

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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CABINET APPROVES SEMICON 2.0

Context

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **Semicon 2.0 programme** with an outlay of Rs.1,27,500 crore for the development of **India's semiconductor design and manufacturing ecosystem**.

India Semiconductor Mission 1.0

- India Semiconductor Mission 1.0** is a flagship programme launched in **2021** under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** to develop a comprehensive semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem in India.
- The Mission is supported by an incentive framework of **₹76,000 crore**, offering fiscal support of up to **50 percent** for silicon fabs, compound semiconductor facilities, assembly and testing units, and chip design.
- As many as **12 semiconductor** manufacturing projects have been approved with an investment pipeline of about **₹1.64 lakh crore** under the mission.
 - These include **silicon fabrication units, silicon carbide fabs, advanced and memory packaging facilities, and specialised assembly and testing infrastructure**.

India Semiconductor Mission 2.0

- It was announced in the Union Budget **2026–27**.
- ISM 2.0 will focus on **producing semiconductor equipment and materials in India**, designing full stack Indian semiconductor intellectual property, and fortifying both domestic and global supply chains.



- Semicon 2.0 seeks to build the semiconductor ecosystem through **six pillars- Design, Machines and materials, Setting up more fabs, Further strengthening the ATMP-OSAT industry, Research and Development and Talent development**.

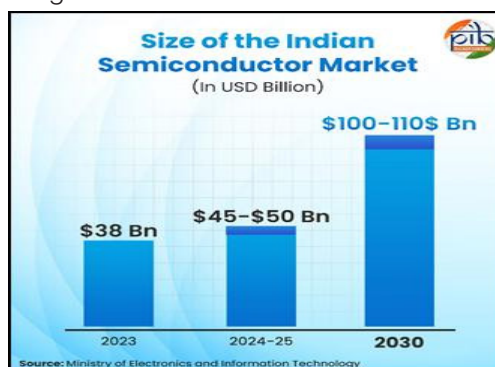
Pillars of Semicon 2.0

- First pillar:** Expand India's semiconductor design capabilities by promoting chip IPs, system designs, and innovation, building on the success of around 105 chip-design startups.

- Second pillar:** Incentivize manufacturing and R&D of semiconductor equipment, materials, chemicals, and gases to create a robust domestic ecosystem.
- Third pillar:** Efforts will be made to attract more manufacturers to come to India and set up fabs to manufacture chips. This will include silicon fabs, compound semiconductor fabs, discrete component fabs, display fabs, etc.
- Fourth pillar:** Encourage advanced Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging (ATMP) and Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) units to strengthen backend manufacturing.
- Fifth pillar:** Move beyond 28–110 nm technology nodes by developing advanced process nodes and next-generation semiconductor technologies.
- Sixth pillar:** With 315 universities training students on complex chip design using the latest EDA tools, around 68,000 students have already been trained. It will be developed further and deepen the level of training while in college.

Why are Semiconductors Strategically Important?

- Foundation of the Digital Economy:** Semiconductors form the core component of almost every modern electronic device and digital technology.
- National Security:** Semiconductor chips are indispensable for defence equipment, surveillance systems, satellites, cybersecurity infrastructure and strategic communication networks.
- Industrial Competitiveness:** Countries with strong semiconductor manufacturing capabilities are leveraging technological leadership and industrial competitiveness.
- Technological Sovereignty:** Domestic semiconductor production is necessary to reduce the dependence on foreign suppliers and strengthen self-reliance.



Indigenous Microprocessors and Core Semiconductor Technologies

- Microprocessors form the **foundational layer** of modern digital infrastructure, **powering devices and systems across telecommunications, mobility, healthcare, industry, defence, and space.**
- India has made **focused investments to build sovereign capabilities** in advanced processor design as a core pillar of semiconductor self-reliance.
- A key milestone in this journey is the launch of **DHRUV64**, a fully indigenous **64-bit microprocessor** developed by C-DAC under the **Microprocessor Development Programme (MDP).**

Schemes under ISM

- Semiconductor Fabs Scheme:** Provides up to 50 per cent fiscal support for setting up semiconductor wafer fabrication units, covering advanced and mature technology nodes.
- Display Fabs Scheme:** Offers up to 50 per cent financial support to establish AMOLED and LCD display fabrication units in India.
- Compound Semiconductors and ATMP/OSAT Scheme:** Supports compound semiconductor and chip assembly, testing and packaging units with up to 50 per cent capital assistance.
- Design Linked Incentive Scheme:** With an outlay of ₹1,000 crore, supports chip design startups and MSMEs through R&D support and incentives of up to ₹15 crore per company.

What are the Challenges?

- High Capital Investment:** The establishment of semiconductor fabrication plants requires investments of several billion dollars and long gestation periods.
- Technology-Intensive Industry:** Semiconductor manufacturing requires highly sophisticated technologies that are continuously evolving.
- Dependence on Imported Equipment:** India remains dependent on foreign suppliers for advanced semiconductor manufacturing equipment and specialised machinery.
- Infrastructure Requirements:** Semiconductor fabrication requires uninterrupted electricity, ultra-pure water and highly reliable logistics infrastructure.
- Skill Gaps:** The industry requires a highly specialised workforce trained in semiconductor engineering, fabrication processes and chip design.

Concluding remarks

- India Semiconductor Mission 2.0 marks a decisive shift from **ecosystem creation to ecosystem consolidation** and global integration.

- By deepening support for manufacturing, design, and advanced skills, ISM 2.0 **positions semiconductors as a strategic national capability**—central to economic resilience, digital infrastructure, and technological sovereignty.

Source: AIR

EMPOWERING INDIA'S SKILL ECOSYSTEM

Context

- The renewed focus on skill development as a key driver of **Viksit Bharat@2047**, coupled with rapid technological change, has brought India's skilling ecosystem to the fore.

Why Skill Development Matters?

- India's labour market is undergoing a structural shift due to automation, artificial intelligence (AI), digitalisation, climate action and demographic changes.
 - The continuous skilling has therefore become mandatory for employability and economic competitiveness.
- Economic Growth:** Development of skills enhances productivity, spurs entrepreneurship, alleviates poverty and builds sustainable economic growth.
- Future Ready Workforce:** The **IMF's AI Preparedness Index** India scored 49.3, above the average of emerging economies (42.1), indicating preparedness to leverage AI-led opportunities.
- Leveraging Demographic Dividend:** More than 54% of India's population is below 25 years and almost 62% of them are in the working age group, hence skilling is very important to leverage demographic dividend.
- Addressing Global Talent Needs:** By 2030, India will produce a **surplus of 45 million skilled professionals**, and the world could experience a deficit of 85 million workers, creating significant global employment opportunities.

Skilling in India: Current Status

- India Skills Report 2026:** Employability rises from 46% (2020) to 56.4% (2026)
- Skill development is embedded at all stages of the education-to-employment life cycle, from school education through vocational training, apprenticeships and digital learning.

- More emphasis is being placed on **AI, emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, the involvement of women and training** aligned with industry.
- The hiring trend shows increasing demand for skilled professionals in IT, manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and electronics sectors.

Related Efforts & Initiatives

- **Early Skilling and Schooling:**
 - ♦ **Samagra Shiksha:** Skill education launched in more than 25,000 schools, 35.5 lakh students to benefit in 138 job roles.
 - ♦ **PM SHRI Schools:** 21st Century Skills with focus on implementation of NEP 2020 in over 13,000 schools.
 - ♦ **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL):** Over 10,000 innovation labs nurturing creativity and scientific temper.
 - ♦ **AI for ALL (SOAR & YUVA AI):** AI literacy programs for school students & citizens under the IndiaAI Mission
 - ♦ **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF):** It is a competency-based learning that integrates vocational and academic education.



- **Workforce Upskilling: Skill India Mission (SIM) by:**
 - ♦ **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 4.0):** 28 lakh+ candidates trained; new future-skills job roles added.
 - ♦ **Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS):** Community skilling with more than 82% women beneficiaries.
 - ♦ **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS):** 'Earn While You Learn' model of industry-led training.
 - ♦ **Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS):** Modernising Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
 - ♦ **PM-SETU:** Upgrading **1,000 ITIs** into industry-linked centres of excellence.

Future Skills and Entrepreneurship:

- ♦ **FutureSkills Prime:** Offers more than **2,800 digital courses** with over **33 lakh learners**.
- ♦ **PM Vishwakarma:** Extends training, credit and market linkages to artisans.
- ♦ **Startup India, NIESBUD & IIE** promotes entrepreneurship and self-employment.
- **Skilling focused on women:**
 - ♦ AI Careers for Women, Swavalambini and NAVYA are working to increase women's participation in AI, entrepreneurship and non-traditional sectors.
- **Measures in Budget 2026–27:**
 - ♦ Schools & Colleges: AVGC Content Creator Labs.
 - ♦ Training of **1.5 lakh caregivers** under NSQF.
 - ♦ Skill development for tourism, sports, Ayurveda, design and university townships linked with industrial corridors.

Key Concerns

- Persistent **skill mismatch** between education and industry requirements.
- Low participation in formal vocational education compared to international standards.
- Regional inequities in the availability of quality skilling infrastructure.
- Poor placement results and little collaboration between industry and academia.
- Technology is changing so fast that we need to keep relearning new skills.

Way Forward: Toughening the Measures

- Align skilling programmes to emerging sectors like AI, semiconductors, green energy, and Industry 4.0.
- Get industry more involved in the design of the curriculum, apprenticeships and placements.
- Promote quality assurance and outcome based assessment through NSQF.
- Expand digital infrastructure and access to skilling in rural and Tier-II/III locations.
- Encourage continuous learning with regular upskilling and flexible certification paths.
- Strengthen international linkages for mobility of India's skilled professionals across the world.

Source: PIB

NATIONAL INVESTMENT POLICY (NIP) FOR UREA-2026

Context

- The Centre approved the **National Investment Policy (NIP) for Urea-2026**.

About

- Aim:** To **promote fresh investments in the domestic urea sector** and strengthen **India's self-sufficiency** in fertilizer production.
- It encourages the **establishment of new gas-based urea manufacturing plants** across the country to **reduce dependence on imports and bridge the gap between domestic production and demand**.
- key changes in comparison to NIP-2012 includes:**
 - The **separation of fixed and variable costs** for greater transparency, introduction of a **viable Return on Equity (RoE) band** with a floor at 12% and a ceiling at 16%, and **mitigation of foreign exchange risk** through conversion of fixed cost into INR after four years based on prevailing exchange rates.
 - These measures are estimated to result in **savings of over Rs.250 crore for each plant** established under NIPU-2026 compared to NIP-2012.
- Under the new policy, all new gas-based urea manufacturing units **will be eligible for support**, with the objective of increasing indigenous production.

NIP-2012

- The previous New Investment Policy-2012, introduced **to attract investment in revamp, expansion, revival, brownfield and greenfield projects**, resulted in the **establishment of six new urea plants**.
- These included four units developed through joint ventures of nominated public sector undertakings and two by private companies. The investment window under NIP-2012 expired in 2019.

Operational Urea Manufacturing Units

- At present, there are **33 operational Urea manufacturing units** with total Reassessed/installed capacity of 269.42 LMT.
- There is a need to increase the indigenous production of Urea. There is a gap in the indigenous production and demand of urea in the country which is filled by the import of urea.

What is Urea?

- Urea is a chemical compound with the formula $\text{CO}(\text{NH}_2)_2$.
 - It contains about **46% nitrogen (N)**, which is the highest nitrogen content among solid fertilizers.
- Use:**
 - Promotes leafy growth (important for crops like rice, wheat, maize).
 - Enhances protein formation in plants.
- Since the Green Revolution, India **has relied on urea to supply the nitrogen essential for higher crop yields**.
 - Urea accounts for **56% of all fertilisers consumed** and nearly 80% of all nitrogenous fertilisers.
 - Over 80% of domestic urea** is produced using **imported natural gas**, and more than a fifth of the total consumption is imported.

Why India Import Urea?

- High Demand from Agriculture:** India has a large agrarian economy with crops like rice and wheat that require heavy nitrogen use. Urea is the most preferred fertilizer because it is cheap and effective.
- Insufficient Domestic Production:** Although India has many urea plants, production is not enough to meet total demand.
 - Some plants are old and inefficient, leading to lower output and setting up new plants requires high investment and time.
- Dependence on Natural Gas:** Urea is produced using natural gas as a key input. India is not self-sufficient in natural gas, leading to higher production costs, and limited expansion of domestic urea production.
- Cost Advantage of Imports:** Sometimes, importing urea from countries is cheaper than producing it domestically.

Concerns

- High Fiscal Burden:** Heavy subsidy on urea increases the government's fertilizer subsidy bill and strains public finances.
- Imbalanced Fertilizer Consumption:** Excessive use of urea (nitrogen) compared to phosphatic and potassic fertilizers disturbs the N:P:K ratio, reducing soil productivity.
- Low Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE):** Only a part of applied urea is utilized by crops; the

rest is lost through volatilization, leaching, and denitrification.

- **Soil Degradation:** Continuous overuse leads to soil acidification, micronutrient deficiency, and long-term fertility decline.
- **Environmental Pollution:** Causes water pollution (eutrophication) due to nitrate runoff, emits nitrous oxide (N₂O), a potent greenhouse gas.
- **Import Dependence & External Vulnerability:** Reliance on imported urea and natural gas exposes India to global price volatility and supply disruptions.

Recommendations

- **Shift policy focus:** Reorient the National Green Hydrogen Mission towards domestic green urea production instead of export-centric green ammonia.
- **Integrate CCUS with urea plants:** Use carbon capture funding to ensure dedicated CO₂ supply for urea manufacturing.
- **Curb overuse & improve efficiency:** Enhance nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) and promote sustainable/organic farming.
- **Undertake structural reforms:** Move towards phased decontrol and market competition to boost efficiency, innovation, and reduce subsidy burden.

Government Initiatives

- **Neem-Coated Urea (NCU):** Government mandated the coating of urea with neem to reduce nitrogen loss, improve efficiency, and prevent diversion to non-agricultural uses.
- **Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme:** It promotes balanced fertiliser use (N:P:K) by subsidising phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, reducing overdependence on urea.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Fertilisers:** Subsidy is transferred to companies after sale to farmers, ensuring transparency and reducing leakages/diversion.
- **Promotion of Nano Urea:** Developed by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited, Nano Urea reduces conventional urea requirement while maintaining crop yield.
- **Soil Health Card Scheme:** Provides farmers with soil nutrient status, encouraging judicious and need-based fertiliser use.

Source: DD

DIGITISATION IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA

Context

- The Union Government has announced that India aims to achieve a full digital rollout of the criminal justice system by 1 July 2027 through the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).

About

- The **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** has been established by integrating the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (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**.

Criminal Justice System (CJS)

- The criminal justice system comprises the police, courts, prisons, forensics, and prosecution services, and aims at ensuring that individuals who suffer injury or loss at the hand of others can present their cases and seek justice.
- **Digital Criminal Justice System:** The proposed digital ecosystem seeks to digitise every stage of criminal proceedings, including:
 - ♦ Registration of First Information Reports (FIRs).
 - ♦ Investigation and collection of evidence.
 - ♦ Filing of digital charge sheets.
 - ♦ Submission of forensic reports.
 - ♦ Digital presentation of witness testimonies.
 - ♦ Conduct of trials.
 - ♦ Final disposal and archival of cases.

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

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.
- **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.

Source: TH

STRENGTHENING RURAL CREDIT FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN INDIA

In Context

- India's rural credit ecosystem has grown substantially over the years.

Evolution of Rural Credit System

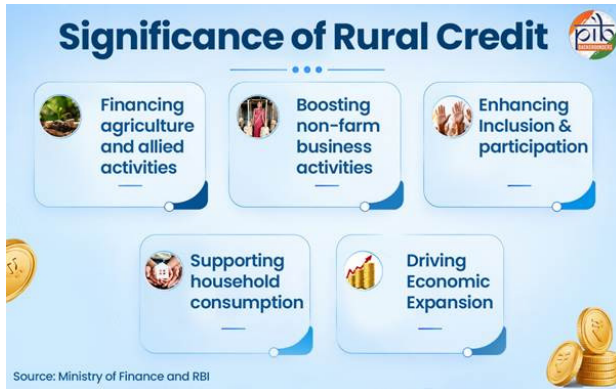
- In the post-Independence period, the Government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) undertook key initiatives to strengthen institutional credit.
- **1955:** The National Agricultural Credit (Long-term Operations) Fund was created and the State Bank of India was established. These initiatives marked a major step towards expanding rural banking and strengthening agricultural finance.
- **1969:** 14 major commercial banks were nationalised. It reoriented banking policies towards priority sectors, particularly small farmers, which enhanced the flow of institutional credit to rural areas.

- **1982:** NABARD was established, strengthening the rural credit architecture.
 - ♦ It integrated financing, developmental, and supervisory functions for agriculture and rural development.
 - ♦ It also promotes financial inclusion, prepares district credit plans and supports Government initiatives aimed at expanding access to formal finance.
- **1992:** The Self-Help Group (SHG)-Bank Linkage Programme was introduced which expanded access to formal credit for rural households.
- **1998:** The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme improved the availability of timely and affordable credit for farmers.
- **2014:** Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched to expand financial inclusion through universal banking access, supporting credit, insurance and Direct Benefit Transfers.
 - ♦ It forms a key pillar of the JAM (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile) Trinity. This has transformed the delivery of welfare benefits through digitally enabled, transparent and targeted service delivery.
- **2015:** The MUDRA Scheme (PMMY) was launched to provide collateral-free institutional credit to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro enterprises. This promotes rural entrepreneurship and self-employment.
- **2022 onwards:** Digital initiatives such as the Jan Samarth Portal, e-KCC and others have transformed rural credit delivery through technology-enabled, accessible and inclusive financial services.
- ♦ **Progress:** At present, around 120 SCBs are providing banking services across the country.
 - In rural areas, there were 41,464 SCB branches in 2014. This increased by over 35% to 56,193 rural branches by July 2025, playing a vital role in rural credit delivery.
- **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) :** RRBs were established under the RRB Act, 1976, with the objective of strengthening institutional credit in rural areas.
 - ♦ They focus particularly on small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans, and small entrepreneurs.
 - ♦ They have played a critical role in promoting rural development and financial inclusion.
 - Currently, 28 RRBs operate across States and Union Territories, having a branch network of over 22,000 in 700 districts.
- **Co-operative Banks:** The co-operative banking system forms an integral part of India's financial system, with separate urban and rural segments.
- **Small Finance Banks (SFB):** SFBs were introduced following the Union Budget 2014–15. Licensed by RBI, SFBs aim to promote financial inclusion by providing accessible and secure savings facilities.
 - ♦ They particularly focus on the unserved and underserved sections of the population.
 - ♦ SFBs extend credit to small businesses, small and marginal farmers, micro industries, and other entities in the unorganised sector.

Importance of India's Rural Credit Ecosystem

Institutional Architecture of Rural Credit

- **Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCB):** A SCB is a bank included in the Second Schedule of the RBI Act, 1934. These banks are eligible for loans at the bank rate from the RBI and are members of the clearing house.
 - ♦ They deliver banking services through branches, Business Correspondents, digital platforms, and Government initiatives such as PMJDY and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
 - SCBs include public sector banks, private sector banks, foreign banks, payment banks, regional rural banks and small finance banks.
- **Supports agricultural production and food security:** Crop loans, investment credit for irrigation, farm mechanisation, dairy, fisheries and horticulture enable farmers to purchase inputs and boost productivity.
- **Promotes financial inclusion:** SHG–Bank Linkage pioneered by NABARD and supported by RBI, links low income rural households particularly women to the formal banking system.
- **Reduced reliance on informal lenders:** Institutional credit is offered at regulated interest rates and offers formal protection to borrowers than traditional moneylenders.
- **Funds rural infrastructure and non-farm growth:** Rural Credit directs resources to roads, irrigation, bridges and other infrastructure



Current Issues

- **Unequal access to formal credit:** Small and marginal farmers face difficulties in getting institutional loans in time resulting in regional disparities in credit flow.
 - **High transaction costs and documentation burden:** The lending in rural areas is expensive and time consuming due to the dispersed borrowers, land-record issues and procedural requirements.
 - **Credit concentration in crop loans:** Short term crop finance is more developed than long term investment credit for irrigation, mechanisation, storage and allied sectors.
 - **Regional Imbalance:** Some of the eastern and central states receive less institutional agricultural credit than the southern and western states.
 - **Lack of Awareness:** Some rural borrowers have low financial literacy and digital capability, which can limit the effective use of formal credit channels.
 - **Monsoon Dependency:** Agriculture remains highly vulnerable to weather shocks, increasing the riskiness of farm lending and generating **repayment stress** and periodic loan restructuring.
- ### Policy Framework for Rural Credit
- **Priority Sector Lending (PSL):** Priority Sector Lending (PSL) is a mandatory framework set by the RBI.
 - ♦ It requires banks to allocate a specific percentage of their total loans to critical or underserved sectors of the economy that struggle to access formal credit.
 - ♦ At least 18% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit or Credit Equivalent of Off-Balance Sheet Exposures, whichever is higher, must be earmarked for this purpose.

- **Ground Level Credit (GLC):** The Government sets annual GLC targets for agriculture and allied sectors, which banks must achieve each financial year.
 - ♦ These targets are set region-wise, agency-wise, and by loan category, including crop and term loans.
- **Self Help Group (SHG):** The Self-Help Group–Bank Linkage Programme (SHG-BLP), was initiated by NABARD. It was launched to connect rural Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with the formal banking system & enabling access to affordable institutional credit.
- **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS):** PACS are the grassroots-level institutions of the short-term cooperative credit structure. They directly interact with rural borrowers, providing loans and facilitating repayment.
 - ♦ PACS also undertakes distribution and marketing functions for agricultural inputs and produce.
- **Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS):** MISS is a central sector scheme ensuring the availability of short-term credit to farmers at affordable interest rates through KCC.
 - ♦ Under the scheme, farmers receive short-term loans at a subsidised interest of 7%, with 1.5% subvention provided to lending institutions. Farmers repaying loans promptly are eligible for an additional incentive of up to 3%, reducing the interest rate to 4%.
 - ♦ The Union Budget 2025–26 introduced several measures to strengthen MISS.
 - Enhanced the loan limit under the MISS from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh for loans availed through KCC.
 - The lending limit for fisheries and allied activities increased from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh.
 - From January 2025, the limit for collateral-free short-term agricultural loans increased from ₹1.6 lakh to ₹2 lakh per borrower.
- **PM Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana (PM-DDKY):** PM-DDKY approved in July 2025, aims to catalyse growth in 100 low performing agri-districts.
 - ♦ It adopts a saturation-based convergence of 36 Central schemes across 11 Ministries. A key objective of the scheme is to enhance access to short-term and long-term agricultural credit for farmers

- **Kisan Credit Card:** It offers features such as an ATM-enabled debit card and one-time documentation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** It provides universal banking access through at least one basic account per household of marginalized communities.
- **Jan Samarth Portal:** Launched in June 2022, it is a one-stop digital platform to link Government-sponsored loan and subsidy schemes, including KCC.
- **Jan Dhan Darshak App:** It enables citizens to locate banking service points, including bank branches, ATMs, Bank Mitras and Common Service Centres (CSCs), across the country.

Conclusion

- India's rural credit system has transitioned from an informal structure to a diversified, institution-led and policy-driven framework. The system has reinforced rural prosperity to timely and affordable credit across agriculture and allied sectors.
- RRBs, cooperatives and NABARD have expanded institutional credit but the problems of unequal access, poor governance of cooperatives and inadequate financing for long-term investments persist.
- Strengthening institutions, digitisation and targeted investment in rural areas are key to sustainable rural growth.

Source : PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

ABATHSAHAYESWARAR TEMPLE

In News

- The 12th-century Abathsahayeswarar Temple at Thukkachi was restored after decades of neglect.

Abathsahayeswarar Temple

- It is situated at Thukkachi, near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu.
- It is one of the most significant monuments of the later Chola period—closely associated with Kulotunga I and Vikrama Chola
- It is designed as a Kara Kovil—a temple conceived in the form of a chariot
- It also houses the idol of Lord Sarabeshwarar which is considered one of the oldest depictions of the deity.

Temple's restoration

- The temple's restoration earned the UNESCO Asia Pacific Award of Distinction (2024) for its attempt to maintain the temple's heritage while reinforcing its structural integrity.
- The project combined traditional temple building practices (Sthapatya Veda, Agama Shastra, lime mortars) with modern technologies like drone surveys, digital mapping, photogrammetry and structural engineering.
 - ♦ Every granite block was numbered, disassembled and then reassembled in its original position to preserve historical authenticity.

Source : TH

JAGANNATH RATH YATRA

Context

- The world-famous Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath has commenced in Puri, Odisha.

About Rath Yatra

- Known by several names, including **Gundicha Jatra**, **Ghosa Jatra** and **Navadina Jatra**, the Rath Yatra is a significant Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Jagannath, an incarnation of **Lord Vishnu**.
- During the annual Rath Yatra festival, Lord Jagannath and his two siblings—elder brother Lord Balabhadra and younger sister Devi Subhadra—give darshan to devotees from their chariots and travel to the **Gundicha Temple**, revered as the maternal aunt's abode of Lord Jagannath.
- The Yatra begins from the **Jagannath Temple in Puri and concludes at the Shree Gundicha Temple**.
- The deities will stay at the Gundicha Temple for nine days before returning to the Jagannath Temple on the same chariots during the **Bahuda Yatra**, also known as the return car festival.
- Beyond Puri, the Jagannath Rath Yatra is also celebrated with equal religious fervour across several states, including Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, drawing large crowds of devotees who participate in ceremonial chariot processions and prayers.

Jagannath Puri Temple

- Shree Jagannath Puri Temple is one of the most impressive monuments of the State of Odisha.
- The temple was built in the **12th Century AD by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva** of the **Eastern Ganga Dynasty**.

- Jagannath Puri temple is called '**Yamanika Tirtha**' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath, popularly known as Lord Krishna.
- It is one of the **Dhammas (Holiest of the holy place)** out of four Dhamas i.e. Puri, Dwarka, Badrinath & Rameswar, in India.
- This temple was called the "**White Pagoda**" and is a part of Char Dham pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri, Rameswaram).

Architectural Features of the Temple

- The entire temple complex is enclosed within **two concentric walls**, the Kuruma Bheda (Inner wall) and the Meghnad Pachira (Wall).
- There are **four gates** to the temple- **Eastern 'Singhdwara'** which is the main gate with two crouching lions, **Southern 'Ashwadwara'**, **Western 'Vyaghra Dwara'** and **Northern 'Hastidwara'**. There is a carving of each form at each gate.
- The main entrance to the temple is through **Singhadwara** located on the Eastern Front of the temple with three other entrances along with the four cardinal directions.
- The **Nilachakra or the Blue wheel** perched on top of the temple is made of eight metals or ashtadhatu.
- The **Aruna stambha**, the 33 ft monolith structure pillar in front of the Singhadwar or the main entrance of the temple was originally located at the Sun Temple, Konark.

Source: AIR

RAVIDASSIAS COMMUNITY

Context

- The Ravidassia community has renewed its demand for recognition of a separate "Ravidassia religion" category in the Census, arguing that it has evolved into a distinct religious identity.

Who are the Ravidassias?

- Guru Ravidas was a **15th–16th century** Bhakti Movement saint, mystic poet, and social reformer who advocated equality, social justice, and devotion beyond caste distinctions.
- He created the concept of **Begampura** — an egalitarian society and a spiritual vision of a city without sorrow, fear or discrimination.

- **Ravidassias are followers of Guru Ravidas** and predominantly belong to the Dalit community.
- The largest concentration of Ravidassias is found in the **Doaba region of Punjab**, particularly in the districts of **Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr)**.

Dera Sachkhand Ballan

- Dera Sachkhand Ballan, located near Jalandhar, is the most influential **religious institution of the Ravidassia community**.
- It was founded in the early **20th century** by **Baba Sant Pipal Das**.
- The dera was historically associated with Sikhism but formally **declared the Ravidassia religion in 2010**, following the 2009 Vienna attack on its religious leaders.
- It serves as the spiritual and organisational centre of the Ravidassia faith.

Source: IE

TIBETAN PLATEAU

Context

- Geoscientists at the University of Glasgow have helped reveal new evidence about the formation of the Tibetan Plateau.

About Tibetan Plateau

- **The Tibetan Plateau** (also known as the **Qinghai–Tibet Plateau, Qingzang Plateau, or Himalayan Plateau**) is the highest and largest plateau in the world.
 - ♦ It is also referred to as the "**Roof of the World**" or the "**Third Pole**".
- Spanning approximately **2.5 million square kilometers** across **Central, South, and East Asia**, it sits at an average elevation of over **4,500 meters** above sea level.
- It is surrounded by high mountain ranges, including the **Hindu Kush to the west**, the **Himalayas to the south**, the **Kunlun Mountains to the north**, and the **Qilian Mountains to the northeast**.
- It is the source of ten major Asian rivers, including the **Indus, Brahmaputra, Yangtze, Yellow, Mekong and Salween**, supporting billions of people.
- It strongly influences the **Asian Monsoon** and the global atmospheric circulation by acting as an elevated heat source during summer.

Source: DTE

MOBILE PHONE MANUFACTURING SCHEME (MPMS)

In News

- The Union Cabinet approved a new Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) with a budgetary outlay of 62,500 crore.

Background

- The Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) is based on the success of the PLI Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing (2020-2026)
- The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing (PLI-LSEM) has played a transformative role in establishing India as a global hub for mobile manufacturing and exports.
 - The tenure of PLI-LSEM ended on 31st March 2026.

Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS)

- It aims to scale up mobile manufacturing and improve global competitiveness.
- It is a five-year scheme, which will run from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.
- Features :** It provides incentive support ranging from **2.25 per cent to 5 per cent on eligible sales of mobile phones** manufactured in India.
 - Manufacturers will also receive an additional incentive of up to 1.5 per cent for increased domestic sourcing of key components and sub-assemblies.



- It offers an additional 3 per cent incentive on eligible sales for companies investing in

product design, research and development, and the creation of Indian brands.

- Objectives:** It aims to deepen domestic value addition, strengthen supply chains, boost exports and consolidate India's position as a global electronics manufacturing hub.
 - It is expected to generate cumulative mobile phone production worth around ₹39 lakh crore during its tenure, significantly increase exports and create approximately 60,000 direct jobs.

Do you know?

- The electronics manufacturing sector has also emerged as a major employer, especially for young men and women from far flung villages, with a few plants employing more than 5,000 employees at a single location.
- Mobile phone manufacturing has been the key driver of this growth and has emerged as the anchor of India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem.
- India is now the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer by volume, with 99.2% of mobile phones used in India being manufactured domestically.
- Smartphones have emerged as the single largest exported product category from India in 2025, surpassing traditional leading export items such as diesel fuel and cut diamonds.
- Mobile phones now constitute a major share of India's electronics production and exports and are playing a critical role in strengthening India's position in global value chains.

Source :DD.

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Context

- The **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** has adopted **seven Codex standards and guidelines** developed under **India's chairmanship and co-chairmanship**.
 - The Commission has also approved India's proposal to undertake **new work for the development of a Codex Standard for Cashew Kernels**.

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- The **Codex Alimentarius**, or **"Food Code"** is a collection of **standards, guidelines and codes of practice** adopted by the CAC.

- ♦ Codex standards ensure that **food is safe and can be traded.**
- It is an **intergovernmental food standards body**, set up in **1963**. The term “Codex Alimentarius” is Latin for “**Food Code.**”
- It was established jointly by the **UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)**, within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme.
- **Objective:** To protect consumer’s health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.
- **Members:** Currently, 189 members (188 UN member countries and the European Union).
- The Commission meets in **regular session once a year alternating between Geneva and Rome.**
- India became a member in **1964.**

Source: PIB

MURICATACIN

Context

- The researchers were able to **synthesize muricatacin in the laboratory** in an easy and more efficient manner **by converting other fatty acids.**

About

- **Conversion of Fatty Acids:** Straight-chain carbon compounds like fatty acids are some of the **most commonly available chemicals in nature.**

- ♦ On the other hand, **many of the biologically-relevant organic compounds**, including several drugs, have **ring-shaped molecular structures.**
- ♦ Scientists often go through a **multi-step process to convert the easily-available fatty acids into more useful molecules** with a variety of applications.
- **Muricatacin:** Researchers used their new method **to synthesize more than 10 biologically and industrially relevant molecules** including a molecule called **muricatacin.**
- ♦ Muricatacin is **naturally found in Laxman phal (soursop)** and is believed to have **anti-cancer properties.**
- ♦ Extracting muricatacin from naturally-occurring substances is considered **extremely difficult and inefficient.**
- ♦ **Only about 15 mg of muricatacin** is obtained from about **15 kg of plant material**, and that too is mixed with other substances.
- The researchers were able to **synthesize muricatacin in the laboratory** in an easy and more efficient manner by converting other fatty acids.
- ♦ They were then able to modify this compound in such a manner that it **exhibited anti-cancer properties comparable to muricatacin obtained from natural plants.**

Source: IE

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