

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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INDIA-KUWAIT JOINT DEFENCE COMMITTEE (JDC)

Context

- The inaugural meeting of the **India-Kuwait Joint Defence Committee (JDC)** was held in New Delhi.

About

- Both countries agreed to further **strengthen the bilateral defence cooperation** across a **wide range of areas**, including training, military exercises, military medicine, staff talks, defence industry, and Research and Development.
- The first meeting of the JDC marked an important step towards **operationalising the objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Defence Cooperation** signed in **2024**.

Brief on India and Kuwait Ties

- Diplomatic relations** between the two countries were established in **1961**.
 - The relationship was upgraded to a **Strategic Partnership** in 2024.
 - The year **2026-27** marked the **65th anniversary** of establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries.
- Hydrocarbon sector:** During FY 2025-26, Kuwait accounted for about **3.5 % of India's total energy needs**, ranking as India's 6th largest Crude supplier and 4th largest LPG source.
- Bilateral Trade:** Total bilateral trade with Kuwait during FY 2025 -26 amounted to USD 9.57 billion, of which Indian Exports was USD 1.65 billion.
- Manpower cooperation:** Indians are the largest expatriate community in Kuwait (approximately 1 million), including in private and domestic sectors of Kuwait.
 - There is an existing mechanism of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Labour, Employment and Manpower Development to discuss these issues, which has been meeting regularly.
- Indian Community:** The Indian community with a strength of over 1 million is the largest expatriate community in Kuwait and is regarded as the community of first preference among the expatriate communities.

Significance of Kuwait for India

- Diaspora & Remittances:** With over 1 million Indians, Kuwait hosts India's largest expatriate community there, contributing significantly to remittances and people-to-people ties.

- Energy:** As one of India's top oil suppliers, Kuwait plays a crucial role in fueling India's energy needs. With India being the one of the largest importer of oil globally, ensuring a steady flow of energy from Kuwait is vital.
- Defence Cooperation:** The emerging defence partnership offers opportunities for joint training, maritime security, military medicine, defence industry and R&D cooperation.
- Strategic Location:** Kuwait's location in the Gulf region gives it strategic importance for India's maritime security, protection of sea lanes and wider engagement with West Asia.



- Shared Strategic Interests:** Strengthening ties with Kuwait provides India with a stable partner in a volatile region.
 - As global tensions persist and energy security becomes a pressing concern, Kuwait's role as an ally could prove invaluable.

Way Ahead

- Institutionalise defence cooperation** through regular JDC meetings, joint exercises, training and greater defence-industry and R&D collaboration.
- Deepen energy and economic ties** by diversifying cooperation beyond hydrocarbons into renewables, technology, healthcare and infrastructure.
- Strengthen diaspora and manpower cooperation** by ensuring better labour protection, social security and consular support for Indian workers.
- Enhance strategic coordination** on Gulf security, maritime safety, counter-terrorism and regional stability, leveraging Kuwait as a key partner in West Asia.

Source: **PIB**

INDIA-US DEAL TO PROCURE JAVELIN ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILE SYSTEMS

Context

- India and the United States have signed a ₹292-crore government-to-government deal for around **60 Javelin anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs)** for the Indian Army.

What is the Javelin?

- The **FGM-148 Javelin** is a **man-portable, fire-and-forget ATGM**, developed and produced by the **Javelin Joint Venture of Lockheed Martin and RTX** for the US military.
- It is primarily designed to destroy **tanks and other armoured vehicles**, but can also engage **bunkers, fortified positions and buildings**.
- Its **infrared seeker locks onto the target before launch**, eliminating the need for continuous guidance.
- Its key feature is **top-attack capability**. After launch, the missile climbs to around **150 metres** before diving onto the target from above, where tank armour is generally weaker.
- The **FGM-148F variant** has a range of around **4.75 km**. The Javelin first saw combat during the **2003 US-led invasion of Iraq** and gained renewed prominence after **Ukraine used it against Russian armoured forces** following Russia's invasion in 2022.

Why does India need it?

- The Indian Army has historically operated systems such as the **French-origin Milan-2T** and **Soviet-origin 9M113 Konkurs-M**, which are older-generation ATGMs.
- India's indigenous **NAG**, developed by **DRDO**, is a **third-generation, fire-and-forget ATGM** with top-attack capability, deployed from platforms such as **NAMICA** and the **ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter)**.
- However, **Javelin is a man-portable ATGM**, offering a capability that is different from the primarily platform-based NAG and making it a useful addition to the Army's anti-armour arsenal.

India - US Defence Ties

- Defence ties have transformed from **transactional to a Major Defense Partnership (2016)**.
- Guided by mechanisms such as:**
 - 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue
 - Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) (2012)
 - Military Cooperation Group (MCG)
- India is designated as **"Major Defense Partner"** and given **Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) status (2018)**, easing high-tech exports.

- India has signed all four major foundational agreements with the U.S.:

- General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002 and the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016.
- COMCASA (2018) – Secure communications & interoperability.
- Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA 2020) for Geo-spatial intelligence & satellite data for precision targeting.

- Military Exercises:** Among India's most extensive set of exercises with any country.

- Yudh Abhyas: Land forces.
- Malabar: Naval quadrilateral with US, India, Japan, Australia.
- Cope India: Air exercise.
- Tiger Triumph: Tri-service HADR exercise.
- Vajra Prahar: Special forces.

Challenges in India-US Defense Relations

- India's Strategic Autonomy:** India seeks to maintain its non-aligned stance, balancing relations with the US while continuing defense ties with Russia and France.
- Unpredictability in US Policy:** The transactional nature of US foreign policy, influenced by changing administrations, adds an element of unpredictability.
 - India must ensure that its defence strategy is not overly reliant on a single partner.
- Technology Transfer Restrictions:** The US remains cautious in sharing sensitive defense technology.
- Indigenous Defence Capabilities:** While the partnership has brought advanced technologies, it has not significantly boosted India's indigenous defence manufacturing.
- CAATSA and Sanctions Concerns:** India's purchase of Russian S-400 missile defense systems risks US sanctions under the CAATSA law.
- Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Complex procurement processes and policy mismatches slow down defense cooperation.

Way Forward

- Diversification of Partnerships:** India should continue to engage with multiple defence partners to avoid over-dependence on any single country.
- Focus on Self-Reliance:** Initiatives like 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' must be prioritized to build a robust domestic defence industry.

- **Balanced Diplomacy:** While deepening ties with the U.S., India must also maintain strong relationships with other global powers to ensure a balanced and independent foreign policy.

Source: TOI

META'S NEW TEEN SAFETY RULES

Context

- Meta is set to introduce **new default restrictions for teenagers on Instagram and Facebook** in the US after signing an \$18 billion settlement with 52 state attorneys general that requires **new safety measures for young users**.

About

- The settlement comes amid **a set of lawsuits** over **alleged harms** caused by **social-media platforms to children and teenagers**.
- The states alleged that **Meta designed Facebook and Instagram to keep young people compulsively engaged**, knew about serious risks and misled the public about them.
- They also accused Meta of **collecting personal information** from children under 13 without complying with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

Instagram and Facebook's new features for minors include the following:

- **A two-hour daily limit** that's cumulative across Facebook and Instagram, which teens can only turn off with a parent's permission and which doesn't include messaging.
- **"Night mode,"** in which teens will not have access to features such as their feed, stories and reels between midnight and 6 a.m. They will still be able to access messaging.
- The ability for teens or parents to **disable autoplay** on the two platforms, requiring the teens to tap or swipe to see more content.
- The **removal of like and reaction statistics** on all forms of posts.
- Teens or parents can choose a **non-algorithmic feed** that isn't personalized by the systems' recommendations and will only include content from accounts that teens follow or are otherwise connected to.
- **Stronger age assurance technology** to remove under 13-year-olds and ensure 13-to 17-year-olds access the age-appropriate versions of the apps.
- The agreement is also tied to **Meta's push for similar restrictions across other social media platforms**.

Ban of Social Media for underage Children

- Though **India is yet to make a regulatory move** at the central level, preliminary discussions around age-based social media restrictions are learnt to have begun at the IT Ministry.
- **The Economic Survey 2025-26** also called on the government to implement age-based limits for social media usage for children and digital ads targeted at them.
- The Survey's recommendation stemmed from larger concerns surrounding **"digital addiction"** among young users.

Need for Ban/Regulation of Social Media for Underage Users in India

- **Protection from Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Children frequently face cyberbullying, trolling, and online abuse, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and social isolation.
- **Mental Health and Psychological Well-being:** Social media algorithms promote addictive scrolling, unrealistic body images, and peer pressure, negatively affecting adolescents' mental health.
- **Exposure to Harmful or Inappropriate Content:** Underage users may encounter violent, explicit, or misleading content that is unsuitable for their age and maturity level.
- **Protection from Online Predators and Exploitation:** Children are vulnerable to grooming, sexual exploitation, and trafficking risks on online platforms.
- **Reducing Screen Addiction and Improving Academic Focus:** Excessive social media use leads to screen addiction, reducing study time, concentration, and physical activity.
- **Protection of Personal Data and Privacy:** Minors often share personal information unknowingly, making them vulnerable to data misuse, identity theft, and targeted manipulation.
- **Combating Misinformation and Radicalisation:** Children may easily believe fake news, propaganda, or harmful online challenges, affecting their judgement and behaviour.

Challenges in Implementing a Ban on Social Media for Underage Users in India

- **Difficulty in Age Verification:** Most social media platforms rely on self-declared age, making it easy for minors to create accounts with false information.
 - ♦ Strict verification may require identity documents, raising privacy concerns.

- **Technical and Enforcement Challenges:** Implementing restrictions across millions of users and multiple platforms is complex.
- **Policy Inconsistency:** If different states adopt different age limits, it may create legal and operational confusion.
- **Impact on Digital Rights and Freedom of Expression:** Blanket bans could restrict children's right to information, expression, and participation in the digital space.
- **Risk of Driving Users to Unsafe Platforms:** If mainstream platforms restrict access, teenagers may move to less regulated or anonymous platforms, which may expose them to greater risks.
- **Widening the Digital Divide:** In India, social media is often used for learning, awareness, and communication. Restrictions may disproportionately affect children from disadvantaged backgrounds who rely on digital platforms for information.

Australia's Model of Social Media Regulation

- Australia **became the first country** to introduce a minimum age for social media use.
- **Under the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act:**
 - ♦ Social media platforms must block users under 16.
 - ♦ Platforms must identify and remove existing accounts of under-16 users.
 - ♦ They must prevent new accounts or workarounds.
 - ♦ Mechanisms must exist to correct errors in account removal.
- **Rationale Behind the Australian Law**
 - ♦ It is aimed to protect children from online risks and psychological pressure.
 - ♦ **Issues identified:**
 - Addictive design features that increase screen time.
 - Harmful content affecting mental health and wellbeing.
 - A survey by the Australian eSafety Commissioner found over 50% of young Australians experienced cyberbullying on social media.

Conclusion

- A balanced approach combining regulation, platform responsibility, digital literacy, and parental involvement is essential to ensure children's online safety while protecting their digital rights and access to information.

Source: **BS**

INDIA'S GROWTH PARADOX: ECONOMIC RISE AMID PERSISTENT REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Context

- There are **substantial gaps in per capita income** and development across states in India while it has emerged as one of the world's largest economies since the **1991 economic reforms**.

India's Growth: From the 1991 Reforms Till Now

- The **LPG Reforms 1991** (liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) integrated India more closely with the global economy and accelerated growth.
- It is now the **world's sixth-largest economy in nominal terms**, behind only five economies i.e. the United States, China, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom.
 - ♦ It is the **third-largest in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms**.
- Economic activity tends to cluster around regions with existing infrastructure, markets, skilled labour and industrial networks.
- Consequently, growth has altered the composition of leading states more often than it has enabled sustained convergence among lagging states.

Growth in India's Per Capita Income

- India's per capita income has increased manifold since the reform era, reflecting significant economic transformation and poverty reduction.
 - ♦ But, India remains a **lower-middle-income economy**, and its per capita income continues to **lag behind that of many countries**.
- According to the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, India's per capita income has **risen more than 40 times in three and a half decades**.
 - ♦ But, on a **per capita income basis**, India **trails more than 140 nations**.
- It reflects India's demographic challenge: a large population makes it difficult for aggregate economic growth to translate automatically into high average incomes.
- For India to achieve developed-country status by 2047, rapid and sustained growth in **per capita income**, rather than GDP alone, will be crucial.
- **Other Achievements:** India's post-reform journey has witnessed:
 - ♦ Expansion of the services and digital economy;
 - ♦ Growth of a large middle class and improved consumption levels;

- ♦ Greater integration with global trade and investment;
- ♦ Development of world-class capabilities in IT, pharmaceuticals, space and digital public infrastructure; and
- ♦ Improved infrastructure and financial inclusion.
- These achievements demonstrate the transformative potential of reforms, but their benefits remain unevenly distributed.

Concerns and Issues: Challenge of Regional Disparities

- The most persistent concern is **inter-state inequality**.
- **Bihar and Uttar Pradesh** have consistently remained among the lowest-income states, while their per capita incomes have fallen substantially relative to the national average over the long term.
 - ♦ **Jharkhand** too has remained a lagging state.
- Conversely, states such as **Delhi, Goa and, more recently, Karnataka** have remained or emerged among the higher-income economies.
- **Maharashtra and Punjab** illustrate that historical advantages do not guarantee continued relative leadership; population growth, structural rigidities, agricultural dependence and external shocks can affect relative performance.
- The **GST's destination-based structure** may have supported consumption measurement and revenues in poorer states, but it alone cannot ensure structural convergence.
- Other challenges include inadequate human capital, weak industrial ecosystems, uneven infrastructure, climate vulnerability and limited employment opportunities.

Way Ahead: Road to Viksit Bharat@2047

- India's development strategy must shift from merely pursuing **high GDP growth to broad-based and inclusive growth**. Key priorities should include:

- ♦ **Place-based development policies** tailored to lagging regions;
- ♦ Investment in **education, health and skills** to improve productivity;
- ♦ Better connectivity and industrial clusters to overcome geographical disadvantages;
- ♦ Strengthening cooperative federalism and outcome-based fiscal transfers;
- ♦ Promoting employment-intensive manufacturing and MSMEs; and
- ♦ Building climate-resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

Source: BS

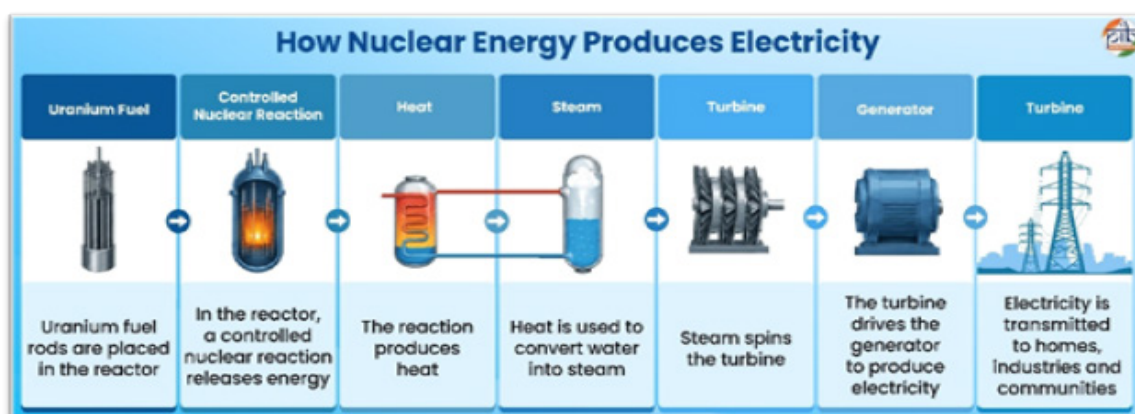
NUCLEAR ENERGY IN INDIA

In News

- India is reinforcing nuclear power as a **secure, sustainable and future-ready foundation** of national development with the help of the **SHANTI Act, 2025, Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat** and indigenous technology.

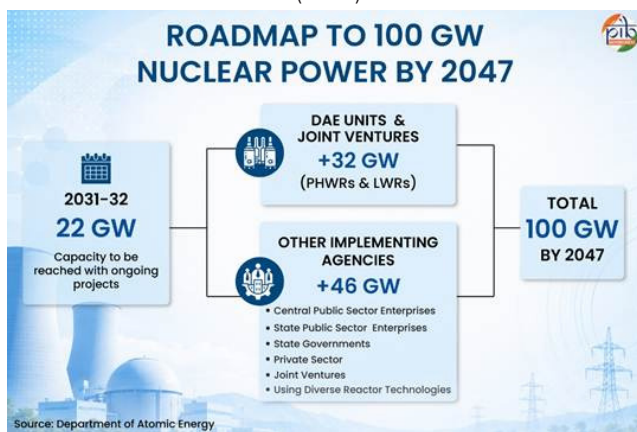
Nuclear Energy

- Nuclear power plants **generate energy from heat** produced in a well-controlled process called nuclear fission.
 - The heat boils water, and the steam turns a turbine coupled to a generator.
 - The electricity is used to provide power for homes, industry and essential services.
- ♦ All of this occurs within a system of established safety barriers and an effective regulatory framework.



Status of Nuclear Energy in India

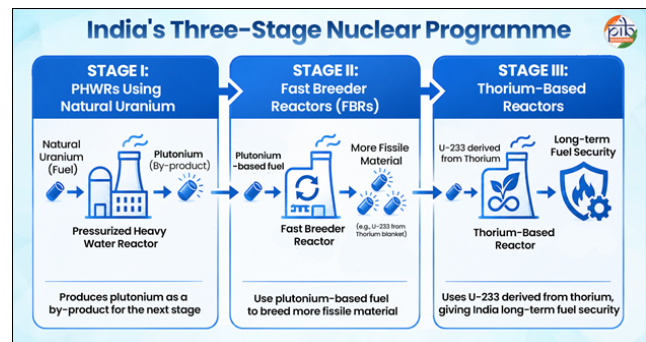
- It has been a part of India's development journey from the inception of **Tarapur Atomic Power Station in 1969**.
- It delivers reliable low-carbon electricity to today's households, industries, and economic growth.
- India has **24 nuclear power reactors** with an installed capacity of 8.78 GW. Nine reactor units are under development with an installed capacity of 7.5 GW.
- India commissioned the **world's first nuclear process heat-based hydrogen-generating plant at Kalpakkam in 2026**.
 - The indigenous technology helps in clean energy & energy security and India's Net Zero and National Green Hydrogen Mission goals.
- The Government has also approved **10 indigenously produced Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs)** in fleet mode and pre-project activities for two 500MW Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs).



Steps Taken and Various Developments

- India's Three-Stage Nuclear Programme:** India's Three-Stage Nuclear Power Program, conceived by Dr. Homi J. Bhabha in 1954, is based on the use of indigenous resources and long-term energy security.
 - Stage I** uses PHWRs running on natural uranium as fuel and reprocessing of spent fuel to recover plutonium.
 - Stage II** is based on Fast Breeder Reactors that use plutonium to generate power and also to produce more fissile material including Uranium-233 from thorium, leading to **Stage III** in which **U-233** would be used to tap India's vast thorium supplies.
 - A significant milestone was reached in April 2026 when the PFBR at Kalpakkam achieved **first criticality and Stage II began**.
- The **Nuclear Energy Mission** has earmarked ₹20,000 crore for developing indigenous SMRs with a target of having at least five SMRs in operation by 2033.

- The Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat aims to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047



Union Budget 2025-26 allocated ₹20,000 crore for indigenous Small Modular Reactors.

- The SHANTI Act, 2025**, is based on the existing framework for the safe, secure and future-ready development of India's nuclear energy program.
- India works closely with the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** for nuclear safety, security and safeguards.

Applications

- Energy:** Nuclear power is India's cleanest energy source in terms of carbon emissions, per unit of installed capacity.
 - Nuclear's 1 gigawatt of capacity in FY 2025–26 avoided some 5.4 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions
- Healthcare:** Nuclear technology is revolutionising healthcare with early disease detection, precision cancer therapy and sophisticated medical research.
 - Research institutions under the Department of Atomic Energy such as Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC), Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Tata Memorial Center (TMC), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and Harish-Chandra Research Institute (HRI) are developing indigenous radiopharmaceuticals, advanced imaging technologies and novel cancer therapies.
 - Indigenous radiation technology also sterilised 1.53 crore medical devices, thus improving patient safety and lowering healthcare-associated infections.
- Agriculture:** Nuclear technology contributes to agriculture through the production of improved crop varieties by use of radiation-induced mutagenesis and crossbreeding.
 - These varieties have higher yields, larger seed size, superior quality features, early maturation and

increased tolerance to drought, heat, salinity and diseases.

- **Food storage:** Radiation technology has a role to play in food preservation by increasing the shelf life of agricultural produce, fish and spices and decreasing spoilage.
 - ♦ Shelf life extension of mangoes has made cost-effective export by sea route possible, while the shelf life extension of onions and potatoes decreases spoilage and provides economic benefits to farmers.
 - The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has allowed radiation processing of several food items.
- **Mining & Rare Earth Elements:** Nuclear technology is helping India enhance its vital mineral and rare earth ecosystem.
 - ♦ The application of advanced nuclear analytical techniques underpins the exploration, characterisation and processing of mineral resources, improving the accuracy of ore assessment, extraction and quality control.
 - ♦ India has issued its **first Certified Reference Material (CRM)** for Rare Earth Elements – Ferrocarbonatite (FC) – BARC B1401. It is the first of its sort in India and the fourth in the world.
- **Semiconductors and Electronics:** The indigenous research and sophisticated materials development in nuclear technology has helped the semiconductor ecosystem to thrive in India.
 - ♦ High-purity isotopes and specialised materials, which are critical in the creation of semiconductors enabling precise fabrication, advanced electronics and strategic technology applications, are produced using nuclear technologies.
 - ♦ India has established its 1st Electronics grade (99.8%) Boron-11 Enrichment Facility at Talcher for use in semiconductors.
- **Green Hydrogen:** Hydrogen will probably be an important energy carrier of the future and will probably play a big role in the transition to clean and sustainable energy systems.
 - ♦ Nuclear power has the potential to produce carbon-free hydrogen with the combination of constant energy and high-temperature process heat.

- This could help cut down on fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions associated with standard methods of producing hydrogen.

Safety Measures

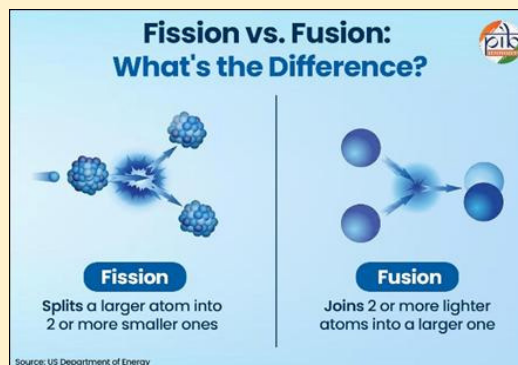
- Indian nuclear power stations are planned and developed on the principle of **Defence-in-Depth**, i.e., several safety layers, redundant systems and physical barriers to prevent accidents and radioactive releases.
- Plants are constructed to **survive earthquakes, floods, cyclones and tsunamis** and are further protected by routine monitoring, emergency shutdown and cooling systems.
- Radiation safety is ensured as per the **ALARA concept, AERB prescribed dosage limits**, dedicated Health Physics Units, shielding, protective equipment and training.
- Radioactive waste is treated, discharged under control, disposed of in engineered disposal facilities and regularly monitored in the environment as per AERB norms.
 - ♦ In India, BARC has developed an indigenous method for vitrification of high-level radioactive waste into stable glass blocks for long-term management.

Conclusion

- India's nuclear program is a manifestation of the firm will of the Government of India to provide energy security, technical self-reliance, public welfare and highest standards of safety.
- Nuclear technology is changing every sector across the country, not just by producing clean electricity.
- India is establishing a robust, innovation-driven and future-ready nuclear ecosystem, guided by transformative programs like the Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat and the SHANTI Act.
- Strong regulatory monitoring, improved reactor designs, and thorough emergency preparedness continue to help assure the safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities.
- As India marches toward Viksit Bharat 2047 and its Net Zero goal by 2070, nuclear energy will continue to be a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, energy security and national prosperity.

Major Terms

- **Nuclear fuel** is the material that goes inside a nuclear reactor to make energy.
 - ♦ It is broken into its atoms by nuclear fission, releasing lots of heat. The heat turns water to steam. Steam spins turbines.
 - This is used to generate power.
 - ♦ The most widely used nuclear fuels include Natural Uranium, Uranium-235 (U-235), Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU), Plutonium-239 (Pu-239), and Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel.
 - Low-enriched uranium (LEU) is used in light water reactors in most nations, including the United States, France, China, Japan, South Korea, Canada, and Russia.
 - ♦ India has Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) which use Natural Uranium, and these do not need uranium enrichment.
 - MOX fuel is also used in India for the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR).
 - India's uranium reserves are of low grade and hence need supplementation through imports.
 - India, however, has large stocks of thorium (Th-232). This is a fertile and not a fissile radioactive mineral, available largely in the coastal sands of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand
- **A nuclear reaction** is when energy is released from the nucleus of an atom, generally by fission or fusion.
 - ♦ Nuclear plants use **fission**. A neutron hits a Uranium or Plutonium nucleus.



- It divides and releases heat and other neutrons that cause a chain reaction.
 - This chain reaction is controlled.
 - Heat causes water to turn to steam that in turn causes turbines to turn and rotate generators that produce energy.
 - ♦ **Fusion** fuses light atomic nuclei to unleash huge amounts of energy and is what powers the Sun and the stars. But fusion is still being developed to provide commercial electricity.
- **Nuclear reactor:** A nuclear power station is built around a nuclear reactor.
 - ♦ Controlled fission generates heat, which nuclear power plants convert to power using fuel, control rods, coolant, and safety systems.
 - ♦ India has mostly Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), but also BWRs and PWRs. India is developing Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs) to facilitate the transition to thorium-based power.
 - ♦ India is also backing Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), which are typically up to 300 MWe and are distinguished by modular production, short build times, and flexible siting.
- **Nuclear waste** is the radioactive material that is produced when a nuclear power station runs.
 - ♦ It contains spent nuclear fuel and other things such as protective clothes, filters, tools, and equipment that become radioactive during operation in the facility.
 - ♦ It is regulated under stringent safety requirements to safeguard humans and the environment since it emits radiation.

NEWS IN SHORT

RENAMING PROPOSAL FOR LAKE ONTARIO

In News

- The U.S. President renamed Lake Ontario "Lake America," escalating a feud with Canada.

Lake Ontario

- It is part of the Great Lakes system, along with Lake Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie
- It is the smallest by surface area of North America's five Great Lakes.
- It forms part of the boundary between the United States and Canada.
- Its main source is the Niagara River, and in the east, Lake Ontario empties into the Saint Lawrence River.

Do you know?

- The Great Lakes system encompasses five large lakes—Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario—as well as connecting canals and the St. Lawrence Seaway.



- They hold about 90% of the freshwater in the United States and approximately 20% of the world's freshwater supply.
- They provide drinking water for about 40 million people in the U.S. and Canada.
- The lakes were formed by the retreat of the Laurentide Ice Sheet following the last Ice Age, and they took their present form about 3,000 years ago.

Source : [TH](#)

EMERGENCY CREDIT LINKED GUARANTEE SCHEME (ECLGS) 5.0

In News

- The Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0 will operate only until its ₹2.5 lakh crore

guarantee cover is exhausted, with guarantees being sanctioned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Background

- The government in May 2020 announced the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan
- It aims to support eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other eligible business enterprises in meeting their operational liabilities and restarting their businesses in the context of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It covered almost all the sectors of the economy, and a 100 per cent guarantee was provided to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) in respect of the credit facility extended by them under the scheme to eligible borrowers.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0

- The Union Cabinet approved the scheme in 2026.
- It aims at providing risk mitigation to lending institutions to lend more to borrowers, helping them to manage cash flow shocks and continue operations.
- It aims to provide rapid and large-scale liquidity support to firms affected by the West Asia geopolitical scenario.

Salient features of the scheme:

- Eligible Borrowers:** MSMEs and non-MSMEs with working capital restrictions and scheduled passenger airlines with outstanding credit facilities as on March 31, 2026, provided their accounts are standard.
- Coverage guarantee:** 100% for MSMEs and 90% for non-MSMEs and the airline sector.
- Guarantee Fee:** None.
- Quantum of Support:** Additional credit up to 20% of peak working capital used in Q4 FY 26 (limited at Rs.100 crore).
 - For airlines:** Up to 100% (up to a limit of Rs.1,500 crore per borrower, if meeting certain particular conditions)
- Term of Loan:** For MSMEs/Non MSMEs (excluding Airlines sector): 5 years from date of first disbursement including moratorium of 1 year.
 - For the airline sector: 7 years from date of first disbursement with moratorium of 2 years.
 - The maximum length of guarantee cover shall run concurrently with the tenor of the loan.

Source: [TH](#)

BARRIER LAKE

Context

- As Nepal grapples with the aftermath of the devastating flood, it now faces a fresh flooding threat following the possible breach of “a significant barrier lake” that formed on the **Tibetan side**.

About

- While Chinese authorities are calling this formation a barrier lake, it is more commonly known as a **landslide dam or lake**.
 - It is created in a **river valley** when **landslide debris completely blocks** a stream or river.
 - The most common triggers for such landslides are **earthquakes and excessive rain**.
- These temporary lakes can accumulate **huge quantities of water with no outlet**.
 - If water continues to accumulate, it can overflow or breach the dam triggering a potentially **devastating disaster known as an LLOF, or landslide lake outburst flood**.
 - This is similar in effect to a GLOF**, or a glacial lake outburst flood, which occurs when the water dammed by a glacier or a moraine is released suddenly.
- The timescale of a breach** can vary from days to even decades after the formation of a dam.
- Landslide dams **commonly form in places with high, steep mountains and narrow river valleys** that witness activity such as **rock, soil and mud avalanches, slides, or flows**.
- A failure of the dam can **potentially release millions of cubic metres of water** in a short period, causing catastrophic flooding downstream.

- This flooding can carry debris and also create **secondary landslides downstream, compounding its effect**.

Do You Know?

The world's **worst recorded LLOF occurred in 1786**, after an earthquake in **China's Sichuan Province** triggered a huge landslide and dammed the **Dadu River**.

- After 10 days, the water breached the landslide dam, travelling as far as 1,400 km downstream and killing about 1,00,000 people.

Source: IE

DEFENCE MINISTER LAID FOUNDATION FOR TANK OVERHAUL FACILITY IN M.P.

Context

- The Defence Minister laid the foundation stone for the **T-Series tank overhauling project in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.

About

- Aim:** To establish facilities for **overhauling T-72 and T-90 tanks at the Vehicle Factory in M.P.**
 - It is aimed at **augmenting the Army's capacity** to keep its armoured fleet operationally ready.
- The new facility will have the **capacity to overhaul 80 tanks annually**.
 - The Army requires **around 230 tanks to be overhauled every year**, and the Heavy Vehicles Factory in Chennai, currently has the **capacity to overhaul 150 tanks annually**.
 - The Jabalpur facility will, therefore, **bridge the existing capacity gap and ensure faster availability of refurbished tanks to the Army**.

Source: TH

