

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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GEOSPATIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND LAND GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

Context

- Recently, the **Department of Land Resources** emphasized that **geospatial information** has emerged as critical in **land governance**.

What is a Geospatial Ecosystem?

- It refers to the **network of technologies, institutions, policies, and stakeholders** involved in collecting, processing, and using spatial data.
- These systems enable **real-time mapping, monitoring, and governance of land and resources**.
- They combine **multiple geospatial technologies** such as satellite imagery and remote sensing, **Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), drones, and LiDAR** to generate accurate spatial data and insights.

Land Governance in India

- Land governance** refers to policies, institutions, and processes that determine ownership, use, and management of land resources.
- Key issues in land governance** in India are fragmented land records, land disputes (major share of civil litigation), urbanisation pressures, environmental degradation, and inefficient land-use planning.

Role of Geospatial Technologies in Land Governance

- Land Records Digitisation & Cadastral Mapping:** GIS enables **accurate boundary demarcation**; reduces disputes and improves land titling; and supports conclusive land ownership systems.
 - Example: SVAMITVA drone mapping.
- Land Use Planning & Urban Governance:** Helps in **zoning, smart city planning, and infrastructure development**; and enables **data-driven master plans**.
 - GIS integration improves urban governance efficiency and transparency.
- Natural Resource Management:** Monitoring forests, water bodies, and agriculture; and supports climate resilience and disaster management.
 - Geospatial inputs are crucial for **efficient land-use policies**.

- Disaster Management:** Real-time mapping for floods, cyclones, landslides; and improves response and mitigation strategies.
- E-Governance & Decision Support Systems:** GIS-based platforms enable **e-governance and public service delivery**; and facilitates **inter-departmental coordination**.
 - GIS acts as a core component of **government decision-support systems**.

Challenges in Geospatial Land Governance

- Institutional Fragmentation:** Multiple agencies managing spatial data; and lack of coordination among them, leading to governance issues in GIS infrastructure.
- Data Accessibility & Standardization:** Historical restrictions on spatial data sharing; and lack of interoperability.
- Capacity Constraints:** Shortage of skilled GIS professionals; and limited local-level adoption.
- Legal and Privacy Concerns:** Data security and misuse risks, and need for regulatory clarity.
- Socio-Political Dimensions:** Power asymmetry in land data control; and risk of exclusion of marginalized communities.

Important Initiatives of Geospatial Ecosystem in India

- Liberalised Geospatial Guidelines (2021 onwards):** Removal of restrictions on mapping and data generation; and private sector participation encouraged.
- National Geospatial Policy (2022):** It aims to develop a **self-reliant geospatial ecosystem**; and to promote innovation, startups, and data democratization.
- Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP):** Integration of textual and spatial land records; and GIS-based cadastral mapping.
- eLoc (National Digital Address System):** Unique 6-character digital address for every location, like Aadhaar for places.
- Other Schemes:** SVAMITVA Scheme & NAKSHA.

Way Forward

- Policy Measures:** Strengthen **National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)**; promote **open data ecosystems**; and enhance **centre-state coordination**.

- **Technological Steps:** Integration of **AI, GIS and Big Data**; and expansion of **drone mapping and real-time analytics**.
- **Governance Reforms:** Move towards **conclusive land titling**; and ensure **community participation and transparency**.
- **Capacity Building:** Training programs in geospatial technologies; and promote **startups and innovation ecosystems**.

Source: PIB

SC UPHOLD MANDATORY ADMISSIONS IN SCHOOLS UNDER RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT

Context

- The Supreme Court upheld the **mandatory admission of students under the Right to Education Act**, calling it a national mission.

Key Highlights of the Judgment

- The neighbourhood schools, including private unaided institutions, **are legally bound to admit students** allotted by the state government without delay.
- Denying admission to children from weaker and disadvantaged sections **violates their fundamental right to education under Article 21A** of the Constitution.
 - ♦ The court emphasised that **25% reservation for such students under the RTE Act** has the potential to transform the social structure of society and promote equality.
- The court also stated that once the state forwards the list of selected students, **schools have no option but to grant admission**.
- It warned that **any obstruction** would render the right to education an empty promise.

Right to Education Act

- **Evolution:** Education in the Indian constitution is a **concurrent issue** and both centre and states can legislate on the issue.
 - ♦ The Right to Education (RTE) was **originally a Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) under Article 45** before becoming a Fundamental Right.
 - ♦ It was moved from the **non-justiciable DPSP to Part III as a Fundamental Right (Article 21A)** via the **86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002**, making it an enforceable right.

- The **Right to Education Act (RTE)**, is an Act of the Parliament enacted in **2009**.
- India became **one of 135 countries** to make education a fundamental right of every child when the Act came into force in 2010.
- **Major Provisions:**
 - ♦ The Act makes education a **fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14** and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools.
 - ♦ All Government schools **shall provide free and compulsory education** to all children.
 - ♦ **Government aided schools** have to provide free and compulsory education proportionate to the funding received, subject to a minimum of 25%.
 - ♦ It requires all **private schools to reserve 25% of seats** to children (to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan).
 - Children are admitted into private schools based on **economic status or caste based reservations**.
 - ♦ The Act also provides that **no child shall be held back, expelled, or required to pass a board examination** until the completion of elementary education.
 - ♦ There is also a provision for **special training of school drop-outs** to bring them up to par with students of the same age.

Significance of the Judgement

- **Universal Access:** Ensures free and compulsory education for children (6–14 years) under Article 21A of the Constitution.
- **Social Equity:** Promotes inclusion through provisions like reservation for disadvantaged groups, reducing caste, gender, and economic inequalities.
- **Human Capital Development:** Builds an educated workforce, supporting economic growth and demographic dividend.
- **Empowerment:** Strengthens the vision of a Common School System under the Right to Education Act, as originally proposed by the Kothari Commission.
- **Nation-building & Global Goals:** Supports inclusive development and aligns with United Nations SDG-4 (Quality Education).

Source: AIR

HATE SPEECH STEMS FROM 'US VERSUS THEM' MINDSET: SC

Context

- The Supreme Court said that **hate speech and rumour-mongering** stemmed from an “**us versus them**” mindset and worked to corrupt a sense of fraternity in a diverse society.

About

- A series of petitions were filed seeking **separate laws for hate speech and crimes**.
- The court **declined to direct the enactment of specific laws** against hate speech and crimes, instead it called for effective enforcement of existing laws.
- The judgment said the court cannot enter into the exclusive legislative domain and **left it to the Union government and legislative authorities**.

What are Hate Crimes?

- Hate crimes** are any crimes that are **targeted at a person** because of **hostility or prejudice** towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity etc.
- In India, the term “hate crime”** is not separately defined in law, but such acts are punishable under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and now the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

Impact of Hate Crimes

- Social issues:** It deepens divisions between communities and disrupts long-standing social cohesion. Repeated hateful narratives escalate into mob violence, riots, and targeted attacks.
- Erosion of Constitutional Values:** It challenges the principles of equality, fraternity, and dignity enshrined in the Constitution.
 - It undermines secularism, a core pillar of India's constitutional morality.
- Fear and Marginalisation:** Communities subjected to repeated hate incidents experience fear, exclusion, and reduced access to opportunities, harming social harmony.

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 14 Equality Before Law:** Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws to all persons.
- Article 15 Prohibition of Discrimination:** Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

- Article 19(2)** of the Indian Constitution deals with the reasonable restrictions that can be placed on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a).
 - Conditions under which speech can be restricted by the state:** Security of the State, Public Order, Decency or Morality, Contempt of Court, Defamation, Incitement to Offense.
- Article 21 Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** Guarantees the right to live with dignity, safety, and security.
- Article 25 Freedom of Religion:** Ensures freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

Challenges in Addressing Hate speech

- Rapid Digital Amplification:** Social media platforms enable hate speech to spread rapidly and reach large audiences without fact-checking.
 - Encrypted messaging services complicate monitoring and evidence collection.
- Difficulty in Proving Intent:** Many hate speech offences require proving intent, which is hard to establish.
 - Establishing a direct link between speech and subsequent violence is legally complex.
- Absence of a Legal Definition:** India lacks a precise statutory definition of hate speech and crime, resulting in broad interpretation and inconsistent enforcement across states.

Steps taken to Address Hate Crimes

- Indian Penal Code (IPC) / Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023:** Specific sections like Section 153A, Section 295A, etc in penal codes criminalize promoting enmity between groups (religion, race, language), outraging religious feelings, or inciting public fear/disorder.
- Representation of the People Act, 1951 Sec. 123(3), 123(3A):** Prohibit political speech that promotes hatred or appeals to religion, caste, community during elections.
- The Supreme Court, in the case of Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India (2014),** acknowledged the lack of specific legislation on hate speech and recommended that the Parliament enact a comprehensive law to address this issue
- In the case of Amish Devgan v. Union of India (2020) the Supreme Court of India** addressed the balance between freedom of speech and expression (Article 19) and the need to restrict

hate speech to maintain public order and communal harmony.

Way Ahead

- India should adopt a clear and comprehensive legal definition of hate speech and crime to ensure uniform and objective enforcement, supported by stronger accountability mechanisms for digital platforms to swiftly remove harmful content.
- An independent oversight mechanism for online harms, combined with better data collection and research, can help design evidence-based interventions and strengthen India's commitment to equality, dignity, and social cohesion.

Source: TH

INSURANCE FOR ALL: EXPANDING COVERAGE, STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY

Context

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India** has set the vision of “**Insurance for All by 2047**”, aiming for comprehensive coverage across life, health, and property segments.

Insurance Sector Performance in India

- India has emerged as the **10th largest insurance market** globally with a share of **1.8%** in global premium volumes.
- **Insurance penetration** in India stands at **3.7%**, with life insurance contributing 2.7% and non-life insurance contributing 1%.
 - ♦ **Health insurance** has emerged as the leading segment within non-life insurance, contributing 41% of gross domestic premium.
- **Insurance density** has increased to **USD 97**, reflecting gradual expansion in coverage.



Key Terms

- **Insurance penetration** is defined as gross premiums written for direct life and non-life insurance business as a percentage of GDP.
- **Insurance density** is the ratio of premiums to population (per capita premium).
- **An insurance premium** is the amount paid by an individual or business to obtain an insurance policy.
 - ♦ **The premium varies** across policyholders, as it is determined by several influencing factors, such as **age, area of residence, nature of employment, medical ailment, income** and others.

Significance of Insurance in the Economy

- **Financial Continuity:** Insurance ensures financial stability by protecting households from income shocks and preventing distress sale of assets.
- **Support to Investment:** Insurance reduces uncertainty and provides risk mitigation, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship and business investments.
- **Capital Formation:** Insurance promotes long-term savings and contributes to capital formation, supporting economic growth.

Major Government Insurance Schemes

- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana:** The scheme provides life insurance cover of **₹2 lakh** at an affordable annual premium, ensuring financial protection to families in case of the death of the insured.
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana:** The scheme provides accidental death and disability coverage at a nominal premium, making it accessible to economically vulnerable sections.
- **Employees State Insurance Scheme:** The scheme provides comprehensive social security covering sickness, maternity, disability, and employment injury.
- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana:** The scheme provides comprehensive crop insurance **against natural risks**, ensuring income stability for farmers.

Policy and Regulatory Measures in Insurance Sector

- The **Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Act, 2025** has amended various provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and Insurance

Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999, to strengthen the insurance ecosystem.

- ◆ The amendment **raises the FDI limit** in Indian insurance companies from **74% to 100%**.
- **GST exemption** is granted on all individual life insurance policies and health insurance policies (including family floater) along with reinsurance **w.e.f. 22 September, 2025**.
 - ◆ The removal of the **18% GST** lowers premium costs and encourages wider adoption.
- **Shortening of Moratorium Period:** Moratorium period in health insurance is a fixed timeframe after which insurance companies cannot deny claims on the grounds of non-disclosure and misrepresentation, except on grounds of established fraud.
 - ◆ IRDAI reduced the moratorium period from **8 years to 60 months (5 years) in 2024**.
- **Standardized 30-day free-look period:** IRDAI introduced a standard **30-day free-look-period** for policies with a term of one year or more.
 - ◆ The free-look-period is the period given to a policyholder to assess and review the policy document.
- **Grace Period for delay in premium payment:** A grace period of **15 days** (where premium is paid on a monthly installments) and **30 days** (where premium is paid in quarterly/half yearly/annual installments) is available on the premium due date, to pay the premium.
- **Premium Refund on Mid-Term Cancellation:** In case of mid-term cancellation of the policy, insurers shall refund the premium or proportionate premium for the unexpired policy period.

Challenges Faced by the Insurance Sector

- **Low Penetration:** Insurance penetration remains low at **3.7%**, indicating inadequate coverage compared to the global average (7.3% in 2024).
- **Claims Settlement Issues:** Delays and **lack of transparency** in claim settlements reduce customer trust in insurance services.
- **Distribution Limitations:** Insurance distribution is **largely urban-centric**, limiting access in rural and remote areas.
- **Affordability Constraints:** High premiums make insurance products less accessible for low-income households.
- **Fraud and Mis-selling:** Fraudulent claims and mis-selling practices by intermediaries undermine consumer confidence.

- **Rising Costs:** Increasing medical and claim costs are raising premiums and affecting insurer profitability.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- IRDA was constituted in **1999** as an **autonomous body** after the recommendations of the **Malhotra Committee report** to regulate and develop the insurance industry.
 - ◆ It was incorporated as a **statutory body** on April 19, **2000**.
- The Authority has the power to frame regulations under **Section 114A of the Insurance Act, 1938**.
- **Objective:** The main objective of the IRDA is to protect the interests of the policyholder and regulate the insurance industry.
- IRDAI is under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India.
- It has framed regulations ranging from registration of companies for carrying on insurance business to protection of policyholders' interests.

Source: PIB

STRUCTURAL GAPS IN INDIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION

Context

- India's power grid has recently faced power shortages at night due to record electricity demand caused by early and intense heatwave conditions.

Recent Power Supply Disruptions in India

- **Mismatch Between Demand and Supply:** India recorded a peak electricity demand of around **256 GW**, with a shortfall exceeding **4 GW** during late-night hours.
- **Forced and Partial Outages:** Forced outages, caused by equipment failure, technical faults, or operational stress, increased sharply to around **21–26 GW**.
 - ◆ The **planned maintenance outages** remained limited to about **3 GW**.
- **Market Scenario:** Spot electricity prices in the Day Ahead Market surged to the regulatory cap of **₹10 per unit** during night hours.
 - ◆ Prices dropped sharply to around **₹1.5 per unit** during the daytime, indicating surplus solar power availability.

Why Is the Power Grid Under Stress at Night?

- **Sharp Decline in Solar Generation After Sunset:** India has developed nearly 150 GW of solar capacity, which significantly supports daytime electricity demand.
 - ♦ **Solar generation falls** to negligible levels **after sunset**, creating a sudden supply gap during evening and night hours.
 - ♦ This phenomenon leads to a steep transition in the supply curve, often referred to as the “**solar cliff**”.
- **Sustained High Demand During Night Hours:** Electricity demand remains elevated during night hours due to continued use of cooling appliances.
 - ♦ The persistence of heat during nighttime further prevents any meaningful decline in electricity demand.
- **Dependence on Thermal Power:** During non-solar hours the grid relies heavily on coal-based thermal power, and is expected to compensate for the absence of solar energy.
- **Limited Flexibility of Other Sources:** Hydropower and gas-based plants provide flexibility but are constrained by water availability and high fuel costs.
 - ♦ **Wind energy remains intermittent** and cannot be relied upon for consistent night-time supply.

Structural Gaps in India's Power Sector

- India's energy transition is creating a **mismatch between variable renewable supply** and **inflexible conventional backup**.
- The grid **lacks adequate energy storage systems** to store excess daytime solar power for night-time use.
- Thermal power plants face **operational stress** due to **ageing infrastructure** and climate-induced challenges.
- **Demand-side management remains limited**, especially in regulating peak residential consumption.

Government Initiatives to Improve Clean Energy Utilisation

- **Renewable Energy Hybrid Policy:** Encourages setting up of projects that combine solar and wind energy in the same location to increase capacity utilisation and reliability.
- **Green Energy Corridor (GEC):** Aims to strengthen the transmission infrastructure to

evacuate renewable energy efficiently from generation points to demand centres.

- **Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) Scheme:** Implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, the scheme promotes energy efficiency in energy-intensive industries, thereby reducing overall electricity demand.

Way Ahead

- India must **accelerate the deployment of battery energy storage systems** and pumped hydro storage to store surplus daytime solar power and ensure reliable supply during night hours.
- There is a need to **modernise and upgrade ageing thermal power plants** to improve efficiency, reduce forced outages, and enhance operational flexibility.
- Greater investment in grid flexibility, including **flexible generation, ancillary services, and real-time balancing mechanisms**, is essential to manage variability in renewable energy.
- **Strengthening forecasting capabilities and digital grid management systems** will help anticipate demand-supply gaps and improve system reliability.

Source: IE

PROJECT TO STRENGTHEN GRASSROOTS BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

In News

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the **National Biodiversity Authority** have launched a **five-year project to strengthen grassroots biodiversity governance** in **Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya**.

Grassroots biodiversity governance

- It is the decentralized management of biological resources by local communities and village institutions, based on the idea that local people are the most effective stewards of nature.
- The **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** requires decentralized governance through Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) at panchayat/municipal levels.

Project to strengthen Grassroots Biodiversity governance in India

- The project is a joint initiative of the Government of India, the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a grant of USD 4.88 million for the period 2025–2030.

- ♦ It follows a bottom-up governance model and supports national and global environmental commitments, including India's Biodiversity Strategy (NBSAP 2024–2030), the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (30x30 target)**, and climate goals under the Paris Agreement.
- ♦ It also promotes innovative financing through **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), CSR funds, and green micro-enterprises**, while building capacity for wider replication with special focus on women, Scheduled Castes, and tribal communities.
- **Coverage:** In Tamil Nadu, it will cover the Sathyamangalam landscape, including the Mudumalai and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserves.
 - ♦ In Meghalaya, it will be implemented across the Garo Hills region, covering the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, Balpakram National Park and Siju Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Objectives:** The initiative supports India's biodiversity and climate goals, including the National Biodiversity Strategy, the global 30x30 target, and the Paris Agreement
 - ♦ It focuses on empowering local communities by integrating biodiversity into Gram Panchayat planning, strengthening local institutions like Panchayats and Biodiversity Management Committees, and promoting community-led conservation through multi-stakeholder platforms and innovative financing.

Importance of Grassroots Biodiversity Governance

- **Community stewardship:** Grassroots Biodiversity Governance empowers local communities to conserve and sustainably use biological resources.
- **Livelihood security:** It supports traditional knowledge, agro-biodiversity, and ecosystem services vital for rural and tribal populations.
- **Climate resilience:** It enhances adaptation through mangrove restoration, watershed protection, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Global commitments:** It aligns with India's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and SDGs.

Challenges

- Many Biodiversity Management Committees lack trained staff and technical expertise.
- Limited financial support for local biodiversity projects.
- Poor integration between local bodies, state biodiversity boards, and national authorities.
- Communities are often unaware of their rights under Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) provisions.

Suggestions

- **Funding innovation:** Establish biodiversity funds at district/state levels; leverage CSR and green bonds.
- **Community incentives:** Recognize and reward local conservation champions; promote eco-tourism and sustainable enterprises.
- **Stronger coordination:** Ensure synergy between MoEFCC, State Biodiversity Boards, and Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Expand Mission LiFE-style outreach to highlight biodiversity's role in daily life.

Conclusion

- Grassroots biodiversity governance is both an environmental and democratic need, as it empowers local communities to protect India's natural heritage.
- While government efforts have built a foundation, continued investment in capacity building, awareness, and benefit-sharing is necessary.
- Strengthening Biodiversity Management Committees and linking biodiversity with local development planning will support India's climate goals, livelihoods, and global conservation commitments.

Source :Air

NEWS IN SHORT

LAWS ON RETURN OF ANTIQUITIES

In News

- U.S. authorities have returned 657 antiquities worth nearly \$14 million to India as part of ongoing investigations into international trafficking networks.

Do you know ?

- In 2024, India and the United States of America signed the first ever '**Cultural Property Agreement**' to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking of antiquities from India to the USA.
 - ♦ The Cultural Property Agreement (CPA) is aligned with the **1970 UNESCO Convention** on the means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to which both countries are States party.

What is Antiquity?

- The **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (enforced from April 1, 1976)** broadly defines "antiquities" as objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific significance, including coins, sculptures, paintings, inscriptions, and other items reflecting past civilizations, provided they are at least 100 years old.
- In the case of manuscripts, records, or other valuable documents of scientific, historical, literary, or aesthetic importance, the minimum age requirement is reduced to 75 years.

International Laws

- The UNESCO 1970 Convention defined cultural property as items of archaeological, historical, artistic, literary, or scientific importance designated by countries.
- It highlighted that illicit trade in such property harms the cultural heritage of source countries and stressed international cooperation as key to protecting it.

Claim Process for Returning Antiquities

- The UNESCO 1970 Convention requires countries to provide evidence (at their own cost) to prove ownership when claiming return of antiquities.
- In India, proving ownership is difficult because many stolen antiquities have no FIR, though scholarly research can sometimes serve as supporting evidence.
 - ♦ Older cases require bilateral negotiations or international forums
 - ♦ Later cases can be pursued more directly using proof of ownership and UNESCO mechanisms

Indian laws

- India's constitutional provisions assign responsibility for heritage across the **Union, State, and Concurrent Lists**.

- Before Independence, the **Antiquities (Export Control) Act of 1947** regulated the export of antiquities, followed by the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act in 1958**.
- Concerns over thefts of cultural objects, along with the influence of the UNESCO Convention, led to the enactment of the **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (implemented in 1976)**.
 - ♦ This law prohibits the export of antiquities without central government permission and requires anyone dealing in them to obtain a licence from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Source: TH**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME****Context**

- **The World Food Programme** is assisting to deliver food and nutrition to the people across South Sudan.

About

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance branch of the United Nations and the **world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and food insecurity**.
- It was established in **1961** by the UN General Assembly and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- WFP has a presence in **over 120 countries and territories**.
- It is **fully funded by voluntary donations**.
- **Major Functions:**
 - ♦ Provides food during conflicts, natural disasters, and pandemics.
 - ♦ Nutritional support to pregnant women, children, and vulnerable groups.
 - ♦ Tackles malnutrition and stunting.
 - ♦ Provides meals to children to boost attendance and learning outcomes.
- **It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2020** for efforts in combating hunger and preventing hunger from being used as a weapon of war.

- **Headquarters:** Rome

Source: UN

E-PRAAPTI PORTAL

In News

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is launching a new portal called **E-PRAAPTI** to help resolve long-pending issues of **unclaimed EPF deposits**.

About E-PRAAPTI Portal

- It is a dedicated digital platform to facilitate identification, tracking, Unique Account Number (UAN) linking, and **activation of old EPF accounts**.
- It will **use Aadhaar-based authentication** to allow users to securely **access old EPF accounts**, even those not linked to a UAN, and help them update details, link UANs, and activate accounts.
- In its initial phase, access will be **based on member IDs, benefiting users who still have those details**, and later it will be expanded to those who cannot recall their old IDs.
- It is designed to **reduce paperwork and manual intervention** while improving transparency and efficiency in handling dormant EPF accounts.

Significance

- The portal is important for **resolving about 31.83 lakh inoperative accounts**, many of which have remained **unused for over 20 years**.
- It mainly supports members **who retired after the age of 55 or whose accounts became inactive after three years** without contributions.
- With features like auto-mode processing and Aadhaar authentication, it strengthens EPFO's efforts, which already settled a record **8.31 crore claims in FY26**.

Source :TH

CHANGI NAVAL BASE

Context

- INS Sunayna has arrived at **Changi Naval Base in Singapore**.

About

- It marked **INS Sunayna's fourth port call** under the **vision of MAHASAGAR** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).
 - The ship, with a multinational crew from 16 Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs), is deployed to the Indian Ocean Region and has completed port calls at Malé, Phuket, and Jakarta.

- Changi Naval Base (CNB)** is a major naval installation of the Republic of Singapore Navy located at the **eastern tip of Singapore, near Changi Airport**.
- The base can accommodate large warships, including aircraft carriers and amphibious vessels.
- It is located **near the Strait of Malacca**, which is one of the busiest sea lanes in the world.
 - It enables Singapore to safeguard Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).



Source: PIB

DOPPLER WEATHER RADAR NETWORK

Context

- India has expanded its Doppler Weather Radar network since 2014, increasing from 14 operational units to 50, marking over 250 percent rise.

Doppler Weather Radar Network

- A **Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) network** is a system of multiple radar stations working together to monitor weather over a large area.
- Operated by the India **Meteorological Department (IMD)**, this network uses advanced **S-band, C-band, and X-band** radars to provide real-time, high-accuracy data, improving nowcast detection to **91%**.
- Applications:**
 - Weather Forecasting:** It tracks formation and movement of clouds and storms, helps predict rainfall, cyclones, and thunderstorms.

- ♦ **Early Warning Systems:** Detects severe weather events like Cyclones, Tornadoes and Lightning and cloudbursts.
- ♦ **Agriculture Support:** Provides agro-meteorological advisories to farmers.

How Does It Work?

- The Doppler Weather radar network is **based on the Doppler Effect**, discovered by **Christian Doppler**, which explains the change in frequency of waves due to motion.
- The radar emits **microwave signals** into the atmosphere. These signals bounce back (echo) after hitting objects like raindrops, clouds, or dust.
 - ♦ By analyzing the change in frequency of the returned signal the speed of particles and direction of movement is identified.
 - ♦ **The dual-polarisation radars** can accurately **distinguish between rain, hail, and drizzle**, improving rainfall estimation and reducing false alarms.

Source: AIR

UNDERGROUND COAL GASIFICATION (UCG)

In News

- The Ministry of Coal has signed **Coal Mine Development and Production Agreements (CMDPAs)** for four coal mines under the 14th commercial coal auction round, introducing **Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) provisions for the first time in India.**

Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)

- Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) is a new technology that converts coal into **synthetic gas** directly within the coal seam, without traditional mining.

- It allows use of deep, thin, or otherwise unmineable coal reserves, expanding India's usable energy resources.

Importance

- UCG supports cleaner and more efficient energy production alongside conventional coal extraction.
- The syngas can be used for producing fertilizers (like urea and ammonia), as well as methanol, dimethyl ether, and synthetic fuels, potentially reducing imports.

Coal Mine/Block Development and Production Agreement (CMDPA/CBDPA)

- It sets a milestone-based system for commercial coal mine allottees, linking performance security to project timelines to ensure timely development and operation.
- To encourage early production, it offers a 50% incentive on revenue share and allows return of the Performance Bank Guarantee (PBG) if the block becomes operational on time.

National Coal Gasification Mission

- The Government has launched the **National Coal Gasification Mission** with a target of achieving **100 million tonnes of coal gasification by 2030.**
 - ♦ To support this, an 8,500 crore incentive scheme has been introduced for both public and private sector projects, alongside major ongoing investments worth over 64,000 crore.
- The initiative also promotes advanced methods like **Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)** to utilize difficult-to-access coal reserves while reducing environmental impact.

Source :PIB

