

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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CONSTITUTION (ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH AMENDMENT) BILL

In News

- The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill has deferred the adoption of its draft report after completing voting on two of its five recommendations.
- The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025 proposes to remove the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Ministers from office if they are held in custody for serious criminal offences.

About the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025

- **Objective:** The Bill seeks to ensure that persons subjected to extended detention for serious criminal offences do not occupy high constitutional posts.
- **Scope:** The Bill will be applicable to the Central Government, State Governments and UT of Delhi.
 - ♦ Bills have separately introduced similar provisions for Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir.
- **Reasons for removal:** A Minister may be removed on the following grounds:
 - ♦ If he/she is charged with an offence the punishment for which provides for imprisonment for a term of **five years or more**,
 - ♦ and If he/she remains arrested and detained for a **period of thirty consecutive days**.
- **Removal of Ministers procedure:** They are removable by the President (in case of Union Minister) or the Governor (in case of State Minister) on the advice of the Prime Minister or Chief Minister respectively.
 - ♦ The Minister will be deemed to have vacated office automatically on the 31st day of detention if no action is taken.
- **Prime Minister & Chief Ministers:** The Prime Minister or Chief Minister is required to resign after completion of 30 days' detention.
 - ♦ If they do not resign, they automatically cease to hold office from the next day.

Key Issues and Concerns

- **Constitutional Issues :** The Bills allow automatic removal of PMs, CMs and Ministers after 30 days of detention for serious offences, raising concerns over removal based on allegations without conviction and its impact on the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Misuse of Power :** Prime ministers and chief ministers are responsible to elected legislatures.
 - ♦ Automatic removal could give investigative agencies the power to decide the fate of elected governments.
 - ♦ It may also bring down the discretion of the Prime Minister/Chief Minister in selection of Ministers.
- **Separation of powers.** The arrest of elected leaders may pave the way for executive agencies to manipulate the tenure of governments.
 - ♦ This could weaken the chain of democratic accountability from citizens to legislatures to governments.
- **Federalism :** Arrests by one level of government's agencies could affect another level of government.
 - ♦ It may upset the balance of Union and State governments.
- **Rule of Law:** Arrest is for suspicion or investigation, not proof of guilt.
 - ♦ At the arrest stage, courts only look at the legality of the arrest, not guilt.
 - ♦ The removal of a Minister prior to judicial determination may be arbitrary and in violation of the principles of fairness.

JPC's Draft Recommendations

- **Replace "removal" with "suspension":** Instead of automatically removing ministers, they should be suspended until legal proceedings conclude.
- **Automatic restoration provision:** If the person is acquitted or if prosecution does not proceed within a specified period, the suspension should be reversed.
- **Define "serious criminal offences":** Such offences should include crimes punishable with imprisonment of five years or more.

Way Ahead

- The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, seeks to promote clean politics and accountability in governance. But mandatory removal of leaders on the basis of mere arrest and detention, raise concerns of Article 21, presumption of innocence and democratic principles.
- So there is a need for a balanced approach that guarantees ethical public leadership while safeguarding due process.
- Better solutions on constitutional grounds would be more transparency, faster trials, more independence of institutions.

Source : [TH](#)

BIMSTEC REINFORCES REGIONAL SECURITY AND MARITIME COOPERATION

Context

- The National Security Chiefs of BIMSTEC member states met in New Delhi, reaffirming their commitment to strengthen regional cooperation against terrorism, cyber threats, maritime security challenges, and emerging security risks.

About

- They adopted **guidelines for the maritime component of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief**.
 - ♦ These guidelines will help BIMSTEC member states to undertake relief operations in the region in an expeditious manner
- They also endorsed a set of **guiding principles on the conduct of maritime law enforcement agencies** during interactions at sea.

What is BIMSTEC?

- **The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** is a grouping of **seven Member States** lying in the **littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal**.
- The organization was formed in **1997** with the signing of the **Bangkok Declaration**.
 - ♦ It unites South and **Southeast Asian nations bordering the Bay of Bengal**.
- **Founding Members (1997)**: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

- **Current Members (7)**: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- **Objective**: To help countries in their economic growth, to support social development, and to encourage development in other areas, like science, technology and economic development.
- The BIMSTEC region brings together **1.7 billion people - 22%** of world population with a combined GDP of **US\$ 5 trillion**.
- **BIMSTEC Secretariat**: Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Significance of BIMSTEC for India

- **Bridges South Asia and Southeast Asia**: BIMSTEC connects India with Thailand and Myanmar (ASEAN) and the Bay of Bengal.
 - ♦ Supports initiatives like the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project** and **India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway**.
- **Counterbalance to China**: Enhances India's regional influence and offers an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- **Maritime Security**: The Bay of Bengal is vital for India's naval strategy and energy trade routes.
- **Support for India's Northeast**: Opens new avenues for development and integration of the Northeast region with regional markets.
- **Bay of Bengal as an Energy Hub**: Scope for collaboration in oil and gas exploration, renewable energy, and the blue economy.
- **Shared Civilizational Links**: Common cultural and religious heritage, particularly Buddhism.
 - ♦ Easier regional travel, promotion of Buddhist circuits and cultural exchanges.
- **Alternative to SAARC**: With SAARC stagnating due to Indo-Pak tensions, BIMSTEC serves as a more productive regional forum.

Challenges

- **Political instability**: The ongoing civil conflict in Myanmar has severely affected regional connectivity, particularly the **India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway** and the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**.
- **Institutional Weakness**: The BIMSTEC Secretariat has **limited financial and human resources**, restricting its capacity to effectively monitor and implement decisions.

- **Bilateral Disputes:** Border and diplomatic tensions, such as **Bangladesh–Myanmar issues** and occasional strains in bilateral relations among member states, impede consensus-building.
- **Incomplete Economic Integration:** The prolonged negotiations on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (FTA) have constrained trade, investment, and regional value-chain development.

Concluding remarks

- As the strategic and economic importance of the Bay of Bengal continues to grow, BIMSTEC has the potential to emerge as the principal platform for **regional cooperation in South and Southeast Asia**.
- By translating its commitments into concrete action, the grouping can foster a secure, connected, resilient, and prosperous Bay of Bengal region while reinforcing **India's Neighbourhood First, Act East, and MAHASAGAR vision**.

Source: [IE](#), [TH](#)

MODIFIED UDAN: STRENGTHENING INDIA'S REGIONAL AVIATION NETWORK

Context

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the **Modified UDAN Scheme** with a **₹28,840 crore outlay (FY 2026–27 to FY 2035–36)**.

About Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)

- The **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** was launched in **2016** by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to make air travel **affordable, accessible and widespread**, especially in **unserved and underserved regions**.
- **Key Features:**
 - ♦ Capping fares on certain regional routes.
 - ♦ Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for airlines.
 - ♦ Revival of unused airports, heliports and water aerodromes.
 - ♦ Financial and operational support from the Centre and States.
 - ♦ Funding through the **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) Levy**, a sector-funded mechanism unique to India.

Achievements of UDAN (2016-2026)

- India emerged as the **third largest domestic aviation market** in the world.
- Operational airports grew from **74 (2014) to 165 (July 2026)** & **679 UDAN routes** are operational.
- Over **3.58 lakh flights** were operated and **1.68 crore passengers** more were benefited.
- Better connectivity in remote places like **Tezpur, Passighat, Pithoragarh, Diu, Rourkela**.
- Passenger-centric initiatives like **UDAN Yatri Cafés, Flybrary and free Wi-Fi** have enhanced the experience at airports.

Why was Modified UDAN Needed?

- There were several challenges:
 - ♦ Many of the regional airports continued to make losses.
 - ♦ High operating and maintenance costs.
 - ♦ Aircraft availability is limited for short regional routes.
 - ♦ Inadequate airport infrastructure in remote areas
 - ♦ Weak connectivity in hilly, island and border areas.
 - ♦ Need for greater private sector involvement and for long-term sustainability.

Modified UDAN Scheme (2026)

- It is the **next phase of India's regional aviation policy** for next 10 years (FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36)
- **Focus Areas:** Expansion of Infrastructure; Sustainable Operations at Airports; Viability of Airlines; Improved Helicopter Connectivity; Indigenous Capacity Building for Aviation; Inclusive Development of the Region.

Major Components

- **Development of Aerodromes:** 100 new airports, 441 aerodromes and 200 modern helipads to be developed from existing unserved airstrips.
 - ♦ It is designed to build regional aviation infrastructure, link small towns to the national aviation network and facilitate the movement of passengers and cargo.
- **Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Support:** Funds to help maintain operations at smaller airports.
 - ♦ Up to Rs 3.06 crore/year per airport;
 - ♦ Up to 0.90 crore per year for each heliport/ water aerodrome

- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for Airlines:** Financial support for a period of **up to 5 years**; taper funding from the **third year**, and route exclusivity **limited to 3 years**.
 - ♦ Its aim is to encourage airlines to serve regional routes until they are commercially viable.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat & Indigenous Aviation:** The scheme proposes to provide **2 HAL Dhruv helicopters to Pawan Hans and 2 HAL Dornier aircraft to Alliance Air** for the promotion of indigenous aircraft manufacturing.
 - ♦ It enhances indigenous aviation capability, reduces dependence on imports and supports operations in tough terrain.

Source: PIB

EMPOWERING WOMEN FARMERS IN AGRICULTURE

In News

- Maharashtra has become the **first state in India** to have a dedicated law for the empowerment of women farmers with the **Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026**.

Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Act, 2026

- It is aimed at correcting the **historical neglect of women's contribution to agriculture** and to improve their access to government schemes, credit, insurance, extension services, technology and markets, irrespective of whether they own land or not.
- It **defines "farmer"** in a comprehensive manner so as to include women engaged in crop cultivation, animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, agro-forestry, mushroom cultivation, vermiculture and primary processing either as landowner or labourer.
- One of the key provisions is the **Woman Farmer Certificate (WFC)**, which recognises **women as farmers, without having to own the land, and allows them to avail government benefits** and institutional support.
- It provides for a digital registry of women farmers, **a dedicated empowerment fund** and implementation mechanisms at state, district and sub-district levels.

- It also provides for a **State level Monitoring Committee headed by the Chief Secretary and a Governing Council under the Chief Minister** for overseeing implementation.

Women in Agriculture

- Agriculture continues to remain the backbone of India's economy with **80 per cent of rural women engaged in agriculture and allied sectors**.
 - ♦ Of these 33% are agricultural labourers and 48% self employed farmers.
- Women are involved in the entire agricultural value chain, from crop production, livestock, fisheries, horticulture, agroforestry to post-harvest processing, packaging and marketing.

Importance

- **Backbone of the Rural Workforce:** Women farmers are playing an increasingly significant role in driving India's agricultural progress.
- **Pillars of animal husbandry:** Women are the main operators of animal husbandry, dairy farming and management of small ruminants by directly stabilising rural household incomes.
- **Guards of Agro-Biodiversity :** Women are often the custodians of indigenous agricultural knowledge.
- **Drivers of Postharvest Processing:** Women-led cooperatives help prevent food waste and boost the competitiveness of rural markets by managing post-harvest activities and processing raw produce into value-added goods such as grinding spices or growing mushrooms

Main Challenges Faced by Women Farmers

- **Lack of ownership of land :** Most women farmers do not have land titles in their own names.
 - ♦ They are often categorised as "helpers" and not independent farmers as they do not formally own land, limiting their access to institutional credit, crop insurance and state direct benefit transfers (DBT)
- **High Physical Drudgery:** Most of the modern agricultural machinery & tools are ergonomically designed for men.
 - ♦ Thus, women still use heavy and inefficient traditional tools which leads to high physical exhaustion and less productivity.
- **Modern knowledge** on high yield variety (HYV) seeds, climate-smart technologies and digital instruments often eludes them.

- **Climate Shocks & Vulnerability:** During droughts and water scarcities, their caregiving burdens increase three times as they have to walk much longer distances to get water and fodder, taking away time needed for active farm management.

Government Initiatives for Women Farmers in Agriculture

- **Integrated Scheme for Agriculture Marketing (ISAM):** A scheme called Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) that aims to strengthen rural agricultural marketing by providing financial assistance for construction and modernisation of godowns and warehouses.
 - ♦ Under the scheme, women farmers, SC/ST promoters, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and beneficiaries in North-Eastern and hilly areas will get 33.33% subsidy while farmers in plain areas will get 25% subsidy.
- **Namo Drone Didi Scheme:** It is a Central Sector Scheme (2023-26) with an outlay of 1,261 crore to provide 15,000 drones to Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for providing drone-based agricultural services.
 - ♦ The scheme offers 80% financial support (up to Rs 8 lakh) for the purchase of drones and training of pilots and assistants.
 - ♦ It is also aligned with the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) which provides 50 per cent assistance (up to 5 lakh) for purchase of drones by women, small and marginal, SC/ST and Northeastern farmers, to boost agricultural mechanisation and rural entrepreneurship.
- **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM):** The National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) is a Central Sector Scheme for promotion of scientific beekeeping, quality honey production and development of the beekeeping sector.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM):** DAY-NRLM is a flagship rural poverty alleviation programme that empowers women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by promoting self-employment, skilled livelihoods and agriculture based enterprises.
- **Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS):** It offers short-term crop loans up to 3 lakh through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) at an effective 7% interest rate with interest subvention of 1.5% to lending institutions.

- **Integrated Development of Horticulture Mission (MIDH):** MIDH is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for promotion of horticulture development including cultivation and post-harvest management of fruits, vegetables, spices, flowers and plantation crops.
- **Mission for Arhar Aatmanirbharta:** The Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses, launched with an outlay of 11,440 crore (2025-26 to 2030-31), aims at enhancing the production of Tur, Urad and Masoor through climate-resilient seeds, expansion of cultivation, post-harvest infrastructure and assured procurement
 - ♦ It will benefit the pulse growers including the women farmers.
- **PM-KISAN:** It is a Central Sector Scheme launched in 2019 to provide financial benefit of 6,000 per year in three equal installments to eligible landholding farmer families, payable through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into their respective bank accounts linked with Aadhaar.
- **Krishi Sakhi:** A nationwide program run by the Agriculture Insurance Company of India, focused on training, awareness, and crop-insurance participation for women farmers with month-wise workshops through 2026.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Empowering women in agriculture is crucial for enhancing productivity, bolstering rural livelihoods, and promoting inclusive economic growth.
- Targeted interventions, such as gender-responsive schemes, skill development programmes, women-friendly technologies, and institutional support, play a crucial role in reducing drudgery, enhancing incomes, and enabling women to become leaders across the value chains.

Source : [IE](#)

AI HALLUCINATIONS

In News

- Recently, researchers warned that AI hallucinations are opening a new front in cybersecurity.

AI hallucinations

- AI hallucination is a phenomenon where, in a large language model (LLM) often a generative AI chatbot or computer vision tool, perceives patterns or objects that are nonexistent or imperceptible to human observers.

- AI hallucinations have evolved from a reliability issue into a cybersecurity threat.
 - ♦ Attackers exploit these predictable errors through techniques such as **Phantom Squatting and HalluSquatting**, creating fake websites and malicious software packages that AI is likely to recommend, thereby enabling phishing attacks and malware distribution.

Major Terms

- **Squatting** : Squatting is a cybercrime technique in which attackers manufacture fake domain names or software packages that resemble the real thing.
 - ♦ The classic types are typosquatting (misspelt websites), brand squatting (copying a famous brand), and package squatting (malicious software packages with similar names).
 - ♦ All of these rely on human error.
- **Phantom Squatting**: It is a cyberattack where cybercriminals take advantage of AI hallucinations to register fake internet domains that are incorrectly suggested to users by large language models (LLMs).
 - ♦ These domains often resemble legitimate sites, like customer portals or support pages.
 - ♦ Attackers register the unused domains and use them to host phishing, malware or credential stealing sites.
 - ♦ Unlike traditional phishing, victims willingly visit these malicious websites because they trust the AI-generated recommendation.
- **HalluSquatting**: It is a software supply chain attack where attackers exploit the tendency of AI coding assistants to hallucinate nonexistent names of software packages, libraries, or repositories.
 - ♦ Attackers register these bogus, but plausible, package names and upload malicious code.
 - ♦ Developers copy and paste installation commands generated by AI and end up installing malware instead of the software they intended, not realising the security risk they've created.

How AI squatting differs from prompt injection

- AI squatting attacks like Phantom Squatting and HalluSquatting differ from prompt injection in that they do not depend on malicious prompts, jailbreaks or weaknesses in AI models.
- Instead, the attackers leverage the inherent propensity of large language models (LLMs) to hallucinate predictable domain names or software packages.
- This makes attacks highly scalable as users can be compromised just by following AI-generated recommendations, even before they engage with malicious content.

Ways to Handle

- AI hallucinations cannot be fully patched because they are inherent to how LLMs generate responses. As AI becomes more autonomous, attackers can exploit hallucinated domains and software packages, making AI behavior itself a new cyberattack surface.
- Enterprises should therefore verify all AI-generated links, software packages, and external resources before use.

Source : [BS](#)

NEWS IN SHORT

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Context

- Argentina's post-match celebration after defeating England in the 2026 FIFA World Cup semi-final sparked controversy after players displayed a banner claiming the Falkland Islands as Argentine territory.

About

- The banner revived a nearly 200-year-old sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom.
- The **Falkland Islands**, known as **Islas Malvinas** in Argentina, have remained disputed since Britain reasserted control over the islands in **1833**.
- Argentina claims it inherited the sovereignty of these islands from **Spain** upon gaining independence in **1816**, and therefore regards Britain's occupation as illegal.

- In 1982, the two countries fought a 74-day war that resulted in 649 Argentine casualties and 255 British deaths.
- In **2013**, an overwhelming majority of the islanders voted to remain a **British Overseas Territory**, a result Argentina does not recognise.



Source: [IE](#)

MANASBAL LAKE

Context

- **Manasbal Lake** is on the path of ecological recovery with the **return of migratory birds**.

About

- It is the country's **deepest freshwater lake** in **central Kashmir's** Ganderbal district.
- The name Manasbal is said to be a **derivative of Lake Manasarovar**.
- The Mughal garden, called the **Jaroka built by Nur Jahan overlooks the lake**.
- The **Mansbal lake was home to more than 46 species** of birds belonging to 23 families, including Mallard, White Headed Duck, Eurasian Hoopoe, Eurasian Collared Dove, Lesser Pied Kingfisher, Golden Eagle, Grey Backed Shrike, Tickell's Thrush etc.
- It is classified as a warm **monomictic lake** and circulates once in a year for a short time.
 - ♦ A warm monomictic lake is a waterbody **that never freezes**, remaining thermally stratified for most of the year.
- **An outlet channel connects the lake with the Jhelum River**. The outflow of water is regulated artificially.

Source: TH

WORLD ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION ORGANISATION (WAICO)

In News

- China formally launched the **World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation (WAICO)** in Shanghai, at the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference.

About WAICO

- It is an **intergovernmental body for AI cooperation**, capacity building, and shared governance standards among developing nations, headquartered permanently in Shanghai.
- It's the first standing institution of its kind aimed squarely at the Global South. It has **representatives from 29 countries**.
- China will provide 5,000 AI training opportunities and establish joint AI cooperation centres with ASEAN, African Union, BRICS, SCO, League of Arab States, and CELAC.
- It will promote **open-source AI models, technology sharing, and collaborative AI development**.
- The nations aligning with WAICO's framework won't need AI regulations compatible with the EU AI Act, OECD AI Principles, or G7 Hiroshima Process.

Why it matters?

- The platform will strengthen China's influence in global AI governance with the Global South.
- It's the first real institutional rival to Western-led AI governance (OECD, EU AI Act, G7 Hiroshima Process) built specifically around Global South membership.

Source: India Today

INVESTMENT FRIENDLINESS INDEX (IFI)

Context

- NITI Aayog has released the report titled **"Investment Friendliness Index (IFI)"**.

About

- It presents a **structured and data-driven framework** for assessing how effectively States and Union Territories **create, enable, and sustain an environment conducive to investments**.

- It **evaluates investment attractiveness across the following eight pillars:** Infrastructure, Business climate, Resources, Government policy, Regulatory Ease, Institutional Environment, Financial Health; and Environmental Resilience.
- **The framework comprises 84 indicators,** incorporating both secondary data and perception-based measures derived from a primary survey of investors.
- **State Categorisation:** States and Union Territories have been classified into **four performance categories:**
 - ♦ Top Performers (scores above 50).
 - ♦ Frontrunners (45–50).
 - ♦ Emerging Performers ($\geq 40 - < 45$).
 - ♦ Aspiring States (below 40).

Category	States/Union Territories
Top performers	Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu
Frontrunners	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh
Emerging performers	Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Punjab, West Bengal
Aspiring states	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim

- **Among the Large States, Gujarat** secured the first rank, followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, which are also the top three performers in the overall Index.
- **In the Hilly and North-Eastern States category, Uttarakhand** emerged as the highest-ranked State, followed by Assam and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Among the City States and Union Territories, Goa** secured the top position, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.
- Initially five religious communities, viz., **Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis)** were notified as minority communities by the Union Government.
 - ♦ **In 2014, Jains** were also notified as another minority community.
- **As per Section 3(2) of the NCM Act 1992**, the Commission consists of: A Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and Five Members.
 - ♦ **Total of 7 persons** to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity.
 - ♦ Each Member holds office for a **period of three years** from the date of assumption of office.
- **Objective:** The organisation is set-up to safeguard and protect the interests of minorities as provided in the Constitution of India and laws enacted by the Parliament and the State Legislatures.

Source: TH

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES

Context

- The Union government appointed **Harjit Singh Grewal** as the Chairperson of the **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)**.

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the **National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992**.
 - ♦ The first Statutory National Commission was set up in **1993**.

Functions of NCM

- **Making recommendations** for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the Central Government or the State Governments;

- **Looking into specific complaints** regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of minorities and taking up such matters with the appropriate authorities;
- **Getting studies** to be undertaken into the problems arising out of any **discrimination against minorities** and recommending measures for their removal;
- **Making periodical or special reports** to the Central Government or any matter pertaining to minorities and in particular the difficulties confronted by them.

Source: [TH](#)

ICMR I-DRONE INITIATIVE

In News

- Recently, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under its **i-DRONE initiative** has successfully demonstrated the use of drone-assisted transport of TB sputum samples to improve access to tuberculosis diagnosis in remote areas.

i-DRONE initiative

- ICMR's Drone Response and Outreach for North East (i-DRONE) was launched in 2021.
 - ♦ It aimed to evaluate the use of drones to deliver vaccines and medical supplies to remote areas of Manipur and Nagaland.
- The i-DRONE project developed a hub and spoke drone network to connect 60 sub-centres, 11 primary health centres and four TB units in Telangana to transport sputum samples for TB diagnosis.
- **Outcomes:** The median time to diagnosis was reduced from 15 days to 5 days.
 - ♦ Average out of pocket expenditure (OOPE) dropped from 9,451 to about 91 with a large number of patients having zero travel costs.

Source: [PIB](#)

INDIA BECOMES 3RD COUNTRY WITH PRIVATE LAUNCH CAPABILITY

Context

- Skyroot Aerospace's **Vikram-1 Test Flight-1** has successfully reached orbit, officially establishing India as only the third country in the world with private orbital launch capability.

What is Vikram-1?

- Vikram-1 under **Mission Aagaman**, is a **four-stage orbital launch vehicle** developed by Skyroot Aerospace, an Indian space-tech start-up.
 - ♦ The **first three stages are solid-fuelled**, providing robust initial thrust, while a **hypergolic liquid upper stage** allows for precise orbital manoeuvres.
- It is built with an **all-carbon composite structure**, reliable solid-fuel boosters and a 3D-printed liquid engine.
- It is India's first privately developed **orbital-class rocket**.
- Vikram-I can deploy up to **350 kg into low Earth orbit (LEO)** and **260 kg** into a **sun-synchronous orbit (SSO)**.

Payloads deployed on Vikram-1

- **Payloads celebrating creativity and India's scientific heritage:**
 - ♦ **Cosmic Bloom**, developed by Cosmos Diamonds, featuring a diamond jewellery creation mounted on an aluminium base plate.
 - ♦ **Microart:** An 18K gold rocket holding micro-sculptures of Sir C.V. Raman, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, and Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam — each smaller than a grain of rice.
- **Technology Demonstration Payloads:**
 - ♦ Robotic Arms by Cosmoserve
 - ♦ SOLARAS by Grahaa Space
 - ♦ SCOPE by Skyroot Aerospace
 - ♦ One international payload — uD3PP and mD3RN — developed by Dcubed GmbH, Germany.

Source: [PIB](#), [IT](#)

WHITE RABBIT TECHNOLOGY BASED NETWORK DEMONSTRATION

Context

- Union Minister Pralhad Joshi inaugurated the **White Rabbit Technology-based Indian Standard Time (IST) Distribution Demonstration Network** at the Regional Reference Standards Laboratory (RRSL), Jakkur, Bengaluru, under the **"One Nation, One Time"** initiative.

What is the "One Nation, One Time" Initiative?

- The One Nation, One Time initiative aims to establish a **single, accurate, secure, and indigenous source of Indian Standard Time (IST)** for all sectors across the country.
- It seeks to provide **uniform and traceable time synchronization** to critical infrastructure.
- It reduces India's dependence on foreign **Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)** such as GPS for time dissemination.

What is White Rabbit Technology?

- White Rabbit (WR) is an **Ethernet-based precision time synchronization technology** that combines:
 - ♦ **Precision Time Protocol (PTP - IEEE 1588)** for clock synchronization.
 - ♦ **Synchronous Ethernet (SyncE)** for frequency synchronization.
 - ♦ **Optical fiber communication** for ultra-low latency.
- **Key Features:**
 - ♦ **Synchronization accuracy** of less than **one nanosecond (sub-nanosecond precision)**.
 - ♦ **High reliability** over long-distance **fibre-optic networks**.
 - ♦ **Open-source technology** originally developed at CERN for particle physics experiments and now adapted for industrial and national timing applications.

How Does the Indian IST Distribution Network Work?

- **National Physical Laboratory (NPL)** maintains India's official atomic clocks and generates the official Indian Standard Time.
- IST is transmitted through a secure **White Rabbit fibre-optic network**.
- Time reaches regional laboratories and critical institutions with extremely high precision.

- Banks, stock exchanges, telecom operators, power grids, defence systems, and data centres synchronize their clocks with the official IST.

Source: [PIB](#)

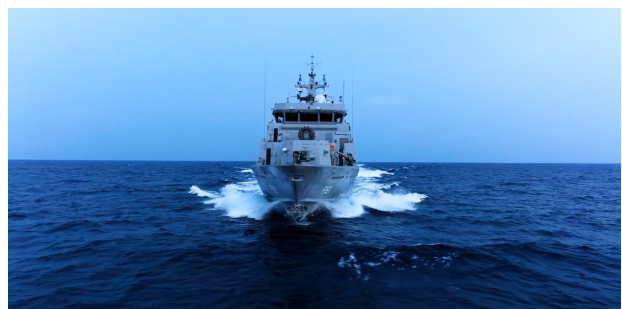
ASW SHALLOW WATER CRAFT MALVAN

Context

- The Indian Navy is set to commission Malvan, the second of the Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC).

About

- Built by **Cochin Shipyard Limited** in Kochi, Malvan has more than **80 per cent** indigenous content, reflecting India's growing self-reliance in warship design, construction and systems integration under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative**.
- The **Mahe-class ASW Shallow Water Craft** are designed to operate effectively in coastal and shallow waters, enhancing the Navy's anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- The Mahe-class ASW-SWC vessels are being inducted to replace the ageing **Abhay-class corvettes**.
- **Features:** It has a twin-shaft diesel propulsion generating over 6 MW of power and this gives it a top speed of **25 knots**, a range of **1,800 nautical miles** at 14 knots, and an endurance of 14 days.



Source: [PIB](#)