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SC PUBLISHES DRAFT REGULATIONS ON AI USE IN JUDICIARY

Context

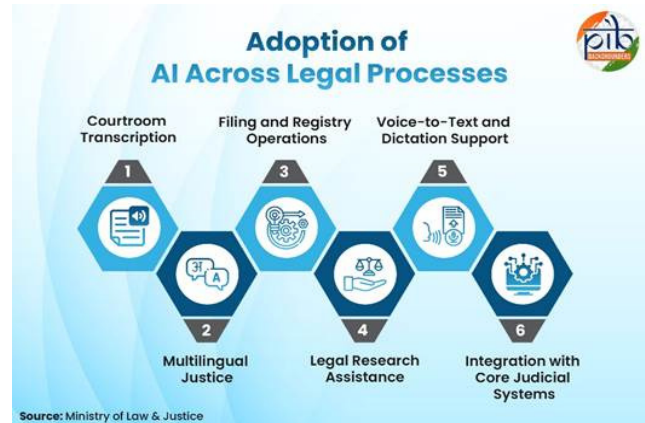
- The **Supreme Court AI committee** has proposed **draft regulations** that bar AI-assisted sentencing without mandatory human oversight.
 - ♦ The proposed regulations come amid concerns expressed by the top court over the **growing reliance on AI by courts in rendering judgments**.

Major Highlights of the Regulations

- It permits the use of AI for **administrative functions** such as case management, preparation of cause lists, scheduling of hearings, transcription of court proceedings and translation of judgments.
- **AI systems cannot be used for “risk scoring”** in court processes, this includes assessing flight risk, predicting recidivism, evaluating bail eligibility, or determining the credibility of parties or witnesses.
- The processing of personal data through AI systems **shall be governed by the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**.
- **AI systems must not perpetuate bias** on grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, gender, disability, language, economic status, or any other ground prohibited under the Constitution.
- **AI-assisted judicial systems should not “widen digital divides”** and must remain accessible to all stakeholders.
- To supervise the adoption of AI in the judiciary, it proposes the **creation of a full-time “apex body” at the Supreme Court**.

Use of AI in India’s Justice System

- In the Supreme Court, High Courts, National Informatics Centre (NIC) **AI tools are now assisting various functions such as:**
 - ♦ Transcription of oral arguments,
 - ♦ Translation of judgments,
 - ♦ Identification of defects in e-filing,
 - ♦ Legal research, and
 - ♦ Metadata extraction.



- Over the past decade, **courts have moved from basic computerisation to nationwide digital platforms**, real-time data systems, virtual courts and multilingual judgment access.
- **Latest technologies** like AI and its subsets Machine Learning (ML), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Natural Language Processing (NLP) are being used in the e-Courts software applications developed under the eCourts Project.

Significance of Use of AI in Judiciary in India

- **Backlog of Cases:** India’s judicial system faces a backlog cases, undermining public trust in timely justice.
 - ♦ AI can streamline case management, reduce backlog, and speed up judicial processes.
- **Overcrowding in Prisons:** Indian prisons have been **housing more inmates than their capacity** for decades now, AI can streamline the complaint registration process, track investigations, flag necessary actions, and assess investigation quality.
- **Translation and Accessibility:** India has **22 scheduled languages** and hundreds of dialects. AI-powered translation can make judicial documents and judgments accessible across linguistic barriers.
 - ♦ **The SUVAAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software) project** has translated thousands of judgments into regional languages.
- **Enhanced Accuracy:** AI can prevent neglect of crucial evidence and ensure a more meticulous and reliable criminal justice process.
- **Improving Access to Justice:** AI chatbots and virtual assistants can help litigants, especially those without legal representation, navigate procedures, track case status, and file petitions.

Concerns/Challenges

- **Bias and Dependence:** AI-enabled legal research may show search bias, excluding relevant precedents.
 - ♦ Over-reliance risks reducing adjudication to rule-based outputs, sidelining nuanced human judgment.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** Absence of clear frameworks on storage and use of judicial data raises concerns.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Courts face uneven Internet connectivity, outdated hardware, and limited technical expertise.
- **Ethical Concerns:** The use of AI in sensitive areas like sentencing and parole decisions raises moral and ethical questions about fairness and justice.
- **Exclusion of Human Insight:** AI may overlook nuanced factors in cases that require human empathy and judgment.

Way Ahead

- A balanced approach must be taken to ensure AI tools respect privacy, civil liberties, and ethical standards, while preventing misuse.
- By leveraging AI, India's criminal justice system can become more efficient, accessible, and just, while ensuring safeguards are in place to address any challenges.

Source: TH

STRENGTHENING SAFETY GOVERNANCE AMID RECURRING FIRE ACCIDENTS IN INDIA

Context

- Recent fire tragedies, including the **Delhi B&B fire and the Muzaffarpur hospital fire**, have once again exposed persistent shortcomings in fire safety compliance and enforcement in urban India.

India's Major Fire Accidents Over the Last Three Decades

- **The Uphaar Cinema fire (1997)** exposed overcrowding, blocked exits, and inadequate emergency preparedness.
- **The Arpora nightclub fire in North Goa (2025)** highlighted violations of safety norms and unsafe occupancy levels.

- **The Delhi B&B fire (2026)** revealed the operation of an establishment without mandatory fire clearance and with far more rooms than permitted.
- **The Muzaffarpur hospital fire (2026)** demonstrated the vulnerability of patients, particularly the elderly and critically ill, during emergencies.

Fire Services in India

- **Fire Service is a State subject** and has been included as a Municipal function in the **XII Schedule** of the Constitution of India under Article 243(W).
 - ♦ As a result, there is **variation in the legal and institutional framework** across different states.
- **The National Building Code (NBC), 2016**, issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards, serves as the most comprehensive document on fire safety.
 - ♦ The Code deals specifically with fire and life safety and lays down detailed technical guidelines for building design, construction, and fire protection systems.
- **At the state level, individual Fire Service Acts** govern implementation and enforcement.
 - ♦ These laws empower fire departments to conduct inspections, issue No Objection Certificates (NOCs), and take action against violations.
- **The Disaster Management Act, 2005**, implemented by the National Disaster Management Authority, integrates fire incidents into the broader disaster management framework and strengthens preparedness and response mechanisms.
 - ♦ **Sector-specific laws** such as the Factories Act, 1948, Explosives Act, 1884, and Petroleum Act, 1934 regulate fire safety in industrial and hazardous environments.
- **Special provisions are made for high-rise buildings**, including the installation of fire lifts, refuge areas, and pressurized staircases to facilitate safe evacuation and firefighting operations.

Institutional Framework

- **At the central level**, the Directorate General of Fire Services, Civil Defence & Home Guards functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** and is responsible for policy formulation, training, and modernization of fire services.

- **At the state level**, fire departments are responsible for the implementation of fire safety regulations, conducting inspections, issuing certifications, and responding to emergencies.

Fire Safety Certification (NOC)

- Fire safety compliance is ensured through the issuance of a **Fire Safety Certificate or No Objection Certificate (NOC)**.
 - ♦ This certification is **mandatory** for high-rise buildings, commercial establishments, hospitals, schools, and other public buildings.
- The process involves submission of building plans, inspection by the fire department, verification of compliance with safety norms, and issuance of the certificate.
- **Periodic renewal** is required to ensure continued compliance.

Structural Causes Behind Recurring Fire Accidents

- **Weak Enforcement of Safety Norms:** Poor inspections and inadequate monitoring allow violations to persist for years.
- **Unauthorized Modifications and Overcrowding:** Many establishments exceed approved capacities and make unapproved structural changes, compromising evacuation and firefighting efforts.
- **Regulatory Loopholes and Evasion:** Businesses often exploit land-use and licensing exemptions to bypass safety requirements and continue unsafe operations.
- **Cost-Cutting:** Fire safety systems and compliance measures are frequently neglected to reduce operational costs.
- **Lack of Institutional Accountability:** Regulatory agencies rarely face consequences for enforcement failures, allowing negligence to persist.
- **Weak Safety Culture:** Fire safety is frequently treated as a compliance formality rather than a public safety imperative.

Key Issues in India's Fire Safety Governance

- **Fragmented Regulatory Framework:** Fire services being a State subject has resulted in varying standards and enforcement capacities across states.
- **Compliance-Centric Approach:** Focus remains on obtaining NOCs rather than ensuring continuous compliance.

- **Capacity Constraints:** Many fire departments face shortages of personnel, equipment, and modern firefighting technologies.
- **Limited Risk-Based Inspections:** Inspections are often reactive and incident-driven rather than preventive.

Way Forward

- Move towards **harmonized national fire safety standards** while respecting the federal structure.
- Strengthen **inspection and enforcement mechanisms** through technology-enabled monitoring and third-party audits.
- Mandate **periodic fire safety audits and mock drills** for hospitals, hotels, schools, malls, and other public buildings.
- Enhance **accountability of both owners and regulatory authorities** for safety violations.
- **Modernize fire services** through greater investment in equipment, training, and emergency response systems.
- Promote a culture of **fire safety awareness** among citizens, businesses, and public institutions.

Source: TH

AI COULD USE 3% OF WORLD'S POWER BY 2030: UN REPORT

Context

- United Nations report Environmental Cost of Artificial Intelligence highlights that by 2030, **AI could consume 3% of world's electricity.**

Major Findings

- **Water and Power Consumption:** AI-related water consumption could equal the basic annual domestic needs of 1.3 billion people by the end of the decade.
 - ♦ Data centres could consume 945 terawatt-hours of electricity annually by 2030 – nearly triple the combined annual electricity use of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria.
- **Water and Land Footprint:** Every unit of electricity used by data centres also carries a “water footprint” for cooling and energy production, and a “land footprint” associated with power generation and supply chains.
- **Electronic Waste:** The report warns of a growing electronic waste challenge, with AI infrastructure projected to generate up to 2.5 million tonnes of e-waste annually by 2030.

- ♦ Much of this burden is likely to fall on lower-income countries with limited capacity for safe disposal.
- **The production of critical minerals needed for AI hardware** also raises concerns about environmental degradation and social inequities in extraction regions.
- **Disparities:** More than 90% of AI-specialised computing capacity is concentrated in just two countries – the United States and China. At the same time, over 150 nations lack significant domestic AI infrastructure.
 - ♦ This imbalance not only limits economic opportunities but also raises questions of **environmental justice**, as some countries bear the environmental costs without sharing in the benefits of AI-driven growth.

Way Ahead

- The report calls for **urgent action** to ensure that the **technology develops within planetary limits**.
- The study outlines a framework for a “**responsible AI ecosystem**”, built on principles including **transparency, efficiency by design, equity, lifecycle responsibility, global cooperation and sustainable use**.
- Governments are urged to integrate AI infrastructure into energy, water and land-use planning, while companies are encouraged to design systems that minimise resource consumption.
 - ♦ Users, too, have a role to play by choosing lower-impact applications where possible.
- Ultimately, the report argues that the future of AI will depend not only on technological innovation but also on governance choices made today.

Source: UN

INDIA'S GREEN TRANSFORMATION

Context

- The **World Environment Day** celebrates India's decade-long green transformation through ecosystem restoration, climate action, sustainable resource management, and global environmental leadership.

Three Pillars of India's Green Transformation

- **Pillar 1:** Increasing Ecological Capability and Biodiversity for a Resilient India.

- **Pillar 2:** Expanding National Capacity for Sustainable Transformation.
- **Pillar 3:** Strengthening Credibility through Leadership and Diplomacy.

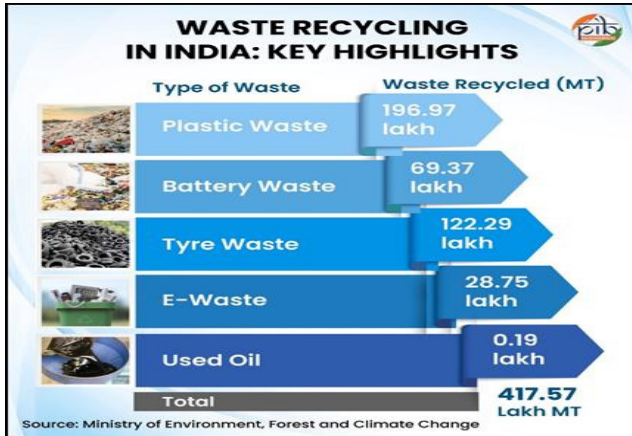
Increasing Ecological Capability and Biodiversity for a Resilient India

- **Reviving Forest Landscapes:** Forest and tree cover increased to **8.27 lakh sq. km**, representing **25.17%** of India's geographical area.
 - ♦ India's forests currently store **30.43 billion tonnes** of carbon stock.
 - ♦ Between **FY 2020–21 and 2024–25**, more than **3.20 lakh hectares** of compensatory afforestation were undertaken across India under **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** funding.
- **Restoring River Ecosystems:** Under the **Namami Gange Programme**, 524 projects worth ₹43,030 crore have been sanctioned. **138 sewage treatment plants** with a treatment capacity of **3,977 MLD** have become operational.
- **Wetland Conservation:** Ramsar sites increased from 26 in 2014 to **99 in 2026**.
 - ♦ **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)**, promotes the integrated conservation and restoration of wetlands.
 - ♦ **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017** prohibits activities such as encroachment, discharge of untreated effluents, and dumping of solid waste.
- **Mangrove Ecosystems Conservation:** India accelerated mangrove restoration through the MISHTI scheme (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes).
 - ♦ **Mangrove cover** increased from 4,628 sq. km in 2013 to 4,992 sq. km in 2023.

Expanding National Capacity for Sustainable Transformation

- **Managing Solid Waste:** Scientific processing of municipal solid waste increased from **17% in 2014** to over **77% in 2024**. Urban local bodies now process over **1.29 lakh tonnes** of waste daily.
- **Circular Economy with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** EPR is a policy approach under which producers are made responsible for the environmentally sound management of their products after use.

- There are **4,574** registered recyclers across waste streams. Total waste processed stands at 417.57 lakh MT, with 341.93 lakh MT covered under EPR certificate generation.



- Education, Awareness & Green Skill Development:**
 - The Environmental Education, Awareness and Training (EAT) Scheme** of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change supported programmes like the National Green Corps (NGC), National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP), and Capacity Building Programme (CBP).
 - Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development (EEARSD) Scheme** promotes environmental literacy, sustainable practices, and green workforce development.
- Green Credit Programme (GCP):** The programme incentivises voluntary environmental actions by individuals, communities, and businesses, encouraging greater participation in afforestation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable practices.

Strengthening Credibility through Leadership and Diplomacy

- Nationally Determined Contribution:**
 - India achieved its target of reducing emissions intensity by **33–35 percent from 2005** levels eleven years ahead of schedule.
 - The target of achieving **40 percent non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030** was met nine years early.
 - India has also created an additional carbon sink of **2.29 billion tonnes** of CO₂ equivalent.
- Clean Energy Leadership:**
 - The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** has grown to around 112 member countries.

- The One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)** initiative promotes global renewable energy connectivity.
- Climate Resilience and Sustainable Lifestyles:**
 - The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** has become a major global platform for resilient infrastructure.
 - Mission LiFE** has popularised sustainable lifestyles as an essential component of climate action.
 - The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** has positioned India as a global leader in wildlife conservation cooperation.

World Environment Day

- World Environment Day is **observed annually** on **5 June** to commemorate the **1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment** and promote global action for environmental protection and sustainable development.
- First Celebration:** 1973, under the theme **“Only One Earth.”**
- The theme for 2026** is “Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future.”

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

ZIMBABWE

Context

- India and Zimbabwe agreed to enhance bilateral defence ties by expanding existing cooperation.

About

- Zimbabwe is a landlocked country** situated in south-central Africa between the **Limpopo** and **Zambezi** rivers, covering an area of over 390,000 sq km.
- It is bounded by **Zambia** to the north and northwest, **South Africa** to the south, **Mozambique** to the east and northeast, and **Botswana** to the southwest.
- Zimbabwe lies entirely north of the **Tropic of Capricorn** and forms part of the southern African plateau.
- The Victoria Falls, located on the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, is the world's largest sheet of falling water.



Source: AIR

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR E-GOVERNANCE (NAEG) 2026

Context

- The Government of India has announced the winners of the **National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2026**.
 - A total of **17 initiatives** were selected across seven award categories, comprising **10 Gold Awards, 6 Silver Awards, and 1 Jury Award**.

About National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG)

- The awards are **presented annually** to promote excellence in e-governance and digital public service delivery.
 - They recognize innovative use of technology to improve governance, transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric services.
- It is instituted by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**.
- The awards cover initiatives** implemented by Ministries, Departments, States, UTs, Districts, Urban Local Bodies, and Gram Panchayats.

Major Award-Winning Initiatives (Gold and Silver Awardees)

- Agri Stack:** Developed by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
 - Creates a digital ecosystem for farmers through unique farmer identities and land-linked databases.
 - It facilitates targeted delivery of subsidies, crop insurance, credit, advisories, and government schemes.
- e-Jagruti:** It is a digital platform for filing and tracking consumer complaints, and developed by the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**.

- Mahakumbh 2025 Digital Governance Model:** Implemented by the **Prayagraj Mela Authority**.
 - It demonstrated large-scale use of technology in managing one of the world's largest religious gatherings.
- Blood Bag Traceability and Citizen Interaction Portal:** It is developed by Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) and enables end-to-end tracking of blood units from donation to transfusion.
- AI-enabled Clinical Decision Support system in eSanjeevani telemedicine service:** It is developed by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

Jury Award

- Project:** Real-Time Precise Positioning Services through CORS Network.
 - It provides highly accurate geospatial positioning services using a network of **Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS)**.

Source: PIB

INDIA- NEPAL BORDER DISPUTES

Context

- Nepal Prime Minister has said that Nepal too has encroached upon some Indian territories, in what is considered to be the **first such public statement by a Nepali head of government**.

India- Nepal Border Disputes

- India and Nepal share a border of about 1,751 km, but disputes persist in certain sectors.
- Kalapani–Lipulekh–Limpiyadhura Dispute:** Nepal has asserted its claim based on the **Sugauli Treaty of 1816**, signed between the **East India Company and Guru Gajraj Mishra**.
 - Under the Treaty, the **Kali River was marked as Nepal's western boundary** with India.
 - Nepal claims the river originates at **Limpiyadhura, which would place the Lipulekh and Kalapani regions within its territory**. Conversely, India maintains that the river begins at a lower point near Kalapani, keeping the **Lipulekh Pass**, a strategic tri-junction between India, Nepal, and China, within its state of Uttarakhand.

- ♦ The **Kali River has changed direction over the years**, causing confusion in defining the border.



- **Susta Border dispute:** Susta is a disputed territory between Nepal and India. It is administered by India as part of West Champaran district of Bihar.
 - ♦ Nepal claims the area a part of West Nawalparasi District under Susta rural municipality, alleging that over 14,860 hectares of Nepali land in Susta has been encroached upon by India.

Causes of Border Disputes

- Different interpretations of the Treaty of Sugauli (1816).
- Shifting river courses, especially in the Terai region.
- Incomplete boundary demarcation in a few segments.
- Strategic significance of Himalayan passes such as Lipulekh.

Existing Mechanisms for Resolution

- Joint Technical Level Boundary Committee.
- Joint Boundary Working Group (BWG).
- Regular diplomatic dialogues through the India-Nepal Joint Commission.

Source: TH

PAC FLAGS GAPS IN PMKVY

In News

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament recently raised serious concerns about the implementation of the **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** as the scheme appears to have been training people for industries that aren't necessarily hiring.

About Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- It was launched in **2015 under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.
- PMKVY was conceived as a national mission to equip India's large and young workforce with industry-aligned skills.
- The scheme operates through the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and aims to bridge the gap between what Indian youth are capable of and what the job market actually demands.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

- It is the oldest parliamentary committee in India, **established in 1921 under the Government of India Act, 1919**.
- The committee is reconstituted annually. The Chairperson of the PAC is appointed by the **Speaker of the Lok Sabha from among its members**.
- Since 1967-68, by convention, the **Chairperson is usually chosen from the Opposition party**.
- The PAC examines government revenue and expenditure to ensure that public funds are utilized efficiently, economically & for the purpose approved by Parliament
- It scrutinizes the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports on government expenditure**.
- Ensures that funds sanctioned by Parliament are spent in accordance with legislative approval.
- The committee consists of 22 members 15 members from Lok Sabha & 7 members from Rajya Sabha.

Source: TH

INDIA-VENEZUELA TIES GAIN STRATEGIC MOMENTUM

Context

- Acting President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez, visited India and held talks with PM Modi.

Key Outcomes of the Visit

- **Towards a Long-Term Energy Partnership:** Both sides discussed moving from spot purchases to **long-term crude oil supply contracts**. India and Venezuela explored cooperation across the entire energy value chain, including:

- ◆ **Upstream activities** such as oil exploration and production.
- ◆ **Downstream activities** such as refining and petrochemicals.
- **Cooperation in Critical Minerals:** Discussions covered critical minerals, gold, and diamond mining.
- **Cooperation in Other Sectors:** Agriculture and farm mechanization, Animal husbandry, Transportation and logistics, Automotive manufacturing, Science and technology.

Significance of Venezuela for India

- **Energy Security:** Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven crude oil reserves.
 - ◆ India is the world's **third-largest consumer of crude oil** and imports more than 85% of its oil requirements.
 - ◆ Indian refineries are well-equipped to **process Venezuela's heavy crude oil**.
 - ◆ Stronger ties can deepen India's engagement with the Latin American region and reduce overdependence on traditional energy suppliers.
- **Securing Critical Minerals for Future Industries:** Venezuela possesses significant reserves of critical minerals, including **rare earth elements, nickel**, and other strategic resources.
- **India's Latin America Outreach:** Venezuela serves as an important gateway for expanding India's economic and diplomatic engagement in Latin America.

About Venezuela

- **Location:** Venezuela is located on the **northern coast of South America**.
- **It is bordered by Colombia** to the west, **Brazil** to the south, **Guyana** to the east, and the **Caribbean Sea** lies to the north.
- **Capital:** Caracas.
- **Major Physiographic Regions:**
 - ◆ Northwestern Venezuela is traversed by the northeastern extension of the **Andes**.
 - ◆ **The Lake Maracaibo Basin** is a major geological and geographical region in northwestern Venezuela.
 - ◆ **Llanos** the vast, tropical savanna plains occupying over **250,000 square kilometers** of central Venezuela.



Source: IE

PRIME MINISTER RESEARCH CHAIR (PMRC) SCHEME, 2026

Context

- The Department of Higher Education has invited applications for the **Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme 2026**.

About

- It is a flagship national initiative by the **Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education**.
- **Aim:** To bring Indian-origin researchers working abroad to leading Indian institutions for high-impact research in priority sectors.
- The **initiative is structured around three pillars:** Lead Institutions, Host Institutions and PMRC Fellows.
- **Applicants can apply under the following categories:**
 - ◆ **Young Research Fellows (YRF):** Less than five years of post-PhD experience.
 - ◆ **Senior Fellows (SF):** Five years to less than 10 years of post-PhD experience.
 - ◆ **Research Chairs (RC):** Ten years or more of post-PhD experience with proven research leadership.
- **An Empowered Committee** chaired by the **Principal Scientific Advisor** to the Government of India will **oversee the selection of participating institutions and fellows**.
- **Eligible applicants include** Indian nationals working abroad, Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders and Persons of Indian Origin with significant achievements in research, innovation and technology.

- **Eligible host institutions include** government higher educational institutions ranked among the top 100 in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Overall or Engineering categories, or among the top 50 in the NIRF Research category.
 - ♦ **National laboratories and research institutions** under agencies such as the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- **PMRC Fellows will receive** fellowship and research grant support, access to laboratories and research infrastructure, and opportunities to work with leading government institutions in the country.

Source: AIR

NEELKANTH MISHRA APPOINTED AS WORLD BANK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Context

- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** has approved the appointment of Neelkanth Mishra as **Executive Director, World Bank Headquarters**, Washington, DC, for a tenure of three years.

About

- He will represent a **South Asian constituency** comprising **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka at the World Bank's board**.
- He succeeds Parameswaran Iyer, who has held the position since February 2023.
- The Executive Director is part of the **World Bank's board**, which oversees policies, lending decisions and development priorities.

World Bank

- It was founded in **1944**.
- The World Bank is like a **cooperative**, made up of 189 member countries.
- It provides **financial and technical assistance to developing countries** to reduce poverty and promote economic development.
- These member countries, or shareholders, are represented by a **Board of Governors**, who are the ultimate policymakers at the World Bank.
 - ♦ Generally, the governors are member countries' ministers of finance or ministers of development.

- **Main Institutions of the World Bank Group:**
 - ♦ **IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development):** It lends to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries.
 - ♦ **IDA (International Development Association):** It provides low-interest loans and grants to the poorest countries.
 - ♦ **IFC (International Finance Corporation):** It supports private-sector development.
 - ♦ **MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency):** It encourages foreign investment by providing guarantees.
 - ♦ **ICSID (International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes):** It resolves investment disputes.

Source: AIR

BIOMIMICRY

In News

- Biomimicry is shifting business innovation from mere replication to nature-inspired breakthroughs, offering sustainable frameworks across industries.

About

- Biomimicry involves learning from and **replicating nature's billions of years of evolutionary ingenuity to design sustainable, efficient human solutions**. Rather than exploiting nature, it positions nature as mentor and model.
- Its **applications are transformative like** Japan's Shinkansen bullet train, redesigned after the kingfisher's streamlined beak, eliminating disruptive tunnel pressure waves while enhancing speed and energy efficiency.
- As India advances its green transition, integrating biomimicry into manufacturing, urban design, and agriculture can drive innovation that is inherently circular, resource-efficient, and ecologically harmonious.

Source: ET

INDIA-UK CRITICAL MINERALS GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN OBSERVATORY (GSCO)

In News

- The India-UK Critical Minerals Global Supply Chain Observatory (GSCO) has been formally launched.

About

- It was announced during the 2025 Prime Ministers' bilateral summit and finalized via a March 2026 Research Collaboration Agreement.
- The GSCO is a tripartite joint initiative spearheaded by TEXMiN (Technology Innovation in Exploration & Mining Foundation at IIT-ISM Dhanbad), the Indian Institute of Technology (ISM) Dhanbad, and the University of Cambridge.
- The GSCO aims to mitigate supply risks through market intelligence, supporting both strategic decision-making and the goals of the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**.

National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)

- **Background & Launch:** The NCMM was approved by the Union Cabinet of India in January 2025, with a total outlay of approximately ₹16,300 crore over a period of 7 years (up to 2030–31).
 - ♦ It is anchored under the Ministry of Mines.
- **Objectives:** Ensure a reliable and sustainable domestic supply of critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, rare earth elements (REEs), titanium, and others.
 - ♦ Reduce India's import dependence for minerals vital to the energy transition (EVs, solar panels, wind turbines, batteries) and defence/electronics sectors.

Source: TH

