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Date: 09-06-2026

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INDIA'S NEW BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY (BIT) MODEL

Context

- The Government of India is revising its 2016 Model Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) to make it more investor-friendly while safeguarding India's regulatory sovereignty and legal system.

What is a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)?

- A Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) is an **agreement between two countries that promotes and protects investments** made by investors of one country in the other.
- It provides legal safeguards such as protection against expropriation, fair treatment, and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- BITs aim to **improve investor confidence** and **facilitate foreign direct investment (FDI)**.

Features of Bilateral Investment Treaties

- **National Treatment:** Foreign investors receive treatment no less favourable than domestic investors.
- **Protection Against Expropriation:** Investments cannot be nationalised or expropriated without due process and adequate compensation.
- **Fair and Equitable Treatment (FET):** Investors are protected from arbitrary or discriminatory actions by the host state.
- **Free Transfer of Funds:** Investors can transfer profits, dividends, and capital across borders subject to applicable regulations.
- **Dispute Settlement Mechanism:** Provides procedures for resolving disputes between investors and host states or between states.

India's Progress on BITs

- **Evolution of India's BIT Framework:** India signed its first **Model BIT in 1993**, which was amended in **2003**.
 - ♦ Following several international arbitration disputes, India adopted a **new Model BIT in December 2015**, which became operational in **2016**.
- **Recent Developments:** India has signed BITs or investment agreements with countries such as; Belarus, Kyrgyz Republic, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Brazil (through an Investment Cooperation and Facilitation Treaty).
- **In Budget 2025-26**, the Government announced a review of the BIT framework to make it more investor-friendly while safeguarding national interests.

Key Features of the Proposed New BIT Model

- **Two-Year Local Remedies Requirement:** Foreign investors will be required to pursue remedies within India's domestic legal system for **at least two years** before initiating international arbitration.
 - ♦ For certain partner countries, a shorter **one-year cooling-off period** may also be considered during negotiations.
- **No Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) Clause:** The revised model is likely to exclude the Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) clause.
 - ♦ MFN clauses **allow investors to claim more favourable treatment** available under India's treaties with other countries.
 - ♦ The government believes removing the clause will **reduce treaty-shopping** and legal uncertainties.
- **Taxation Matters Excluded:** Tax-related disputes will remain outside the scope of investment treaties.
 - ♦ This approach is influenced by past arbitration cases involving foreign companies such as **Vodafone Group and Cairn Energy**.
 - ♦ The government maintains that **taxation is a sovereign policy matter** and should **not be subject to investor-state arbitration**.

What are the concerns?

- **Investor Concerns:** Mandatory exhaustion of local remedies before international arbitration may increase costs and delays. **Lengthy judicial processes** can discourage foreign investors.
 - ♦ **The absence of a Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) clause** may reduce investor protections available under other treaties.
- **India's Concerns:**
 - ♦ **Excessive investor rights** may constrain legitimate public policy measures.
 - ♦ **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)** mechanisms can challenge sovereign regulatory actions.
 - ♦ **International arbitration awards** may impose significant financial liabilities on governments.

Global Trends in Investment Dispute Settlement

- **Shift Away from Traditional ISDS:** Several countries are reconsidering traditional Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanisms.
 - ♦ For example, the BIT between Australia and the United Arab Emirates adopts **State-to-State Dispute Settlement (SSDS)** instead of ISDS.

- ◆ Under SSDS, disputes are resolved between governments rather than directly between investors and host states.

Way Ahead

- **Adopt a balanced BIT framework** that protects investors while preserving India's regulatory sovereignty and policy space.
- **Strengthen commercial courts and contract enforcement** to enhance investor confidence in domestic legal institutions.
- **Ensure regulatory stability and policy predictability** through transparent and consistent policymaking.
- **Promote mediation, conciliation, and state-to-state dispute settlement mechanisms** as alternatives to costly arbitration.

Source: IE

INCLUSIVE TRANSFORMATION OF VULNERABLE SECTIONS IN INDIA

Context

- Over the last decade, India has witnessed an inclusive transformation through welfare expansion, and social protection, significantly reducing deprivation and improving the quality of life of vulnerable sections.

What is Inclusive Transformation?

- Inclusive Transformation refers to a development process that ensures the benefits of **economic growth, social progress, and public policies reach all sections of society**, particularly the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups.
- It seeks to improve not only income levels but also **access to basic services, opportunities, and human capabilities**, thereby reducing social and economic inequalities.

Initiatives for Inclusive Transformation

- **Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection:**
 - ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** provides free food grains to over 81 crore beneficiaries.
 - ◆ **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** ensures food security for migrant workers.
 - ◆ **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** has improved transparency and reduced leakages in welfare delivery.

- **Financial Inclusion:**

- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** has expanded banking access to over 58 crore beneficiaries.
- ◆ **PM Mudra Yojana** provides collateral-free loans to micro and small entrepreneurs.
- ◆ **UPI and Digital Payments** have facilitated financial inclusion and digital transactions.

- **Healthcare and Nutrition:**

- ◆ **Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY** provides health insurance coverage of 5 lakh per family.
- ◆ **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission promotes** digital health records and seamless healthcare access.
- ◆ **Mission Indradhanush** and maternal health schemes improve child and maternal healthcare outcomes.

- **Water, Sanitation and Housing:**

- ◆ **Jal Jeevan Mission** provides functional household tap water connections.
- ◆ **Swachh Bharat Mission** has achieved near-universal sanitation coverage.
- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)** promotes affordable housing for urban and rural poor.

- **Women Empowerment:**

- ◆ **PM Ujjwala Yojana** provides clean cooking fuel to women from poor households.
- ◆ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** promotes education, and empowerment of the girl child.
- ◆ **DAY-NRLM, Lakhpati Didi, and Drone Didi** initiatives encourage women-led entrepreneurship.

- **Livelihood and Employment Generation:**

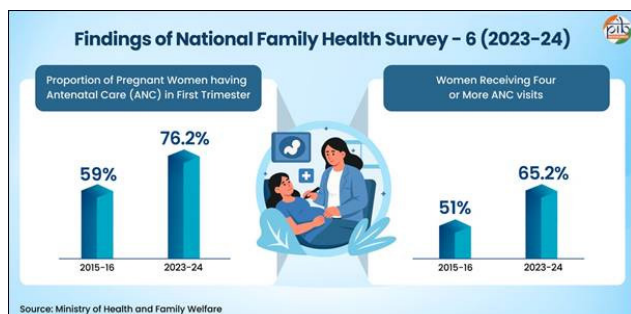
- ◆ **Viksit Bharat-Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (formerly MGNREGA)** provides wage employment and rural asset creation.
- ◆ **PM SVANidhi** supports street vendors through collateral-free loans.
- ◆ **PM Vishwakarma** strengthens traditional artisans and craftsmen.

- **Tribal Development**

- ◆ **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** focuses on holistic tribal development.
- ◆ **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** improve educational access in tribal areas.

Progress Achieved in Inclusive Transformation

- **Poverty and Deprivation:** Multidimensional poverty declined from 29.17% in 2013-14 to **11.28% in 2022-23**, reflecting a reduction of 17.89 percentage points.
 - ◆ Nearly 25 crore people moved out of multidimensional poverty during this period.
- **Water, Sanitation and Basic Amenities:** Rural tap water coverage under Jal Jeevan Mission increased from 3.23 crore households (2019) to 15.84 crore households (May 2026), covering 81.87% of rural households.
 - ◆ Rural sanitation coverage increased from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019.
- **Improvement in Maternal and Child Health:** Maternal Mortality Ratio declined from 130 (2014-16) to 88 (2021-23) per 100,000 live births.



- **Clean Energy and Electricity:** 10.57 crore free LPG connections were provided under PM Ujjwala Yojana.
 - ◆ **Average rural electricity** supply increased from 12.5 hours/day (2014) to 22.6 hours/day (2025).
- **Livelihoods and Women-Led Development:** Women associated with Self-Help Groups increased from 2.37 crore to 10 crore under DAY-NRLM.
 - ◆ The number of SHGs increased to **91.75 lakh**.

Viksit Bharat
Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin)

Indicator	FY 2006-14	FY 2014-25	% Increase
Persondays generated (crore)	1,660	3,036.7	~83%
Central funds released (₹ crore)	2,13,220	7,81,635.65	~267%
Works completed (lakh)	153	809.05	~429%

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

What are the challenges?

- **Persistent Regional Disparities:** Development outcomes remain uneven across states, districts, and tribal regions.

- **Quality Deficit in Public Services:** Access has improved, but quality of healthcare, education, and sanitation services remains inconsistent.
- **Income Vulnerability:** Informal employment continues to dominate the labour market and also job creation has not always kept pace with workforce expansion.
- **Nutritional Challenges:** Child malnutrition, anaemia, and stunting remain significant concerns.
- **Digital Divide:** Internet connectivity and digital literacy gaps persist, particularly in remote and tribal areas.
- **Social Exclusion:** Certain vulnerable groups, including migrants, urban homeless, elderly citizens, and persons with disabilities, continue to face barriers in accessing welfare benefits.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** Expanding welfare commitments require sustained fiscal resources and efficient targeting.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen Last-Mile Delivery:** Improve beneficiary identification and grievance redressal mechanisms.
- **Quality of Services:** Shift from infrastructure creation to service quality and outcome-based monitoring.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Expand broadband connectivity and digital literacy in underserved regions.
- **Improve Human Capital:** Increase investments in health, nutrition, education, and social protection.
- **Strengthen Cooperative Federalism:** Encourage greater coordination between the Centre, States, and local governments for effective implementation.

Source: PIB

SIPRI YEARBOOK 2026

Context

- According to the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Yearbook 2026**, India is estimated to have **modestly expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025**.

Major Highlights

- **Growing Dependence on Nuclear Weapons:** Nuclear-armed states are placing greater emphasis on nuclear deterrence in their security strategies.

- ♦ This marks a **reversal of decades-long efforts** to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons.
- **Expansion and Modernisation of Arsenals:** All nine nuclear-armed states, the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel continued modernization programmes and deployed new nuclear-capable systems in 2025.
- **Global Nuclear Stockpile:** Estimated global inventory (January 2026): 12,187 nuclear warheads. **Russia and the USA together possess around 83%** of all stockpiled nuclear warheads.

WORLD NUCLEAR FORCES, JANUARY 2026

Country	Military stockpile ^a		Total inventory ^c
	Deployed ^b	Total	
USA	1 770	3 700	5 042
Russia	1 796	4 400	5 420
UK	120	225	225
France	280	290	370
China	34	620	620
India	12	190	190
Pakistan	–	170	170
North Korea	–	60	60
Israel	–	90	90
Total	4 012	9 745	12 187

- **Declining Arms Control and Disarmament:** Since the end of the Cold War, dismantling retired warheads generally exceeded deployment of new ones.
 - ♦ SIPRI warns that this trend is likely to reverse as **dismantlement slows and deployment of new weapons accelerates.**
- **Weakening Arms Control Regime:** Strategic dialogue among major nuclear powers is declining.
- **Rising Escalation Risks:** Advances in missile technology, artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and space-based systems are complicating deterrence calculations. SIPRI warns that heightened geopolitical tensions increase the possibility of miscalculation leading to nuclear escalation.
- **India-Specific Observations:** India's estimated nuclear arsenal **increased to 190 warheads, up from 180 the previous year.**

- ♦ **India continues to modernize its deterrent** through developments such as longer-range missiles, MIRV technology, and stronger sea-based nuclear capabilities.
- ♦ India's strategic planning is increasingly influenced by China's growing military capabilities, while the India–Pakistan nuclear rivalry remains important.
- **Military Spending:** India retained its position as the **world's fifth-largest military spender in 2025.**
 - ♦ India's military expenditure at \$92.1 billion, an increase of **8.9% over the previous year.**
- **Import of Arms:** India also remained the **world's second-largest importer** of major arms during the 2021-25 period, accounting for **8.2% of global arms imports.**

THE MAIN SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS OF MAJOR ARMS, 2021–25

Supplier	Global share exports (%)	Recipient	Global share imports (%)
1 USA	42	1 Ukraine	9.7
2 France	9.8	2 India	8.2
3 Russia	6.8	3 Saudi Arabia	6.8
4 Germany	5.7	4 Qatar	6.4
5 China	5.6	5 Pakistan	4.2
6 Italy	5.1	6 Japan	3.9
7 Israel	4.4	7 Poland	3.6
8 UK	3.4	8 USA	2.9
9 South Korea	3.0	9 Kuwait	2.8
10 Spain	2.3	10 Australia	2.8

About SIPRI

- SIPRI is an **independent international institute** dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. It is based in Stockholm.
- It was established in **1966** and provides **data, analysis and recommendations**, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
- **Funding:** It was established on the basis of a decision by the Swedish Parliament and receives a substantial part of its funding in the form of an annual grant from the **Swedish Government.**
 - ♦ The Institute also seeks financial support from other organizations in order to carry out its research.

Nuclear Disarmament

- It refers to the **act of eliminating or abolishing weapons** (particularly offensive arms) **either unilaterally or reciprocally**.
- It may refer either to reducing the number of arms, or to eliminating entire categories of weapons.

Treaties Related to Nuclear Disarmament

- **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT):** It was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970, the NPT aims to **prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament**.
 - ♦ It divides the world into **nuclear-weapon states (NWS)**, recognized as possessing nuclear weapons at the time of the treaty's signing, and **non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS)**, which agree not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.
 - ♦ It requires NWS to pursue disarmament negotiations in good faith.
 - ♦ **India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan** have not signed the NPT.
- **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW):** Adopted by the United Nations in 2017 and opened for signature in 2018, the TPNW aims to prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons.
 - ♦ It represents a significant step towards nuclear disarmament, although it has not been signed by nuclear-armed states.
- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT):** Opened for signature in 1996, the CTBT aims to ban all nuclear explosions for both civilian and military purposes.
 - ♦ While the treaty has been signed by 185 countries and ratified by 170, it has not entered into force as nuclear-armed states must ratify it to become operational.
- **Outer Space Treaty:** This multilateral agreement **entered into force in 1967** and bans the siting of weapons of mass destruction in space.
 - ♦ All nine states believed to have nuclear weapons are parties to this treaty.

India's Nuclear Weapons Program

- **Smiling Buddha (1974):** India conducted its first nuclear test code-named 'Smiling Buddha',

and since then, it has developed a nuclear triad consisting of land-based, sea-based, and air based delivery systems.

- **Operation Shakti (1998):** India conducted a series of nuclear tests at **Pokhran**, codenamed 'Operation Shakti'.
 - ♦ It marked India's formal entry into the nuclear weapons club.

India's Policy Towards Nuclear Weapons

- **No First Use:** India has a declared nuclear no-first-use policy, under which it will not use nuclear weapons as a means of warfare unless first attacked by nuclear weapons.
- **Non-Use Against Non-Nuclear Weapon States:** India has committed to not using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
- **Retaliation Only:** India's nuclear doctrine asserts that nuclear weapons are solely for deterrence and that India will pursue a policy of 'retaliation only'.
- **Multilateral Legal Arrangements:** India is prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

Source: SIPRI

AMPLIFYING' RANDOM NUMBERS BRINGS A BREAKTHROUGH IN DIGITAL SECURITY

Context

- Researchers at ETH Zürich have experimentally **demonstrated device-independent randomness amplification**, converting weakly random data into **certifiably perfect randomness using quantum entanglement**.

What is Randomness in Digital Security?

- Modern digital security relies on **cryptographic keys**, which are generated using random numbers.
 - ♦ If random numbers contain patterns or biases, **attackers may predict keys and compromise encryption**.
- **True randomness is difficult to achieve** because practical random number generators often contain small biases due to noise, heat, or hardware imperfections.
 - ♦ **This represents a fundamental limitation of classical computation** and motivated

the search for quantum methods to achieve perfect randomness.

- **Randomness Amplification:** It is the process of starting with an imperfect or biased random source and using quantum correlations generated through entanglement **to produce output that is certifiably unbiased and unpredictable.**
 - ♦ It has potential use in **lotteries, blockchain systems, auditing, and secure digital infrastructure.**
- **Limitations:** The setup is currently large, complex, and laboratory-based.
 - ♦ Output rates are much lower than commercial random-number generators.

What is Cybercrime?

- Cybercrime refers to criminal activities that involve the **use of computers, networks, and digital technologies.**
 - ♦ It encompasses a **wide range of illicit activities** conducted in the virtual space, often with the intent to compromise, damage, or gain unauthorized access to computer systems, networks, and data.
- Cybercriminals employ **various techniques and tools** to exploit vulnerabilities in networks, and they may target individuals, organizations, or even governments.
- **As per the NCRB Crime in India 2024 Report,** the overall crime rate in India **declined by 6% in 2024** compared with 2023 but there was an increase of over **17% in cybercrime cases.**

Impact of Cyber Crimes

- **National Security Threats:** Cyber crimes pose a threat to national security when state-sponsored actors or criminal organizations target critical infrastructure, government institutions, or military systems.
- **Data Breaches:** Data breaches lead to the exposure of personal information, trade secrets, intellectual property, and other confidential data, causing severe damage to the affected entities.
- **Disruption of Services:** Cyber attacks disrupt essential services such as power grids, communication networks, and transportation systems.
- **Reputational Damage:** Organizations that fall victim to cyber attacks often suffer reputational damage.

Initiatives by Government of India to Prevent Cybercrimes

- **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In):** CERT-In is the **national nodal agency** for responding to cybersecurity incidents.
 - ♦ It provides proactive and reactive cybersecurity support and plays a crucial role in ensuring the security and resilience of the country's cyber infrastructure.
- **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC):** NCIIPC is responsible for protecting critical information infrastructure from cyber threats.
 - ♦ It identifies and designates critical sectors and advises organizations in these sectors on enhancing their cybersecurity measures.
- **Cyber Crime Prevention against Women & Children (CCPWC) scheme:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has provided financial assistance to all the States & UTs under the scheme to support their efforts for setting up of cyber forensic-cum-training laboratories, training, and hiring of junior cyber consultants.
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):** It provides a framework and ecosystem for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
 - ♦ 'Joint Cyber Coordination Teams' have been constituted for seven regions at Mewat, Jamtara, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Visakhapatnam and Guwahati under the I4C.
- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** It is launched to enable the public to report incidents pertaining to all types of cyber crimes.
 - ♦ **A toll-free number 1930** has been operationalized to get assistance in lodging online cyber complaints.
 - ♦ The **Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System** module has also been launched for immediate reporting of financial frauds and to stop siphoning off funds by the fraudsters.
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre):** This initiative is aimed at creating awareness about **botnet and malware infections** and providing **tools for detection and cleaning.**
 - ♦ It also provides cyber security tips and best practices for citizens and organisations

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

PRIDE MONTH AND THE EVOLUTION OF LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN INDIA

Context

- June is observed globally as Pride Month to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and raise awareness about issues of equality, inclusion, and human rights.

About LGBTQ+ Community

- **LGBTQ+** is an umbrella term for **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons**, with '+' representing other identities that are not specifically included in these letters.
- **Notably, LGBTQ+** persons do not conform with traditional gender roles and expectations, display sex characteristics that do not fit the typical male or female binary, and their gender identities that differ from the sex they were assigned at birth.

What is Pride Month?

- Pride Month traces its origins to the **1969 Stonewall Uprising** in New York City.
- It commemorates the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights and celebrates diversity and inclusion.
- In India, the **'Friendship Walk'** held in Kolkata on **2 July 1999** is widely regarded as the precursor to the country's Pride Parade movement.

India's Position on LGBTQ+ Rights

- **As per census 2011**, there were 4.87 lakhs persons in India who opted for **"other" in gender category**.
- **Transgender Rights: NALSA v. Union of India (2014)** recognised the right to self-identify gender.
 - ♦ It recognises **transgender as the "third gender"** upholding their fundamental rights.
- **Decriminalisation: Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)** decriminalised consensual homosexual acts (Section 377 partially struck down).
- **Constitutional Provisions:** Article 14 Right to equality, Article 15 No discrimination on grounds of sex and Article 21 Right to life and personal liberty.
- **Legislation:** The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 provides legal recognition of transgender identity.

Source: IE

ZOJILA TUNNEL

Context

- The Zojila Tunnel achieved its final breakthrough in June 2026, marking a significant milestone in India's efforts to establish all-weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh.

About Zojila Tunnel

- The Zojila Tunnel is a **13.14-km-long single-tube, bi-directional road tunnel** being constructed beneath the Zojila Pass in the Himalayas.
- It is located at an altitude of approximately **11,578 feet** and connects **Baltal in Kashmir** with **Meenamarg in Ladakh**.
- The tunnel is designed as a **two-lane horseshoe-shaped structure** and is among the world's longest road tunnels at such a high altitude.
- The project is being executed by **Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Ltd.**
 - ♦ The tunnel has been constructed using the **New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM)**.
 - ♦ **NATM relies on sequential excavation, immediate support measures such as shotcrete and rock bolting, and continuous geotechnical monitoring, allowing engineers to respond flexibly to changing ground conditions during tunnelling.**

Strategic Importance

- It will provide all-weather connectivity between **Kashmir Valley and Ladakh**.
- It will reduce dependence on the **snow-bound Zojila Pass**, which remains closed during winter due to heavy snowfall and avalanches.
- It will **improve military logistics and troop mobility** in areas close to the **Line of Actual Control**.

Source: TH

PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHIT MATRITVA ABHIYAAN (PMSMA)

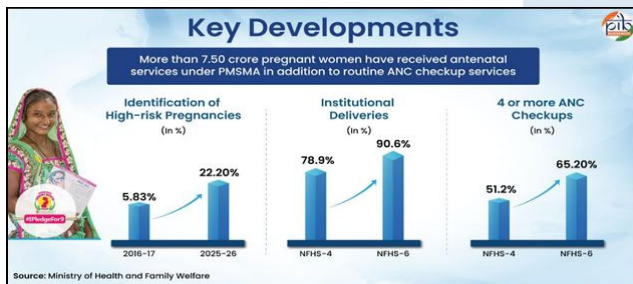
Context

- The 10th anniversary of the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) was observed.

About PMSMA

- Launched on **June 9, 2016**, PMSMA provides free, comprehensive antenatal care to pregnant women — particularly those in their second and third trimesters — at designated government health facilities on the **9th of every month**.

- **Key Services: Under PMSMA, pregnant women receive:**
 - ♦ Clinical examinations and risk assessment;
 - ♦ Blood and urine tests;
 - ♦ Ultrasonography;
 - ♦ Essential medicines and supplements;
 - ♦ Counselling on nutrition, birth preparedness, and safe pregnancy practices.
- **The Doctor Volunteer System:** The programme encourages voluntary participation of private-sector specialists, including obstetricians, gynaecologists, radiologists, and physicians, to provide antenatal care services on the 9th of every month.
- In **2022**, the government launched the **Extended PMSMA (e-PMSMA)** to strengthen tracking and follow-up of high-risk pregnancies.
- **Achievements:**
 - ♦ India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) **declined from 130** per lakh live births (2014–16) **to 87** per lakh live births (2022–24).
 - ♦ The initiative contributes to India's commitment towards achieving the **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target** of reducing maternal mortality to below **70 per 100,000 live births by 2030**.



Working Alongside Other Maternal Health Initiatives

- PMSMA does not operate in isolation. It forms part of a larger ecosystem of maternal and child health programmes implemented by the Government.
 - ♦ **The Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)** promotes institutional deliveries. Since 2014-15, it has benefited more than 11.96 crore women as of March 2025.
 - ♦ **The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)** provides free healthcare services to pregnant women and newborns. Since 2014-15, more than 18.05 crore beneficiaries have received support under the scheme.

- ♦ **The Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)** strengthens quality maternal healthcare through a network of over 99,290 facilities.
- ♦ Other initiatives such as Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (**POSHAN**) **Abhiyaan**, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (**PMMVY**), and Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative (**LaQshya**) address maternal nutrition, maternity benefits, and quality of care in labour rooms.
- Together, these programmes create a comprehensive framework for maternal and newborn health.

Source: PIB

PREVENTIVE DETENTIONS

Context

- The Allahabad High Court recently raised concerns over the alleged misuse of preventive detention laws.

What is Preventive Detention?

- Preventive detention refers to the detention of a person **without trial** in order to prevent them from committing an act that may threaten public order, national security, or other vital state interests.
- Unlike **punitive detention**, which is imposed as punishment after conviction by a court of law, preventive detention is based on the apprehension that a person may engage in activities prejudicial to:
 - ♦ Security of the State;
 - ♦ Defence of India;
 - ♦ Public order;
 - ♦ Foreign affairs; or
 - ♦ Maintenance of essential supplies and services.
- The Constitution divides the legislative power to enact preventive detention laws between the **Union and the States**.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 22(3)** of the Constitution provides for preventive detention laws, Article **22(4)** contain the following safeguards against abuse of this power:

- ◆ No law providing for preventive detention shall authorise the detention of a person for a longer period than **three months**. Detention beyond this 3-month period requires clearance from an **Advisory Board**.
- **The 44th Amendment Act of 1978** has reduced the period of detention without obtaining the opinion of an advisory board from three to two months. However, this provision has not yet been brought into force, hence, the original period of three months still continues.

Source: IE

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Context

- The Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has indicated that **subsidised LPG cylinders for households under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** have been reduced from **nine to four**.

About

- As per the latest information, the **subsidy for Ujjwala customers is limited to ₹300 per cylinder** for the first four units each year, **reflecting average annual consumption of four to five cylinders**.
- Domestic cooking gas LPG prices were raised by 29 per cylinder marking the **second increase in three months** as state-owned fuel **retailers continue to grapple with elevated global energy costs**.
- **The PMUY beneficiary pays an effective** 642 for a 14.2 kg cylinder, and the general consumer in Delhi pays 942, against a **cost of supply that has now risen to over ₹1,600**.

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- **In 2016**, Government of India launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY).
- **The objective** of the scheme is to **replace harmful cooking fuels** such as coal and firewood with clean LPG to protect women & children's health by reducing indoor smoke pollution.
- **Eligibility:** Initially, LPG connections were provided to women belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households identified through the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011.

- ◆ **Under PMUY 2.0 (launched in 2021) eligible beneficiaries include:** Migrant families, scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), most Backward Classes (MBCs), beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, forest dwellers, other poor households not covered earlier.
- The scheme provides a **completely free LPG connection, including the first refill and a stove**.
- PMUY initially aimed to provide 8 crore free LPG connections to poor households, achieving this target in September **2019**.
 - ◆ To reach more families, PMUY 2.0 was launched in 2021, distributing an additional 1.6 crore connections by **2022**.
- **Achievements:** More than 10 crore LPG connections have been released under the scheme.
 - ◆ LPG coverage in India has increased significantly, approaching universal household coverage.
 - ◆ Contributed to improved health outcomes and reduced dependence on biomass fuels.

Source: LM

GALLANTRY AWARDS

Context

- President conferred Gallantry Awards to the personnel of the **Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Forces, and State and Union Territory Police** during the Defence Investiture Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

About

- The President conferred **seven Kirti Chakras, 15 Vir Chakras and 29 Shaurya Chakras**.
- **One of the four Gaganyatris** chosen for **India's Human Space Flight Mission Gaganyaan, Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair** was awarded **Kirti Chakra** for his indomitable spirit and bravery.

About Gallantry Awards

- **Gallantry Awards** are given by the Government of India to honour acts of bravery, sacrifice, and exceptional courage by **members of the armed forces, paramilitary forces, and civilians**.
- They are classified as **wartime (gallantry in the face of enemy) and peacetime awards**.

- **Administered by:** Ministry of Defence (for armed forces) and Ministry of Home Affairs (for police and civilians).
- **Awarded by:** President of India.
- These gallantry awards are **announced twice in a year** - first on the occasion of the Republic Day and then on the occasion of the Independence Day.
- **Wartime Gallantry Awards:** Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Mahavir Chakra (MVC) and Vir Chakra.
 - ♦ These were instituted on 26 January 1950, and were deemed to have effect from 15 August 1947, the date of India's independence.
- **Peacetime Gallantry Awards:** Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Shaurya Chakra.
 - ♦ The Government instituted three more gallantry awards on 4 January 1952, also with retrospective effect from 15 August 1947.
 - ♦ Originally, they were named as: Ashoka Chakra Class-I, Ashoka Chakra Class-II and Ashoka Chakra Class-III.



- **Order of Precedence:** Param Vir Chakra (PVC), Ashoka Chakra (AC), Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), Kirti Chakra (KC), Vir Chakra (VrC), Shaurya Chakra (SC).
- **All six awards can be conferred posthumously.**

Source: AIR

TEJAS

Context

- The Defence Minister reviewed the progress of major ongoing projects of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) where delays in the **delivery of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A was also discussed.**

About

- **The Ministry of Defence** had signed a contract to buy **97 light combat aircraft**, of the **Tejas Mark-1A variant**, for the **Indian Air Force from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.**
- This procurement aims to **replace the aging MiG-21 fleet** soon to be phased out.

- With just 29 fighter squadrons against a sanctioned strength of 42.5, the Tejas Mk1A induction has become an operational necessity for the IAF.

Tejas Mk-1A

- **Developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, Tejas is the **world's lightest fighter aircraft in its class.**
- **It is a 4.5 generation**, all weather and multi-role fighter aircraft.
- The aircraft is designed to be a **multi-role aircraft** capable of taking up offensive air support, close combat and ground attack roles at ease.
- **LCA Mk1A** is the most **advanced version of the LCA Tejas.**
- **It is equipped with** AESA Radar, EW suite consisting of radar warning and self-protection jamming, Digital Map Generator (DMG), Smart Multi-function Displays (SMFD), Combined Interrogator and Transponder (CIT), Advanced Radio Altimeter and other advances features.

Source: TH

HERBICIDE-TOLERANT MUSTARD HYBRIDS

Context

- India is set to begin large-scale cultivation of **imidazolinone-resistant (IMI-resistant) mustard hybrids** during the 2026–27 rabi season.

About

- The hybrids are designed to control **Orobanche (Phelipanche)**, a parasitic weed that attaches itself to the roots of mustard plants.
- It draws **water and nutrients from the host plant**, reducing growth and productivity.
 - ♦ Since much of the parasite remains underground, manual removal is difficult and often ineffective.

What are IMI-Resistant Mustard Hybrids?

- These are mustard hybrids resistant to **imidazolinone (IMI) herbicides.**
- They have been developed through **mutation breeding**, not through genetic modification (GM).
- Mutation breeding involves **selecting and preserving naturally** occurring genetic mutations that confer desirable traits.

How does it work?

- The technology is based on the enzyme **Acetolactate Synthase (ALS)**, which is essential for plant growth.
- IMI herbicides normally **inhibit ALS**, causing susceptible plants and weeds to die.
- In the new hybrids, a mutation in the ALS gene makes the **enzyme resistant to the herbicide**.
- Farmers can **spray IMI herbicides across the field**, killing weeds while the mustard crop survives.

Source: TH

