

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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Table of Content

- Union Government Tightens FCRA Rules for NGOs
- CRED-Meta Deal of Fintech Sector
- Submarine Cables: Critical Infrastructure of the Digital Age
- NEET-linked Suicides: A Case Study

NEWS IN SHORT

- Chapekar Brothers
- Nirbhay Chetna
- RSS & Legal Entity
- TReDS Platform
- India's ABS Framework Delivers Rs 145 Crore to Beneficiaries
- Interstellar comet 3I/ATLAS
- Ras Laffan Gas Facility
- Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)

UNION GOVERNMENT TIGHTENS FCRA RULES FOR NGOS

Context

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has notified the Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Amendments Rules 2026, issued under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010

- FCRA aims to **regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions** to prohibit activities detrimental to the national interest.
- It was **first enacted in 1976** but repealed and later replaced with new legislation in 2010. It was further amended in **2020**.
- FCRA registration is valid for **5 years** and must be renewed before expiry.
- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** monitors the implementation of the FCRA to ensure that such funds do not adversely affect the country's internal security.

Key Amendments to FCRA Rules



- Categorisation of NGO Activities:** NGOs seeking foreign funds must register under one of five permitted categories — **social, economic, educational, cultural, and religious**.
 - This is the first time separate activity lists have been laid out for NGOs in each category.
- Mandatory Disclosure:** NGOs must now disclose their activities, the geographical scope of their programmes, their websites, social media accounts, and publications.
 - They must also **pay separate fees for each category**, State and Union Territory they operate in, as opposed to the previous single fee for FCRA registrants.
- Key functionaries:** The amended Rules also broaden the definition of an NGOs **“key functionary”** beyond office-bearers and directors to include trustees, partners, the head of a Hindu Undivided Family, governing body members, and anyone else controlling or managing the organisation.
 - Associations having foreign nationals** (other than persons of Indian origin) as key functionaries will ordinarily not be considered eligible for registration or prior permission, unless specifically permitted by the Central government.
- State-wise and Category-wise Registration:** The amended Rules state that the certificate of registration or the application form (for fresh

registrations) shall **specify the purpose or purposes for which registration is granted**, chosen only from such **list of purposes as specified in the Schedule appended to the Rules**; and the States or Union territories in which the NGO proposes to undertake the activities.

- The Rules also imposes a fee on NGOs to operate for each specified purpose, and within each State or Union Territory.

Funding check

Under the fresh changes to Rules of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, all NGOs are required to disclose specific activities and geographical scope of their programmes to receive contributions under 5 permitted categories:

 <p>EDUCATIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Schools, colleges, and libraries ■ Scholarships ■ Research institutions and think tanks ■ Civic-awareness and constitutional-rights programmes 	 <p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Livelihood generation ■ Skill development ■ Agricultural sectors ■ Entrepreneurship and micro-enterprises ■ Financial and digital inclusion 	 <p>RELIGIOUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Places of worship ■ Religious education ■ Pilgrim services ■ Meditation programmes ■ Preservation of religious traditions
 <p>SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public health ■ Rehabilitation ■ Sanitation and nutrition ■ Disaster relief 	 <p>CULTURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Preservation of Indian arts and languages ■ Museums, archives, and cultural festivals ■ Heritage conservation 	

Significance of Amended Rules

- The amendments **enhance transparency through greater disclosure of NGO** activities and foreign funding.
- The purpose-specific and State-specific approval system **strengthens monitoring and accountability**.
- The expanded definition of key functionaries improve governance and responsibility within NGOs.
- The **changes improve the traceability of foreign funds** and strengthen regulatory oversight.

What are the Concerns?

- Multiple registrations and fees increase compliance costs for NGOs.
- Enhanced reporting requirements burden smaller organizations with limited resources.
- Restrictions on approved activities and locations will reduce operational flexibility.
- Stringent regulations affect the functioning of civil society organizations and foreign-funded development projects.

Concluding remarks

- The amended FCRA Rules seek to strengthen transparency, accountability, and oversight of foreign contributions received by NGOs.
- While the measures can improve regulatory compliance and prevent misuse of funds, their effective implementation should ensure that

genuine civil society organizations are able to continue their developmental and humanitarian work without undue administrative burdens.

Source: TH, ET

CRED-META DEAL OF FINTECH SECTOR

Context

- Kunal Shah, India's prominent fintech entrepreneur **has been appointed as global CEO of WhatsApp**.

About

- The Meta is also investing **\$900 million in CRED**, raising concerns over US technology companies gaining **increasing control over India's fintech sector** and data generated by Indian consumers.
- The Meta-CRED transaction comes at a time **when India's digital-payments ecosystem is increasingly dominated by platforms linked to US firms**.
 - Walmart controls about 72% of PhonePe, Google owns Google Pay and Meta owns WhatsApp Pay.
 - The proposed CRED investment would further strengthen the control of foreign technology giants in a sector built largely on Indian public digital infrastructure.
- Many Indian fintech startups **appear more interested in building companies for eventual sale to foreign buyers** than in creating long-term Indian-owned digital champions.

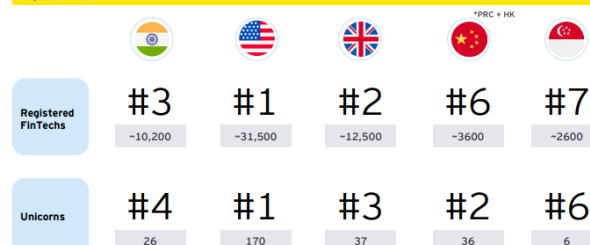
What is Fintech?

- The fintech sector in India refers to the **use of technology to enhance, innovate, and streamline financial services**.
- This sector encompasses a wide range of financial products and services, including **digital payments, lending, insurance, wealth management, and personal finance**, all powered by technology.

Fintech Sector in India

- The Indian fintech industry is estimated to be around **USD 110 billion in 2024** and is projected to reach about **USD 420 billion by 2029**.
- India ranks 3rd globally**, in number of FinTechs and is the Global Leader in digital payment volumes.
- From just **1 Mn transactions in 2016**, UPI has since crossed the landmark **10 Bn transactions**.

The number of registered FinTech start-ups has grown **fivefold** in the past three years, from 2,100 in 2021 to 10,200 in 2024



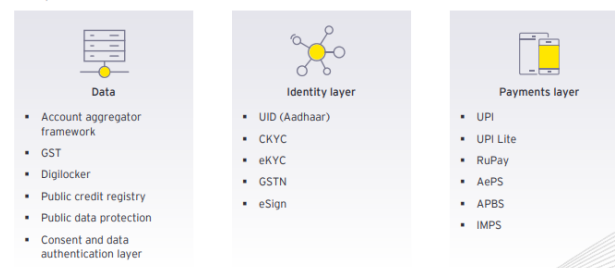
Source: Ministry of Finance, Tracxn

Growth Drivers

- Digital Infrastructure: Open Application Programming Interface (API) Platforms** i.e. Aadhar, UPI, Bharat Bill Payments, GSTN.
- Technological Innovation:** Implementation of new business models driven by technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
- Favourable Demographics:** 62% of urban and 37% of rural adults use the internet. Smartphone penetration surpassed 50% in 2024, with a 2.5x growth in the last seven years.

Digital public infrastructure

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) integrated identity, payments, and data layers to enable secure, paperless, cashless, and presence-less transactions across India



FinTechs in India have leveraged the Digital Public Infrastructure for on-boarding customers at a reduced cost and acquiring new customers with robust checks

- Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Financial inclusion programmes such as PMJDY, DAY-NRLM, Direct Benefit Transfer, Atal Pension Yojana among others have accelerated the digital revolution and brought more citizens, especially in rural areas, within the ambit of digital financial services.

Challenges

- Cybersecurity Risks:** The increasing use of digital platforms raises concerns about data breaches and cyberattacks.
 - Ensuring robust security measures to protect sensitive financial data is crucial.
- Lack of Digital Literacy:** A significant portion of the population still lacks digital literacy and access to technology, which limit the reach and effectiveness of fintech solutions.
- Customer Trust:** Building trust in digital financial services, especially among older demographics and those new to technology is challenging.

- **Policy Changes:** Changes in economic or financial policies, including taxation and interest rates majorly affect the fintech ecosystem.
- **Innovation and Scalability:** Keeping pace with rapid technological advancements and ensuring that systems can scale effectively as user demand grows is a tough challenge.

Government Initiatives for Fintech Sector in India

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** Aims to increase financial inclusion by facilitating the enrollment of new bank accounts for direct benefit transfers and access to financial services.
- **India Stack:** A societal initiative to build public digital infrastructure that supports both public and private digital initiatives, particularly in the finance sector.
- **Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS):** Allows individuals to conduct financial transactions using their Aadhaar number and biometric verification (fingerprint or iris scan) on Micro-ATMs.
- **Central KYC (Know Your Customer):** A central repository designed to reduce the need for multiple KYCs across different financial institutions.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** A scalable platform that supports digital payments across India.
- **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS):** Enhances consumer convenience by enabling bill payments across various utilities and sectors, covering all recurring billers except prepaid recharges.
- **Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) for Fintech:** RBI has recognized Fintech Association for Consumer Empowerment as an SRO for the fintech sector.
 - ♦ It strengthens industry standards, compliance, and consumer protection.
- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) and Related Initiatives:** Government-led efforts, including NDHM and DISHA, aim to transform the insurance and healthcare sectors through digital infrastructure.
- **Regulatory Sandbox:** Introduced by the Reserve Bank of India and later by International Financial Services Centres Authority.
 - ♦ Allows fintech firms to test innovative products in a controlled regulatory environment before full-scale deployment.
- **Fintech Hub at IFSC, GIFT City:** A world-class fintech hub developed in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, to promote India as a global fintech leader.

Conclusion

- The fintech sector in India is vibrant and rapidly evolving, playing a significant role in the country's financial ecosystem by enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and inclusion.

Source: IE

SUBMARINE CABLES: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE DIGITAL AGE

Context

- The **British Empire's "All-Red Line"** demonstrated the strategic importance of communication networks, a role now performed by undersea fibre-optic cables connecting the digital world.

What Were Undersea Telegraph Cables?

- Undersea telegraph cables were **insulated communication wires laid** on the seabed to transmit telegraphic messages across oceans.
- They revolutionized **long-distance communication** by reducing message transmission time from weeks or months to a matter of minutes.
- They were the **predecessors of today's fibre-optic submarine cables** that carry most global internet traffic.
- In 1851, the world's first successful undersea telegraph cable was laid across the **English Channel** by the **Submarine Telegraph Company**.

Emergence of the "All-Red Line"

- In the **late 19th century**, Britain built a large network of undersea telegraph cables across its colonies.
 - ♦ This network was called the "All-Red Line" because British colonies were shown in **red colour on maps**.



- The network connected different parts of the British Empire and helped Britain communicate quickly with its colonies.

- The network passed through British-controlled territories to avoid dependence on rival powers.
 - Cables were drawn from the **Strait of Gibraltar** into the Mediterranean, routed through **Malta and the Suez Canal**, into the Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean to **Bombay**, and stretched as far as **Hong Kong**.

Major Vulnerabilities Associated with Undersea Cables

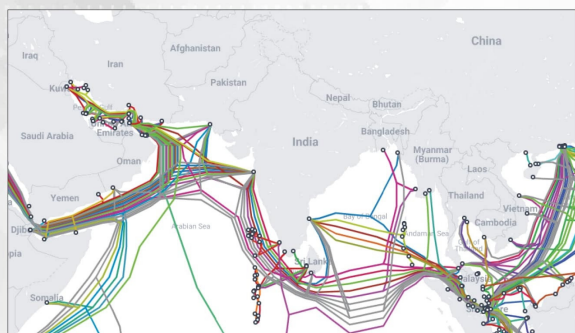
- Concentration of Infrastructure:** Many submarine cables are concentrated along the same seabed routes, creating dangerous **single points of failure**.
- Difficulty in Repair Operations:** Repairing damaged submarine cables requires specialised ships, technical expertise, and international coordination. Repair operations become difficult during military tensions or maritime conflicts.
- Legal and Regulatory Ambiguity:** International legal frameworks regarding intentional cable disruption **remain weak and ambiguous**, especially in situations involving hybrid warfare or grey-zone conflicts.

India's Undersea Cable Network

- India is a significant player in the global submarine cable network, with 17 international cables and 14 landing stations in cities like Mumbai and Chennai.
 - As of the end of **2022**, the total lit capacity and activated capacity of these cables stood at **138.606 Tbps** and **111.111 Tbps**, respectively.
- India is linked to global networks through several submarine cables, including **SMW4 (South East Asia–Middle East–Western Europe 4)** and **IMEWE (India–Middle East–Western Europe)**.

INDIA A STRATEGIC LOCATION FOR SUBSEA CABLES

India's strategic location makes it a vital hub for subsea cables connecting regions like the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Europe, facilitating connectivity between continents. Telegeography's Submarine Cable Map depicts approximately 400 submarine cables worldwide, spanning over 1.3 million kilometres. In India, Mumbai has about 20 subsea cables landing in the city, while Chennai has nine cables.



India's Undersea Cable Technological Deficiencies

- India lacks defined legal mechanisms to safeguard undersea cables** within its territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
 - Unlike countries like Australia, which has "**Cable Protection Zones**" regulated under UNCLOS, India has yet to designate similar zones, leaving its cables vulnerable to both accidental and malicious damage.
- Operational Readiness:** India lacks indigenous cable repair ships and relies on foreign vessels for maintenance. This absence significantly delays restoration following cable damage.
- Monitoring Shortfall:** There is minimal undersea infrastructure for real-time surveillance of subsea cable networks, which further risks timely detection and response to disruptions.

International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience

- It was established by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** in partnership with the **International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC)** in 2024.
 - This initiative aims to **strengthen the resilience of submarine cables**.
- The Advisory Body will also provide **strategic guidance** to address challenges related to **increasing traffic, aging infrastructure, and growing environmental threats** to submarine cables.

International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC)

- ICPC, **founded in 1958**, is a global forum for governments and commercial entities involved in the submarine cable industry.
- Its primary mission** is to enhance the security of undersea cables by providing a platform for exchanging technical, legal, and environmental information.

Source: IE, ITU, PIB

NEET-LINKED SUICIDES: A CASE STUDY

Context

- Recent tragic suicides, including a 22-year-old and other aspirants nationwide, highlights calls for mental health support and systemic reform in high-stakes entrance testing.

NEET-linked Suicides: Case in Brief

- NEET-linked suicides include those students who either prepare or appear for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and commit suicide due to the stress of the exam, fear of failure, parental expectations, social pressure, etc.

Key Ethical Issues in NEET-linked Suicides

- **Devaluation of Intrinsic Value of an Individual to Marks, Ranks and Admission:** Denying human dignity by reducing the value of a student to his marks and ranks.
- **Lack of ethics of care:** The students receive no emotional support from families, schools, coaching institutes and society.
- **Unreasonable social and parental pressures:** Exceedingly high expectations rob students of their independence, welfare and emotional well-being.
- **Commercialisation of education:** In many cases, the educational institutions give priority to results and profit over the holistic development of the students.
- **Stigmatisation of failure:** The student sees failure as a personal flaw or an indication of inadequacy.
- **Absence of proper counselling services:** Insufficient counselling services and absence of accessible psychological services are against the obligation to take care.
- **Development of low EI and resilience:** Too much emphasis on academic success at the cost of emotional development and resilience.
- **Comparisons on social media:** Continuous comparison on social media raises the stress levels of the students.
- **Institutional Responsibility and Accountability:** It is the obligation of the educational institution to make it an emotionally safe place for all the students.
- **Issues of Equity and Justice:** Access to better coaching classes raises the issue of equity.

Ethical Considerations for Handling Exam-linked Suicides

- **Human Dignity (deontological/Kantian ethics):** Each human being is an end-in-itself and is dignified irrespective of success or failure.
 - ♦ Each student possesses intrinsic value irrespective of his marks or ranks.
 - ♦ Policy and social attitudes should reflect that life has worth apart from accomplishments.
- **Ethics of care:** Care and compassion are essential for families, schools, coaching institutes and society.

- ♦ Relationships, attentive listening and a nurturing environment are its central aspects.
- **Compassion and Empathy:** It means understanding the problems of the students without judging. It implies a humane response and not blaming or stigmatising.
- **Emotional Intelligence (EI):** Daniel Goleman describes EI as the ability to know, control and empathise with others.
 - ♦ Students should develop self-awareness, the ability to control their emotions and stress and build resilience.
 - ♦ Teachers / parents should be empathic and sensitive.
- **Responsibility and Duty of Care:** It is the moral obligation of the educational institution to provide counseling, mentoring and safe spaces.
 - ♦ Parents and society have collective responsibility.
- **Justice and Fairness:** Equal access to quality education, counseling and opportunities irrespective of socio-economic factors.
 - ♦ Reduce inequalities caused by the coaching ecosystem.
- **Autonomy and Respect for Individual Choice:** Students should be able to choose a career based on their talents and interests.
- **Virtue Ethics:** Virtues like resilience, perseverance, courage, self-discipline and hope should be promoted among the students.
- **Communitarian Ethics:** Improve social connectedness and community engagement to fight loneliness and isolation.
- **Ethics of Well-Being/Holistic Development:** Education should take into account the holistic development of personality, i.e., intellectual, emotional, moral and social development, and not just examinations.

Way Forward: Building a Life-affirming Society

- **For Families:** Do not compare excessively, recognize efforts rather than results; and open communication.
- **For educational institutions:** Provide counselling and mentoring, value education and life skills and normalization of failure and resilience.
- **For Society:** Destigmatize mental illnesses, appreciate perseverance, not only success, empathy and inclusivity.

Conclusion

- An ethical society cannot judge human beings based on their examination scores or professional success.

- As per Ernest Hemingway 'A man can be destroyed but not defeated'.
- It is the ethical responsibility of families, institutions and society to make sure that each young person gets enough dignity and support to choose life despite everything.

Source: IE

NEWS IN SHORT

CHAPEKAR BROTHERS

Context

- On 22 June 1897, the Chapekar brothers assassinated British plague commissioner Walter Charles Rand in Pune.

About

- The Chapekar Brothers, **Damodar Hari Chapekar, Balkrishna Hari Chapekar, and Vasudeo Hari Chapekar**, were among the earliest revolutionary nationalists in India's freedom struggle.
- They were influenced by the revolutionary activities of **Vasudev Balwant Phadke** and the nationalist ideas propagated by **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** through his newspaper **Kesari**.
- **Formation of Secret Organisation:** They organized an association called "**Chapekar Club**" for physical and military training which they also called "the society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu Religion".
- **During the bubonic plague outbreak of 1896–97**, the British administration implemented harsh plague-control measures under the leadership of **Walter Charles Rand**, Chairman of the **Poona Plague Committee**.
 - ♦ Soldiers conducted intrusive house searches, violated religious customs, and subjected local residents to humiliating inspections.
 - ♦ Viewing Rand as a symbol of colonial oppression, the **Chapekar brothers planned his assassination**.
- **Arrest and Execution:** Damodar Hari Chapekar was executed in 1898, whereas Vasudeo Hari Chapekar and Balkrishna Hari Chapekar were executed in 1899.

Source: IE

NIRBHAY CHETNA

Context

- **The Ministry of Panchayati Raj** organised a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Nirbhay Chetna.

About

- **Nirbhay Chetna** is a key intervention under the **Nirbhay Raho initiative**, launched in 2026 by the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj**.
- It comprises three complementary components:
 - ♦ **Nirbhay Netri** focuses on capacity-building and legal awareness among elected women representatives;
 - ♦ **Nirbhay Chetna** seeks to sensitise elected male representatives on gender equality and women's safety; and
 - ♦ **Nirbhay Drishti** envisages the installation of CCTV cameras at strategic rural locations to strengthen technology-enabled safety infrastructure in Panchayats.
- **Under Nirbhay Chetna, a cadre of 28,500 Master Trainers** is being developed at the State, district, and block levels to reach over **17.5 lakh male elected representatives across the country**.
 - ♦ Master trainers who will engage male elected representatives on gender equality, women's safety, rights, and leadership within Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Source: PIB

RSS & LEGAL ENTITY

In News

- Karnataka's home minister questions **the legal status of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**.

About

- The RSS describes itself as a voluntary socio-cultural organisation and a **"body of individuals"**.
- It is **not a society registered** under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, or a trust registered under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882, or a Section 8 company established under the Companies Act, 2013.

What is a Legal Entity?

- A 'person in law' means any entity that can have legal rights and obligations. Persons are typically categorised as follows:
 - ♦ **Natural Person:** A human being
 - ♦ **Juridical/Artificial Person:** A legal entity such as a company, trust, society or statutory body that has legal rights and obligations distinct from those of its members.
- The legislation allows legal individuals to **hold property, enter into contracts, and sue or be sued**.

About Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

- It is a Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation created by **Dr K.B. Hedgewar in Nagpur** in 1925 in response to perceived challenges to Hindu culture and society **during the era of British colonial control**.
- It seeks to **promote the concept of Hindutva, stressing the cultural and national identity of Hindus**.
- The organisation played a vital role in the social and cultural mobilisation of Hindus in the **pre-independence period**. It **emphasised community service, education and promotion of Hindu ideals**.
- After independence in 1947, the RSS came under criticism, particularly after the killing of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse in 1948. The organisation **was briefly suspended and then revived**.

Source: TH

TREDS PLATFORM

Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued Reserve Bank of **India (Trade Receivables Discounting System) Directions, 2026**, aimed at simplifying the onboarding process for MSMEs.

What is TReDS?

- **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)** is an online platform which helps small businesses auction their invoices or trade receivables to banks and other financial institutions to unlock working capital.
- The platform **facilitates financing against receivables** due from corporate buyers, government departments, and public sector undertakings (PSUs).

About the RBIs Directions

- RBI fixed a minimum net worth of **₹25 crore** and should get it certified by a **statutory auditor** to provide discounting services.
- Existing entities providing the service have been given a deadline of March 31 2028 to comply with the networth criterion.

Source: TH, MoneyControl

INDIA'S ABS FRAMEWORK DELIVERS RS 145 CRORE TO BENEFICIARIES

Context

- India's Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 has mobilized more than Rs 266 crore since 2008, with around 145 crore disbursed to beneficiaries.

What is Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)?

- ABS refers to the framework through which benefits arising from the use of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge are **shared fairly and equitably with the communities** that have conserved these resources.
- It is a principle under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- India operationalizes ABS through the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, and its recent amendment the **Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023**.

Significance

- India's ABS framework is advancing the objectives of the **Nagoya Protocol**, supporting the **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2024-2030**, and contributing to the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**, particularly Target 13 on fair and equitable benefit sharing.

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

- The Act was introduced to achieve the objectives of **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992**.
- It provides a framework for **access to biological resources and sharing the benefits arising out of such access and use**. It is in line with the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing**.

Nagoya Protocol

- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) is a supplementary agreement to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- It provides a transparent legal framework for the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: **the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources**.
- It was adopted in **2010 in Nagoya, Japan** and entered into force in **2014**.

Source: PIB

INTERSTELLAR COMET 3I/ATLAS

Context

- The discovery of **3I/ATLAS**, only the third known interstellar object, has provided scientists with a rare opportunity to study material from **an ancient planetary system**.

What is 3I/ATLAS?

- 3I/ATLAS is the **third interstellar object** ever detected passing through our Solar System. **Interstellar refers to** anything located, moving, or occurring in the space between stars within a galaxy.
 - ♦ It is a comet about **2.6 km in diameter**.
 - ♦ The name “**3I**” denotes the **third identified interstellar object**.
 - ♦ It was formed **when the Universe was only about 13% of its current age**.
 - ♦ It contains **water with about 30 times more deuterium** (heavy hydrogen) than comets in the Solar System.
 - ♦ **Carbon isotope ratios differ** significantly from those found in Solar System objects.
- **The two other interstellar objects previously observed** were comets called 1I/Oumuamua, detected in 2017, and 2I/Borisov, discovered in 2019.
- **3I/ATLAS is now approaching the orbit of the planet Saturn** and is expected to pass beyond the dwarf planet Pluto’s orbit in **2029 and exit the solar system’s outer boundary in around 2035**.
- **Significance:** Scientists estimate that it formed 10–12 billion years ago, making it possibly the **oldest object ever observed in the Solar System**.
 - ♦ It **predates the formation of the Solar System**, which is about 4.5 billion years old.
 - ♦ It likely originated in a different planetary system and was later ejected into interstellar space.

Source: TH

RAS LAFFAN GAS FACILITY**Context**

- An explosion at the **Barzan gas facility in Ras Laffan, Qatar**, claimed the lives of 12 Indian workers.

Indian laws/rules Applicable to such Accidents

- **The Factories Act 1948** applies to almost all the accidents as it addresses the operator’s duties to prevent fires and explosions, mandate safeguards and disclosures, and have emergency plans when dealing with hazardous processes.
- **The 1989 Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules** under the Environment Protection Act 1986 aims to prevent vapour cloud explosions and other chemical mishaps.
- **The 2010 Central Electricity Authority Regulations** may apply if any sources of ignition or electrical equipment interact with a flammable gas or mix of gases.

- **The Boilers Act 1923 and the various State boiler rules** address the inspection and certification of boilers and pressure systems, conditions of safe operations, the qualifications of operators, and periodic inspections.

HAZOP and LOPA to Calculate a Safety Instrumented System

- **HAZOP:** HAZOP is short for ‘**hazard and operability study**’, a systematic way to identify deviations from a facility’s design intent.
 - ♦ HAZOPs typically focus on steady-state operations and evaluate how a pipe would behave if there is no flow inside it.
 - ♦ For transient operations, engineers use procedural HAZOPs, where they analyse every single step of the startup manual.
- **LOPA:** Layer-of-protection analysis, or LOPA, is likewise a semi-quantitative tool that operators use to check if there are enough independent protection layers to prevent an accident.
 - ♦ One layer could be the operator, another could be an alarm, a third could be a relief valve, a fourth could be a blast wall, and so on.

Source: TH

PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR (PMRBP)**Context**

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited nominations for the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2026.

About Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)

- The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar is conferred annually by the President of India on **Veer Bal Diwas** (26 December).
- Instituted in its present form in **2019**, the award recognises children aged **5–18 years** for exceptional achievements in **six categories**: Bravery, Art & Culture, Environment, Science & Technology, Social Service and Sports.
- To be **eligible**, a nominee must:
 - ♦ Be an Indian citizen residing in India;
 - ♦ Not have received the award previously; and
 - ♦ Have achieved the recognised accomplishment within the **two years preceding the nomination deadline**.
- While the award is generally **not conferred posthumously**, exceptional cases may be considered.
- This award is the **highest civilian honour for children** in India. Each awardee of PMRBP is given a medal, a certificate and a citation booklet.

Source: DD News

