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DIGITAL PUSH FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA

Context

- As per the Ministry of Home Affairs, **from January 1, 2027,** procedures related to **all investigations and trials** under the **new criminal laws will be recorded digitally.**

About

- The **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** has been established by integrating the Police (CCTNS), Courts (e-Courts), Jails (e-Prisons), Forensic Lab (e-Forensic) and Prosecution (e-Prosecution).
- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** is the **Nodal Agency** responsible for implementation of the project in association with **National Informatics Centre (NIC), as the Technology Partner.**
- **Under the ICJS 2.0 project** all applications are being upgraded and funds have been provided to States/UTs to upgrade hardware and network connectivity.

Digital drive

The digitisation aims to make way for faster, more transparent, and integrated justice delivery nationwide

- All investigations and trials under BNS, BSS, and BNSS will be digitally recorded and stored on the **MeghRaj** government cloud platform
- The **Interoperable Criminal Justice System** (ICJS) connects police, courts, prisons, prosecution, and forensic laboratories on a single platform
- Over **63,500** zero-FIRs have been registered, allowing complaints to be filed regardless of jurisdiction and transferred electronically
- 25 new **forensic laboratories** have been added in two years to support mandatory forensic investigations
- Implementation has risen from 46.47% to 70.06% since January 2025, with improved **chargesheet compliance** and millions of digital evidence IDs and e-summons generated

ICJS Addresses the following areas

- Facilitate **seamless integration between the various data sets** of Police, Prisons, Forensics, Prosecution and Courts.
- **Enhance data quality** by reducing errors in data entry.
- **Increase effectiveness and timeliness** in investigations, and consequently in Trials, due to easy access of data between pillars.
- Enabled effective use of data analytics and AI/ML tools available in the investigations.
- Reduce dependence on paper records in decision-making.
- Enable a shift towards "SMART Policing".

Various Digital Systems Developed and being Updated

- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project (2009):** Its aim is to inter-link all police stations under a common application software for the purpose of investigation, data analytics, research, policy making and providing Citizen Services.
- **e-Prisons:** e-Prisons application is a cloud-based product deployed as a unified application for all the states of India where states need to configure state-specific parameters.
    - It provides vital information about the inmates lodged in the prisons in a real-time environment to the courts, prison officials, and other entities that are involved in the Criminal Justice System.
- **e-Forensics:** e-Forensics is an online case registration and tracking system formulated under the project ICJS, which assists the examiners in delivering expeditious, accurate, and reliable forensic reports to the police.
- **e-Prosecution:** The main purpose of the e-Prosecution application is to digitalize the process followed by the public prosecutor as one of the pillars of the criminal justice system to ensure transparent and speedy trials.
- **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)**: It is a centralized repository of criminal fingerprints that can be accessed by users of State/UTs and central law enforcement agencies across the country.
- **Criminal Procedure (Identification) System:** The Government enacted Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 which empowers Police and Prison Officers to collect measurements from persons of interest for the purpose of identification and investigation in criminal matters.
    - The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has been designated as the modal agency responsible for implementing the CrPI Act Across all States and Union Territories in the country.

Concerns

- **Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Risks:** Integration of criminal justice databases increases the risk of data breaches, cyberattacks, and misuse of sensitive personal information.

- **Digital Divide and Unequal Access:** Poor digital infrastructure and low digital literacy, especially in rural and remote areas, can exclude vulnerable sections from accessing justice.
- **Threats to Fair Trial and Due Process:** Technical glitches, connectivity issues, and reliance on virtual proceedings may hamper effective legal representation and access to justice.
- **Institutional and Infrastructure Challenges:** Lack of interoperability, inadequate digital infrastructure, and insufficient training of police, prosecutors, and judicial officers hinder effective implementation.
- **Legal and Regulatory Gaps:** India lacks a comprehensive legal framework governing AI use, digital evidence, accountability, and data governance in the criminal justice system, creating uncertainty and potential misuse.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen Data Protection and Cybersecurity:** Implement robust data protection standards, regular security audits, encryption, and strict access controls for criminal justice databases.
- **Bridge the Digital Divide:** Improve digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and digital literacy, while ensuring offline alternatives for vulnerable and digitally excluded citizens.
- **Build Institutional Capacity:** Provide regular training to police, prosecutors, forensic experts, and judicial officers on digital tools, cyber forensics, and electronic evidence.
- **Establish a Robust Legal and Ethical Framework:** Frame clear guidelines for the use of AI, facial recognition, and digital evidence, with independent oversight to safeguard privacy, transparency, and due process.
- **Enhance Interoperability and Infrastructure:** Strengthen seamless integration among police, courts, prisons, prosecution, and forensic systems under the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) through standardized protocols and reliable digital infrastructure.

Source: TH

RISE IN GULF REMITTANCES

Context

- As per the Monthly Economic Review by the Department of Economic Affairs, **despite the West Asia crisis, net remittances from the region to India rose to $16 billion** in April 2026, up **70% over the same period of last year.**

About

- **In FY26,** remittances rose **to a record $155.1 billion, up from $135.4 billion in FY25,** registering a **14.5% year-on-year increase.**
- **As a share of GDP,** remittances **increased to 4.0% in FY26 from 3.6% in the previous year.**
- **Contrary to concerns that geopolitical tensions in the West Asia region** could adversely affect remittance inflows from the Gulf economies, transfer receipts have remained robust.
  - This resilience in remittances is because they are pegged to labour market conditions in the region and do not get affected by short-term crises, unlike more volatile flows like FDI, portfolio flows, or debt flows.
  - The report found that remittances have **historically been among the most stable components of external financing.**

Remittances

- **Remittances** are a way to electronically send funds to people, often family, in another country.
  - Usually sent by individuals working in foreign countries, especially those employed in blue-collar or skilled jobs.
- **Modes of Transfer:** Remittances can be sent through banks, money transfer operators, or digital platforms.
- **Two Types of Remittances:** There are two types of remittances based on the transaction purpose**: Inward Remittance and Outward Remittance**.
  - **Inward Remittance:** The term inward remittance indicates transfer of funds from one account to another either domestically or internationally.
  - **Outward Remittance:** The transfer of funds out of the country or overseas is termed as outward remittance.
- **Impact:** Remittances are a significant source of income for many countries, contributing to their economic stability, supporting local economies, and sometimes helping to finance national trade deficits.

Source: TH

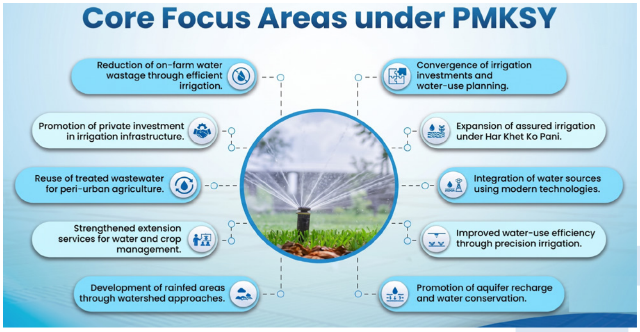
10 YEARS OF PRADHAN MANTRI KRISHI SINCHAYEE YOJANA (PMKSY)

Context

- The **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** has completed more than **10 years** of advancing irrigation-led agricultural transformation through **sustainable water management** and the **expansion of irrigation coverage.**

About Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

- It is a flagship irrigation scheme launched in 2015 under the vision of 'Har Khet Ko Pani' (Water to Every Field) and 'Per Drop More Crop'.
- It aims to provide for the integrated development and efficient management of water resources from source creation to its application at the farm level.
- It follows the **convergence approach** which involves ministries of Jal Shakti, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development.



Components of PMKSY

- **Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP):** It ensures the timely completion of major and medium irrigation projects.
    - It improves irrigation infrastructure and availability of water.
    - It has received more than ₹21,023 crore of central assistance since 2016-17. It benefitted nearly 17.3 million farmers.
    - The newly approved **Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM)** aims to provide water through pressurized piped network and micro-irrigation systems.
- **Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP):** It expands assured irrigation through minor irrigation and groundwater development.
    - It aims for the repair, renovation and restoration (RRR) of traditional water bodies.
    - More than 3,462 Surface Minor Irrigation and RRR schemes have been implemented.
- **Watershed Development Component:** It promotes integrated watershed management in rainfed and degraded areas.
    - It improves soil moisture conservation, groundwater recharge and climate resilience.
- **Per Drop More Crop (PDMC):** It promotes micro-irrigation technologies like drip and sprinkler irrigation.
    - PDMC has been subsumed under PM-RKVY since 2022-23.
    - It provides financial assistance:
        - 55% subsidy for small and marginal farmers.
        - 45% subsidy for other farmers.

Issues in India's Irrigation Infrastructure

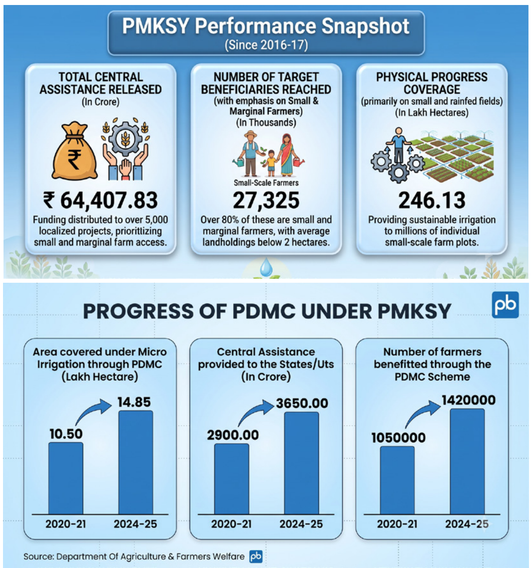
- **Monsoon Dependency:** Almost half of India's net sown area is rainfed, making agriculture highly dependent on monsoon.
- **Inefficient Water Usage:** Flood irrigation dominates Indian agriculture which causes loss of water through evaporation, runoff, and seepage.
- **Regional Disparities:** States like Punjab and Haryana have high irrigation coverage, while eastern and central India are still facing irrigation deficits.
- **Groundwater Degradation:** Unplanned exploitation has led to depleting water tables in many regions.
- **Incomplete irrigation projects:** Many major and medium irrigation projects remain stalled for decades due to lack of funding and administration.
- **Climate Change:** Increased frequency of droughts, irregular rains and extreme weather events threaten the sustainability of agriculture.

How Can PMKSY Be a Solution?

- **Integrated Water Resource Management:** PMKSY takes care of the whole irrigation value chain- from water source creation to efficient use at the farm level.
- **Promotion of Micro-Irrigation:** Drip and sprinkler systems cause minimal loss of water and increase irrigation efficiency.
- **Expanding Assured Irrigation:** Irrigation infrastructure is expanded in un-covered areas through AIBP and HKKP.
- **Watershed Based Development:** Rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and soil conservation help in building resilience in rainfed regions.
- **Convergence and Decentralized Planning:** The scheme helps in promoting convergence among ministries/states for better resource utilisation.
- **Climate Resilience:** Efficient management of water helps farmers adapt to climate change and droughts.

Achievements of PMKSY in Last 10 Years

- **Expansion of Irrigation Coverage:** PMKSY is continued till 2021-26 with an outlay of ₹93,068.56 crore.
  - By Aug 2025, more than 27 million farmers will benefitted.
  - Over 24.61 million hectares have been covered or developed through various interventions.
- **Increasing Irrigation Potential:** HKKP interventions have helped in creating almost 5.93 lakh hectares of irrigation potential.
  - Groundwater interventions have helped in adding around 88.55 thousand hectares.
- **Adoption of Micro-Irrigation:** Around 110.92 lakh hectares have been brought under micro-irrigation.
  - Almost 9.3 lakh farmers are supported annually.
- **Increasing Water-Use Efficiency:** Sprinkler and drip irrigation have significantly decreased the use of water, fertilizer, electricity and labor.
- **Increasing Income of Farmers:** Experience of farmers of Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh shows that:
  - There has been an increase in yield of 25-30%.
  - There is a 50% decrease in use of water and inputs.
  - Farmers earn profits of around ₹60,000-70,000 per hectare.
- **Sustainable Natural Resources Management:** Watershed interventions have improved soil health, groundwater recharge and ecological sustainability.



What More Needs To Be Done?

- **Universalization of Micro-Irrigation:** Micro-irrigation covers only a small portion of net sown area of India and its greater adoption is needed.
- **Strengthening Participatory Irrigation Management:** Water Users Association (WUAs) needs to be strengthened for better distribution and maintenance.
- **Completion of Incomplete Projects:** Timely execution and monitoring of irrigation projects is required.
- **Promoting Crop Diversification:** Water-intensive crops in stressed regions need to be replaced with less water-intensive crops.
- **Usage of Technology:** Scaling up remote sensing, GIS, AI based irrigation advisories and IoT enabled precision farming can prove beneficial.
- **Improvement in Groundwater Governance:** Need of scientific groundwater budgeting and management of aquifers is required for long term water security.
- **Greater Convergence:** PMKSY should be converged with MGNREGS, PMKSN, Atal Bhujal Yojana etc.

Source: PIB

FISCAL TIGHTROPE FOR STATE GOVERNMENTS

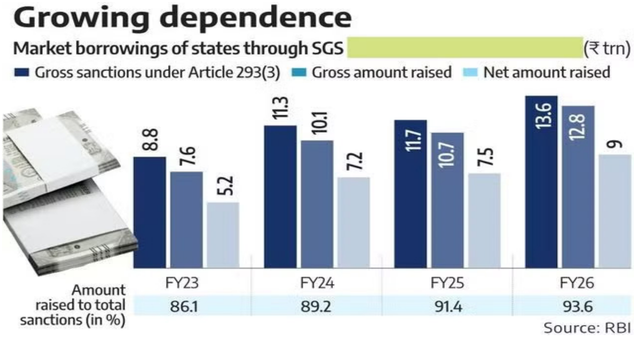
Context

- The recent White Papers released by the Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments have highlighted the growing fiscal stress faced by State governments despite their strong social and economic development.

Rising Public Debt of States

- According to the **Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report 2025–26,** States raised **₹12.76 lakh crore** through State Government Securities (State Development Loans—SDLs) during 2025–26, compared to ₹10.73 lakh crore in 2024–25.
  - **Market borrowings** financed **76.3% of States' gross fiscal deficit,** up from 71.8% in the previous year.
- The sharp increase in State borrowings has widened the spread between State Development Loans (SDLs) and comparable Central Government Securities (G-Secs).

- **The weighted average cut-off yield** on SDLs increased to **7.32% in 2025–26**, compared to 7.20% in 2024–25.



Why are State Governments Facing Fiscal Stress?

- **Developmental Responsibilities:** State governments are responsible for delivering essential public services such as healthcare, education, irrigation, urban and rural development and public welfare.
  - Also growing **population, urbanisation and rising public expectations** have significantly increased expenditure on social and economic sectors.
- **Limited Revenue Mobilisation:** States rely mainly on the State Goods and Services Tax (SGST), State Excise Duty, Stamp Duty and Motor Vehicle Tax for their own revenues.
- **Dependence on Union Transfers:** The state governments are dependent on centre for tax devolution, finance Commission grants, centrally Sponsored Schemes and loans.
  - However the states have raised their concerns regarding insufficient devolution of tax and conditional grants.
- **Borrowing for Current Expenditure**: The CAG report flagged a breach of the **'golden rule'** of borrowing, which says governments should raise debt only for investment, not to fund operating costs.
  - CAG found in 11 states (Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, etc.), more than half of net borrowings were used for salaries, pensions, subsidies rather than infrastructure.

Measures Needed to Strengthen State Finances

- **Fiscal Federalism:** States should receive enough fiscal resources to fulfill their expenditure responsibilities. It will improve their ability to design development programmes according to local needs.
- **Increase Capital Expenditure:** States should prioritise investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, research, renewable energy and digital infrastructure.
  - Greater capital expenditure enhances productivity and creates long-term economic benefits.
- **Reduce Borrowing Costs:** Measures to lower the borrowing cost of State Development Loans can provide additional fiscal space for development projects.
- **Public Financial Management:** Better project planning, timely implementation, outcome-based budgeting and transparency can improve the efficiency of public expenditure.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Private sector participation will supplement public investment in infrastructure and reduce fiscal pressure on State governments.

Concluding remarks

- Strong State finances are indispensable for achieving inclusive growth, balanced regional development and effective governance.
- A balanced approach that combines prudent debt management with sustained investment in human capital and infrastructure will enable States to become stronger engines of India's long-term economic development.

Legal & Institutional Framework managing Public Debt in India

- **Public Debt Act, 1944:** Governs procedural aspects of debt issuance and management, though outdated for modern markets.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003**: Sets fiscal deficit and debt targets, requires transparent reporting, and promotes medium-term strategy.
  - Provides a framework for fiscal discipline, targeting:
    - Central Govt debt: 40% of GDP
    - General Govt debt: 60% of GDP
- **Government Securities Act, 2006:** Regulates issuance, trading, and management of government securities.
- **RBI Act, 1934:** Sections 17, 20, 21, and 21A mandate RBI to manage Central and State government debt, issue loans, and handle securities.

> **Article 293(3) of the Constitution of India**
> - Article 293 deals with the borrowing powers of State Governments.
> - It states that, if a State is indebted to the Government of India, or if any loan made by the Government of India to the State is still outstanding, the State cannot raise any further loan without the consent of the Government of India.

Source: TH, BS

NINE YEARS OF GST

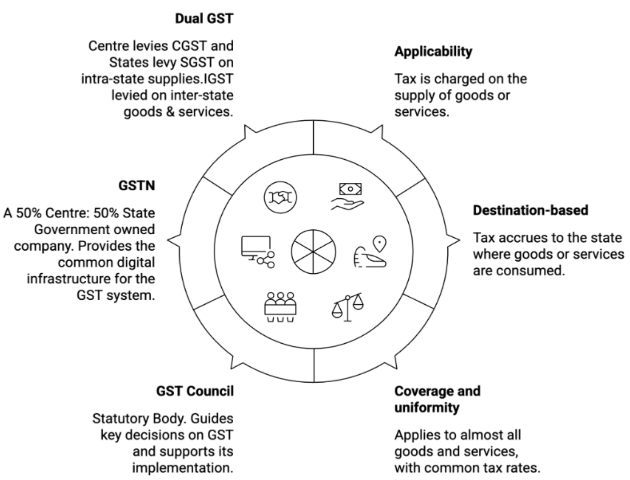
Context

- On 1 July 2026, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) completed nine years since its rollout under the 101st Constitutional Amendment.

Nine Years of GST: Key Outcomes

- **Formalisation of the Economy:** GST has expanded India's formal economic base. The number of registered taxpayers has increased from around **66.5 lakh in 2017** to nearly **1.65 crore by May 2026**.
- **Strong Revenue Performance:** Tax collections have grown steadily over the years. Gross GST revenue increased from approximately **₹7.4 lakh crore in 2017–18** to **₹22.27 lakh crore in 2025–26**.
- **Towards a Unified National Market:** By replacing **17 different Central and State indirect taxes**, GST created a common national market and substantially reduced the cascading effect of taxation which strengthen the idea of **"One Nation, One Tax"**.

Salient Features of GST



GST 2.0: Major Reforms

- **Rationalisation of Tax Rates:** Under this, the earlier four-rate system of **5%, 12%, 18% and 28%** has largely been consolidated into two principal slabs of **5% and 18%.**
  - Also, a new **40% rate** has been introduced for luxury and demerit goods.
- **Household Relief:** Essentials like UHT milk (tetra pack), paneer, roti, and erasers have been moved to Nil (0%) GST. Common household items like soap, toothpaste, kitchenware are placed in the 5% bracket.
- **Healthcare and Insurance:** Life and health insurance products are GST-exempt, and rates on essential drugs and medical devices have been reduced.
- **Sectoral Support:** GST 2.0 reforms specifically address the Inverted Duty Structure affecting key sectors.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** The Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) become operational to enable faster dispute resolution.

Next-Gen GST: Benefits

Challenges

- **Revenue Foregone:** Rate reductions could lead to a revenue loss of approximately ₹48,000 crore on FY 2023-24 consumption base (Finance Ministry), requiring compensatory base broadening.
- **ITC Removal Concerns:** Removal of ITC on healthcare products and insurance could increase costs for businesses providing these services, partially offsetting consumer relief.
- **Petroleum Exclusion:** Keeping petroleum outside GST perpetuates cascading tax effects on logistics and manufacturing, undermining GST's core efficiency objective.

- **Transitional Compliance Burden:** Despite rationalisation, businesses face pricing structure adjustments and billing system upgrades during transition, creating short-term operational complexity.
- **Concerns of States:** Several states continue to express concerns over possible revenue losses following the end of the GST compensation mechanism and the latest rate rationalisation.
- **Moderating Revenue Growth:** Although GST collections continue to reach record levels in absolute terms, the pace of year-on-year growth has moderated. This has raised questions about the long-term sustainability of revenue buoyancy and the need to further widen the tax base.

Way Forward

- **AI Integration:** Develop AI-driven invoice matching and real-time ITC verification to combat fake invoice fraud, protecting revenue without burdening compliant taxpayers.
- **Strengthen Cooperative Federalism:** Sustained engagement through the **GST Council** remains essential for addressing state-level revenue concerns and ensuring that future reforms enjoy broad consensus.
- **Broaden the GST Base:** Expanding the tax base would improve revenue buoyancy, simplify the indirect tax structure and move India closer to a truly comprehensive GST regime.
- **Faster Dispute Resolution:** Fast-track GSTAT operationalisation across all 45 locations to resolve pending disputes and restore taxpayer confidence in the GST dispute resolution architecture.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

HUL DIWAS

Context

- **June 30 is observed as Hul Diwas**, marking the anniversary of the **1855 Santhal rebellion/ Santhal Hul**, one of the earliest **peasant and tribal uprisings** against the British.

Santhal Hul

- **Santhal Hul of 1855** was a revolt against imperialism led by four brothers, **Sidho, Kanho, Chand, and Bhairav Murmu**, along with sisters **Phulo and Jhano.**
- **Background: In 1832**, the British demarcated a region in present-day Jharkhand, called **Damin-i-Koh**, as a settlement area for the Santhal tribe.
  - While initially intended for peaceful settlement and agricultural development, the region eventually **experienced exploitation by outsiders (dikus)**, leading to land alienation among the Santhals.
- **Santhal Hul:** The Murmu brothers led around **60,000 Santhals** against the East India Company and engaged in guerrilla warfare.
  - The Santhals also fought against the upper castes, zamindars, darogas, and moneylenders, described by the umbrella term '**diku'.**
  - The British hanged **Sidhu in 1855,** followed by **Kanhu in 1856.**
- **Significance:** The rebellion led to the enactment of the **Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act of 1876** and the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908**, which aimed to safeguard tribal land rights and cultural autonomy.

Source: IE

FCRA 2.0 PORTAL AND E-OCI CARD

Context

- The Union Home Minister launched the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) 2.0 Portal and the Electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) Card.

FCRA 2.0 Portal

- The Portal has been developed to simplify compliance under the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act** and to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement mechanism.
- All major processes related to applications, renewals, annual returns, and other services have now been made fully digital.
- This portal, hosted on the **National Government Cloud (MeghRaj)**, includes features such as **process re-engineering, an integrated dashboard, Aadhaar-based authentication, e-Sign facility, and OCR-based document analysis.**
- The portal is integrated with major government databases and banks, including **PAN, Aadhaar, OCI, NGO Darpan, and the ICAI's UDIN system.**

e-OCI Card

- **The Electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) Card** is a citizen-centric initiative aimed at transforming OCI services for the global Indian diaspora through a fully digital system.

- Under this system, applicants can complete the entire OCI process online - from submitting the application and uploading supporting documents to downloading the digitally generated card after approval.

Source: PIB

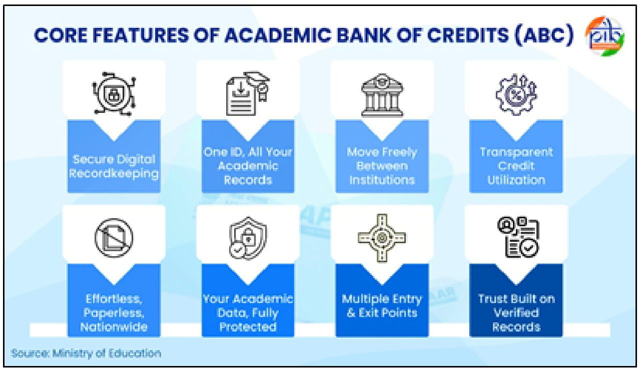
ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDITS AND APAAR

Context

- The **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)** is a revolutionary digital platform by the **Ministry of Education** and is regulated by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

About

- **APAAR (Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry) ID** is a unique 12-digit student identification number linked to the ABC system.
  - It was introduced as part of the **"One Nation, One Student ID" initiative,** and creates a **single academic identity for every learner.**
- It aimed to create a flexible, learner-friendly education system in which learning achievements can be recognised, stored, and used throughout a person's life.
- It supports the vision of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Credit Framework (NCrF)** by enabling credit transfer, multiple entry and exit options, and recognition of learning across different institutions and disciplines.
- It is accessible through **DigiLocker,** it brings together a **student's educational records from school, higher education, skill development, and other learning programmes onto one platform.**



Source: PIB

CLIMATE TIPPING POINTS

Context

- **Climate tipping points** emerged as a major area of debate during the Bonn Climate Change Conference held in Germany.

What are Climate Tipping Points?

- A climate tipping point is a **critical threshold in the Earth's climate system**, beyond which a small additional change can **trigger large, self-reinforcing and potentially irreversible changes.**
  - Once a tipping point is crossed, the affected climate system may continue changing even if the original cause is reduced.
- It operates through **positive feedback loops**, where one change reinforces another.

Major Potential Climate Tipping Points

- **Arctic Sea Ice Loss:** Continued melting reduces the Earth's reflectivity (albedo), leading to faster global warming.
- **Amazon Rainforest Dieback:** Rising temperatures, deforestation and declining rainfall can transform large parts of the Amazon into savannah, reducing one of the world's largest carbon sinks.
- **Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC):** Weakening of this major ocean current can disrupt rainfall patterns, agriculture and weather systems across Europe, Africa and Asia.
- **Greenland Ice Sheet Melting:** Accelerated ice-sheet loss could contribute substantially to long-term global sea-level rise.
- **Coral Reef Collapse:** Increasing ocean temperatures and acidification can lead to irreversible coral bleaching and biodiversity loss.

Source: TH