

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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## GOVERNOR'S ROLE IN A HUNG ASSEMBLY

### In News

- Tamil Nadu's 2026 elections produced a hung Assembly, TVK (Vijay's party) won 108 seats, short of the 118-seat majority mark in the 234-seat House.

### What Is a Hung Assembly?

- When **no single party wins a clear majority**, the Assembly is called "hung." This triggers coalition negotiations and reliance on smaller parties or independents.
- The **Governor steps in as the key constitutional officer** to decide who gets the first invitation to form the government.

### Constitutional Provisions

- Article 163:** Governor acts on Council of Ministers' advice, except where he must use discretion.
- Article 164(1):** Governor appoints the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers. In a hung Assembly, he wields discretion in inviting parties to form the government.
- Article 163(2):** If any question arises whether a matter requires the Governor's discretion, his decision is final and cannot be called in question.

### Role of Governor in Hung Assembly

- To exercise this power, the **Governor invites the party** that has the people's mandate and stakes a claim to form the government.
- The Governor then **fixes a time to administer the oath** of office to the Chief Minister designate.
- A pro-tem speaker** is appointed, usually the senior-most legislator among the elected, **to administer the oath** to the MLAs and **conduct a floor test**.
  - A floor test (also called a 'trust vote')** is held in legislative bodies, to find out whether the government that is suspected to have lost the majority still retains the confidence of the House. This is done through a vote among the members.
- In case the **Governor comes to the conclusion** that no government can be formed under the given composition of the Assembly, he **can recommend to the Central government the imposition of President's rule**.

### Reports and SC Judgements on Role of Governor

- Sarkaria Commission Report (1983):** It stated that if a single party **has an absolute majority**

in the Assembly, the **leader of that party** should automatically be asked to become the Chief Minister.

- However, **if there is no such party**, the governor should select a Chief Minister from among the following parties **in the order of preference indicated below:**
  - An **alliance of parties** that was formed prior to the elections.
  - The largest single party staking a claim to form the government with the **support of others**, including "independents."
  - A post-electoral coalition of parties**, with all the partners in the coalition joining the government.
  - A post-electoral alliance of parties**, with some of the parties in the alliance forming a Government and the remaining parties, including "independents", supporting the Government from outside.
- The Punchhi Commission (2007):** It broadly endorsed the Sarkaria framework but added that the **Governors should act with constitutional neutrality** and not as political agents.
  - It said that a **floor test should be conducted** as early as possible to determine the majority.
  - Further, **pre-poll alliances should be prioritised** over post-poll arrangements, as they reflect a clearer electoral mandate.
- SC judgements: In SR Bommai v. Union of India (1994)**, the SC held that the Governor must invite the leader of the party commanding a majority in the House, or the single-largest party/group, to form the Government.
  - In 2006, in Rameshwar Prasad v Union of India:** The Court warned against premature dissolution and stressed that political parties must be given a **fair opportunity to form a government**.
  - In 2016, involving a similar crisis in Uttarakhand** as well, the SC had underlined the **floor test as the "ultimate" option** and directed then Congress CM Harish Rawat to prove majority on the floor of the house.

Source: TH

## 546 DIE EVERY DAY IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS: NCRB DATA

### Context

- According to the latest report by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, 1.99 lakh

people died in **traffic accidents in 2024**, an increase of 0.79% compared to 2023.

### Major Findings

- **Traffic accidents include** road accidents, railway accidents, incidents on railway tracks or railway premises, and accidents at railway crossings.
- **Road Accidents:** Out of 1.99 lakh traffic-related deaths recorded in 2024, 1.75 lakh (88%) were due to road accidents.
- **The socio-economic costs** of road crashes alone amount to around **3.14% of India's GDP**.
- **Two-wheelers** account for most of the fatal road accidents, followed by pedestrians and cars.
- **Speeding is the biggest factor**, accounting for **58%** of the total road deaths.
- **The top three states in terms of fatalities are** Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

### Reasons for Increased Numbers of Road Accidents in India

- **Overspeeding and Reckless Driving:** Overspeeding, dangerous overtaking, drunk driving, and mobile phone usage while driving are among major causes.
- **Poor Road Infrastructure:** Badly maintained roads, potholes, inadequate signage, poor lighting, and unsafe road design increase accident risks.
- **Weak Enforcement of Traffic Rules:** Inadequate monitoring and inconsistent enforcement of traffic laws lead to low compliance with safety regulations.
- **Lack of Proper Driver Training:** Weak licensing systems and insufficient driver education result in unskilled and irresponsible driving behaviour.
- **Rapid Growth of Vehicles and Traffic Congestion:** Increasing vehicle ownership without proportional expansion of road infrastructure creates chaotic and unsafe traffic conditions.
- **Weak Emergency and Trauma Care:** Delays in medical assistance and inadequate trauma care facilities, especially in rural areas, increase fatalities after accidents.

### Government Initiatives

- **National Road Safety Policy India, 2010:** It emphasized the need for better road infrastructure, stricter enforcement of traffic rules, enhanced emergency medical services, public awareness campaigns, and improved post-crash care.

- **Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR)/ Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD):** Centralized system for reporting, managing, and analyzing road accident data to improve safety.
- **Speedy Assistance to Accident Victims:**
  - ♦ Award 25,000 for Good Samaritans who help accident victims.
  - ♦ Faster compensation: 2.5 lakh for grievous hurt, 5 lakh for death.
  - ♦ Enhanced compensation for hit-and-run victims: 2 lakh for death, 50,000 for grievous hurt.
  - ♦ Simplified procedures for third-party insurance, including hired drivers.
- **Vehicle Fitness:** Old, unfit vehicles contribute to accidents. The Ministry is setting up model Inspection and Certification Centers across States/UTs (28 States/UTs covered by 2024).
- **IIT Madras Collaboration:** Establishing a Center of Excellence for Road Safety to develop new products, conduct research, and promote safety initiatives.
- **Accident Blackspot Rectification:** Priority on identifying and improving accident-prone spots on National Highways through engineering measures.
- **Road Safety Audits:** Mandatory audits for all highway projects at design, construction, and operation stages.
- **Brasilia Declaration:** India was one amongst the initial 100+ countries to have signed the Brasilia Declaration in 2015 committing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 i.e. to half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030.
- **Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019:** The act brought about higher penalties for traffic violations, including speeding, drunk driving, and not wearing helmets or seat belts.

### Way Ahead

- India has done substantial research on road safety through premiere institutions like Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and Central Road Research Institute (CRRI).
  - ♦ The government can collaborate with these institutes to improve policies and action plans.
- **The corporate sector can play a role** in helping strengthen road safety by funding research, spreading awareness.

**Source: IE**

## KERALA'S OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN

### In News

- Kerala began preparing an **Oil Spill Contingency Plan** following the 2025 shipwrecks incidents off Kerala coast to **address marine pollution and coastal environmental risks.**

### What is Oil Spill?

- It is the **release of petroleum substances into the environment**, especially oceans and coastal waters, due to human activities such as tanker accidents, offshore drilling, or fuel leaks, causing serious pollution.

### Major Reasons

- Oil spills can occur wherever oil is drilled, transported, or used, and are fairly common.
  - ♦ Most spills are small, such as during ship refuelling, but can still damage sensitive ecosystems like beaches, mangroves, and wetlands.
- Major causes include accidents involving tankers, pipelines, refineries, drilling rigs, storage facilities, and recreational boats.
- Spills may result from human error, equipment failure, natural disasters (storms, hurricanes, high winds), or intentional acts like sabotage or illegal dumping.

### Consequences of oil spills

- **Effect on marine fauna:** Oil spills harm marine life by exposing animals to toxins, damaging birds' insulation and survival, and affecting the growth and reproduction of fish and invertebrates.
- **Threat to biodiversity:** Oil spills can wipe out animal populations, with toxic substances accumulating in the food chain and posing significant risks to higher-level predators, including humans.
  - ♦ This bioaccumulation can result in long-term health problems and a reduction in biodiversity, disrupting entire ecosystems.
- **Effect on coastal ecosystems:** Coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, coral reefs, and marshlands, are especially at risk, as oil can suffocate these habitats and kill vital plants and animals. Recovery can take decades, with some species facing the threat of extinction.
- **Effect on economy:** The economic fallout of the oil spill is significant for communities dependent on fishing and tourism. Also, the cleanup effort is

often costly and lengthy, diverting resources from other critical areas.

### Methods used to clean up Oil Spills

- **Skimming:** It involves removing oil from the sea surface before it can reach sensitive areas along the coastline.
- **In situ burning:** It means burning a particular patch of oil after it has concentrated in an area.
- **Releasing chemical dispersants:** It helps break down oil into smaller droplets, making it easier for microbes to consume and further break it down into less harmful compounds.
  - ♦ While oil spill cleanup methods are useful, some can harm marine life and manual cleanup is often labour-intensive and less effective in remote areas.

### International conventions

- **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL):** The MARPOL Convention governs oil spills.
  - ♦ It evolved from several older agreements and led to a protocol issued in 1978 following several oil spill disasters in the 1970s.
  - ♦ It has six annexes, covering prevention of pollution from ships by Oil, Noxious liquid substances, Dangerous goods in packaged form, Sewage, Garbage and Air pollution from ships.
- **UNCLOS (1982):** Grants coastal states rights to protect marine environments within their Exclusive Economic Zones.
- **International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC, 1990):** Ensures coordinated global response to spills.
- **Civil Liability Convention (CLC, 1969):** Holds shipowners financially liable for oil pollution damage.
- **India's position:** India is also a signatory of MARPOL convention. It is enforced with the help of domestic legislation, such as the Merchant Shipping Act in India, which has provisions on civil liability and pollution prevention certificates. Indian ships and ships in Indian waters are mandated to follow these regulations.
  - ♦ Ports also maintain oil spill contingency plans to handle local cases, while the Indian Coast Guard is the nodal agency.

### Suggestions

- **Strengthen surveillance:** Use satellite monitoring and AI-based spill detection.
- **Enhance response capacity:** More pollution response vessels and dispersant stockpiles.
- **Regional cooperation:** Collaborate with neighboring countries for joint drills and rapid response.
- **Strict liability enforcement:** Ensure polluters bear cleanup costs and compensate affected communities.
- **Promote clean energy:** Reduce dependence on oil to minimize spill risks.
- **Community awareness:** Train coastal populations in shoreline cleanup and safety.

Source: TH

## FIXING STRUCTURAL DEFICITS IN INDIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM

### Context

- Recently the Minister of State for Health, informed Parliament that 43 new medical colleges have been established and **11,682 MBBS seats** along with **8,967 postgraduate seats** have been approved for the 2025-26 academic year.
  - ♦ However, structural deficits continue to challenge India's health system.

### Structural Deficits in India's Health System

- **Massive Specialist Vacancies:** According to Health Dynamics of India 2022–23, rural Community Health Centres (CHCs) face a **specialist vacancy rate of nearly 79.9%**.
  - ♦ Only 4,413 specialists are available against the requirement of 21,964 specialists.
- **Private Sector in Medical Education:** Of the 43 newly sanctioned medical colleges, 27 are in the private sector.
  - ♦ Private medical colleges charge high tuition fees and capitation costs.
  - ♦ Graduates from private institutions generally prefer **urban private practice**, as there is **no binding obligation** requiring them to serve in government hospitals or remote regions.
- **Dysfunctional Community Health Centres:** A CHC serves as a **first referral unit** for a population of about **1.6 lakh to 2 lakh** and is expected to have **30 beds with five specialists;**

physician, surgeon, obstetrician, paediatrician, and anaesthetist.

- ♦ However, most CHCs remain non-functional due to specialist shortages.
- **Poor Working Conditions for Doctors:** Doctors posted in remote regions often face lack of staff quarters, professional isolation, heavy workloads and limited career growth opportunities.
- **Faculty Shortages:** Eleven out of 18 AIIMS report nearly **40% vacancies** in teaching and research faculty positions.
- **Imbalanced Health Budget Priorities:** The Union health budget remains heavily focused on **capital expenditure** (infrastructure expansion), while critical operational components such as human resources, diagnostics, emergency care, and maintenance remain underfunded.

### Significance of Strengthening Public Healthcare

- **Social Justice and Equity:** Public healthcare remains the primary source of medical care for poor and vulnerable populations. Weak public health systems deepen **regional inequalities and social exclusion**.
- **Out-of-Pocket Expenditure:** Strong public healthcare systems reduce dependence on expensive private healthcare. This lowers catastrophic health expenditure and medical indebtedness among households.
- **Universal Health Coverage:** Strengthening public healthcare is essential for National Health Policy goals, and **Sustainable Development Goal 3** related to health and well-being.

### Government Initiatives

- **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM):** The scheme designed to build critical healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to manage future pandemics and strengthen surveillance.
- **Ayushman Bharat Programme:** It aims to strengthen primary healthcare through **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)** and provide financial protection through Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).
- **Telemedicine Initiatives under eSanjeevani:** It promotes digital healthcare consultations to improve healthcare access in remote and underserved regions.
- **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP):** Ensuring the availability

of high-quality generic medicines at affordable prices through dedicated Kendra centers.

### Measures to Strengthen India's Public Health System

- **Align Medical Education with Public Health Needs:** Government-sponsored postgraduate seats should be directly linked to specialist vacancies in **Community Health Centres (CHCs)** and district hospitals.
  - ♦ Candidates receiving subsidised postgraduate training should be required to serve in designated public facilities after completion of training.
- **Rural Service with Incentives:** Doctors serving in difficult areas should receive additional allowances, career advancement incentives, enhanced pension and service benefits.
- **Categorise Health Facilities:** PHCs and CHCs should be classified into **normal areas, difficult areas, and most difficult areas**, as was done in **Chhattisgarh under the Rural Medical Corps Scheme**.
  - ♦ Special incentives should be linked to the difficulty level of postings.
- **All or None principle:** Specialists should be **deployed as complete teams** rather than scattered individually.
  - ♦ Functional CHCs require the simultaneous availability of **all five core specialists**.
  - ♦ Concentrated deployment in selected CHCs can **create effective referral centres** at the sub-district level.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure:** Priority investment should focus on Staff quarters, Labour rooms, **Operation theatres, Intensive care units, Blood storage facilities**, Telemedicine and digital health infrastructure etc.

### Concluding remarks

- India's healthcare crisis is a deeper structural **mismatch between medical education, workforce deployment, and public health priorities**.
- India must **adopt a comprehensive strategy** that integrates **medical education with public service obligations**, strengthens rural healthcare infrastructure, and creates a motivated health workforce capable of delivering equitable healthcare to all sections of society.

Source: TH

## INDIA'S STEEL SECTOR ADVANCES TOWARDS SELF-RELIANCE

### Context

- India has retained its position as the **world's second-largest steel producer** since **2018**, reinforcing its position as a competitive and expanding global player.

### About Steel

- Steel is an **alloy** primarily composed of **iron, carbon (< 2%) and manganese (1%)**, along with small quantities of **silicon, phosphorus, sulphur and oxygen**.
- There are different forms of steel and iron which are vital for the steel sector. Some of them are:
  - ♦ **Crude steel:** First solid steel product formed upon solidification of liquid steel.
  - ♦ **Finished steel:** Product obtained upon hot rolling/forging of Semi-finished steel.
  - ♦ **Hot metal, pig iron and sponge iron:** Key forms of iron that constitute important categories within the steel industry.

### India's Global Position in Steel Sector

- India's share in global crude steel production increased from **5.2% in 2014 to 7.9% in 2024**, reflecting its growing global competitiveness.
- According to the **World Steel Association**, India is also the world's **second-largest consumer of finished steel**.
  - ♦ **Finished steel consumption** in India increased from 77 million tonnes (MT) in 2014–15 to **163.7 MT in 2025–26**.
- **Top destinations for India's finished steel exports** in March 2026 were Vietnam, Belgium and Taiwan, comprising **more than 50%** of India's total finished steel exports.
- India aims to achieve **500 MT steel production** capacity by **2047** as part of the long-term industrial growth strategy.



### Importance of the Steel Sector for India

- **Backbone of Industrial Development:** Steel supports core sectors such as infrastructure, housing, transportation, power, capital goods, and heavy industries, while contributing roughly **2% to India's GDP**.
- **Employment Growth:** The steel industry generates large-scale direct and indirect employment across mining, manufacturing, logistics, and ancillary industries.
- **National Security Importance:** A strong domestic steel base is crucial for defence manufacturing, shipbuilding, railways, and strategic infrastructure.

### Government Reforms Supporting Steel Sector

- **National Steel Policy:** The **National Steel Policy 2017** envisions expanding crude steel capacity to **300 MTPA and production to 255 MTPA by 2030–31**.
  - ♦ Additionally, raising per-capita finished steel consumption to **158 kg** from the current 61 kg.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Specialty Steel:** It aims to strengthen India's manufacturing capabilities by offering **financial incentives to eligible companies** based on their incremental sales.
  - ♦ The scheme offers incentives for **5 years (FY 2024-25 - FY 2030-31)** to companies that meet specified investment and production targets.
  - ♦ **Specialty steel** is a value-added steel product manufactured through advanced processing techniques to provide superior strength, durability, corrosion resistance, and performance.
- **Identification of Steel Zones:** The Government is fast-tracking key logistics and infrastructure projects across **12 major steel zones**.
  - ♦ **Priority rail, road and port expansions** are underway to ease bottlenecks and develop world-class multimodal connectivity supporting the sector's growth.
- **The Steel Scrap Recycling Policy (2019)** has been notified to boost the availability of domestic scrap.
- **In April 2025, the Government imposed a 12% safeguard duty** on select non-alloy and alloy steel flat products. This protects domestic manufacturers from import surges and maintains fair market competition.

### Decarbonisation of India's Steel Sector

- India is pursuing decarbonisation of the steel sector to achieve its **net-zero emission intensity target by 2070** through energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, green hydrogen, scrap recycling, and **Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) technologies**.
- **In 2024**, India became the **first country to introduce an official Green Steel Taxonomy**, defining **green steel** as steel produced with emission intensity below **2.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per tonne** of finished steel.
  - ♦ **By March 2026, 89 steel units** had received green steel certification covering 12.34 MT production.

### Way Ahead

- India's steel sector has emerged as a major driver of industrial growth, infrastructure development, and economic self-reliance.
- With rising production capacity, expanding exports, focus on specialty steel, and commitment towards green steel and decarbonisation, the sector is poised to play a crucial role in India's vision of becoming a developed and sustainable economy by 2047.

Source: AIR

## AMOC SLOWDOWN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

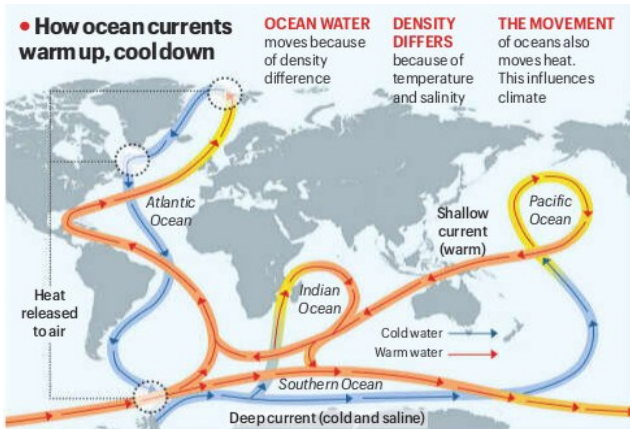
### Context

- Recent studies suggest that the **Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)** could weaken by nearly **59% by 2100** due to climate change and accelerated melting of Arctic ice.

### About Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

- It is a large system of ocean currents that transports heat:
  - ♦ Warm, salty water flows **northward near the surface** (e.g., Gulf Stream)
  - ♦ Cold, dense water sinks in the North Atlantic and flows **southward at depth**.
- It transfers enormous amounts of heat across the planet and helps regulate global weather patterns.
- It is often described as a global ocean 'conveyor belt'.

- It influences Europe's relatively mild climate, rainfall in Africa and South Asia, monsoon systems, marine ecosystems, and global heat distribution.



### Why is the AMOC Weakening?

- **Role of Climate Change:** Human-induced global warming is accelerating the melting of Arctic sea ice and Greenland ice sheet.
  - ♦ It releases large volumes of **freshwater** (less salty and less dense) into the North Atlantic.
  - ♦ Therefore, it does not sink easily, and disrupts the sinking mechanism that drives the AMOC, slowing down the entire circulation system.
- **AMOC as a Climate 'Tipping Point':** A tipping point refers to a threshold beyond which a system undergoes irreversible change.
  - ♦ If the AMOC weakens beyond a critical level, it may collapse into a permanently sluggish state, and recovery may become impossible even if temperatures stabilize later.
- **Possible Global Consequences:** Extreme weather events, sea-level rise along North America, colder conditions in Europe, disruption of global rainfall systems, and increased climate instability.
  - ♦ AMOC has already weakened by nearly **15% over the last 50 years**.

## WHY AMOC COLLAPSE COULD TRIGGER A GLOBAL CRISIS

1



### THE OCEAN'S THERMOSTAT:

The AMOC is a massive "conveyor belt" of ocean currents in the Atlantic that moves heat across the globe, heavily influencing worldwide weather patterns.

2



### A LOOMING COLLAPSE:

Melting Arctic ice is dumping fresh water into the Atlantic, acting as a brake on these currents. Scientists warn the system is slowing down and could cross a catastrophic "tipping point" of no return.

3



### GLOBAL CHAOS:

If the AMOC collapses, it will disrupt weather globally, trapping heat in ways that make phenomena like El Niño far more unpredictable and extreme.

4



### THREAT TO INDIA:

For India, a halted Atlantic conveyor belt would pull the tropical rain belt southward, severely destabilising the summer monsoon, triggering longer dry spells, and threatening the nation's agriculture.

### Connection Between AMOC and El Niño

- Though AMOC exists in the Atlantic Ocean, it strongly influences the Pacific climate system.
- A weaker AMOC alters global heat distribution, cools parts of the North Pacific, and disturbs atmospheric circulation patterns.
  - ♦ It can intensify and destabilize **El Niño events**.
- **Impact of Strong El Niño Events:** Recent El Niño events such as 2015–16 and 2023–24 caused severe droughts, floods, agricultural losses, and heat waves.
  - ♦ For India, El Niño generally weakens the southwest monsoon and affects crop production.

### Why Does AMOC Matter for India?

- **Threat to the Indian Monsoon:** India's monsoon system depends on temperature differences between land and ocean, and global heat circulation patterns.
  - ♦ A slowdown of the AMOC shifts tropical rainfall belts southward, reducing moisture transport towards the Indian subcontinent.
  - ♦ **Weakening of monsoon winds** reduced moisture flow from the Arabian Sea, and delayed or deficient monsoon rainfall.
- **Agricultural Crisis:** Nearly 50% of India's population depends on agriculture, and large areas remain rain-fed.
  - ♦ Weak monsoons can reduce crop yields, increase farmer distress, and threaten food security.
- **Water Stress:** India already faces groundwater depletion and uneven rainfall distribution. Reduced monsoon rainfall may intensify drinking water shortages, irrigation crises, and urban water stress.
- **Increase in Extreme Events:** An unstable climate system may produce erratic rainfall, flash floods, droughts, and heat waves.

### Government and Scientific Responses

- **India's Climate Initiatives:** India has launched several measures to improve climate resilience:
  - ♦ **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** includes missions on water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and himalayan ecosystem protection.

- ♦ **India Meteorological Department (IMD):** Strengthening monsoon forecasting systems, and using climate models for early warning
- **Disaster Management Efforts:** The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) focuses on flood preparedness, drought management, and climate adaptation planning.

Source: IE

## NEWS IN SHORT

### JANANI PLATFORM

#### In News

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched **JANANI (Journey of Antenatal, Natal and Neonatal Integrated Care)** at the recently concluded National Summit on Innovation and Inclusivity.

#### About JANANI Platform

- It is a service-oriented digital platform designed to **comprehensively monitor and maintain digital health records of women** during their **reproductive age**.
- It is developed as an upgraded version of the **existing Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal**.
- It is a digital maternal and child health platform that introduces **QR-enabled digital Mother and Child Health (MCH) Cards** for easy and portable access to health records.
- It supports real-time monitoring through high-risk pregnancy alerts, supervisory dashboards, and due-list generation for timely interventions.
- It integrates with **national systems such as U-WIN and POSHAN** to enable seamless data sharing and coordinated beneficiary tracking.
- It allows **beneficiary registration** using ABHA, Aadhaar, or mobile numbers, supports self-registration, and ensures continuity of care for migratory populations while preventing duplicate records.

Source :PIB

### ARTICLE 26(B)

#### Context

- The Central Board of Dawoodi Bohra Community, questioned the power of the religious head of the

community to excommunicate persons, saying it **violated the fundamental rights** of the faithful.

- ♦ The court asked if the power to excommunicate **isn't protected under Article 26(b)**.

#### About Article 26(b)

- Article 26 deals with the **Freedom to manage religious affairs** and grants rights to every religious denomination or any section thereof, **subject to public order, morality, and health**.
  - (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;
  - (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;
  - (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and
  - (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

#### Essential religious practices

- **Essential religious practices** are those that are vital or fundamental to religion and if they are not followed, the religion itself will change.
- The Doctrine was originally conceived in the **Madras v. Shirur Mutt Case**, in which the Court made a distinction between **'religious' and 'secular' practices**.
- **Religious practices** were considered to be those of the **utmost importance** to the religion and **secular activities** were defined as practices associated with religion but **do not really constitute an essential part of it**.

Source: IE

### DECENTRALISING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE THROUGH SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

#### Context

- The Union Ministry of Education has issued new national guidelines mandating the constitution of **School Management Committees (SMCs)** in all schools, including secondary and senior secondary schools up to Class 12, in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

#### Key Features of the New SMC Guidelines

- **Mandatory Constitution of SMCs:** Every school across the country must constitute an **SMC within one month** of the commencement of the academic session.

- ◆ The new SMC framework will replace the earlier **School Management Development Committees (SMDCs)**.
- **Community-Centric Representation:** At least **75% of SMC members must be parents or guardians** of enrolled students.
  - ◆ **A minimum of 50%** of the members must be **women** to promote gender-inclusive participation in school governance.
  - ◆ **The remaining 25%** will include elected local officials, teachers, alumni, and local experts such as Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, and academicians.
  - ◆ **Proportionate representation** must be given to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), including **SC, ST, OBC, and Children with Special Needs (CwSN)**.
- **Two sub-committees will be established under the SMC:**
  - ◆ **The School Building Committee** for maintenance and construction, and
  - ◆ **The Academic Committee** focused on improving educational quality.

#### Financial and Administrative Powers of SMCs

- The SMCs are authorised to execute all school civil works costing up to **₹30 lakh**.
  - ◆ **For projects exceeding this amount**, SMCs will participate in the public tendering process (per CPWD/PWD manuals) to ensure quality and transparency
- The SMC will also be responsible for **reviewing the school budget, preventing financial irregularities, and maintaining accurate records** of receipts and expenditures.
- **Driving learning outcomes:** SMCs have also been tasked with creating a **three-year School Development Plan** consisting of annual sub-plans.
  - ◆ This roadmap will detail class-wise enrollment projections, infrastructure requirements, and the need for additional teaching staff.

Source: TH

## ATOMIC ENERGY REGULATORY BOARD (AERB)

### Context

- The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has issued permission for "major equipment erection"

at Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) Units 5 and 6.

### Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

- The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board is India's **apex nuclear regulatory authority** responsible for **ensuring radiation and nuclear safety** in the country.
  - ◆ It was **established in 1983** under the provisions of the **Atomic Energy Act, 1962**.
- **The regulatory authority of AERB** is derived from the rules and notifications promulgated under the **Atomic Energy Act and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- The Board functions under the administrative control of the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)**. It is headquartered in **Mumbai**.
- **Objectives of AERB:**
  - ◆ To ensure that the use of **ionising radiation and nuclear energy** does **not cause undue risk** to people and the environment.
  - ◆ To **regulate nuclear and radiation facilities** through **licensing, inspection, and enforcement**.
  - ◆ To **establish safety standards** for nuclear power plants, radiation facilities, and radioactive waste management.

### Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP)

- It is located in **Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu** near the southern tip of India.
- The project is being developed by the **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited** in collaboration with **Russia**.
- **Reactor Type:** The project uses VVER-type Pressurised Water Reactors (PWRs) of Russian design.
  - ◆ VVER stands for "Water-Water Energetic Reactor".
  - ◆ These reactors use light water as both coolant and moderator.
- **Capacity and Units:** The site consists of **six nuclear reactor units** and each reactor has a capacity of **1000 MW**.

Source: TH

## VADINAR SHIP REPAIR FACILITY

### In News

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved the development of a ship

repair facility at **Vadinar, Gujarat**, at a combined investment of 1,570 crore.

#### About

- Vadinar is on the western coast of Gujarat, in the **Gulf of Kutch**.
- It sits close to **Kandla (Deendayal Port) and Mundra**, two of India's busiest cargo ports and is well-positioned relative to major shipping lanes in the Arabian Sea.

- The site's natural deep draft makes it physically suitable for berthing very large vessels, which many Indian ports cannot accommodate.

#### Do you Know?

- India currently **accounts for less than 1% of the global ship repair market**, despite around 7–9% of all international shipping traffic passing within 300 nautical miles of its coastline. The domestic ship repair market is estimated at around 2,000 crore annually.

Source: TH

