

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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CBSE RELAXES THREE-LANGUAGE FORMULA FOR STUDENTS

Context

- Recently, the government has clarified that the students studying in Classes 7, 8 and 9 in CBSE affiliated schools can continue learning foreign languages under the three-language policy until they finish Class 10.

About the Three-Language Formula Policy

- It aims to promote **multilingualism, national integration, and linguistic diversity** in India.
- Historical Background:**
 - The three language policy was **first recommended** by the **Kothari Commission (1964-66)**.
 - It was adopted in the **National Policy on Education (NPE), 1968**, and reiterated in **NPE 1986/1992**.
 - It was re-emphasised under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- According to NEP 2020:**
 - Students will learn **three languages**, with flexibility in choice.
 - At least two of the three languages should be native to India.**
 - No language is to be imposed on any State.
 - The choice of languages rests with **States, regions and students**.

Major Determinants & Objectives

- Promotion of Multilingualism:** Enhances linguistic competence among students; and encourages learning beyond the mother tongue.
- National Integration:** Helps in cross-regional communication; and enhances the concept of 'Unity in Diversity'.
- Preservation of Indian Languages:** Helps in fulfilling constitutional responsibility through Articles 29, 350A and 351; and promotes the preservation of classical and regional languages.
- Cognitive and Educational Gains:** NEP 2020 mentions that multilingual education increases cognitive and critical thinking abilities of students.
- Enhancement in Employability & Mobility:** Helps in increasing educational and employability opportunities in India.

Issues and Concerns in Policy

- Language Imposition Fears:** Some States, especially the ones in south India, feel that there is an issue of imposition of Hindi.

- Federal Issues:** As **Education falls in the Concurrent List** of Schedule VII, states want more autonomy in making the language policy.
- Shortage of Language Educators:** Many schools face shortage of educators of several Indian languages.
- Challenges in Implementation:** Rural and remote schools do not always have the required infrastructure or learning materials.
 - Challenges related to timetabling and overloaded curriculum exist.
- Issues related to Equity:** Students of government schools may get less language choices compared to the students of private schools.
 - Unequal access can increase educational disparities.
- Additional Burden for Students:** Learning several languages can increase academic burden.

Recent Initiatives Addressing Major Concerns in Policy

- Flexibility in NEP 2020:** NEP makes it clear that no language shall be imposed on any State.
 - Flexibility has been provided to the States and the students in choosing languages.
- National Curriculum Framework (NCF):** It supports multilingual education while keeping in mind regional diversities.
 - Foundational literacy in the home language is emphasized.
- Promotion of Mother Tongue Medium:** According to NEP, the medium of instruction up to Grade 5 (preferably up to Grade 8) should be in the home/mother tongue wherever possible.
- Training of Language Teachers:** The Ministry of Education and NCERT have been working on developing multilingual teaching materials and training programs for the teachers.
- Use of Technology:** Platforms like DIKSHA offer multilingual digital content.
 - Development of e-learning materials in various Indian languages is being undertaken.

Other Related Initiatives Related to Education in India

- NIPUN Bharat:** It aims at promoting foundational literacy and numeracy.
- PM SHRI Schools Scheme:** It works towards development of model schools in line with NEP 2020.

- **Samagra Shiksha:** It is an integrated school education program from pre-primary to Class XII.
- **DIKSHA Platform:** Digital learning resources in various Indian languages.
- **NCF 2023:** It promotes multilingual and competency-based education.
- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Initiative:** It promotes inter-State cultural and linguistic interaction.

Way Forward: Strengthening Initiatives

- **Facilitate Cooperative Federalism:** The language policy should be evolved with consultations between the Union and the States.
- **Increase Flexibility:** There should be increased language choices for the students according to the requirements of region/locality.
- **Teacher Capacity Building:** Recruitment and training of competent language teachers in all Indian languages.
- **Development of Multilingual Learning Materials:** There should be development of good quality textbooks and digital content in all scheduled languages.
- **Use of Technology:** Using AI-enabled translation tools and digital platforms for multilingual education.
- **Mother Tongue Based Education:** Promotion of multilingual proficiency along with mother tongue-based foundational learning.

Source: TH

DECLINING FERTILITY RATE IN INDIA AND CONCERNS

Context

- As per the latest Sample Registration System data **India's total fertility rate is at 1.9** children per woman, below both the **global average of 2.2** and the **replacement level of 2.1** needed to keep a population stable.

TFR as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2024

- **India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR),** the average number of children a woman would have in her lifetime assuming she lives through her reproductive years (15-49 years), has **fallen below the replacement level of 2.1**.
 - ♦ **Replacement rate** is the number of child births a woman must go through to keep the

population constant from one generation to the next without migration.

- **The only states in India with a TFR higher than 2.1 in 2024** were Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh.
- **Delhi records the lowest TFR at 1.2**, followed by Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal at 1.3 each.
 - ♦ **The southern states** have always had TFRs well below the national average. This has gone down further in the last two decades.
- **In 1985, India's TFR was 4.3** and has fallen at a rate of about 0.06 per year and there is no sign that this decline will reverse.
 - ♦ At the current pace, India's TFR is projected to drop below 1.6 by 2031.

Reasons for Declining Fertility Rate in India

- **Delayed Marriage and Childbearing:** The average age of marriage has increased, especially in urban areas, couples are postponing childbirth due to career considerations.
- **Urbanisation:** Urban living is associated with higher costs of housing, education, healthcare, and childcare. Limited living space and changing lifestyles encourage smaller family sizes.
- **Improved Access to Contraception and Family Planning:** Expansion of reproductive health services and contraceptive availability has enabled couples to plan the number and spacing of children.
- **Declining Infant and Child Mortality:** Improvements in healthcare, immunisation, nutrition, and sanitation have reduced child mortality.
- **Economic Factors:** The cost of raising and educating children has increased substantially. Families increasingly prefer investing more resources in fewer children to improve their quality of life and educational outcomes.
- **Demographic Transition:** India is moving through the later stages of the Demographic Transition Model, characterised by low birth rates, low death rates, slower population growth.

Major Concerns

- **Difference Between India and Other Countries:** Western Europe and Japan aged after they had **industrialised, brought a large share of workers into formal employment, widened their tax systems, and built welfare institutions with some capacity for risk-pooling**.

- ♦ Even then, ageing strained public finances; Japan saw the burden push public debt above 200% of GDP.
- ♦ India enters the same demographic passage on a **weaker institutional and fiscal base**, its per-capita income is around \$2,800 and its direct tax base remains narrow.
- ♦ **State governments**, tasked with much of the social-sector response, are already **fiscally stretched**.
- **Informal Employment:** Most workers spend their lives in **informal or semi-formal work**, old-age income security remains largely outside formal employment contracts.
 - ♦ A contribution-based pension system works best when earnings are predictable, employment is formal, and workers can save regularly over decades.
- **Existing Public Safety Nets:** The Atal Pension Yojana assumes sustained contributions across one's working life, which is difficult for informal workers with volatile incomes.
 - ♦ The old-age pension under the National Social Assistance Programme remains 200 a month for those aged 60 to 79 and 500 for those above 80. Such support does not protect the elderly from dependence.
- **Regional Demographic Imbalances:** Fertility rates vary significantly across states, most southern and western states have well below replacement fertility, while states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan continue to record relatively higher fertility levels.
 - ♦ This may alter the internal migration patterns, political representation, resource allocation and labour market dynamics.
- **Maternal and Child Health Schemes:** Programmes under the National Health Mission (NHM) improve maternal and child health, reduce infant mortality, and create conditions that support family formation and childbearing.
 - ♦ Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) provide maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating women.
- **Mission Shakti:** Umbrella programme for women empowerment and safety.
 - ♦ It includes schemes supporting childcare services and economic empowerment of women.
- **Palna Scheme (National Crèche Scheme):** It provides day-care facilities for children aged 6 months to 6 years.
 - ♦ It offers nutrition, health care, and early learning support, helping mothers participate in the workforce.
- **Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVYAY):** AVYAY brings together articulation of each of the current schemes, future plans, strategies and targets and maps it with schemes/programmes, accountabilities, financials and clear outcomes.
 - ♦ This Plan takes care of the top four needs of the senior citizens viz financial security, food, health care and human interaction /life of dignity.
 - ♦ It also includes the facets of safety/protection and general wellbeing of the elderly beginning from awareness generation and sensitization of the society.
- **Scheme of Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens (IPSRc):** Setting up of Homes to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens, especially indigent senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities.
- **Promoting Silver Economy:** It has an objective to encourage the entrepreneurs to think about the problems of the elderly and come out with innovative solutions.
 - ♦ The Government aims to achieve the objective by providing upto Rs. 1 crore as financial assistance through equity participation, through an open invitation on a portal namely **Seniorcare Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE)**.

Government Initiatives

- **State-Level Population Policies:** Andhra Pradesh's Population Management Policy (2026) provides cash incentives for second, third and fourth children, free education support, fertility clinics, and improved maternal healthcare.
 - ♦ Sikkim has introduced measures such as extended maternity and paternity leave and support for IVF treatment to address declining fertility.
- **Infertility Support Programmes:** The Jiyo Parsi Scheme provides financial assistance for infertility treatment, child-care support, and awareness campaigns to arrest the decline of the Parsi population.

Way Ahead

- **Adopt a Balanced Population Policy:** Shift from a sole focus on population control to a demographic strategy that balances population stabilization with concerns over declining fertility.

- **Strengthen Family Support Measures:** Provide affordable childcare, parental leave, and flexible work arrangements for young couples.
- **Expand Fertility and Reproductive Healthcare:** Improve access to infertility treatment, assisted reproductive technologies (ART), and reproductive health services, especially in smaller cities and rural areas.
- **Promote Gender Equality:** Encourage greater sharing of caregiving responsibilities and enhance women's workforce participation through supportive workplace policies.
- **Focus on State-Specific Interventions:** Tailor policies to regional demographic trends, as fertility levels vary significantly across states.
- **Invest in Human Capital:** Alongside fertility measures, improve education, healthcare, and skill development to maximize the benefits of India's demographic transition.

Conclusion

- International evidence shows that low fertility can accompany prosperity.
- The difficulty is that India is entering mass ageing before completing the transitions that made ageing manageable elsewhere.
- India's low-fertility future will be sustainable only if stronger public systems gradually assume responsibilities that large families once carried quietly.

Source: TH

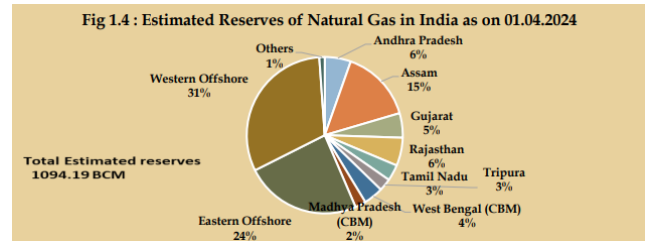
INDIA'S GAS-BASED POWER PUSH AMID RENEWABLE EXPANSION

Context

- **The Grid Controller of India (Grid India)** has advised gas-based power stations to plan fuel procurement arrangements, anticipating the need for additional gas-fired generation for coming days.

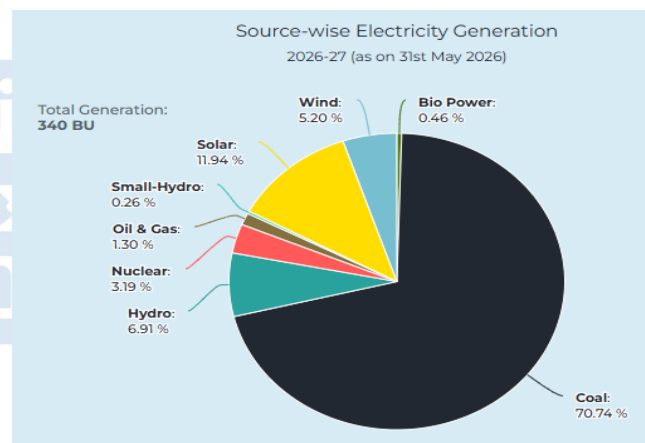
What is Gas-Based Power?

- Gas-based power plants generate **electricity using Natural Gas or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)**.
- They primarily operate through **Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) technology**, which offers faster start-up than coal plants, higher operational flexibility, and lower carbon emissions than coal.



India's Energy Landscape

- India has **achieved over 50%** of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources, well ahead of its **2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** target.
- As per IRENA RE Statistics 2025, globally, **India stands 3rd in Solar Power** installed capacity, **4th in Wind Power** capacity and **4th in total Renewable Energy** capacity.
- **Coal-based thermal power** remains the grid's mainstay, meeting **over two-thirds of total peak demand**. However, this share retracted to **57 per cent** during solar hours.



Why Does India Still Need Gas-Based Power?

- **Cleaner Energy Source:** Gas-based power generation emits fewer pollutants compared to coal-based power plants, making it a cleaner option.
- **Less Hydropower Generation:** The India Meteorological Department has forecast below-normal rainfall in this monsoon. This will eventually reduce inflows into reservoirs, limiting hydroelectric power generation.
- **Intermittent nature of Renewable Energy:** Solar power generation falls after sunset, while wind generation is also variable. However electricity demand continues throughout the day and peaks in the evening.
- **Grid Balancing:** Gas-based power plants can start and ramp up quickly, making them suitable for balancing variable renewable energy.

- **Rapid Deployment:** Gas-based power plants can be **constructed relatively quickly** compared to large-scale coal or nuclear plants.

Challenges of Gas-Based Power

- **Import of Natural Gas:** India has **limited domestic natural gas reserves**, and the majority of its consumption is met through **imported natural gas, primarily from countries like Qatar, Australia, and the United States.**
- **Infrastructure Constraints:** The development of infrastructure, including pipelines, LNG terminals, and city gas distribution networks, is essential for the efficient transportation and distribution of natural gas.
 - ♦ However, the expansion of infrastructure in India has been hampered by factors such as **land acquisition issues, regulatory hurdles, and funding constraints.**
- **Environmental Concerns:** While natural gas is considered a cleaner alternative to coal and oil, its **extraction, transportation, and combustion still produce greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Low Plant Utilisation:** Many gas-based plants remain underutilised because of expensive fuel and limited domestic gas availability.

Government Initiatives to Increase Gas Based Energy

- **Infrastructure Development:** As of June 2025, about 25,429 km of natural gas pipelines are operational, while 10,459 km are under various stages of construction.
- **National Gas Grid ("One Nation, One Gas Grid"):** It is the expansion of the pipeline network to connect all states and transport natural gas safely and economically.
- **Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga (PMUG):** The Jagdishpur–Haldia–Bokaro–Dhamra–Barauni–Guwahati natural gas pipeline) stretches **3,546 km**, across **6 states** (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and Assam) to bring cleaner fuel to Eastern India.
- **City Gas Distribution (CGD) Network Expansion:** The government has been promoting the expansion of CGD networks across India to increase access to piped natural gas (PNG) for households, industries, and commercial establishments.
 - ♦ Under the CGD bidding rounds, licenses are awarded to entities for developing CGD networks in geographical areas identified by the **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB).**

- **Gas Price Rationalization:** Reforms such as the New Domestic Gas Pricing Guidelines (2014) and the introduction of the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) have aimed to provide **pricing incentives for domestic gas producers while balancing the interests of consumers.**
- **Natural Gas Infrastructure Development Fund (NGIDF):** The government has set up the NGIDF to provide financial support for the development of natural gas infrastructure in India.

Way Ahead

- **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS):** Accelerate deployment of grid-scale battery storage through supportive policies and financial incentives to provide reliable balancing and peak-hour support.
- **Expand Pumped Storage Projects (PSPs):** Fast-track the development of pumped hydro storage as a cost-effective long-duration energy storage solution.
- **Adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI),** machine learning, and digital grid management tools to improve renewable energy forecasting and optimise scheduling.
- **Transmission infrastructure:** Accelerate the expansion of **Green Energy Corridors** and interstate transmission networks to transmit renewable power from resource-rich regions to demand centres.

Concluding remarks

- India's energy transition is no longer only about installing more solar panels and wind turbines but it is about ensuring that clean electricity is available whenever consumers need it.
- Until **large-scale energy storage and smart grid technologies** become widespread, gas-based power will remain an essential balancing resource.

Source: IE, BS, MOSPI, NITI AAYOG

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

Context

- The Union Food and Public Distribution Department published a draft of the proposed amendments to the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

- NFSA aims to supplement the food requirements of up to **75% of the rural** and up to **50% of the urban population**, which at Census 2011 comes to 81.35 crore persons.
- It aims to ensure food and nutritional security by providing affordable foodgrains through the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.
- Eligible households receive subsidized foodgrains based on;
 - ♦ **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households:** These households constitute the poorest of the poor. AAY households are entitled to **35 kg** of food grains **per household per month**.
 - ♦ **Priority Households (PHH):** These households are entitled to **5 kg** of food grains **per person per month**.

Who are the Beneficiaries?

- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) Households:** Chosen by States/UTs based on Central Government criteria, covering the poorest of the poor. **The Eligible Categories are;**
 - ♦ Households headed by widows, terminally ill persons, disabled persons, or elderly persons (60+) with no assured means of subsistence or societal support.
 - ♦ Widows or terminally ill persons or disabled persons or persons aged 60 years or more or single women or single men with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence.
 - ♦ All primitive tribal households.
 - ♦ Landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen, slum dwellers, and people earning a daily livelihood in the informal sector and other similar categories in both rural and urban areas.
 - ♦ All eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families of HIV-positive persons.
- **Priority Households:** Selected by State Governments/Union Territory Administrations as per their own criteria.

Merger With PMGKAY

- During the COVID-19 pandemic in **2020**, the government launched the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**, under which additional foodgrains were provided free of cost.
- From January 2023, the government **merged PMGKAY with NFSA** and made the **regular NFSA entitlement itself free of cost**.

- In November 2023, this free foodgrain scheme was **extended for five years** (January 2024 to December 2028).

Proposed Amendments to NFSA

- A new provision In **Section 3** of the **National Food Security Act, 2013**, proposes that **every person** belonging to households covered under the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** shall be entitled to **7 kg of foodgrains** every month to a **maximum of 35 kg per household**.
 - ♦ Earlier, it was 35 kg per AAY household, irrespective of the number of members in the household.
- For AAY cardholders, this allocation will be **free of any charges**.
- **Rationalise behind the proposal:** Rationalise foodgrain allocation by addressing the imbalance whereby smaller households receive disproportionately higher per-capita entitlements than larger households.

What are the Concerns?

- **Inadequate Nutritional Security:** The amendment focuses exclusively on cereals and does not include pulses, edible oils, or other nutrient-rich foods.
- **Demand for Higher Entitlement:** Right to Food activists have demanded **14 kg** of foodgrains per person instead of 7 kg, particularly for the poorest households.
- **Disadvantage to Large Families:** The amendment retains the ceiling of 35 kg per household. As a result, larger households would continue to receive lower per-capita allocations than intended.
- **Regional Disparities:** Smaller households, which are more common in southern States, may receive lower foodgrain allocations than under the existing system.
- **Outdated Coverage:** The coverage of the National Food Security Act continues to be based on the 2011 Census despite significant population growth. Millions of eligible households are estimated to remain outside the ambit of the Public Distribution System.
- **Implementation Challenges:** The amendment does not address operational issues affecting the Public Distribution System.
 - ♦ **Biometric authentication failures, e-KYC-related exclusions, connectivity issues,** and difficulties faced by migrant workers,

elderly persons, and persons with disabilities continue to prevent eligible beneficiaries from accessing their foodgrain entitlements.

Way Ahead

- **Update NFSA beneficiary coverage** using the latest Census data to reflect current demographic realities.
- There is a need to ensure that no existing beneficiary experiences food insecurity due to the transition.
- Consider supplementing cereals with **pulses, edible oil, and fortified foods** to improve nutritional security.
- There is a need for consultations with States to build consensus and strengthen **cooperative federalism** before finalising the amendment.

Source: DTE, TH, PIB

NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU ANNUAL REPORT – 2025

Context

- The Union Home Minister has released the 'Narcotics Control Bureau Annual Report 2025'.

Major Highlights of the Report

- **Myanmar Emerged as Alternative Source:** Following the 2022 Taliban-imposed ban on drugs in Afghanistan, Myanmar has emerged as an alternative source of global opium supply.
 - ♦ Myanmar's illicit opium cultivation expanded by approximately 56% between 2021 and 2023 with the area under poppy cultivation reaching 45,200 hectares.
 - ♦ Myanmar's Golden Triangle has expanded as both an opiate supplier and a dominant methamphetamine (Yaba tablets) hub.
- **North-East India Most Impacted:** The northeastern States of Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland are bearing the sharpest frontline exposure due to the enhanced production of drugs in Myanmar.
- **Porous Border Mechanisms:** The Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the India-Myanmar border, have created conditions under which these States have transitioned from peripheral transit zones to active staging grounds for distribution of narcotics.

- **Drug Trafficking Through Afghanistan:** The drone-based drug trafficking from across the Pakistan border has seen a five-fold increase over the past five years, particularly into Punjab.
 - ♦ This exponential rise reflects the **growing operational maturity of trafficking networks** using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to circumvent traditional border controls.
 - ♦ **The South Asian arm of the drug trade via Afghanistan** flows through Pakistan into India via both the land frontier in Punjab and Rajasthan, and the maritime frontier along the Gujarat and Maharashtra coastlines.

Why is India Targeted by Drug Trafficking?

- **Geographic Location:** India is situated at the intersection of the illicit drug flows from two key drug-producing regions, the so-called Golden Crescent (encompassing the border regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) and the Golden Triangle (including Myanmar, Laos and Thailand), and has been historically affected by heroin flows from both directions.
- **Extensive Land and Maritime Borders:** India shares over 15,000 km of land borders and a coastline of over 11,000 Km.
 - ♦ Porous borders with Myanmar, Nepal, and Bangladesh facilitate cross-border smuggling through difficult terrain and informal routes.
- **Growing Domestic Market:** India is no longer only a transit country but also a significant consumer market.
- **Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Base:** India is one of the world's largest producers of pharmaceuticals and precursor chemicals.
 - ♦ Diversion of precursor chemicals can aid the illegal manufacture of synthetic drugs if regulatory oversight is weak.
- **Narco-Terrorism:** Drug trafficking finances terrorist organisations and insurgent groups. Proceeds from narcotics have been used to fund anti-India activities, especially along the western border.
- **Expanding Maritime Trade:** India's busy ports and growing container traffic create opportunities to conceal narcotics among legitimate cargo.
- **Difficult Terrain and Border Challenges:** Dense forests, mountains, deserts, and riverine stretches make surveillance difficult.

- **Regional Instability:** Political instability and weak law enforcement in parts of neighbouring countries enable cultivation, production, and trafficking of narcotics into and through India.

Impact of Drug Abuse

- **Economic Impact:** Drug abuse lowers productivity, increases healthcare costs, and weakens human capital.
- **Health Impact:** It causes mental disorders, spreads HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, and leads to physical deterioration.
- **Social Impact:** It disrupts families, fuels domestic violence, and results in social isolation and stigma.
- **National Security Impact:** Drug trade fosters narco-terrorism, organised crime, and youth involvement weakens national integrity.

Steps Taken

- **Indian Initiatives:**
 - ♦ **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act):** It prohibits the production, possession, sale, and consumption of illicit drugs and prescribes penalties for violations.
 - ♦ **Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan:** Launched in 2020, this campaign aims to create awareness about the ill effects of drug abuse and promote a drug-free India.
 - ♦ **350 Integrated Rehabilitation Centers for Addicts (IRCA)s** are supported by the Government to provide treatment for the drug victims, preventive education, awareness generation, motivational counseling, detoxification/de-addiction, after care and re-integration into the social mainstream.
 - ♦ **Kashi Declaration:** It is a five-year roadmap for drug-free India, signed during the Youth Spiritual Summit in Varanasi.
 - ♦ **India** has set a national goal of achieving a **Drug-Free India by 2047**.
 - ♦ **India** has signed **Bilateral Agreements with 27 countries**, Memorandum of Understanding with 16 countries and Agreements on Security Cooperation with 02 countries for combating illicit trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) and Chemical Precursors as well as related offences.

- ♦ **Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF):** Many states have established ANTFs to strengthen drug law enforcement at the state level.
- ♦ **DarkNet Monitoring Cell** under **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** tracks online drug sales.
- ♦ To monitor the investigation of important and significant seizures, a **Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) under the Chairmanship of Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** has been set up.
- **Global Initiatives:**
 - ♦ **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):** The UNODC is at the forefront of the global fight against illicit drugs. The UNODC-led campaign aims to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.
 - ♦ **International Narcotics Control Board (INCB):** The INCB monitors the global drug situation and assesses countries' compliance with international drug control treaties.

Conclusion

- The growing drug menace in India poses a grave threat to public health, societal well-being, and national security.
- However, sustained success will require coordinated efforts across government, civil society, and communities, with a strong emphasis on prevention, rehabilitation, and youth empowerment to build a truly Nasha Mukh Bharat.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

PRE-CONCEPTION AND PRE-NATAL DIAGNOSTIC TECHNIQUES (PCPNDT) ACT

Context

- The growing use of portable ultrasound devices has raised debate that the **PCPNDT Act, 1994** needs to be updated to support better healthcare access while preventing the misuse of ultrasound for illegal sex determination.

What is the PCPNDT Act?

- The PCPNDT Act was introduced in **1994** to **curb prenatal sex determination** and the **selective abortion of female fetuses** in response to a declining child sex ratio.

- It was **amended in 2003** to expand its scope from regulating prenatal diagnostic techniques to also prohibiting pre-conception sex selection through modern reproductive technologies.
- **Punishment:**
 - ♦ **First offence:** Up to **3 years** imprisonment and fine up to **₹10,000**.
 - ♦ **Subsequent offences:** Up to **5 years** imprisonment and higher fines.
 - ♦ Medical practitioners may **face suspension or cancellation of registration** by the State Medical Council.
- Developed in collaboration with the **Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, the portal enables International arriving passengers to submit a mandatory online Health Self-Declaration — **covering 21-day travel history**, exposure history and related symptoms, if any — prior to immigration clearance.
- The portal enables **real-time data sharing** with the Airport Health Officer, Bureau of Immigration, IDSP and State Surveillance Officers, enabling swift identification and referral of at-risk travellers.

Key Provisions of the Act

- **Regulation of Diagnostic Techniques:** Prenatal diagnostic techniques may be used only for detecting specific genetic or congenital abnormalities, chromosomal disorders, metabolic disorders, haemoglobinopathies, or sex-linked diseases.
 - ♦ Every genetic counselling centre, laboratory, clinic, ultrasound clinic, and imaging centre must be registered under the Act.
- **Restriction on Advertisements:** Any advertisement promoting sex determination or sex selection services is prohibited.
- **Record Maintenance:** Registered clinics must maintain prescribed records of every **prenatal diagnostic procedure**.
 - ♦ Failure to maintain records is treated as a violation under the Act.

Source: TH

AIR SUVIDHA 2.0 PORTAL

Context

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) launched Air Suvidha 2.0.

Air Suvidha 2.0 Portal

- It is an upgraded **contactless Passenger Health Self-Declaration Portal**, to strengthen public health surveillance at Points of Entry.
 - ♦ The launch follows the **WHO's declaration of the Ebola/Bundibugyo virus disease outbreak** in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** and **Uganda** as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

What is Bundibugyo virus disease?

- **Bundibugyo virus disease (BVD)** is a rare and potentially deadly type of viral hemorrhagic fever. It is caused by **Bundibugyo virus, a type of Ebola virus**.
 - ♦ BVD has caused two previous outbreaks, one in Uganda in 2007 and one in DRC in 2012.
- **BVD is spread** by contact with the **blood or bodily fluids of a person** who is infected with or has died from BVD.
 - ♦ It is also spread by **contact with contaminated objects** or by contact with animals, such as **bats and nonhuman primates**, that are infected with BVD.
- **Symptoms** include fever, headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, and unexplained bleeding or bruising (a late stage of illness).
- **There are no vaccines** or specific treatments approved to prevent or treat BVD.

Source: PIB,

BANDIPUR AND NAGARAHOLE TIGER RESERVES

Context

- The Karnataka Government announced the full restoration of the jungle safari (park excursion) at the Bandipur and Nagarhole Tiger Reserves, suspended since November 2025 in the wake of human-tiger conflict in the region.

Bandipur and Nagarhole Tiger Reserves

- **Location:** Both tiger reserves are located in **Karnataka** and form part of the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**, India's first Biosphere Reserve.



- **Project Tiger:**

- ♦ **Bandipur** was among the first nine Tiger Reserves notified under Project Tiger in 1973.
- ♦ **Nagarahole** was declared a Tiger Reserve of India in 2003.

- **Landscape:** Together with **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu)** and **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala)**, they form one of the largest contiguous protected forest landscapes for tigers and Asian elephants in the world.
- **River system:** The **Kabini Reservoir** separates the Bandipur and Nagarahole Tiger Reserve on the North-west.
- **Fauna:** Tiger, Leopard, Asiatic Wild Dog, Sloth Bear, Asiatic Elephant, Four Horned Antelope, Mouse Deer and South-western langur etc.
- **Flora:** Predominantly tropical moist deciduous, dry deciduous, and scrub forests, with patches of bamboo and teak.

Source: TH,

