

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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Table of Content

Landslide
Five Years of Strengthening India's Cooperative Movement
Armed Forces Seek Greater Retention of Agniveers
AI is Reshaping Modern Warfare

News In Short

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's 125th Birth Anniversary
Hindkesari Pedgaon 'Bailgada Sharyat'
ICC's 'Return to Play Post-Pregnancy' Guidelines
MHA lists 23 individuals as Terrorists under UAPA
Caged Frontier AI models
India Needs a Second Home for Asiatic Lions

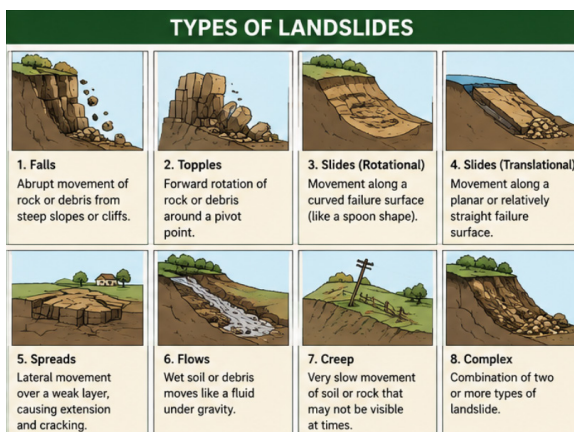
LANDSLIDE

In Context

- Torrential monsoon rains continued to affect Maharashtra triggering landslides and structural collapses that disrupted road and connectivity across the state.

What is a Land Slide?

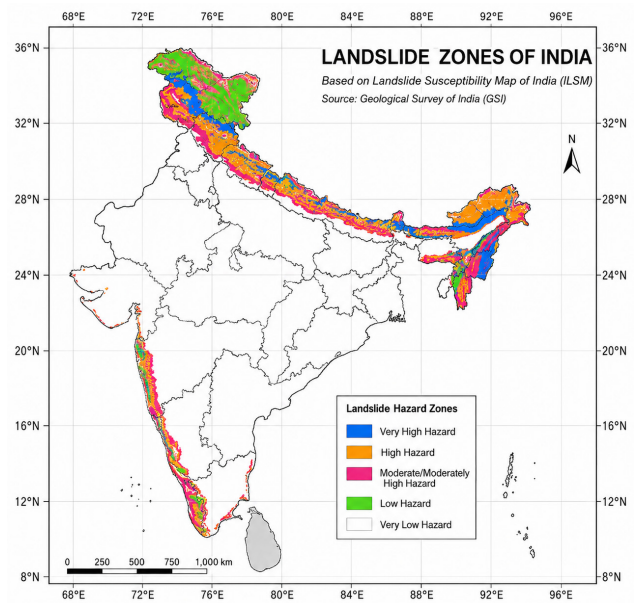
- A landslide is a mass movement of material, such as rock, earth or debris, down a slope. They can happen suddenly or **more slowly over long periods of time**.
- When the force of gravity acting on a slope exceeds the resisting forces of a slope, the slope will fail and a landslide occurs. External factors can lead to landslides happening, including:
 - heavy rainfall leading to saturation of the ground
 - erosion of the base of a slope
 - changes to the material's strength through weathering



Key Facts on Landslides in India

- According to the **India Landslide Susceptibility Map (ILSM)**, **about 13.17% of India's geographical area** is prone to landslides, while 4.75% falls under the 'very high susceptibility' category.
- The Himalayas, Northeastern States, and Western Ghats are the country's major landslide hotspots.
- Sikkim has the highest share of landslide-prone area (57.6%)**, whereas Kerala has nearly 14% of its area in the 'very high susceptibility' category despite being outside the Himalayan region.
- India accounts for **around 8% of global deaths caused by landslides**.
- The agency for mapping landslide-prone areas and hazard assessment is the **Geological Survey**

of India (GSI).



Major Causes of Landslides

- There are rarely any single causes; they are usually a combination of natural vulnerability and human interference.
- In the Himalayan regions there are factors like presence of young and tectonically active mountains, hydropower projects, road widening, tunnelling and intense rainfall and cloud bursts.
- In the Western ghats, although geologically older and more stable than the Himalayas but heavy monsoon rainfall, mining, quarrying, tourism, and unplanned construction increase the landslide risk.

Steps Taken to Reduce Landslide Risk

- National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC):** It was set up by the GSI in Kolkata to improve landslide forecasting and early warnings.
- Bhusanket Portal & Bhooskhalan App:** These apps provide real-time landslide forecasts and reporting of landslide events.
- NDMA Guidelines:** The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued comprehensive guidelines for managing landslides and snow avalanches.
- National Landslide Risk Management Strategy:** Focuses on hazard mapping, monitoring, early warning systems, awareness, capacity building, and slope stabilization.
- Sendai Framework (2015–2030):** India follows this global framework for disaster risk reduction and building resilience.

What NDMA Says?

- The National Disaster Management Authority has issued a clear road map:
 - ♦ Prepare the **Landslip Hazard Zonation (LHZ) maps** so that we know exactly which areas need attention.
 - ♦ GSI to maintain a **National Landslip Database** to monitor trends and risk over time.
 - ♦ Retaining walls, rock bolting, wire mesh, and vegetation cover can all be used to physically stabilise slopes.
 - ♦ **Fix drainage so water does not collect** and seep into the slope.

Way Forward

- Notify and implement the **Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA) framework** in the Western Ghats to regulate mining, quarrying, and large infrastructure projects.
- Make land-use zoning based on detailed **Landslide Hazard Zonation (LHZ) maps mandatory** in hilly regions.
- Deploy AI-enabled sensors, early warning systems into vulnerable areas so people receive alerts on time.
- Employ drones, LiDAR and satellite imagery to keep a constant eye on vulnerable slopes.
- **Rely on afforestation and other nature-based solutions.** In many cases, they are cheaper and more sustainable than concrete fixes.

Source: TH

FIVE YEARS OF STRENGTHENING INDIA'S COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Context

- The 5th Foundation Day of the Ministry of Cooperation was celebrated on July 6, 2026, in New Delhi.

About the Foundation Day

- The government laid the foundation stones for **47 grain storage godowns** to enhance cooperative storage infrastructure.
- A **Milk Supply Review Dashboard Portal** for the **National Dairy Development Board** was launched to improve management of milk procurement and distribution.
- Two flagship initiatives of the **National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation (NUCFDC)** were unveiled - Sahakar CBS and Sahakar Sahyogi.

- ♦ **Sahakar CBS** is a centralized Core Banking Solution for Urban Cooperative Banks.
- ♦ **Sahakar Sahyogi** is a conversational AI-powered platform designed to enhance customer services and banking operations.

What are Cooperatives?

- A cooperative (or co-op) is an **organization or business** that is **owned and operated by a group of individuals** who share a common interest, goal, or need.
- These **individuals, known as members**, participate in the cooperative's activities and **decision-making process**, typically on a one-member, one-vote basis, regardless of the amount of capital or resources each member contributes.
- The main purpose of a cooperative is **to meet the economic, social, or cultural needs of its members**, rather than to maximize profits for external shareholders.
- **India** has one of the largest cooperative ecosystems in the world.
 - ♦ These institutions form the backbone of grassroots economic participation, linking **farmers, dairy producers, fishers, artisans, and workers** to income opportunities.

Strengthening Cooperatives through Structural Reforms

- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** form the grassroots foundation of the short-term cooperative credit structure. They are actively functioning as multi-service institutions that serve as the first point of contact for rural economic services.
- **White Revolution 2.0:** The cooperative dairy sector is being strengthened under White Revolution 2.0 with a focus on increasing milk procurement by **50% by 2028-29**.
 - ♦ 25,282 dairy cooperative societies have been registered so far with focus on women-led dairy cooperatives and wider cooperative coverage.
- **Cooperative Education: Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU)** has been established as India's first cooperative university. The University supports education, research, and skill development in the cooperative sector.
 - ♦ Training programmes are conducted through the **National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT) and NABARD**.

- **Bharat Taxi:** It is an initiative of **Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited** which is a driver-centric mobility platform based on the cooperative model.
 - ♦ It aims to economically empower drivers while offering affordable, safe, and reliable transport services to the public.



Success Stories of Cooperatives in India

- **Amul (Gujarat):** Amul, a dairy cooperative, is one of India's most successful cooperatives in India. It has transformed the dairy sector by empowering millions of small farmers and bringing India to the forefront of the global dairy market.
- **IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited):** One of the world's largest fertilizer cooperatives, IFFCO supplies fertilizers, agricultural inputs, crop advisory services and digital solutions to millions of farmers.
- **The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** has promoted women-led cooperatives in sectors such as dairy, handicrafts, agriculture and financial services.
- **Maharashtra's cooperative sugar sector,** led by institutions such as the **Pravara Cooperative Sugar Factory (India's first cooperative sugar factory)** and the **Warana Cooperative Complex**, has transformed the rural economy by integrating sugar production with education, banking, dairy, healthcare and agro-processing.

Challenges faced by Cooperatives

- **Political interference** in the functioning of cooperative institutions.
- **Weak governance** and inadequate professional management.
- **Limited financial resources** and low capital base of Cooperatives
- **Uneven development** of the cooperative movement across States.
- **Limited awareness** among members regarding cooperative governance and rights.

97th Constitutional Amendment Act 2011

- It established the right to form cooperative societies as a fundamental right (**Article 19**).
- It included a new Directive Principle of State Policy on the Promotion of Cooperative Societies (**Article 43-B**).
- **Part IX-B (Partially Struck Down):** It added a new **Part IX-B** to the Constitution titled "**The Co-operative Societies**" (**Articles 243-ZH to 243-ZT**).
 - ♦ In 2021, the Supreme Court of India in the **Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah's case** struck down a significant portion of Part IX-B.

Source: PIB

ARMED FORCES SEEK GREATER RETENTION OF AGNIVEERS

Context

- The Armed Forces are seeking an increase in the percentage of Agniveers who can be retained in the services after completing their four-year tenure.

About

- Agniveers recruited under the Agnipath scheme began their training in early 2023. The initial batches of Agniveers will complete their four-year tenure with the services later in 2026.
- Under the existing policy, all of them will initially be released from the services, after which up to 25 percent of those who volunteer will be enrolled back as regular soldiers based on merit.

About Agnipath Scheme

- The Government launched Agnipath scheme in **2022** to recruit both male and female aspirants into '**below the officer's rank**' cadre of the three services for a period of **four years as Agniveers**.
- **Eligibility:** Candidates between the age group of **17.5 to 21 years** are eligible to apply for the scheme.
- **Training:** These Agniveers would undergo **optimised basic military training** and specialised trade training followed by up-skilling courses, as required.
- **Enrolment:** Based on organisational requirement and policies promulgated by the Armed Forces, Agniveers after completing their engagement period will be offered an opportunity to apply for enrolment in the permanent cadre.

- ♦ Of these up to **25% of Agniveers** will be selected to be enrolled in the Armed Forces as a regular cadre.

Benefits under the Scheme

- Agniveers receive a customized monthly package with applicable risk and hardship allowances, with **30%** contributed to the **Agniveer Corpus Fund**, matched by the Government.
- After four years, they are paid a **tax-free SevaNidhi package** (including accrued interest), totaling around **₹11.71 lakh**.
- Agniveers will be provided non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of **₹48 lakh** for the duration of their engagement period in the Indian Armed Forces.
- There shall be **no entitlement to gratuity and pensionary benefits**.

Why Are the Armed Forces Seeking Higher Retention of Agniveers?

- **Need for Specialised Training:** Procurement of new technologies, modern platforms, and advanced equipment has created a growing need for extended specialised training.
 - ♦ Retaining a greater proportion of Agniveers will ensure that soldiers gain sufficient experience and proficiency in operating these sophisticated systems.
- **Building an Experienced Force:** Retaining a greater percentage of Agniveers will balance the need for keeping a younger profile for the manpower across the three services, while also having adequately experienced personnel in the Armed Forces.
- **Strengthening Unit Cohesion:** Longer tenures as soldiers, particularly in the initial years in the forces, are considered to build **better camaraderie** between colleagues when they go through hardships and difficult tenures together.
- **Operational Preparedness:** While Agniveers have performed exceptionally well in operations, there were instances when experience gained across various field tenures and multiple training exercises came in handy, in terms of faster and more effective reactions in operational situations.

Way Ahead

- Agnipath scheme should be seen as a major manpower reform aimed at making the Army younger, more energetic, disciplined and future-ready.

- To develop structured career pathways for Agniveers who wish to continue beyond four years, include specialised training and leadership opportunities.
- However there is a need to adopt a service-specific retention policy by considering the different manpower needs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Source: IE

AI IS RESHAPING MODERN WARFARE

Context

- The trinity of **artificial intelligence (AI), military autonomy and algorithmic warfare** is redefining modern-day warfighting and deterrence.

Recent Use of Technology in Warfare

- **The Russia-Ukraine War** has shown that low-cost FPV drones can destroy expensive armoured platforms.
- **The Nagorno-Karabakh War** demonstrated the decisive impact of loitering munitions on conventional warfare.
- **The Gaza Strip conflict** highlighted how non-state actors can use commercial drones for surveillance and targeted strikes.
- **India**, too, has employed drones in recent operations, including the **Operation Sindoor and retaliatory strikes against Pakistan**.

What Is Modern Warfare?

- **Modern warfare** is characterised by the growing use of low-cost, high-impact technologies such as **unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions, swarm drones, and long-range precision strike systems**.
- **Threat of Swarm Saturation:** The deployment of hundreds of drones in a single coordinated attack has demonstrated the serious threat posed by swarm saturation.
 - ♦ Even the most advanced air defence systems **face limitations in terms of rate of fire, interception capacity, and reload speed** when confronted with such large-scale attacks.
- **India's counter-drone doctrine** is still in a **transitional phase**, with operational responsibilities expanding significantly.

Key Technologies Shaping Modern Warfare

- **Artificial intelligence** enables real-time intelligence processing, **predictive battlefield analysis**, **automated logistics**, and decision-support systems.
- **Unmanned and Autonomous Systems:** Drones, loitering munitions, and unmanned ground and naval platforms have transformed surveillance and strike capabilities.
- **Cyber and Information Warfare:** It targets critical infrastructure, command-and-control systems, and military networks, often during peacetime.
 - ♦ Information warfare includes **disinformation campaigns**, **psychological operations**, and **narrative control**, aimed at shaping public perception and political outcomes.
- **Counter-Space Capabilities:** Space-based assets are central to **navigation**, **missile guidance**, **surveillance**, and secure communications.
 - ♦ **Anti-satellite weapons**, electronic interference, and space debris risks have made space a contested and weaponised domain.
- **Precision-guided munitions** and **hypersonic weapons** allow stand-off attacks with minimal warning time, challenging traditional deterrence and air defence systems.

Threats Posed by Modern Warfare to India

- **Hybrid and Grey-Zone Challenges:** India faces persistent grey-zone tactics, including cyber intrusions, disinformation campaigns, and proxy violence.
 - ♦ The **Doklam (2017) and Ladakh standoff (2020)** illustrate how coercion can occur without full-scale war.
- **Cyber and Information Vulnerabilities:** India ranks among the top five countries targeted by **cyber attacks**, according to **CERT-In assessments**.
 - ♦ Disinformation campaigns risk undermining social cohesion, electoral processes, and institutional trust.
- **Maritime and Space Security Risks:** Over **90%** of India's trade by volume moves through sea routes, making maritime security vital.
 - ♦ Dependence on space-based assets exposes India to counter-space threats affecting both civilian services and military operations.

India's Institutional and Strategic Response

- **Military Modernisation and Indigenisation:** India allocated a record 2.19 lakh crore (~\$23.9 billion) for the defence capital outlay in the 2026–27 Union Budget, marking a 21.84% increase over the previous year.
 - ♦ Indigenous platforms such as **Tejas**, **Akash**, **Pinaka**, and armed UAVs enhance self-reliance and operational flexibility.
- **Structural Reforms:** The creation of the **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** following the **Shekatkar Committee** recommendations aims to enhance joint planning and integration.
 - ♦ **Proposed Integrated Theatre Commands** are designed to enable unified multi-domain operations.
- **Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction System (IDD&IS)** is developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation and Bharat Electronics Limited, provides a comprehensive counter-drone solution.
 - ♦ It is capable of **detecting drones at ranges of 5–8 km**, **jamming communication signals within 2–5 km** and neutralising threats using laser-based directed energy weapons at close ranges.
- **“Bhargavastra” Anti-Swarm System:** Developed by Solar Defence and Aerospace Limited (SDAL), it is a **low-cost, homegrown counter-drone system** that uses micro-rockets to destroy drone swarms in hard-kill mode.
- The Indian Army has initiated large-scale procurement of **surveillance and kamikaze drones** to enhance both defensive and offensive capabilities.
- Establishment of the **Defence Cyber Agency (DCA)** and **Defence Space Agency (DSA)** institutionalises emerging warfighting domains.

Way Ahead

- **Need for Robust Counter-Drone Systems:** Swarm drones are low-cost but high-impact weapons capable of overwhelming advanced air defence systems.
 - ♦ India needs to prioritise the **procurement of cost-effective anti-drone systems** capable of detecting, jamming, and neutralising small unmanned aerial vehicles.
- **Expansion of Robotic Warfare Capabilities:** The increasing role of robotics in warfare is **reducing dependence on human manpower** in high-risk operations.

- ♦ Robotic systems can be effectively deployed for mine detection, surveillance, reconnaissance, and logistical support.
- **Passive Defence Measures:** The saturation of even advanced defence systems, such as Iron Dome, highlights the limitations of active defence mechanisms.
- ♦ Passive measures such as **dispersion of assets, camouflage, concealment, and underground infrastructure** are essential for force preservation.

Conclusion

- Modern warfare demands a shift from **platform-centric approaches to capability-based, technology-driven force** planning. India must accelerate **AI adoption, cyber resilience, space security**, and jointness reforms.
- Sustained investment in human capital, defence innovation, and strategic partnerships will be crucial to maintain credible deterrence.
- Adapting to the evolving character of warfare is essential for safeguarding India's **sovereignty, stability, and strategic autonomy** in a rapidly changing global order.

Source: IE

NEWS IN SHORT

DR. SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE'S 125TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee on his 125th birth anniversary.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee (1901- 1953)

- Initially a member of the **Indian National Congress**; later joined the **Hindu Mahasabha in the 1930s**.
- He became the **youngest Vice-Chancellor** of Calcutta University at age **33 in 1934**.
- He served as Finance Minister of Bengal (1941–42) in the Fazlul Haq ministry.
- **1944:** He founded an English daily, "**Nationalist**."
 - ♦ Presided over the **Bilaspur session** of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha.
 - ♦ Met M.A Jinnah to find out a solution of **Hindu-Muslim problems**.

- ♦ He was a strong critic of the Muslim League and the partition of India.
- He joined the **cabinet of the interim government** as Minister for Industry and Supply after independence (1947–1950), but resigned over differences.
- **Founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh:** In 1951, founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the ideological predecessor of today's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
 - ♦ Advocated for national unity, cultural nationalism, and economic self-reliance.
- **Legacy:** He is remembered as a staunch nationalist, educationist, and advocate of cultural unity.
 - ♦ The Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata and several institutions are named in his honor.

Source: Mint

HINDKESARI PEDGAON 'BAILGADA SHARYAT'

Context

- The Hindkesari Pedgaon 'Bailgada Sharyat' (bullock cart race) showcased Maharashtra's deep-rooted rural sporting tradition, attracting more than 1,000 entrants and thousands of spectators from across the region.

About

- **The bullock cart race** is an event involving bulls or bullocks to conduct a race with the animals tied to a cart by a wooden yoke, with or without a cartman.
- The rural sport is known as '**bailgada sharyat**,' '**chhakadi**' or '**shankarpath**' in the state.
- It is **held annually** in Pedgaon, Khatav Taluk, Satara district, Maharashtra.

Jallikattu

- **Meaning:** The term 'jallikattu,' comes from Tamil terms '**salli kaasu**' which means **coins**, and kattu which means **package tied to the horns of bulls** as prize money.
 - ♦ It is usually held during the **Pongal season**.
- It is a **sport where men compete against each other** to hold on to the humps of agitated bulls that are released into an open arena.

- **Historical linkages:** Jallikattu is a dated tradition. An ancient reference to bull taming is found in a seal discovered at **Mohenjo-daro**, which is dated between **2,500 BC and 1,800 BC**.

- The sport was called **Yeru thazhuval** or “embracing the bull”.

Kambala

- The annual buffalo race Kambala is a unique festival observed by the farming community between November to March.
- Kambala is performed on **two parallel race tracks, filled with slushy water**.
- Traditionally, it is sponsored by local Tuluva landlords and households in the coastal districts of **Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Bhatkal** of **Karnataka** and **Kasaragod** of **Kerala**, a region collectively known as **Tulu Nadu**.

Source: TH, IE

MY BHARAT (MERA YUVA BHARAT)

Context

- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya highlighted the role of MY Bharat in nurturing youth potential and directing it towards nation-building.

About MY Bharat

- MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat) was launched in **October 2023** under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** as an **autonomous body**.
- It serves as a **digital platform** that connects the Government, educational institutions, non-profit organisations and industry to create meaningful youth engagement.
- It aims to place **youth at the centre of nation-building** by providing opportunities for **volunteering, skill development, leadership, and civic participation**.



- The initiative, aligned with the National Youth Policy, primarily engages individuals in the **15–29 year age group** while also nurturing adolescents between **10–19 years** to cultivate early participation and civic awareness.



Source: PIB

ICC'S 'RETURN TO PLAY POST-PREGNANCY' GUIDELINES

Context

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced a framework to assist women players who are **returning to the sport after pregnancy and child birth**.

About

- The **Return to Play Post-Pregnancy Guidelines** can be used by the **Boards of member countries of the ICC** to design their **own policies in line with local laws for the welfare of the cricketers**.
- It calls for the **appointment of a case manager** who will serve as the primary point of contact.
- The board recommends that **players stop competing at the end of their first trimester**.
- **For return to play, the guidelines outline the 6 Rs framework:** Ready (0-6 weeks), Review (6-8 weeks), Restore (8-16 weeks), Recondition (12-16+ weeks), Return and Refine which includes addressing social barriers such as child care, and mental well-being of the player.
- **Countries having Policy:** Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England, Pakistan and the West Indies.
 - India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh do not have dedicated norms.

International Cricket Council

- The ICC is responsible for the **global governance and regulation of cricket**.
- It sets and enforces the rules of the game, as well as the code of conduct for players and officials.

- The ICC is headed by a **Chairman, who is elected by the ICC board.**
- The day-to-day operations of the ICC are overseen by the **CEO.**
- The ICC is governed by a **board of directors** comprising representatives from full member nations, with a few seats for associate members.

Source: TH

MHA LISTS 23 INDIVIDUALS AS TERRORISTS UNDER UAPA

Context

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has designated **23 more individuals as 'terrorists' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA).**

About

- The designations were made under **Section 35 of UAPA**, which empowers the **Central Government to add the name of an individual in the Fourth Schedule to the UAPA**, if it believes that **individual is involved in terrorism.**
- The provision was inserted in the **UAPA through an amendment in 2019.**

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

- It is **India's primary anti-terrorism law** aimed at **preventing unlawful activities**, and terrorist activities that threaten the sovereignty and integrity of India.
- It was enacted in **1967** by the Parliament of India.
- The Central Government can **designate organizations as terrorist organizations.**
- Accused can be detained for a **longer period without filing chargesheet** up to 180 days in certain cases.
- Cases are often investigated by the **National Investigation Agency.**

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- **Established under:** NIA Act, 2008 after 26/11 Mumbai attacks.
- **Function:** Central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency.
- **Mandate:** Investigates offences affecting India's sovereignty, security, international treaties, etc.
- **NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019:**
 - ♦ **Jurisdiction extended:** Can investigate scheduled offences committed outside India involving Indian citizens/interests.

- ♦ **Expanded mandate:** Covers offences under Explosive Substances Act, 1908 Human Trafficking, Cyber Terrorism Arms Act, 1959.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Special Courts:** Total NIA Special Courts: 52
 - ♦ Exclusive NIA Courts: 3 (Ranchi, Jammu and Mumbai).

Source: TH

CAGED FRONTIER AI MODELS

Context

- Recently a debate arose whether closed (caged) frontier AI models will be able to maintain their lead open-weight/open-source AI models.

What are Frontier AI Models?

- Frontier models are the **most advanced AI models** available at a given moment, trained on massive datasets to deliver state-of-the-art performance across many tasks, representing the leading edge of AI capability.
- They typically power advanced reasoning, image and text generation, and agentic workflows.

What are "Caged" AI Models?

- These are the frontier AI models whose model weights, training data, and architecture are not publicly released.
 - ♦ **Examples:** OpenAI's GPT models, Anthropic's Claude, Google's Gemini.
- They are controlled by the developing company and are **accessible only through APIs or paid services.** This allows developers to maintain safety controls, protect intellectual property, and monitor how the models are used.
- Whereas **Open-weight AI models** make their trained model weights publicly available, allowing anyone to download, modify, and improve them.

Source: TH

INDIA NEEDS A SECOND HOME FOR ASIATIC LIONS

Context

- Recently conservation experts have reiterated the need to establish a second free-ranging population outside the Gir landscape to reduce the risk of extinction.

Why Does India Need a Second Home for Asiatic Lions?

- **Population Increase:** As per the **16th Lion Population Estimation**, India has reported a **32% increase (from 674 in 2020 to 891 in 2025)** in its lion population, exclusively concentrated in Gujarat, between 2020 and 2025.
- **Potential Threat:** Multiple reports of the **Wildlife Institute of India** have consistently emphasised that a single population confined to one landscape is vulnerable to **epidemics, forest fires, or other natural disasters**.
 - ♦ It could wipe out the entire species if it remains geographically concentrated.
 - ♦ **The 2018 outbreak of the Canine Distemper Virus** among the population, which killed several lions and infected many others, serves as a stark reminder of this danger.

Asiatic Lion (*Panthera leo persica*)

- It is one of the **five big cat species** found in India.
- **Physical Characteristics:** Asiatic lions are slightly **smaller than African lions**.
 - ♦ Males have **less developed manes**, leaving their ears visible.
 - ♦ Prominent **longitudinal fold of skin** along the belly (a distinguishing feature from African lions).

- **Distribution:** In India, concentrated in the state of Gujarat in and around the **Gir Forest** mainly in;
 - ♦ Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary
 - ♦ Paniya Wildlife Sanctuary
 - ♦ Mityala Wildlife Sanctuary
 - ♦ Barda Wildlife Sanctuary
- **Conservation Status:**
 - ♦ **IUCN Red List status:** Endangered
 - ♦ **CITES:** Appendix I
 - ♦ **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I



Source: TH

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