DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

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PARLIAMENTARY PRODUCTIVITY & DISRUPTIONS IN INDIA

Context

- Recently, the **Parliamentary Affairs Minister** reported productivity of **19% in Lok Sabha and 39% in Rajya Sabha** after the Monsoon Session, reviving concerns over legislative disruptions.

About Parliamentary Disruptions in India

- Parliamentary disruption refers to repeated interruptions, adjournments, protests, sloganeering or other actions that prevent the Houses from conducting scheduled business.
- Persistent disruption undermines Parliament's deliberative and accountability functions while disruption can be a legitimate instrument for the Opposition to draw attention to urgent issues.

Past Disruptions

- **Winter Session (2010):** A near-total washout amid the 2G spectrum controversy and the Opposition's demand for a JPC; Lok Sabha functioned for only **5%** and Rajya Sabha **2%** of scheduled time.
- **Winter Session (2013):** Protests over the 2G JPC findings, Telangana, and other issues reduced productivity to **6% in Lok Sabha and 19% in Rajya Sabha**.
- **Interim Budget Session (2014):** Productivity remained low at **21% and 27%**, respectively.
- **Monsoon Session (2015):** Lok Sabha functioned for **46%**, while Rajya Sabha functioned for only **9%**, amid the Lalit Modi and Vyapam controversies.
- **Winter Session (2016):** Demonetisation protests reduced productivity to **15% and 18%**.
- **Budget Session (2018):** Cauvery dispute, Andhra Pradesh's special-category-state demand and PNB-related allegations contributed to productivity of **21% and 27%**.
- **Monsoon Session (2021):** Pegasus allegations and protests over farm laws resulted in productivity of **21% and 29%**.
- **Budget Session (2023):** The Adani controversy, Rahul Gandhi's remarks abroad and his subsequent disqualification contributed to productivity of **33% in Lok Sabha and 24% in Rajya Sabha**.

Declining Legislative Productivity in India

- **The 17th Lok Sabha (2019–2024)** held only **274 sittings** across **15 sessions,** the lowest for any full-term Lok Sabha in Indian history.
- The proportion of Bills referred to **Parliamentary Standing Committees** declined from **71%** during the **15th Lok Sabha (2009–14)** to **27%** during the **16th Lok Sabha (2014–19)** and around **16%** during the **17th Lok Sabha (2019–24).**
- During the Monsoon Session 2025**,** the **Lok Sabha** functioned for only **29%** of its scheduled time, while the **Rajya Sabha** functioned for only **34%** of its scheduled time.

PARLIAMENT · MONSOON SESSION 2026

Parliament Productivity Washouts

UPA vs NDA sessions since 2009

SESSIONS TRACKED	WORST LS SESSION	WORST RS SESSION	CURRENT SESSION
9	2010 Winter · 5%	2010 Winter · 2%	LS 19% / RS 39%

Why Parliamentary Disruptions Matter?

- **Legislative scrutiny suffers:** Bills may receive inadequate debate and committee examination.
- **Executive accountability weakens:** Question Hour and discussions on government policies are lost.
- **Public money is wasted:** Parliamentary time is a valuable public resource.
- **Federal concerns get limited space:** Rajya Sabha provides representation to States and must function effectively.
- **Democratic deliberation declines:** Parliament is constitutionally intended to reconcile competing interests through debate.

Key Concerns & Issues

- Increasing political polarisation and confrontation.
- Frequent resort to disruption as a parliamentary strategy.
- Limited opportunities for structured Opposition expression.
- Reduced referral of important Bills to parliamentary committees.
- Absence of sufficient incentives for maintaining order.
- Risk of passing legislation without adequate deliberation.

Way Forward: Strengthening Measures

- **Greater consensus-building:** Government should provide adequate space for Opposition concerns through Business Advisory mechanisms.

- **Protect Question Hour:** Disruptions should not routinely eliminate the primary instrument of executive accountability.
- **Strengthen committees:** More Bills should undergo detailed committee scrutiny.
- **Time-bound discussion:** Dedicated slots can be created for major national and State-specific issues.
- **Enforce rules impartially:** Presiding Officers should apply disciplinary provisions consistently while protecting legitimate dissent.
- **Increase parliamentary sitting days:** More scheduled time can reduce pressure to transact large amounts of business in limited sessions.
- **Promote parliamentary ethics:** Political parties should evolve bipartisan norms against persistent obstruction.

Conclusion

- Parliamentary disruption is sometimes a necessary democratic tool, but **continuous disruption is not a substitute for deliberation**.
- The objective should be a Parliament where the Opposition can effectively question the government and the government can efficiently legislate within a framework of debate, accountability and constitutional restraint.

Source: IE

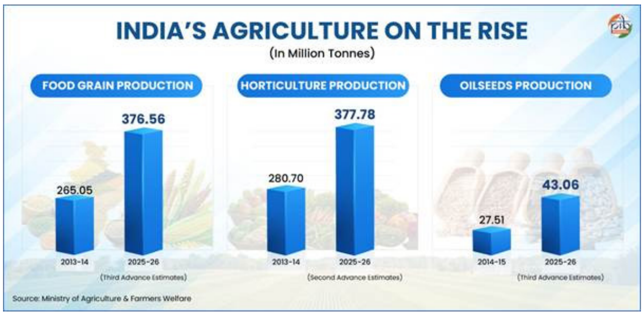
THE NEW ERA OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS

Context

- India's agriculture and allied sectors are witnessing a significant transformation, marked by rising productivity, stronger farmer support systems, and greater resilience.

Agriculture Sector in India

- Agriculture remains the backbone of India's economy, providing livelihoods to approximately **46.1 percent** of the workforce.
- **Livestock and fisheries** have maintained stable growth of **5-6 per cent** strengthening rural incomes and supporting agricultural diversification.
- The GVA of the **Agriculture and Allied Sector** is estimated to have increased to **Rs.52.08 lakh crore in 2025-26.**
- **Budget allocation** for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare increased to Rs.1,40,528.78 crore in 2026-27.
- **Agricultural exports** rose to **USD 51.1 billion (FY25)**, with the share of processed food increasing to **20.4%,** signalling value-added growth.



Major Challenges Faced by the Agricultural Sector

- **Water scarcity & irrigation:** Agriculture in India is highly dependent on monsoon rain, which can lead to drought and erratic patterns of rainfall.
  - Major issues are access to irrigation facilities and water management especially in water scarce locations.
- **Limited access to credit and finance:** Small and marginal farmers often have problems in getting access to loans and financial services.
- **Small land holdings:** The average farmer is a small land holder resulting in fragmented and uneconomical farming techniques.
  - This hampers them to adopt new farming methods and technologies leading to low output.
- **Outdated farming practices:** A large section of farmers in India still follow traditional and obsolete farming methods.
- **Market volatility & price fluctuations:** Farmers in India typically encounter price volatility due to lack of adequate market linkages, middlemen and price information.
- **Soil Degradation:** Intensive chemical-based farming has degraded about 30 per cent of the entire land in India.
- **Excessive use of urea and pesticides** and reduction in organic matter have led to nitrogen imbalance, harming soil fertility and ecosystem services.
- **Rising Input Costs:** The Green Revolution paradigm is reaching the point of diminishing returns, with rising input costs outpacing gains and leading to indebtedness and farmer suicides.
- **Impacts of Climate Change:** Agriculture production and food security are under threat from rising temperatures, irregular rainfall, floods, droughts and extreme weather events.

Way Ahead

- **Diversification:** Encourage the shift from cereal-based agriculture to horticulture, dairy, livestock, fisheries, sericulture, beekeeping and agro-forestry to raise farm revenues and minimise dependence on a few crops.
- **Expand the usage of micro-irrigation systems** using drip and sprinkler technologies for improved water-use efficiency.
- **Empower Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** and cooperatives and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to enhance aggregation, bargaining power, access to credit and market linkages.
- **Promote food processing,** cold-chain networks, warehousing and logistics so as to reduce post-harvest losses and boost farmers' participation in consumer prices.
- **Support start-ups,** agri-tech breakthroughs and data-driven farming solutions that boost production, efficiency and market access.

Source: PIB

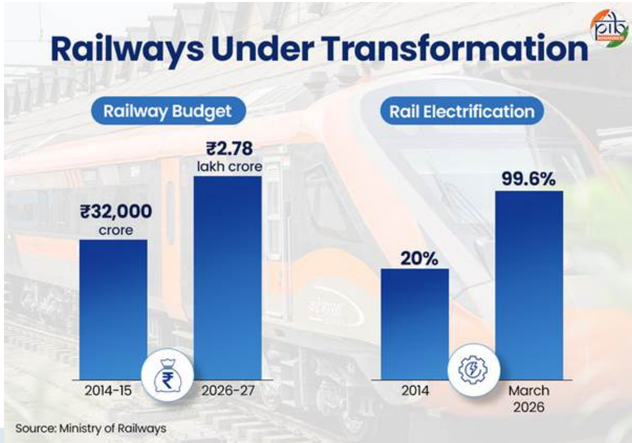
INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE TRANSFORMATION

Context

- Over the past decade, **India accelerated infrastructure creation across transport, housing, water, energy, logistics, and digital networks.**

Infrastructure Development in India

Transport & Connectivity:



- **Major Railway Bridges: Chenab Bridge (2025), Anji Khad Bridge (2025), Pamban Bridge (2025) and Bairabi–Sairang (2025)**
- **Roads and Highways:** National Highways expanded by 61% to 1.46 lakh km; 3,644 km of expressways operational.
- **Operational airports** increased from 74 (2014) to 165 (2026); UDAN connected 95 airports and benefited 1.64 crore passengers.
- **Operationalisation of GAGAN in 2015,** world's first equatorial Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) enhanced navigation accuracy and flight safety.

Maritime & Logistics Infrastructure:

- Port capacity nearly doubled to 1,726 MMTPA.
- National Waterways increased from 5 to 111.
- India's rank in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index **improved from 54 (2014) to 38 (2023).**
- India has expanded its network of National Waterways from 5 in 2014 to 111 in 2026.

Water Infrastructure:

- Under Jal Jeevan Mission, rural tap water coverage increased from 17% (2019) to about 82% (2026).

- Progress in irrigation, river rejuvenation, and river-linking projects such as Ken–Betwa.

Energy Security:

- Installed power capacity increased from 248 GW to 533 GW.
- Power shortages reduced from 4.2% to 0.03%.
- India became the world's 3rd-largest clean energy producer.
- Nearly 2.86 crore households electrified under Saubhagya scheme.

Clean Cooking Fuel:

- LPG coverage increased from 55.9% to 107.2%.
- PM Ujjwala Yojana expanded clean cooking access to poor households, with over 33 crore LPG consumers nationwide.

Digital Infrastructure:

- Internet connections rose from 25 crore to over 100 crore.
- Broadband connections reached nearly 100 crore.
- As of 2026, 5G services are available in 99.9% of districts with about 85% population coverage.

Challenges in India's Infrastructure Development

- **Financing Constraints:** Large infrastructure projects require massive investments, creating pressure on public finances and increasing dependence on private capital.
- **Land Acquisition Issues:** Delays due to disputes, rehabilitation concerns, and lengthy approval processes increase project costs and timelines.
- **Environmental and Social Concerns:** Infrastructure expansion can lead to ecological degradation, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and displacement of communities.
- **Implementation Delays:** Bureaucratic hurdles, litigation, and coordination problems among multiple agencies often slow project execution.
- **Regional Imbalances:** Infrastructure development remains uneven, with northeastern, hilly, and remote regions lagging behind.
- **Urban Infrastructure Stress:** Rapid urbanization has outpaced the development of transport, housing, water supply, and waste management systems.
- **Operation and Maintenance Gaps:** Inadequate maintenance reduces the efficiency and lifespan of infrastructure assets.
- **Climate and Disaster Risks:** Extreme weather events, floods, cyclones, and heatwaves pose increasing risks to infrastructure resilience.

Way Ahead

- Strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs).
- Accelerate land and environmental clearances through transparent mechanisms.
- Promote climate-resilient and sustainable infrastructure.
- Enhance maintenance and asset management systems.
- Improve last-mile connectivity in underserved regions.
- Build institutional and technical capacities for efficient project execution.

Conclusion

- India's infrastructure transformation has emerged as a **key driver of economic growth, connectivity, and social inclusion.**
- While significant progress has been made in transport, energy, housing, water, and digital infrastructure, **addressing challenges remains crucial.**
- **A balanced approach that emphasizes quality, resilience, and inclusivenes**s will be essential to realize the vision of a developed and globally competitive India by 2047.

Source: PIB

FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN INDIA

Context

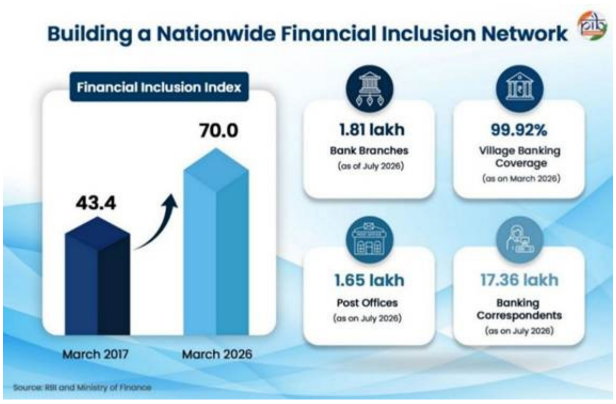
- **Financial inclusion** is central to India's vision of equitable development, India has expanded access to **banking, digital payments, credit, insurance, pensions and investment opportunities.**

Financial Inclusion

- Financial inclusion is the process of **ensuring access to financial services and timely and adequate credit** where **needed by vulnerable groups** such as weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable cost.

India's Progress in Financial Inclusion

- **RBI Financial Inclusion (FI) Index:** It measures the **extent of financial inclusion across access, usage and quality of financial services.**
    - It serves as a **comprehensive indicator** of progress in expanding formal financial services nationwide.
    - **The FI Index increased from 43.4 in 2017 to 70.0 in 2026**, reflecting broad-based improvements across all three dimensions.
- **The Global Findex Database** is the world's leading source of data on financial inclusion.
    - It measures **how adults access and use financial services** across economies.
    - **Account ownership has reached 89% since 2011**, reflecting significant gains in access to formal financial services and active account usage over the past decade.
- **Banking access** is delivered through branches, Business Correspondents and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) outlets.
    - In 2026, **99.92% villages** in the country are covered with banking outlets within a 5 km radius.

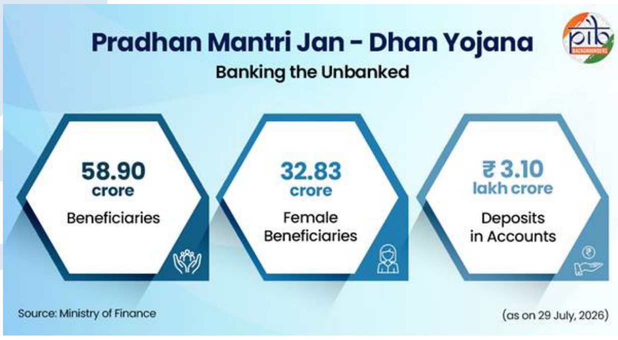


Challenges

- **Cybersecurity Risks:** The increasing use of digital platforms raises concerns about data breaches and cyberattacks. Ensuring robust security measures to protect sensitive financial data is crucial.
- **Lack of Digital Literacy:** A significant portion of the population still lacks digital literacy and access to technology, which limit the reach and effectiveness of fintech solutions.
- **Customer Trust:** Building trust in digital financial services, especially among older demographics and those new to technology is challenging.
- **Innovation and Scalability:** Keeping pace with rapid technological advancements and ensuring that systems can scale effectively as user demand grows is a tough challenge.

Government Initiatives

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** Aims to increase financial inclusion by facilitating the **enrollment of new bank accounts** for direct benefit transfers and access to financial services.



- **JAM Trinity:** The JAM Trinity Integrates Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar and mobile connectivity to strengthen financial inclusion.
    - It enables Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for transparent and efficient delivery of government benefits.
    - DBT reduces leakages, eliminates fake beneficiaries and minimises intermediaries in welfare delivery.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** It enables instant, interoperable and secure transactions between individuals and merchants in real time.
    - Within India, 81% of total retail payment transactions are processed on UPI.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY):** PMJJBY (2015) is an annual renewable life insurance scheme which offers a 2 lakh life cover for individuals aged 18–50 years.

- The scheme provides immediate cover for accidental death and a 30-day waiting period for non-accidental death.

- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):** PMSBY (2015) is also an annual renewable accident insurance scheme for savings bank account holders aged 18–70 years. It provides 2 lakh cover for accidental death or full disability, and 1 lakh for partial disability.
  - The insurance is available at an annual premium of 20 which is auto-debited from the linked bank account.
- **Atal Pension Yojana (APY):** APY (2015) is a contributory pension scheme for workers in the unorganised sector, launched in 2015.
  - It provides a guaranteed monthly pension ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 after attaining 60 years of age.
- **PM Mudra Yojana:** It provides collateral-free loans up to 20 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm micro and small enterprises across manufacturing, trading, services, and allied agricultural activities.
- **PM SVANidhi:** It is a first-of-its-kind micro-credit initiative focused on street vendors with government-backed credit guarantee support.
  - It provides collateral-free loans in three progressive tranches of 15,000, 25,000 and 50,000.
- **Kisan Credit Card (KCC):** KCC provides timely and adequate credit to farmers through the banking system.
  - It offers an ATM-enabled debit card, one-time documentation and flexible withdrawals.
- **Jan Samarth:** Jan Samarth is a unified digital platform for credit-linked government schemes.
  - It connects beneficiaries directly with lenders, simplifying access to government-sponsored credit.
- **National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE):** The centre promotes financial education and awareness across all sections of society under the National Strategy for Financial Education.
  - It conducts seminars, workshops, training programmes and awareness campaigns to strengthen financial literacy.
- **Financial Education Programme for Adults (FEPA):** FEPA was launched in 2019 by NCFE to promote financial awareness among adults.
  - The programme covers farmers, women's groups, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, SHGs, employees and skill development trainees.
- **Nationwide Financial Inclusion Saturation Campaign:** The four-month campaign was launched in 2025 to extend financial inclusion across 2.70 lakh Gram Panchayats and ULBs.

Conclusion

- India's financial inclusion journey has evolved from **expanding account ownership to enabling meaningful financial participation.**
  - A strong network of banks, digital infrastructure and government schemes has widened access to formal financial services.
- Together, these initiatives are building a **more accessible, resilient and inclusive financial ecosystem that supports inclusive growth.**

Source: PIB

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

In Context

- India has undertaken wide-ranging reforms to create a more transparent and facilitation-driven business environment.

Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)

- It is the degree of ease or difficulty to start and operate a business in a country or region.
- It relies on things like the regulatory environment, bureaucratic procedures, legal structure, and efficiency of government services.

Present Status

- Investor confidence is growing in India's business environment and improved Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).
- The progress is reflected in global assessments such as the Doing Business Report 2020 by the World Bank.
  - India's rank improved from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2019, marking an advancement of 79 positions over five years.

- The **IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2025** factors in economic performance of the country, Government and business efficiency and infrastructure development for businesses.
    - India's rank improved from 43 in 2021 to 41 in 2025. This highlights a stronger business environment, improved governance and better digital and regulatory reforms.
- **In 2020, 2022 and 2025,** India was placed in **Group A of the World Bank's GovTech Maturity Index** that evaluates digital transformation in the public sector.
    - This category acknowledges countries that are trailblazers with innovative and advanced practices across Core Government Systems, Public Service Delivery, Digital Citizen Engagement and GovTech Enablers.
- Post 2014, **India's logistics competitiveness** has improved with increased multimodal connectivity and infrastructure.
    - World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2023 – India's rank improved from 54th in 2014 to 38th in 2023.

Reforms in India's Business Environment

- **Startup India:** The Startup India plan was started in January 2016 to promote entrepreneurship and to build a healthy startup ecosystem. The objective is to make India a country of employment creators, not job seekers.
- **Udyam Registration Portal was launched in July, 2020:**
    - It provides a free, paperless, and self-declaration-based approach for MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).
    - It provides an integrated digital, paperless registration process without any administrative bottlenecks and access to the CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) and GSTN (GST Network) databases.
- **Digital India Land Records Modernisation Program (DILRMP)**: DILRMP was launched in 2016 to improve the management of land records and to limit the extent of land/property disputes.
- The program will improve the accuracy of the land records management system.

- **National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) - Ek Desh, Ek Panjikaran:**
    - The NGDRS has helped to ease property transactions and EoDB through a comprehensive user interface to register property and documents.
    - The program also allows citizens to purchase land online. Buyers can know the circle rate of land, can determine property valuation as per current rates, and can know the type of land.
- **National Single Window System (NSWS)**: NSWS is a single-window digital platform to help find and apply for approvals as per the firm's requirements.
- **PARVIESH:** The PARVIESH site was created in August, 2018 to streamline Environment clearance (EC), Forest clearance (FC), Wildlife (WL) and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances.
- **SPICe+ Form:** The SPICe+ integrated web form was rolled out in 2020 to consolidate several of the government's services under a single platform to accelerate business registration.
- **MCA21 V 3.0.:** MCA21 project is an AI-based effort which assists to a large extent in the transparency in the business sector of India.
- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM):** To digitise public procurement and make it more streamlined and inclusive, GeM was launched in 2016. The e-marketplace is the connecting link for women entrepreneurs, startups, micro and small businesses (MSEs), artisans, self-help groups (SHGs) and Divyangjans to the mainstream economy.

- **ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce)**: ONDC is an initiative to promote open networks for all aspects of the exchange of goods and services on digital or electronic networks. Founded in April 2022 to bring digital trade to everyone.
- **PM Gati Shakti Mission National Master Plan:** PM GatiShakti National Master Plan was launched in October 2021 as a way-breaking program for integrated infrastructure development and multimodal connectivity.
    - It is a single digital platform that integrates 58 Central Ministries and all States/UTs with 3199 data layers for collaborative infrastructure planning and implementation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** "PMMY was launched to bridge the gap of financial accessibility by providing collateral-free loans up to ₹ 20 lakh for small-scale enterprises.
    - Since its inception in 2015, the scheme has disbursed loans of 40.07 lakh crore to over 57 crore accounts (as of 27th March 2026).
- **GST was introduced in 2017** to replace an inefficient and dysfunctional indirect tax regime, which was a burden on both business and consumers.
    - Earlier, we had a level of taxes like excise duty, service tax, VAT, CST, etc.

Importance of Ease of Doing Business

- **Attracting Foreign Direct Investment:** Global investors need regulatory institutions that are predictable, transparent and reliable. The relaxed standards on compliance and property purchase also help investor trust.
- **Empowering MSMEs:** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are the backbone of the Indian economy.
    - Reducing the regulatory burden reduces the cost of doing business and encourages informal firms to formalise.
- **Facilitates entrepreneurship**: Simplified registration, licensing and compliance help startups, MSMEs and new enterprises to readily access the market.
- **Job creation:** To create formal jobs to absorb India's young people, there is a need to create and develop firms faster.
- **Global Competitiveness**: Indian companies would be able to effortlessly get into the global supply chains through seamless logistics, digital integration of customs, and speedy environmental clearances.

Problems and Concerns

- **Increased regulation:** Changes in taxation, environmental and industrial legislation could discourage investment.
    - The complexity of compliance rules has a disproportionate impact on MSMEs and start-ups, as they have fewer resources to comply.
- **States and districts** have performed differently, resulting in an uneven economic climate.
    - Centre's reforms may not lead to effective services at the local level
- **Land and building** delays: The conversion and building permits take time, as do the land and documentation.
- **Limited access to finance**: Availability of timely and inexpensive financing, especially to MSMEs, remains an issue.
- **Poor infrastructure and logistics**: Transport, ports, power, internet access, and logistical obstacles all add to the expense of conducting business.

Suggestions

- **Capacity Building**: Development of the capacity of local governments, technology, and human resources of municipalities and district administrations.
- **Predictable policy regimes**: Long-term consistency in trade and tax policy to enable global investors to plan decades without worry of retrospective change.

- There is a need for a **single real-window systems** for approval of processes
  - Eliminate duplication in licensing, inspection and compliance processes.
- **Reforms should be targeted** to the requirements and restrictions of MSMEs and start-ups.

Conclusion

- India's Ease of Doing Business journey is evolving from simplifying individual processes to building a more responsive and enterprise-friendly ecosystem.
- With stronger digital infrastructure, wider access to markets and finance, and greater regulatory certainty, businesses are better positioned to seize opportunities, scale sustainably and compete globally.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

VAISHYA TEKRI STUPA IN UJJAIN

Context

- The Madhya Pradesh government is considering fresh excavation at Vaishya Tekri in Ujjain, where a massive Buddhist stupa probably larger than Sanchi Stupa, was partially excavated in **1938–39.**

What is Vaishya Tekri?

- Vaishya Tekri is a large archaeological mound located near **Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.**
- It is believed to contain the **remains of a large Buddhist stupa**, popularly associated with the ancient **Kanipura/Kanakgiri Buddhist establishment.**
  - Earlier excavations exposed portions of the **main stupa** as well as **remains of two smaller stupas.**
- The site has been tentatively dated to the **Mauryan period,** around the **3rd century BCE.** The monument has traditionally been associated with **Emperor Ashoka** and his period of governance at Ujjain.
- **The stupa is estimated** to have an approximate diameter of 350 ft and a height of 100 ft or more.

The Great Stupa of Sanchi

- A stupa is a Buddhist commemorative monument usually containing sacred relics of the Buddha or other saints.
- **Established:** The stupa was commissioned in the **third century BCE** by Emperor Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty.
  - The stupa was subsequently enlarged and embellished during the **Shunga and Satavahana periods.**
- **Structure:** The Great Stupa is a hemispherical dome made of stone and brick, with a central structure that is a large, raised platform containing the relics of the Buddha.
  - It is topped by a 'harmika' that holds the triple umbrella, or **'chhatraveli',** which represents the three jewels of Buddhism – **the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.**
  - Above the dome, there is a pillar-like structure called the **chatra**, which is a symbol of the Buddha's presence and enlightenment.
- The Stupa is a **UNESCO World Heritage site** and a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists from around the world.

Source: TOI

VITAL CHEMOTHERAPY DRUGS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN INDIA

Context

- India is facing a **critical nationwide shortage of two key chemotherapy drugs, cisplatin and carboplatin**, driven by soaring global platinum raw material costs, West Asia shipping route disruptions, and domestic price caps.

About

- For patients, this has meant **interruptions or delays in life-saving treatment.**
  - The government last month **raised temporarily ceiling rates** for the two drugs by 50%, to help restart halted domestic manufacturing lines.
- **Cisplatin** is a chemotherapeutic agent used in the **treatment of solid tumors as well as certain blood cancers.**
- **Carboplatin** is a **second generation platinum compound** that is also used to treat solid tumours.
  - Both are among the **most widely used chemotherapy drugs in India** used in treating ovarian, head and neck, lung, gall bladder, urinary bladder, breast and testicular cancers.

Chemotherapy

- Chemotherapy is a drug treatment that uses **powerful chemicals to kill fast-growing cells/ Cancer cells in the body.**
- Chemotherapy drugs can be **used alone or in combination to treat a wide variety of cancers.**
- Though chemotherapy is an effective way to treat many types of cancer, **chemotherapy treatment also carries a risk of side effects.**

Source: TH

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS ON THE POWER OF ARREST

Context

- The Supreme Court, in **Vihaan Kumar v. State of Haryana (2025)**, held that every arrested person must be properly and meaningfully informed of the grounds for his arrest.

Supreme Court Ruling

- The constitutionality of arrest needs to be examined to reinforce democratic values and ensure that the **authority of the state and the liberty of the citizen are properly balanced.**
  - Failure to provide information shall amount to a **violation of Article 22(1)** of the Constitution and **Section 47 of the BNSS, 2023**.
- The verdict says that **communicating the details of the arrest to relatives** or providing ambiguous records does **not satisfy** the constitutional requirements.
- To fulfil the requirements of **Article 22(2)** and **Section 58 of the BNSS, 2023,** the arrest memo must contain the time of arrest.

Constitutionality of Arrest and Detention

- **Article 22** provides procedural safeguards for a person who is arrested, including the **right to be informed** and the **right to consult** and be defended by his lawyer as soon as possible, and finally the right to be presented before the nearest magistrate within **24 hours**, excluding the travel time.
- **Arrest is different from detention.** While detention is a **temporary hold** for investigation and the person is not charged with any offence, **arrest is a formal police custody** based on probable cause of the commission of an offence.
  - **In non-cognisable offences** such as defamation, etc., a warrant is needed for arrest, whereas in cognisable offences such as murder, rape, etc., arrest is without a warrant.

Supreme Court Judgement

- **In Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar (2014),** the Supreme Court laid down guidelines for arrests to prevent the misuse of criminal laws.
  - The court said that arrests should be an exception in cases where the punishment is less than seven years.
  - The police must determine whether an arrest is necessary under **Section 35 of the BNSS.**
- **The Supreme Court in Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)** suggests that Article 21 is related to Articles 14 and 19.
  - Of the two, Article 14 is an antithesis to arbitrariness, and the substantive natural justice emanates from it, whereas Article 19(1) incorporates procedural natural justice.

Source: TH

SRAVAANI

In News

- Researchers at IISc's SPIRE Lab, in collaboration with ARTPARK and with support from Google have released **SraVaani.**

SraVaani

- It is a multilingual Indian speech **recognition model trained on 65 Indian languages and dialects**, including 40-plus languages that today's speech recognition systems do not officially support.
- SraVaani covers **20 scheduled languages and 45 regional languages** and dialects, potentially opening speech AI capabilities to around 25 crore people as per the 2011 Census whose languages are not properly handled by current systems.
- Its coverage is designed to be **pan-India, spanning 19 languages** from the Northeast, 16 from eastern India, 9 from the west, 8 from the north, 6 from the south and 5 from central India, along with English and Sanskrit. The model even supports languages such as **Garo, Angika, Chakma, Kokborok, Tulu, Bundeli and Bajjika.**

Source:TH

WORLD ELEPHANT DAY

Context

- As India observed World Elephant Day 2026 on 12 August, its commitment to elephant conservation remains steadfast.

About Elephants

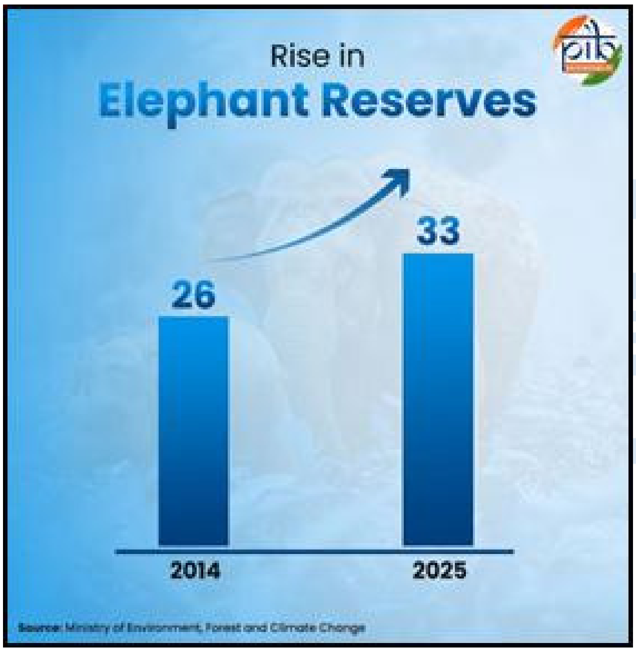
- Elephants are Earth's largest land animals and are highly intelligent. They also have the **longest gestation period among mammals**.
- There are three species of elephant: **African Savanna (Bush), African Forest and Asian.**
  - The **African savanna elephant** is the largest elephant species.
- **Threats**: The greatest threat to African elephants is poaching for the illegal ivory trade, while Asian elephant populations are most at risk from **habitat loss and resulting human-elephant conflict.**
- **IUCN Red List Status :**

Do you know?

- India is home to over **60%** of the world's wild Asian elephants. The Synchronous All India Population Estimation of Elephants (SAIEE) 2021–25 estimates India's wild elephant population at 22,446.
- The Government of India has declared the Indian elephant as a **National Heritage Animal.**

Initiatives for conservation of Elephants

- **Project Elephant (PE):** A centrally sponsored scheme launched in **1992** and implemented by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to provide financial and technical support to major elephant-bearing States for the protection of elephants, their habitats and corridors.
- **Legal Protection:** The Indian elephant receives the **highest degree of legal protection** under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- **Elephant Corridors and Reserve Network:** Elephant corridors play an important role in elephant conservation in India. Currently, 150 corridors support elephant movement.



- **Making Railways Safer for Elephants:** Joint surveys identified **127 sensitive railway** stretches covering **3,452.4 km,** leading to measures such as underpasses, overpasses, ramps and bridge modifications. These interventions reduced train-hit elephant deaths from **26 in 2013 to 12 in 2024**, a decline of over 50%.
- **Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme:** Launched in 2003, it is an international collaboration that tracks trends in the illegal killing of elephants across Africa and Asia to assess the effectiveness of field-level conservation efforts.
- **Operation Thunderbird:** To fight against wildlife crime, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, coordinated "OPERATION THUNDERBIRD" in India.
- **Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024:** The Government notified these rules to regulate the movement of captive elephants.

Source: PIB

IOL LAUNCHES INDIGENOUS 'GARUD' HIGH RESOLUTION BINOCULARS FOR CIVIL MARKET

Context

- India Optel Limited (IOL), a Mini Ratna Category-I Defence Public Sector Undertaking under the Department of Defence Production, has launched the **indigenous 'GARUD' High Resolution Binoculars for the civil market.**

About

- GARUD **offers 8x magnification and a wide 7.6-degree field of view,** enabling clear observation of distant objects while retaining a broad viewing perspective.
  - Its **weather-resistant construction** enables reliable use across varied outdoor conditions.
- **It is suited for a wide range of applications,** including birdwatching, wildlife observation, nature exploration, travel, sports, forestry, marine activities and security-related applications.
- **GARUD combines IOL's experience in defence optics with modern technology for civilian users**.
  - Its launch makes the company's optical capabilities available to the wider public, including outdoor enthusiasts and professionals.

Source: PIB