

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA-AUSTRALIA URANIUM SUPPLIES AGREEMENT

Context

- Recently, **India and Australia** have finalised the '**administrative arrangements**' required for the export of Australian uranium to India under the **Australia-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (2015)**.

What Does 'Administrative Arrangement' Mean?

- The administrative arrangement operationalises the civil nuclear agreement and its finalisation facilitates:
 - Australian private uranium mining companies to sign commercial contracts with Indian entities.
 - Participation of Indian private sector companies in uranium procurement following recent policy reforms **allowing private participation in India's nuclear sector**.
 - IAEA safeguards agreement** to monitor uranium exports to ensure that the imported uranium is used only in safeguarded civilian nuclear facilities.
- In practice this means that it removes procedural barriers which have previously hampered uranium trade at a commercial scale.

Why is Development Important?

- India's Energy Security:** Strengthening India's energy demand is growing rapidly and geopolitical developments have exposed vulnerabilities in hydrocarbon supplies.
 - Diversifying our nuclear energy provides reliable baseload power, reduces our dependence on imported oil and gas, enhances our resilience to global energy shocks and reduces carbon emissions.
 - India-Australia pact helps India in its long-term clean energy transition.
- Access To World's Largest Uranium Reserves:** Australia has more than a quarter of the world's identified uranium reserves and is one of the world's leading producers of uranium.
 - It will ensure availability of long term fuel supply to support the expansion of India's nuclear power programme and contribute to supply chain diversification.
- India's Push for Clean Energy Gets a Boost:** Nuclear power is necessary for **Net Zero by 2070**, for building up non-fossil fuel energy capacity, and for reliable low-carbon electricity generation.

- Nuclear power is a perfect complement to renewable sources, which are intermittent sources of baseload power.

Why can Australia export uranium to India when India is not a signatory to NPT?

- India is **not a signatory** to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But a number of developments made nuclear cooperation possible.
 - India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement (2008):** It brought an end to India's nuclear isolation and opened the door for international cooperation.
 - IAEA Safeguards Agreement:** India signed an agreement with the IAEA that the civilian nuclear facilities will continue to be subject to international inspections.
 - NSG Waiver (2008):** NSG gave India a special waiver to conduct civil nuclear commerce in view of its non-NPT status. It allowed India to sign civil nuclear pacts with several countries including Australia.
 - India's strong non-proliferation record and responsible nuclear behaviour have further strengthened international confidence.

Development of India-Australia Nuclear Cooperation

- 2009:** India and Australia agreed to enhance cooperation in the area of energy resources as both countries recognised energy security as a common priority.
 - They reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- 2014: Australia and India sign Nuclear Cooperation Agreement.** It came into force in 2015.
- 2018 and Beyond:** Australia began limited uranium exports to India under closely monitored arrangements.
 - The initial shipments helped build confidence in the regulatory regime in India.
- 2026:** The administrative arrangement is formalised, allowing for larger commercial uranium exports.

Strategic importance to India

- Energy Security:** It diversifies fuel imports, lowering the risk of geopolitical disruptions.

- **Climate Commitments:** Assists India in transitioning to low-carbon electricity generation.
- **Strategic Partnership:** Enhances India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- **Indo-Pacific Cooperation:** Enhances cooperation among like-minded democracies in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Builds secure supply chains for critical minerals and nuclear fuel.

Nuclear Energy Vision of India

- The **Department of Atomic Energy** has been pursuing expansion of nuclear power generation, development of indigenous reactors, international civil nuclear cooperation, long term fuel security and public private participation wherever permitted under evolving policy.
- Recent agreements for the supply of uranium from Canada and Australia further strengthen India's long term fuel supply.

Conclusion

- The finalisation of the '**administrative arrangement**' for uranium export between India and Australia is an important milestone in the **civil nuclear programme of India**.
- It implements the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (2015), facilitates commercial trade in uranium, and enhances India's long-term energy security while fully complying with IAEA safeguards.
- For Australia it is a vote of confidence in India's responsible nuclear record and strengthens the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Additional Information

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- It was established in **1957** as an autonomous organisation within the UN system.
 - ♦ It is **not an UN specialised agency**; it reports to both the **UN General Assembly** and the **UN Security Council**.
- **Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.**
- **Objective:** To promote the **peaceful use of nuclear energy** and prevent its diversion to military purposes.
 - ♦ It conducts **safeguards and inspections** to verify that civilian nuclear materials are not used for nuclear weapons.
- India signed an **India-specific Safeguards Agreement** with the IAEA in **2008** for its civilian nuclear facilities following the India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- Opened for signature in **1968**; entered into force in **1970**.
- **Objective:** To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons; promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and pursue nuclear disarmament.
- It recognises **five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS)** i.e. the **United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France and China**.

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

- It is a **voluntary grouping** that was established in **1975** following India's 1974 peaceful nuclear explosion.
 - ♦ There are **currently 48 Participating Governments** of the NSG.
 - ♦ Decisions are taken by **consensus**.
- **Objective:** Prevent nuclear exports from contributing to nuclear weapons programmes by controlling exports of nuclear materials, equipment and technology.
- India is **not a member of the NSG** and continues to seek membership.
- In **2008**, the NSG granted **India a one-time waiver**, allowing member countries to engage in civil nuclear trade with India despite its non-membership in the NPT.

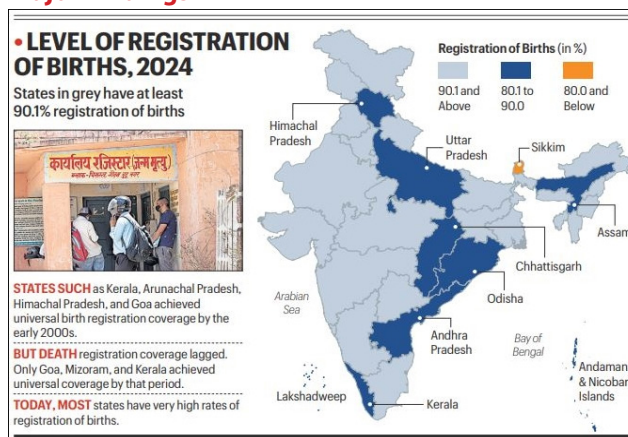
Source: TH

CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM (CRS)

Context

- India officially recorded **more than 99% of its estimated births and deaths in 2024**, according to the latest official data released by the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**.

Major Findings



Civil Registration System

- Data on births, deaths and stillbirths are recorded under a continuous and compulsory mechanism known as the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**.
 - ♦ It serves as a **foundational source of India's population data** such as **estimated births and deaths**, for the accurate estimation of **mortality, fertility and sex ratio at birth**.
- It functions under the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the **Home Ministry**.
- The CRS has been legally **operational since 1970**, though the coverage and completeness of reporting were historically poor.
- The system operates under the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, which was amended in 2023**.
- Births and deaths are ordinarily required to be **reported within 21 days**.
 - ♦ **In hospitals**, the medical officer in charge or an authorised official is responsible for reporting such events.
 - ♦ **For events at home**, responsibility generally lies with the head of the household or another prescribed informant.

Data Over the Years

- **Until 2000**, India registered only **56% of births and 48% of deaths**. By 2014, this figure **rose to around 86.6% and 72.5%, respectively**.
- **In 2024**, birth registration **reached 99.1%** and death registration **reached 99.4%**.
 - ♦ **The improvement is also visible across states**, in 2024, 18 states and Union Territories achieved 100% birth registration, while 21 states and UTs achieved 100% death registration.

Reasons for the Rise in Registration of Data in 2024

- **Rise in Registration of Birth:** The increase in **institutional deliveries** in hospitals or health facilities incentivised by post-delivery benefits.
 - ♦ **Birth certificates** are also now necessary for school admission, identity documents, welfare benefits and other official purposes.
- **Rise in Death Registration:** More people are **accessing formal healthcare** through expanded health insurance and public health schemes like PM-JAY.

- ♦ Also, families also require **death certificates** for pensions, insurance, inheritance, property transfer, bank accounts and other administrative processes.

- **Amendment in the Act:** The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 made civil registration more **complete, timely, and accessible**.

Significance of the Data

- **Administrative Purpose:** Like assessing the impact of health and social policies and understanding trends in fertility, mortality, and population change.
- **Real Time Information:** Timely registration of births and deaths can provide real-time information on demographic changes and population health.
 - ♦ CRS is also important for **understanding seasonal mortality changes** those are driven by high temperatures and pollution.
- **Local Planning:** A complete CRS can support local planning under decentralised governance since district and sub-district level data are far more useful for programme design than national or state-level estimates alone.
- **Individual Identity:** Registrations also **enable individuals to prove their identity from a legal standpoint**.

Concerns

- **Regional Disparities:** Significant variations in the quality and completeness of Civil Registration System (CRS) implementation persist across states and regions.
- **Delayed Registration:** Many births and deaths are not registered within the legally prescribed 21-day period, affecting the timeliness and reliability of vital statistics.
- **Under-registration of infant deaths:** Although 84.2% of registered infant deaths are reported from urban areas and only 15.8% from rural areas, the data suggests possible under-registration.
- **Poor quality of mortality data:** Registration of deaths does not necessarily include medically certified causes of death, limiting the utility of CRS data for public health planning and disease surveillance.
- **Need for better data quality and governance:** Greater emphasis is required on timely registration, accurate record-keeping, robust medical certification, and secure, responsible use of digital records.

- **Absence of internal migration records:** The lack of a mechanism to systematically record internal migration limits the effectiveness of administrative planning and service delivery.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen registration coverage and timeliness** by improving awareness, simplifying procedures, and enhancing last-mile service delivery, especially in underserved regions.
- **Improve data quality** by expanding Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD), conducting regular data audits, and ensuring accurate and timely record-keeping.
- **Bridge regional and rural-urban disparities** through targeted capacity building, better digital infrastructure, and stronger monitoring of low-performing states and districts.
- **Leverage digital governance** by ensuring secure use of CRS data, integrating internal migration records, and enhancing inter-agency coordination for evidence-based policymaking.

Source: IE

VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISHTHAN (VBSA) BILL, 2025

Context

- Several universities and higher education institutions have demanded a separate grant-disbursing authority under the proposed Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan (VBSA) Bill, 2025.

Key Features of the Bill

- **Regulatory Body:** The Bill establishes the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan (the Commission) as an apex regulatory authority for higher education.
 - ♦ It replaces the University Grants Commission (UGC), **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, and **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)**. The Commission will comprise the Regulatory, Accreditation, and Standards Councils.
 - ♦ It will regulate **technical education, teacher-training, and architecture education**. Other professional courses, such as medicine and law have been excluded from its purview.
- **Composition of the Commission:** The Commission will consist of a Chairperson and up to **12 members**. Members include:
 - ♦ The Presidents of the three Councils,
 - ♦ The higher education secretary of the central government,

- ♦ The five eminent experts, and
- ♦ Two eminent academicians from state HEIs. The Chairperson will be selected by the central government.
- **Composition of the Councils:** Each Council will consist of **14 members** headed by a President. Members will include eminent experts, one nominee of the Union Department of Higher Education, and nominees of the other two Councils.
- **Functions of the Councils: The Regulatory Council** will be responsible for establishing and ensuring compliance with minimum standards for setting up an HEI, facilitating the autonomy of HEIs in a timely manner, and addressing grievances received from stakeholders against HEIs.
 - ♦ **The Standards Council** will be responsible for framing learning outcomes for higher education programmes, and minimum academic standards for HEIs.
 - ♦ **The Accreditation Council** will be responsible for developing an accreditation framework and system for HEIs.
- **Removal of members:** The Chairperson, Presidents, or any full-time members of the Commission or the Councils may be removed on grounds of; insolvency, conviction of offence involving moral turpitude, physical or mental incapacity, or abuse of powers.
- **Right to confer degrees:** Degrees may be granted only by:
 - ♦ A university (established by a central or state Act or deemed under the **UGC Act, 1956**), or
 - ♦ An institution specially empowered by a central Act, or
 - ♦ Other HEIs authorised by the Regulatory Council with the prior approval of the central government.

Key Issue of the Bill

- **Autonomy of HEIs:** The Bill's provisions may not significantly improve the autonomy of higher education institutions (HEIs). In some cases, autonomy already granted to HEIs may be rolled back.
 - ♦ Currently, **institutes of national importance** are governed under their specific laws, with academic and research autonomy.
 - ♦ The Bill brings such institutes under the purview of the Commission and its Councils.

- **Funding:** Allocating and granting funds is a key function of the UGC.
 - ♦ The Bill does not include this as a function of the Commission or its Councils.
 - ♦ **The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020** had recommended setting up a single regulator with four verticals for regulation, accreditation, funding, and standard setting. **The Bill sets up three of these, excluding funding.**
- **The Bill treats professional courses inconsistently.**
 - ♦ **Technical, management, and teacher education** will come under the VBSA Commission.
 - ♦ **Architecture education** will be regulated by the Commission, while the Council of Architecture will continue as a professional body.
 - ♦ **Medical, legal,** and certain other professional courses remain outside its ambit.
- **Appeals against decisions of the Councils** will be made to the central government. This is unlike the procedure for other regulators, such as SEBI and TRAI.
- Grounds for **removal of part-time members** not provided.

Significance

- The present bill represents a **renewed effort** to implement the **NEP 2020 vision**, incorporating a more comprehensive framework that includes **technical and teacher education oversight under the new authority.**
- **Under NEP 2020**, the concept of a single regulator was highlighted as part of a **broader repositioning of higher education governance.**
- The policy recommended separating regulatory functions to **reduce duplication and improve efficiency while maintaining accountability.**

Source: TH

UN'S FIRST SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON AI

In News

- The first global scientific assessment on AI has been released by the United Nations convened Independent International Scientific Panel.

Major Findings

- **AI development outpaces regulation:** AI capabilities, especially frontier AI models and

autonomous AI agents, are advancing faster than scientific understanding and existing governance mechanisms, increasing the risk of serious harm.

- **Weak and fragmented AI governance:** Current AI regulations and ethical frameworks are fragmented, dominated by a few corporations, and lack effective methods to independently assess AI capabilities and risks.
- **Growing global computer divide:** AI leadership increasingly depends on access to advanced computing infrastructure, semiconductors, cloud facilities, and datasets.
 - ♦ The United States accounts for around 75% of global AI computing capacity and China another 15%, leaving the rest of the world to share the remaining 10%.
 - ♦ This "compute divide" risks making many countries AI consumers instead of AI creators.
- **Risks of AI concentration:** Few companies and countries are increasingly controlling the AI value chain from advanced chips and cloud infrastructure to foundation models and deployment platforms driving a concentration of AI development.
- **Democratic Threats:** AI deepfakes and persuasion algorithms are eroding shared truth, creating disinformation and impacting democratic processes.
- **Geopolitical concerns:** Dependence on a few AI powers could undermine countries' strategic autonomy in critical sectors such as healthcare, defence, public services, and infrastructure.
- **Implications for India:** The findings reinforce the importance of initiatives such as the IndiaAI Mission and investments in domestic AI computing infrastructure to reduce long-term technological dependence.

Recommendations

- It urges governments to **improve governance and build domestic AI capabilities (Sovereign AI Models)**, and to work together internationally to ensure AI is safe, inclusive and beneficial for all.
- There is a need for better and more harmonised global AI governance.
 - ♦ Independent scientific assessments of risks from AI.
 - ♦ Better access to scientific resources and computing infrastructure.

- ♦ Policies that promote competition and open scientific research.
- ♦ Investing in public-interest AI and expanding the participation of developing countries.
- ♦ Apply established human rights and child rights impact assessments.

India's AI Policy and Governance Framework for Inclusivity

- **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence :** It was launched by NITI Aayog in June 2018, identifies AI as a transformative tool to address India's development challenges by improving access, affordability, and quality of essential services.
- **India AI Governance Guidelines (2025):** The guidelines establish people-centric principles, such as fairness, accountability, and transparency, to mitigate the risks of bias, exclusion, and opaque decision-making.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India has constituted the **AI Governance and Economic Group (AIGEG)**, a high-level inter-ministerial body that will serve as India's central institutional mechanism for AI governance policy development and coordination.

Source :IE

south; and Africa and the Arabian Peninsula to the **west**.



- **Maritime Security:** It involves **protecting the nation's sovereignty** from threats arising from the oceans and seas.
 - ♦ Threats include protecting coastal areas, safeguarding the available ocean resources such as fish, offshore oil and gas wells, port facilities, etc.
 - ♦ India's maritime security is closely linked to **major chokepoints** in and around the Indian Ocean, such as the **Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb, Malacca Strait, and Lombok Strait**.

GUARDIANS OF INDIA'S MARITIME FRONTIERS

Context

- India is strengthening its maritime security capabilities through the induction of indigenous naval platforms designed for combat operations, surveillance, and coastal defence, reflecting the growing importance of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

India's Maritime Zone

- India's maritime zone refers to the **maritime boundaries and areas under its jurisdiction** in the surrounding seas and oceans.
 - ♦ India's **coastline stretches over 11,000 kilometers** including island territories.
- **Indian Ocean Region:** The Indian Ocean covers approximately **one-fifth of the total ocean area of the world**.
- The Indian Ocean is bounded by Iran, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh to the **north**; the Malay Peninsula, the Sunda Islands of Indonesia, and Australia to the **east**; the Southern Ocean to the

India's Layered Naval Capability

- The Indian Navy is a primary security provider in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It safeguards a coastline of about **11,098 kilometres**, an Exclusive Economic Zone of nearly 2.4 million square kilometres, and sea lanes carrying close to **90 per cent of India's trade by volume**.
- Achieving this requires a balanced fleet, with each class of warship contributing to a distinct layer of maritime security.
 - ♦ In India, **New-generation indigenous naval platforms** have been inducted to bring this layered approach to life.

Stealth Frigates of the Navy

- Designed for **modern naval warfare**, they integrate advanced weapons, sensors, and aviation facilities while optimizing radar, infrared (thermal), and acoustic signatures for enhanced stealth.
- **Project 17A** is the Indian Navy's advanced stealth frigate programme to build seven next-generation guided-missile warships.

- ♦ **The Nilgiri-class** comprises INS Nilgiri, INS Himgiri, INS Taragiri, INS Udaygiri, INS Dunagiri, INS Mahendragiri and the under construction Vindhyagiri.

Survey Vessels of the Navy

- Survey vessels strengthen the Indian Navy's hydrographic capability by **mapping the seabed and coastal waters**.
- These ships regularly undertake humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and search and rescue missions.
- The Indian Navy is inducting the indigenous **Sandhayak-class survey vessels**. The class comprises **INS Sandhayak, INS Nirdeshak, INS Ikshak and INS Sanshodhak**.

Shallow-Water Sub-Hunters

- Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft strengthen the Indian Navy's coastal defence capability. They detect and neutralise submarines operating in shallow waters near the coast.
- The Indian Navy is inducting the indigenous **Arnala-class craft**.
 - ♦ The eight-ship class comprises **Arnala, Androth, Anjadip, Amini, Abhay, Agray, Akshay and Ajay**.

Other Initiatives of Government

- **Sagarmala Programme:** Focuses on leveraging India's coastline and of navigable waterways.
 - ♦ Supports port infrastructure, coastal development, and connectivity.
 - ♦ Financial aid for projects like coastal berths, rail/road connectivity, fish harbours, cruise terminals.
- **Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030):** Aiming for India to become a top 10 shipbuilding nation by 2030 and create a world-class, efficient, and sustainable maritime ecosystem.
- **Maritime Development Fund:** 25,000 crore fund for long-term financing to modernize ports and shipping infrastructure, encouraging private investment.
- India launched **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** in 2015 to secure its immediate Indian Ocean neighbourhood.
 - ♦ It later evolved and expanded its reach globally by launching **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)** in 2025 to build partnerships across the broader Global South.

Conclusion

- India's maritime security initiatives reflect a blend of military capability, infrastructure readiness, regional partnerships, and legal-institutional frameworks.
- Initiatives such as Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific Vision, and Blue Economy strategy reinforce India's centrality in the IOR.

Source: PIB

DIGITAL THREAT REPORT 2025–26

Context

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the **second edition** of the **Digital Threat Report 2025–26**.

Major Findings

- **Emerging Threats:** Threats previously considered emerging or episodic - including **social engineering, credential theft, supply-chain compromise and cloud exploitation** - are now established attack methods.
- **Exploiting Digital Trust:** Attackers increasingly exploiting 'digital trust' rather than directly targeting passwords or transactions.
 - ♦ Cybercriminals are manipulating vulnerabilities across biometric onboarding, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven decision-making, partner applications, real-time payment systems, APIs and third-party ecosystems.
- **Industrialisation of Deepfake Fraud:** Deepfake-enabled fraud has become "industrialized", with attackers deploying real-time executive video deepfakes, adversarial large language models (LLMs) and polymorphic attack variants to evade detection.
- **Social engineering and Business Email Compromise (BEC) campaigns** have also intensified, while **credential theft and session hijacking** have emerged as the primary methods for gaining initial access to systems.
- **The report identifies AI asymmetry** as one of the defining risks facing financial institutions.
 - ♦ Activities that once required specialist teams, significant resources and weeks of effort can increasingly be **performed at machine speed by comparatively low-resource threat actors**.

- **Recommendation:** The report highlights the **need to move beyond periodic security interventions** towards continuous risk assessment, coordinated response and stronger information sharing.

Cyber Frauds in India

- **As per National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal Data,** around 28 lakh cyber frauds were reported in the year 2025, amounting to 22,931 crore rupees.
- **Increased Digital Transactions:** Digital transaction volumes have increased 38-fold, while transaction values have more than tripled.
 - ♦ The significant growth of the digital payment ecosystem has been backed by systems such as UPI, IMPS, and NEFT.
- **Evolving Nature of Fraud:** A typical fraud today may not involve technical compromise of systems, but fraudsters are deploying various tactics, such as bogus call centres, deepfake-driven impersonation scams and mule account networks.
- **The instant nature of digital payments** further increases the risk, as the scope for timely intervention and recovery of funds becomes limited.

Initiatives by Government of India to Prevent Cybercrimes

- **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In):** CERT-In is the **national nodal agency** for responding to cybersecurity incidents.
 - ♦ It provides proactive and reactive cybersecurity support and plays a crucial role in ensuring the security and resilience of the country's cyber infrastructure.
- **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC):** NCIIPC is responsible for protecting critical information infrastructure from cyber threats.
 - ♦ It identifies and designates critical sectors and advises organizations in these sectors on enhancing their cybersecurity measures.
- **Cyber Crime Prevention against Women & Children (CCPWC) scheme:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has provided financial assistance to all the States & UTs under the scheme to support their efforts for setting up of cyber forensic-cum-training laboratories, training, and hiring of junior cyber consultants.
- **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):** It provides a framework and ecosystem for Law

Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

- ♦ 'Joint Cyber Coordination Teams' have been constituted for seven regions at Mewat, Jamtara, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Visakhapatnam and Guwahati under the I4C.
- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** It is launched to enable the public to report incidents pertaining to all types of cyber crimes.
 - ♦ **A toll-free number 1930** has been operationalized to get assistance in lodging online cyber complaints.
 - ♦ The **Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System** module has also been launched for immediate reporting of financial frauds and to stop siphoning off funds by the fraudsters.
- **Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre):** This initiative is aimed at creating awareness about **botnet and malware infections** and providing **tools for detection and cleaning**.
 - ♦ It also provides cyber security tips and best practices for citizens and organisations

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

PAIZHEN FAULT

In News

- Chinese geologists have expressed concern about the structural stability of China's hydropower project on the **Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river** in Tibet due to the **Paizhen Fault**.

Do you know?

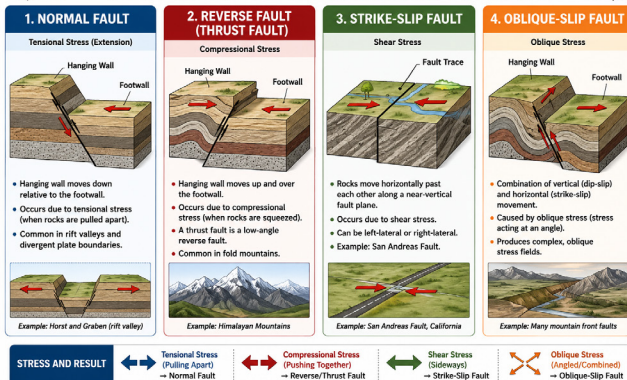
- The Yarlung Zangbo becomes Siang as it flows into India's Arunachal Pradesh, after egressing the autonomous region of Tibet.
- It flows further southwards through Assam as the **Brahmaputra** and enters Bangladesh as Jamuna river.

Paizhen Fault

- It is part of a network of **tectonic faults in the eastern Himalayan** region created by the collision of the **Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates**.

- It is located within the reservoir area of the Yarlung Tsangpo downstream hydropower station.
- It has remained active since the Early Pleistocene and continues to exhibit strong activity during the present Holocene epoch.
- Dating of ancient lake sediments suggests the fault remained active as recently as 9,500 years ago.

🐛 — TYPES OF GEOLOGICAL FAULTS — 🐛



Source : TH

UMANG PORTAL

Context

- Researchers have identified security vulnerabilities in India's UMANG Portal, raising concerns about personal data.

About UMANG Portal

- UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) is a flagship initiative under the **Digital India Programme**. It offers a **single window access** to a wide range of services delivered by the Central Government, State Governments and local bodies through a unified mobile application.
- It enables citizens to access services such as **EPFO, healthcare, pensions, LPG bookings, certificates**, and several other citizen-centric services through a single platform.
- It was launched in **November 2017** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the **5th Global Conference on Cyberspace** in New Delhi.
- As of February 2026, UMANG offers **2,446 services** from **240 government departments**, including 80 Central Government Departments and 160 departments across 30 States and Union Territories.
- UMANG supports **23 Indian languages**, including **Hindi, English, Nepali, and Sanskrit**.

Source: TH

STANDING DEPOSIT FACILITY (SDF)

In News

- The Reserve Bank of India(RBI) absorbed 1.67 lakh crore rupees through the **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)**.

Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)

- It is a tool with RBI for liquidity management to suck out **excess liquidity from the banking system** and to control inflation.
 - ♦ In 2018, the amended Section 17 of the RBI Act empowered the central bank to introduce the SDF — an additional tool for absorbing liquidity without any collateral.
- It has replaced the Fixed Rate Reverse Repo (FRRR) as the lower bound of the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) corridor.
- It enables **banks to park their surplus funds with the RBI without collateral**, thereby fortifying the conduct of monetary policy and supporting financial stability.
 - ♦ Under the SDF, the eligible entities can place deposits with the RBI on an overnight basis.
 - ♦ The RBI, however, retains the flexibility to absorb liquidity for longer tenors under the SDF with appropriate pricing, as and when the need arises.
 - ♦ It is available throughout the year along with the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF).

Source: Air

EÄRENDIL-1

Context

- The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) authorized a company named Reflect Orbital to launch and **operate a test satellite named Eärendil-1**.

About

- Eärendil-1 is named for a **character in the Tolkien fantasy epic The Silmarillion**.
- It will be a **single satellite in a non-geostationary orbit** fit with a "**deployable, highly specular thin-film reflector**".
 - ♦ The reflector will be **motorised and can be steered to different orientations**.
 - ♦ The satellite will operate at an altitude of around **625 km with a high inclination of 88°**.

- Its purpose is to **reflect sunlight towards specific spots on the earth at nighttime**.
 - ♦ It intends to use this technology **to extend the usable hours for solar panels and provide light during “critical operations”** like emergency or humanitarian missions.
- The FCC has granted a **limited two-year license for the test**.
- The project has raised questions about **governing orbital debris, ownership of reflected energy, and light pollution**.

Source: TH

SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SO₂)

In Context

- As per the study, nearly 81 per cent of **sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions** from coal plants within a 300-km radius of Delhi-NCR originate from facilities exempted from installing pollution control systems.

About

- Sulphur dioxide is a **colourless gas** with a sharp, choking smell.
- It forms whenever fuel containing sulphur is burnt, and it's one of the **oldest air pollutants** tracked by regulators, dating back to the days of London's coal-smoke smogs.
- The single biggest source in **India is coal-fired thermal power plants**. Oil refineries and metal smelting units (especially copper and zinc smelters) add to the load.
- SO₂ has health concerns and once released, it reacts with oxygen and moisture in the air to form sulphate particles, which are a component of PM_{2.5}, and sulphuric acid.

- **Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) system** is a technology to remove SO₂ from coal plant emissions using limestone slurry, producing gypsum as a by-product.

Source: DTE

GLOBAL LIVEABILITY INDEX 2026

Context

- The Economist Intelligence Unit has released the **Global Liveability Index 2026**.

Major Highlights

- The index is compiled **annually by the EIU**, the research and analysis arm of The Economist Group, **it scores 173 cities on 30 indicators**.
- **These are grouped under five categories:** Stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.
- **Copenhagen (Denmark)** remains the world's most liveable city, edging out **Vienna (Austria)** and **Melbourne (Australia)**, which are in **second and third place**.
- **New Delhi is ranked 120**, followed by Mumbai (121), Chennai (123), and Bengaluru (127).
 - ♦ Neither this year's report nor last year's **names a single Indian city in the top or bottom ten**, or among the biggest movers.
- **Western Europe** is still the **strongest region for liveability**, but its average score has stagnated, while **Asia's has risen**.
- **Karachi** stayed pinned at **170th place** two years consecutively, **Dhaka** held at **171st**, **Damascus (Syria)** remains the **world's least liveable city for a second consecutive year**.

Source: TOI

