiling** limits women's upward mobility, as invisible institutional and social barriers prevent them from reaching top leadership positions **despite adequate qualifications and experience**.

• But in positions of power, women lag behind



Steps Taken by Government

- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (2023):** Ensures 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Grassroots Representation:** Over 20 states have implemented 50% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), with nearly 14.5 lakh elected women representatives.
- **Financing Women-Led Businesses:** Schemes like **Stand-Up India** and **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana** (where **69%** of beneficiaries are women) promote female entrepreneurs.
- **Mentorship:** The **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)** by NITI Aayog supports networking and mentorship.
- **Gender budgeting** has expanded significantly, increasing to **₹4.49 lakh crore in 2025-26**, reflecting a **shift towards women-led development**, with greater focus on employment, employability, entrepreneurship, and welfare.

Key Challenges

- Structural barriers such as **gender bias in hiring and promotions** continue to persist.
- Women are **disproportionately concentrated in informal, low-paying, and insecure jobs**.
- **Inadequate childcare infrastructure**, safety concerns, and mobility constraints limit workforce participation.
- Weak enforcement of diversity norms and **delayed political reforms** further constrain progress.

Way Ahead

- The government should **focus on job creation in labour-intensive sectors** such as textiles, electronics, and food processing to absorb the growing female workforce.
- There is a need to **strengthen childcare infrastructure, maternity support, and flexible work arrangements** to enable sustained female workforce participation.
- Ensuring **equal pay, safe working conditions, and prevention of workplace harassment** is essential to improve retention and progression of women.

Source: [IE](#)

INDIA–SRI LANKA RELATIONS: INDIA'S VP'S VISIT

Context

- **India's Vice-President** announced a **policy shift** regarding the **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card**, alongside discussions on bilateral cooperation, economic assistance, and the fishermen issue during his visit to **Sri Lanka**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF VICE-PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO SRI LANKA

- **OCI Extension & Diaspora Engagement:** Eligibility extended up to the **6th generation** of Indian-origin Tamils.
 - ♦ **Diaspora as a 'Bridge':** It boosts **diaspora diplomacy** and cultural ties, enhances access to **education, employment, and mobility** in India.
- **Welfare & Socio-Economic Initiatives:** Increased support under **Ceylon Estate Workers' Education Trust**, aimed at improving **social mobility of Indian-origin Tamils**;
 - ♦ **145 houses handed over** under Phase III of Indian Housing Project.
- **Development Cooperation & MoUs:** Projects under **post-Cyclone Ditwah assistance programme**; and construction of **medical infrastructure (Mullaitheevu hospital)**.
 - ♦ India as a **'first responder' and development partner**; strengthening presence in **Sri Lanka's Eastern Province**.

- **Focus on Neighbourhood First Policy:** Sri Lanka acknowledged India's role in **economic crisis (2022)** support, and **disaster relief assistance**.
 - ♦ It enhances India's role as a **net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

India–Sri Lanka Relations

- **Historical Evolution:**
 - ♦ **Ancient & Medieval Period:** Shared **Buddhist heritage** (Ashoka's missions to Sri Lanka). Strong **cultural, linguistic, and trade linkages**.
 - ♦ **Colonial & Post-Independence Phase:** Migration of **Indian-origin Tamils** during British rule. Agreements like **Sirima–Shastri Pact (1964)** for citizenship issue resolution.
- **Post-1980s Phase: Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and India's involvement:**
 - ♦ **Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (1987)**
 - ♦ Deployment of **Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF)**
- **21st Century:** Shift towards **economic cooperation, connectivity, and development partnership**.
 - ♦ Increasing strategic importance in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

Present Status of Relations

- **Political Relations:** Frequent high-level visits and institutional dialogues.
- **Economic Ties:** Bilateral trade, about **USD 5.5 billion (2023–24)**; India is among Sri Lanka's **largest trading partners and investors**.
- **Development Cooperation:** India's assistance of more than **USD 7 billion (credit lines and grants)**
- **Connectivity:** Ferry services, air links, digital payments (UPI), energy connectivity.

Key Areas of Cooperation & Common Interests

- **Economic & Trade Cooperation:** Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA) operational since 2000.
 - ♦ Ongoing negotiations on **Economic & Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA)**.
- **Development Partnership:** Major projects like **60,000 houses** for Tamils; railways, hospitals, renewable energy, focusing on **people-centric development**.

- **Connectivity:** Maritime, air, digital, and energy connectivity; and proposed **power grid interconnection, and multi-product pipeline.**
- **Defence & Security:** Joint exercises ie **SLINEX (Navy), and Mitra Shakti (Army).**
 - ♦ Cooperation in maritime security, and counter-terrorism.
 - ♦ **Colombo Security Conclave** as a regional platform.
- **Cultural & Educational Ties:** Buddhist linkages and cultural exchanges; and scholarships, training (ITEC), and capacity building.
- **Maritime & Regional Interests:** Shared interest in **Indian Ocean security**, freedom of navigation, and disaster response

Related Concerns & Issues

- **Fishermen Dispute:** Frequent arrests due to **Palk Strait boundary issues**; and ecological concerns (bottom trawling).
- **Tamil Issue:** Political reconciliation and **13th Amendment implementation** remain sensitive.
- **Strategic Concerns:** Growing **Chinese presence in Sri Lanka** (e.g., Hambantota Port); and strategic competition in IOR.
- **Economic Vulnerabilities:** Sri Lanka's debt crisis impacts bilateral stability.
- **Trade Imbalance:** India enjoys **trade surplus**, raising concerns in Sri Lanka.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Economic Integration:** Early conclusion of **ETCA**, and promote **investment in infrastructure and energy.**
- **Resolving Fishermen Issue:** Shift to **deep-sea fishing**; and institutionalised bilateral mechanisms.
- **Enhancing Connectivity:** Fast-tracking of **energy grid links**, maritime & land connectivity projects.
- **Strategic Cooperation:** Expand **maritime security collaboration**, and strengthen **Colombo Security Conclave.**
- **Addressing Tamil Concerns:** Support **inclusive political reconciliation**, and continue development projects in Tamil-majority regions.
- **Countering External Influence:** Build **trust-based partnerships**, and offer sustainable alternatives to external investments.

Conclusion

- The recent visit by India's VP underscores India's **multi-dimensional engagement with Sri Lanka**, combining **diaspora outreach, economic assistance, and strategic diplomacy.**
- The OCI expansion is a notable step in strengthening **people-to-people ties**, while persistent issues like fisheries require **balanced and humane solutions.**

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card

- It is a form of **permanent residency status** granted to foreign citizens of Indian origin.
- It was introduced through an amendment to the **Citizenship Act, 1955 (in 2005)** as part of India's **diaspora engagement policy.**
- It was merged with Person of Indian Origin (PIO) in **2015.**

Eligibility Criteria

- A foreign national is eligible if they:
 - ♦ Were a **citizen of India on or after 26 January 1950**, or
 - ♦ Belonged to a territory that became part of India after independence, or
 - ♦ Are **children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren** of such persons.
- **Not Eligible:** Citizens of **Pakistan and Bangladesh** (or other notified countries).

Key Features

- **Lifelong visa** to visit India.
- **Multiple entry, multi-purpose travel** without restriction.
- Exemption from **registration with** Foreigners Regional Registration Office (**FRRO**).
- Parity with **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** in education, economic and financial fields
- OCI cardholders can purchase residential and commercial properties; and **cannot purchase agricultural land, plantation property.**
- OCI holders **do NOT enjoy** voting rights, the right to hold **constitutional/public offices**, employment in **government services**, and political rights.

Source: IE

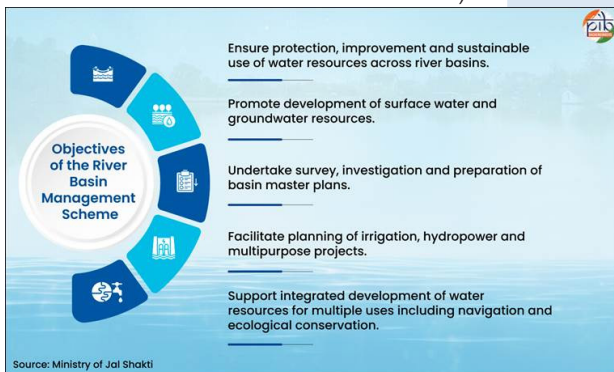
RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT SCHEME

In News

- The Government of India has approved the continuation of the **River Basin Management (RBM) Scheme** for the **16th Finance Commission** period spanning 2026–27 to 2030–31 with financial **outlay of ₹2,183 crore**.

What Is the River Basin Management Scheme?

- The RBM Scheme is a **Central Sector initiative under the Ministry of Jal Shakti** designed to shift **India's water governance from fragmented, project-level interventions to a holistic, basin-level approach**.
- Rather than treating rivers, tributaries, lakes, and groundwater in isolation, the scheme recognises an entire river basin as a **single interconnected hydrological unit**.
 - A river basin is the total land area drained by a river and all its tributaries, recognised as India's fundamental hydrological planning unit. Key components include the watershed (boundary separating basins), confluence (where rivers meet), and mouth (where the river drains into a sea or ocean).



Institutional Architecture

- The scheme operates through **three specialised bodies with distinct, non-overlapping mandates**:
 - Brahmaputra Board**: Dedicated exclusively to the North Eastern Region — handles river basin planning, flood control, erosion management, and drainage development for the Brahmaputra and Barak systems.
 - Central Water Commission (CWC)**: Conducts hydrological surveys and prepares Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for multipurpose water resource projects in remote and difficult terrains including J&K and Ladakh.

- National Water Development Agency (NWDA)**: Leads the Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) programme at the national level — preparing feasibility reports and DPRs for inter-basin water transfer projects.

Why Does This Scheme Matter?

- Cross-Border Water Diplomacy**: The Indus (shared with Pakistan) and Brahmaputra (shared with China and Bangladesh) are among the world's most geopolitically sensitive rivers. Real-time basin-level data provides India with data sovereignty and negotiating leverage in transboundary water treaties and disputes.
- Climate Resilience**: Erratic monsoons, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), and prolonged droughts are intensifying. Basin-level infrastructure rather than isolated project responses is the only framework capable of building systemic climate resilience.
- Inter-State Water Equity**: With 81% of India's geographical area falling under inter-state basins, coordinated basin-level governance is essential to prevent unilateral upstream actions and ensure equitable downstream water access.
- Hydropower and Irrigation Unlocking**: DPR preparation for Himalayan river projects opens significant untapped hydropower capacity and irrigation potential in the Northeast and J&K regions where energy and water deficits directly constrain economic growth.



Challenges

- Terrain and Logistics**: Projects in J&K, Ladakh, and the Northeast face extremely short working seasons typically four to six months combined with poor connectivity, inflating costs and delaying timelines substantially.

- **Inter-State Disputes:** The absence of a binding national water allocation framework means river water sharing generates persistent legal and political friction directly complicating Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) implementation and Detailed Project Report (DPR) approvals.
- **Real-Time Data Gaps:** Historically weak streamflow monitoring networks have led to inaccurate hydrological predictions including runoff deficits in years with adequate snowpack. Bridging this data gap is foundational to the scheme's success.
- **Ecological Trade-offs:** Large infrastructure like dams and barrages alters sediment flows, disrupts aquatic biodiversity, and affects downstream communities. Current project appraisal frameworks inadequately capture these cumulative ecological costs.
- **Cost Escalation:** Anti-erosion works in dynamic, laterally shifting rivers like the Brahmaputra regularly exceed initial budget estimates reflecting the inherent unpredictability of managing one of the world's most powerful river systems.

Way Ahead

- **Scaling LiDAR and drone surveys** across all priority basins will generate high-resolution digital elevation models.
- **NEHARI (North East Hydraulic and Allied Research Institute)** must be strengthened to build state-level technical capacity in the Northeast.
- Institutionalising mandatory environmental flow assessments within DPR appraisal protocols will help balance infrastructure development with ecological protection.
- **A national water framework law was long recommended** but not enacted that would resolve inter-state allocation disputes and provide a stable legal foundation for ILR implementation.

Source: PIB

GENE DRIVES TRANSFORMING MALARIA CONTROL

Context

- **Gene drive technology** is emerging as a novel approach to genetically modify mosquitoes to **prevent the transmission of Malaria**.

Global burden of Malaria

- According to the World malaria report, there were **282 million cases** of malaria in 2024, with an estimated number of malaria deaths standing at **610 000**.
- The **WHO African Region** is home to about **95% of all malaria cases** and deaths. **Children under 5 years of age** accounted for **about 76%** of all malaria deaths in the Region.

What are Gene Drives?

- A gene drive is a **genetic engineering technology** that **biases inheritance patterns**, ensuring that a **specific gene is passed** on to a disproportionately large share of offspring.
- It **operates using CRISPR-Cas9**, which enables precise modification and copying of genes during reproduction.
- Unlike normal inheritance where a gene has a 50% chance of transmission, gene drives can **ensure inheritance rates exceeding 90%**, allowing rapid spread through a population.

Tanzania 'Transmission Zero' Study

- Genetically modified mosquitoes significantly **inhibited parasite development** when fed on blood samples from infected individuals.
- In several cases, **parasites failed to reach the infectious stage**, thereby preventing transmission.

What are the Concerns?

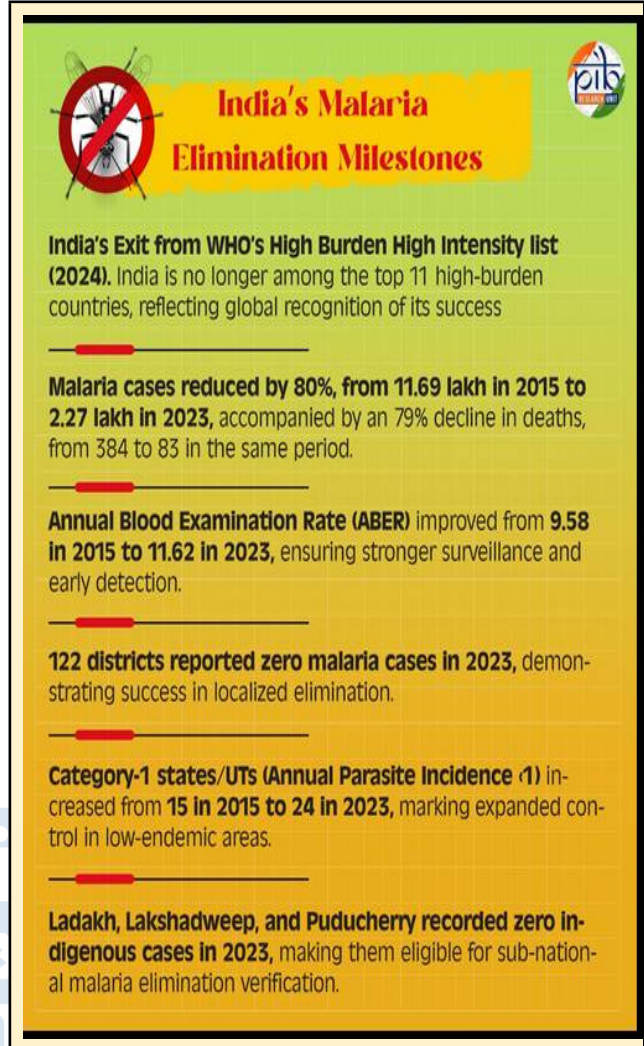
- **Scientific and Technical Challenges:** The genetic diversity of malaria parasites requires multi-targeted interventions to prevent resistance. There is a **possibility of evolutionary adaptation** in both mosquitoes and parasites.
- **Ecological Risks:** Altering or suppressing mosquito populations may have unintended **ecological consequences**, as mosquitoes play roles in **food chains and ecosystems**.
- **Regulatory and Governance Challenges:** Deployment requires robust biosafety frameworks, risk assessments, and global cooperation.

What is Malaria?

- **Malaria** is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by some types of mosquitoes. It is mostly found in tropical countries.
- **Transmission:** It is caused by **plasmodium protozoa**. The plasmodium parasites spread through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. Blood transfusion and contaminated needles may also transmit malaria.
- **Types of parasites:** There are 5 Plasmodium parasite species that cause malaria in humans and 2 of these species – **P. falciparum** and **P. vivax** – pose the greatest threat. The other malaria species which can infect humans are **P. malariae, P. ovale** and **P. knowlesi**.
 - ♦ **P. falciparum** is the **deadliest malaria parasite** and the most prevalent on the African continent. *P. vivax* is the dominant malaria parasite in most countries outside of sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Symptoms:** Fever and flu-like illness, including chills, headache, muscle ache and fatigue.
- **Vaccine:** Since 2021, WHO has recommended broad use of the **RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine** among children living in regions with moderate to **high P. falciparum malaria** transmission.
 - ♦ In 2023, WHO recommended a second malaria vaccine, **R21/Matrix-M**.

India's Commitment and National Goals

- India remains steadfast in its commitment to **eliminate malaria by 2030**, with the intermediate target of **zero indigenous cases by 2027**. The strategic roadmap for this mission is guided by:
 - ♦ **The National Framework for Malaria Elimination in India (2016–2030)** outlines the vision, goals, and targets for phased malaria elimination.
 - ♦ **The National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2023–2027)** builds upon earlier frameworks and aligns with the **WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030**.



India's Malaria Elimination Milestones

India's Exit from WHO's High Burden High Intensity list (2024). India is no longer among the top 11 high-burden countries, reflecting global recognition of its success

Malaria cases reduced by 80%, from 11.69 lakh in 2015 to 2.27 lakh in 2023, accompanied by an 79% decline in deaths, from 384 to 83 in the same period.

Annual Blood Examination Rate (ABER) improved from **9.58 in 2015 to 11.62 in 2023**, ensuring stronger surveillance and early detection.

122 districts reported zero malaria cases in 2023, demonstrating success in localized elimination.

Category-1 states/UTs (Annual Parasite Incidence ≤ 1) increased from **15 in 2015 to 24 in 2023**, marking expanded control in low-endemic areas.

Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry recorded zero indigenous cases in 2023, making them eligible for sub-national malaria elimination verification.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

VISHWA SUTRA

In News

- The Vishwa Sutra collection debuted at the **61st Femina Miss India** in Bhubaneswar.

About

- Vishwa Sutra is a designer handloom collection jointly developed by the **Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) under the Ministry of Textiles**, and the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).
- It pairs 30 state-specific Indian weaves with the cultural aesthetics of 30 nations positioning traditional handlooms within a modern, global design language.



Key Features

- **The 30-30 Framework:** Each of the 30 state winners at the Miss India pageant presented one state-specific weave inspired by a distinct country's design sensibility.
- **Kunbi Weave Highlight:** The 61st Femina Miss India winner wore the Kunbi weave, a Goa-origin weave symbolising family and seed reimagined as a Central European skirt silhouette.

Significance

- **5F Vision:** Directly operationalises the PM's framework — Farm Fibre Factory Fashion Foreign
- **Vocal for Local to Global:** Transforms traditional cottage-level weaving into an internationally competitive fashion proposition
- **Soft Power:** Uses textiles as a medium of cross-cultural diplomacy and storytelling on a global stage

Source: [PIB](#)

JAGADGURU BASAVESHWARA

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to **Jagadguru Basaveshwara on the occasion of Basava Jayanthi.**

About

- Basaveshwara, also known as **Basavanna**, was a **12th-century** philosopher, social reformer, and key figure of the **Bhakti movement**, primarily active in the **Kalyana region of present-day Karnataka.**
- He is regarded as the **founder of Lingayatism** and advocated equality, social justice, and the rejection of caste hierarchy and social discrimination.
 - ♦ Lingayats had been classified as a Hindu subcaste called "**Veerashaiva Lingayats**" and they are **considered to be Shaivites.**
- He served as a minister under **King Bijjala II** of the Kalachuri dynasty, and his teachings are preserved in poetic compositions known as **Vachanas.**
- Basaveshwara introduced the concept of **Ishtalinga**, promoting a direct and personal connection with the divine, transcending social divisions.
- He also established the **Anubhava Mantapa** (often referred to as the first Parliament of the world), a pioneering forum for open dialogue, where people from diverse backgrounds, including women, could participate in discussions on spiritual and social issues.

Source: [DDNews](#)

RELOS PACT

In News

- India and Russia have operationalised the **Indo-Russian Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS) Pact.**

About

- The agreement establishes **standardised procedures for dispatching and hosting military units** between the two countries during authorised activities.
- It defines the administrative, logistical, and operational arrangements required when forces of one country are temporarily present on the territory or within the airspace of the other.
- RELOS is **not a permanent basing agreement (remain in effect for 5 years and can be extended)**, it is a logistics support framework enabling reciprocal access to facilities during exercises, deployments, humanitarian missions, and disaster relief operations.

Source: [ET](#)

CABINET EXTENDS PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA-III (PMGSY-III)

Context

- The Union Cabinet has extended the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) beyond March 2025 till 2028–29, increasing the outlay by 3,727 crore to 83,977 crore.

About PMGSY

- The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is a 100% **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, under the **Ministry of Rural Development**, aimed at providing all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations in rural areas as part of a broader poverty reduction strategy.
- Launched in 2000**, the PMGSY has evolved through multiple phases:
 - PMGSY-I (2000)** focused on providing connectivity to unconnected habitations;
 - PMGSY-II (2013)** aimed at upgradation of existing rural roads;
 - After these two phases, another component of the PMGSY—Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA)—was launched in 2016 for constructing rural roads in the LWE areas;
 - PMGSY-III (2019)** focuses on consolidation of rural road networks;
 - and **PMGSY-IV (2024–25 to 2028–29)** aims to provide connectivity to about 25,000 newly eligible habitations due to population growth.

Significance

- The extension will help complete targeted rural road upgradation, **improving market access** for agricultural and non-farm products while reducing transportation costs.
- It will enhance access to education and healthcare services, particularly in remote areas, and contribute to inclusive growth by **bridging the rural–urban divide** in line with the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

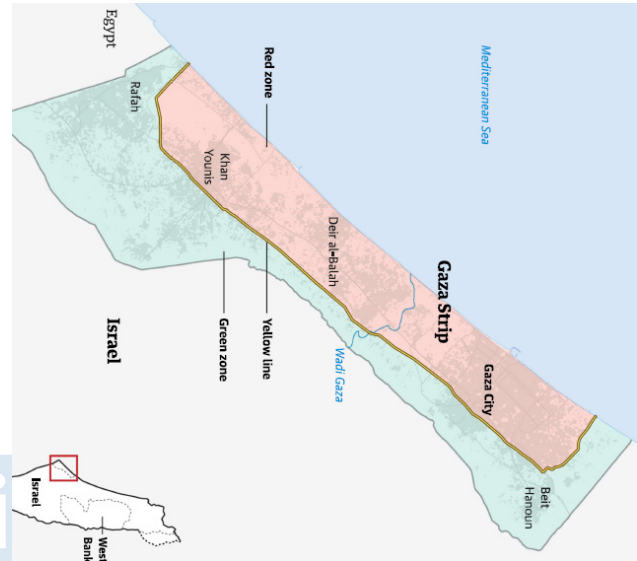
Source: [PIB](#)

ISRAEL'S 'YELLOW LINE' IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

Context

- Recently, Israel announced the establishment of a **'Yellow Line'** in southern Lebanon, shortly after a **10-day ceasefire agreement** between Israel and Lebanon.

What is the 'Yellow Line'?



- It is a **military demarcation line created by Israel** to separate areas of control in a conflict zone.
- It is a **temporary operational boundary** that marks the **limit of Israeli troop deployment**.
- A threshold beyond which movement is treated as a **potential security threat**.

Comparison with Gaza

- A similar line has been used in **Gaza since October 2023**.
- There, it effectively divided territory between **Israeli-controlled areas and Hamas-controlled zones**.
- Its use in Lebanon reflects **Israel's attempt to replicate a familiar operational strategy**.

Source: [HT](#)

BHARAT MARITIME INSURANCE POOL (BMI POOL)

Context

- The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of a **'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool)** with a **sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore** to strengthen India's maritime trade resilience.

About

- The BMI Pool is a **domestic insurance mechanism** providing comprehensive coverage across key segments such as hull and machinery, cargo, protection and indemnity (P&I), and war risk.
- It covers **Indian-flagged and Indian-controlled vessels**, including those operating in conflict-prone international waters, and extends protection to cargo movement between India and global ports.
- It is aligned with **Maritime India Vision 2030** and supports India's ambition of becoming a leading maritime nation by 2047.
- Similar state-backed frameworks exist in countries such as the **United Kingdom, Japan, and South Korea**.

Do you know?

- India's maritime sector handles over **70%** of the country's trade by volume and nearly **95%** by value, yet insurance coverage for this vast ecosystem has largely remained in foreign hands.
- This structural vulnerability became evident during recent disruptions in key shipping corridors such as the **Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman**, when several global insurers sharply increased premiums or withdrew coverage altogether, exposing Indian exporters and shipping operators to heightened financial risk and operational uncertainty.

Source: PIB**INDIA'S FIRST LARGE-SCALE PRIVATE GOLD MINING PROJECT****In News**

- The launch of India's first large-scale private gold mine at Jonnagiri, Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh, has brought renewed focus on India's gold reserves, production deficit, and the strategic importance of domestic mining.

About

- Gold is a **soft, dense, highly ductile, and corrosion-resistant precious** metal found in nature in its native form.

- Gold is **India's second-largest import after oil**, with nearly 1,000 tonnes imported annually to meet domestic demand.
- **Bihar dominates reserves** at ~43%, **followed by Rajasthan** (~25%) and Karnataka (~20%), while Kerala holds significant placer (alluvial) deposits along its rivers and coast.
- **Karnataka accounts for approximately 97% of India's total gold output**, primarily through the Hutti Gold Mines in Raichur.
- **China leads global gold production** with approximately 10% of world output, followed by Russia and Australia.
- Switzerland is the **world's largest gold importer**. **Switzerland dominates global gold exports as well**, refining approximately 70% of the world's gold.

Source: TOI**FARMER PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS****Context**

- Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) have emerged as a vital collective mechanism to empower small and marginal farmers, and in strengthening India's food security.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

- A Producer Organisation (PO) is a **legal entity formed by primary producers**, viz. farmers, milk producers, fishermen, weavers, rural artisans, craftsmen.
- APO can be a **producer company, a cooperative society or any other legal form** which provides for sharing of profits/benefits among the members.
- The **Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** plays a key role in promoting FPOs in India.
- Producer Organisation can be registered under any of the **following legal provisions**:
 - ♦ **Cooperative Societies Act/ Autonomous or Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act** of the respective State

- ◆ **Multi-State Cooperative Society Act, 2002**
- ◆ Producer Company under **Indian Companies Act, 1956**, as amended in 2013
- ◆ Section 25 Company of **Indian Companies Act, 1956**, as amended as Section 8 in 2013
- ◆ Societies registered under **Society Registration Act, 1860**
- ◆ Public Trusts registered under **Indian Trusts Act, 1882**
- Presence of **multiple intermediaries reduces farmers' share** in the final consumer price.
- **FPOs enable:**
 - ◆ **Aggregation of produce** and inputs, reducing costs.
 - ◆ **Improved market access** and price realisation.
 - ◆ **Stronger bargaining power** with buyers and suppliers.

Need for FPOs

- Small farmers **face low bargaining power and lack economies** of scale due to fragmented landholdings.

Source: [DTE](#)

