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UTTAR PRADESH



**MAY
2025**



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New Delhi



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Karol Bagh
New Delhi



Tashkent Marg,
Civil Lines,
Prayagraj,
Uttar Pradesh



Tonk Road,
Vasundhra Colony,
Jaipur,
Rajasthan



Burlington Arcade Mall,
Burlington Chauraha,
Vidhan Sabha Marg,
Lucknow



12, Main AB Road,
Bhawar Kuan,
Indore,
Madhya Pradesh

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Gallantry Awards 2025

Why in News?

The **President of India** conferred **Gallantry Awards**, including **6 Kirti Chakras** (4 posthumously) and **33 Shaurya Chakras** (7 posthumously), to personnel from the **Armed Forces**, **Central Armed Police Forces**, and **State/UT Police**, which were **announced** on the eve of the **76th Republic Day 2025**.

Key Points

Gallantry Awards

- 💡 **About:** They are given to the personnel for displaying **raw courage, unparalleled bravery and total disregard to personal safety** in the line of duty.
 - ✦ These gallantry awards are announced **twice a year**, first on the occasion of **Republic Day** and then on the occasion of **Independence Day**.



Types:

✦ Gallantry Award in the Face of the Enemy:

- ✍ **Param Vir Chakra (PVC):** It shall have embossed on the obverse **four replicas of "Indra's Vajra"** with the **State Emblem** embossed in the centre.
 - 🏆 It is awarded for the **most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice**, in the **presence of the enemy**.
- ✍ **Mahavir Chakra (MVC):** It shall have embossed on the obverse a **five-pointed heraldic star** with the points of the **star just touching the rim**. The star shall have in the centre a **domed gilded State Emblem**.
 - 🏆 It is awarded for **acts of gallantry** in the **presence of the enemy**.
- ✍ **Vir Chakra:** The star will feature a **Chakra at its centre**, with a domed centerpiece inside the Chakra bearing the gilded State Emblem.
 - 🏆 It is awarded for **acts of gallantry** in the **presence of the enemy on land, at sea or in the air**. The decoration may be awarded **posthumously**.

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★ Gallantry Award Other than in the Face of Enemy:

- ✎ **Medals:** It includes **Ashok Chakra**, **Kirti Chakra**, and **Shaurya Chakra**, on which the **obverse** of the medal shall be embossed with a **replica of the respective chakra** in the **centre**, surrounded by a **lotus wreath**.
- 🏅 Along the **rim**, on the inner side, shall be a pattern of **lotus leaves, flowers, and buds**.
- 🏅 On its reverse shall be embossed the respective words, both in Hindi and English, the two versions being **separated by two lotus flowers**.

CIVILIAN AND GALLANTRY AWARDS

CIVILIAN AWARDS

Bharat Ratna

- India's **highest civilian award**; instituted in **1954**
- Awarded for exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour
- Award includes certificate & medallion (no monetary grant)
- Recommended to **President by the PM**
- Can be given (max) **thrice per year**



Padma Awards

- Instituted in **1954**; announced annually on **eve of Republic Day**
- Recognises achievements in all fields/disciplines involving **public service**
- Categories: Padma **Vibhushan** > Padma **Bhushan** > Padma **Shri**
- Recommended by **Padma Awards Committee** (constituted by PM annually)
- **Suspended twice** - 1978-79 and 1993-97
- Max no. of awards per year - **120**



GALLANTRY AWARDS

- **Wartime** Gallantry instituted on **26th January 1950**
- **Peacetime** Gallantry instituted on **4th January 1952**
- **Announced twice** a year - Republic Day and Independence Day
- Order of Precedence - **Param Vir Chakra** > **Ashoka Chakra** > **Mahavir Chakra** > **Kirti Chakra** > **Vir Chakra** > **Shaurya Chakra**

- Eligibility -
 - » All officers of all ranks (**Army, Navy, IAF**), Reserve forces, **Territorial army**
 - » **People providing nursing services** under any of the above forces

Wartime Gallantry Awards



Param Vir Chakra

Maha Vir Chakra

Vir Chakra

Peacetime Gallantry Awards



Ashoka Chakra

Kirti Chakra

Shaurya Chakra



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💡 **Order of precedence of the Award:**

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ✦ Param Vir Chakra | ✦ Mahavir Chakra | ✦ Vir Chakra |
| ✦ Ashoka Chakra | ✦ Kirti Chakra | ✦ Shaurya Chakra |

💡 **Eligibility:**

- ✦ **For Param Vir Chakra, the Maha Vir Chakra and the Vir Chakra:** All ranks of the Naval, Military, Air, Reserve, and Territorial Forces, including medical and nursing staff, and civilians serving under their direction.
- ✦ **For Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra & Shaurya Chakra:** All ranks of the Armed Forces, Reserve and Territorial Forces, Nursing Services, Police, Central Para-Military Forces, Railway Protection Force, and civilian citizens.

Note: For each subsequent act of similar bravery, recipients are recognized by a **Bar to the Chakra**.

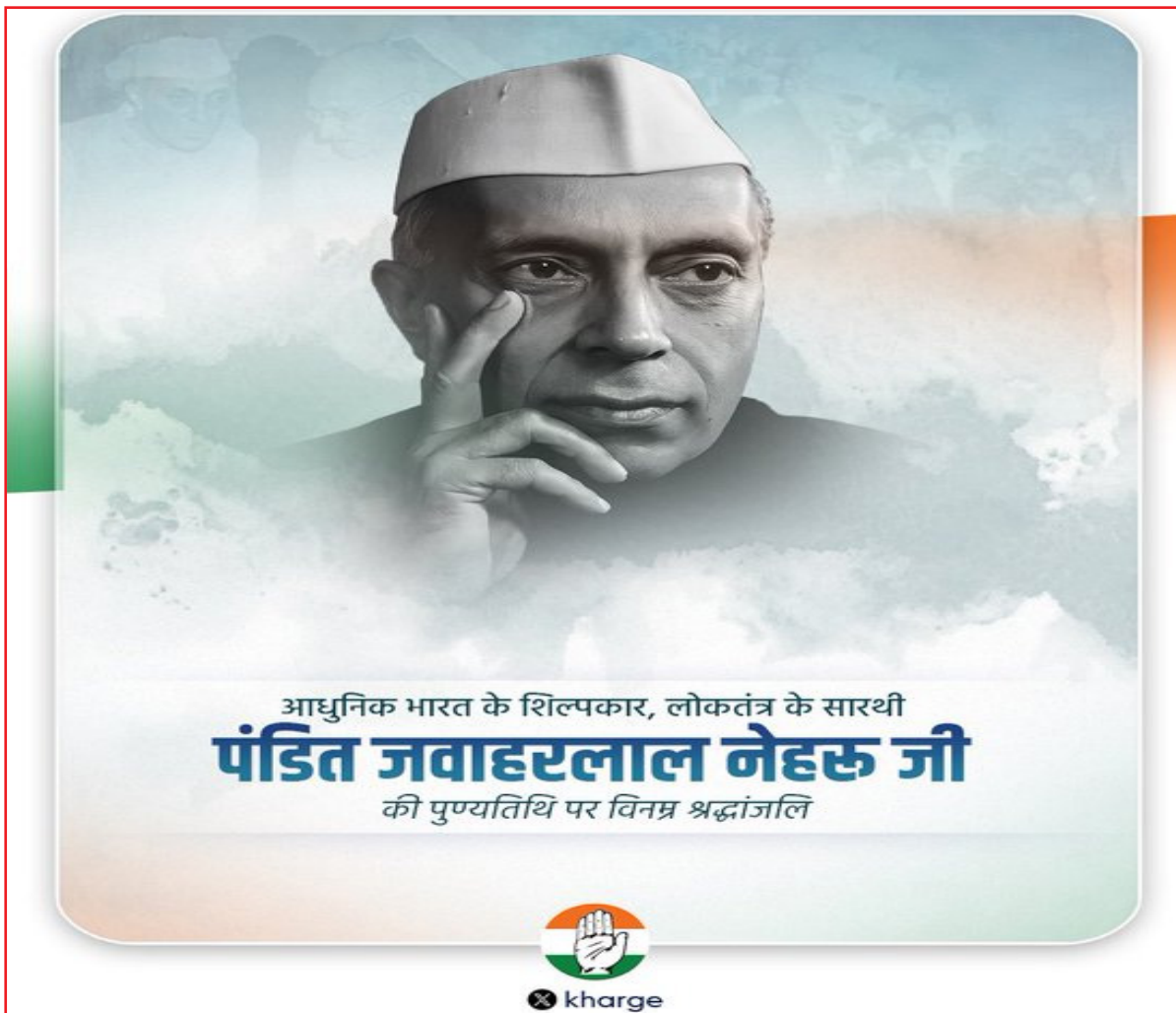
- 💡 Also, both **Chakra** and **Bar to the chakra** for additional bravery **may be awarded posthumously**.

Death Anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Why in News?

The death anniversary of India's first **Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**, was observed on **27th May 2025**.

- 💡 He is remembered as the **Architect of Modern India**.



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Key Points

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

- 💡 **Early Life:** He was born on 14th November 1889, into a **Kashmiri Brahmin** family in **Allahabad (now Prayagraj)**.
 - ✦ Fondly called '**Chacha Nehru**' for his deep affection for children, **his birthday is celebrated as Children's Day every year in India**.
 - ✦ He attended his **first Congress session in 1912** at **Bankipore (Patna)** as a delegate and joined **Annie Besant's Home Rule League** in 1916, becoming its **Allahabad Secretary in 1919**.
- 💡 **Contribution in Freedom Struggle:** He was elected **Congress President** at the **1929 Lahore session**, passing the historic **Purna Swaraj resolution** for complete independence, and later presided over the **1936 Lucknow** and **1937 Faizpur** sessions, promoting **socialism**.
 - ✦ He drafted the **Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy (1929-31)**, adopted at the **1931 Karachi Session** under **Sardar Patel**, and advocated legal defence for **Indian National Army (INA)** soldiers.
 - ✦ He led the **Interim Government** in 1946.
- 💡 **Post-Independence:** In **1953**, he formed the **States Reorganisation Commission**, promoted **industrialisation** through **Five-Year Plans**, and led the **Non-Alignment Movement**.
- 💡 **Awards:** He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna (1955)** and **World Peace Council Prize (posthumously, 1970)**.
- 💡 **Literary Contributions:** **The Discovery of India, An Autobiography, Glimpses of World History and Letters from a Father to His Daughter**.

Semiconductor Unit in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹3,700 crore display driver **chip manufacturing unit at Jewar, Uttar Pradesh**.

- 💡 This project is the **sixth semiconductor manufacturing unit** sanctioned under the first phase of the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**.

Key Points

Project Details:

- ✦ The unit will be a joint venture between **Indian firm HCL and Taiwanese electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn**.
 - 📎 Commercial production at the Jewar plant is **expected to begin by 2027**, necessitating rapid construction and development.
- ✦ Chips manufactured will be **used in laptops, PCs, smartphones, and automobiles**.

Strategic Importance:

- ✦ This is the **first semiconductor manufacturing plant in Uttar Pradesh**, located in the rapidly developing industrial area of Jewar.
 - 📎 The Uttar Pradesh government has launched its own **UP Semiconductor Policy - 2024**.
 - 📎 This ambitious policy is **designed to boost local semiconductor manufacturing**, enhancing India's strategic independence in critical technology sectors.
- ✦ The plant is **expected to fill a critical gap in India's display and electronics value chain**.
- ✦ Once operational, it is anticipated that a display panel manufacturing plant will also be established in India, potentially **meeting about 40% of India's display capacity**.

Significance of the Project:

- ✦ **Boost to Make in India & Electronics Manufacturing:** The project aligns with India's push towards self-reliance in semiconductor manufacturing, a key component for technological sovereignty and economic growth.
- ✦ **Employment & Industrial Development:** The unit will spur industrial activity in Uttar Pradesh, generating employment and attracting ancillary industries.
- ✦ **Reducing Import Dependence:** Enhancing domestic chip production reduces reliance on imports and strengthens India's electronics supply chain resilience.

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India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

- ⚡ The ISM was **launched in 2021** with a total financial outlay of Rs 76,000 crore under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)**.
- ⚡ It is **part of the comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor** and display ecosystems in the country.
- ⚡ The programme **aims to provide financial support** to companies investing in semiconductors, display manufacturing and design ecosystem.
- ⚡ Envisioned to be led by global experts in the Semiconductor and Display industry, ISM will **serve as the nodal agency for efficient, coherent and smooth implementation of the schemes**.

SEMICONDUCTORS

Semiconductors are materials having conductivity between conductors and insulators

EXAMPLES

- **Pure Elements:** Silicon and Germanium
- **Compounds:** Gallium Arsenide and Cadmium selenide

SIGNIFICANCE

- Essential to almost all sectors of the economy – **aerospace, automobiles, communications, clean energy, information technology** and **medical devices** etc.

SEMICONDUCTORS AND INDIA

- **India Imports from:** China, Taiwan, USA and Japan
- **Indian Semiconductor Market:** Expected to reach **USD 55 bn** by 2026

SCHEMES

- ↳ **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**
- ↳ **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme**
- ↳ **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS)**

OBJECTIVES

- ↳ Encourage semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country.
- ↳ Nurture >20 domestic companies in semiconductor design. Achieve a turnover of > Rs.1500 crore in next 5 years
- ↳ Manufacture electronics components and semiconductors

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION (ISM)

VISION

- Build a **vibrant semiconductor and display design and innovation ecosystem**

LAUNCHED

- 2021

NODAL MINISTRY

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

TOTAL FINANCIAL OUTLAY

- Rs 76,000 crore

COMPONENTS

- Scheme for setting up of Semiconductor Fabs
- Scheme for setting up of Display Fabs
- Scheme for setting up of Compound Semiconductors/Silicon Photonics/Sensors (including MEMS) Fabs/ Discrete Semiconductors Fab and Semiconductor ATMP/OSAT
- DLI Scheme



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North India's Largest Film City in Noida

Why in News?

The International Film City project in Uttar Pradesh advanced with the submission of its layout plan to the [Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority \(YEIDA\)](#).

Key Points

Project Overview:

- ✦ The Film City will be located in **Sector-21 of Greater Noida**, along the Yamuna Expressway.
- ✦ It will cover a total area of 1,000 acres, making it the largest film city in North India.
- ✦ Phase 1 will cover 230 acres with an estimated investment of ₹1,510 crore.

UP Film Policy 2023:

- ✦ The government provides a **50% subsidy on the total cost** of films made in regional languages such as **Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli, and Bhojpuri**.
- ✦ For **Hindi films**, a **subsidy of up to 25%** of the total production cost is available.
- ✦ Films that complete **at least 50% of their shooting days in Uttar Pradesh** are eligible for a **subsidy of ₹1 crore**.
- ✦ If a film completes **two-thirds of its shooting days in the state**, it becomes eligible for a **maximum subsidy of ₹2 crore**.
- ✦ Incentives for Engaging Local Talent:
 - 📎 A **grant of ₹25 lakh**, or the actual remuneration paid (whichever is lower), is provided for featuring **actors who are residents of Uttar Pradesh**.
 - 📎 An **additional grant of ₹5 lakh**, or **2% of the total subsidy** (whichever is lower), is provided for employing **local singers, composers, lyricists, directors, cameramen, and other crew members** from the state.
- ✦ OTT Productions Incentives:
 - 📎 Web-series shot at least two-thirds in UP receive 50% of production costs or ₹10 lakh per episode (whichever is less).

- 📎 Web-films get 25% of costs or up to ₹1 crore under similar criteria.
- ✦ Film Infrastructure Subsidies:
 - 📎 Film Training Institutes get 25% capital subsidy or ₹50 lakh (minimum ₹50 lakh investment).
 - 📎 Film studios/labs receive 25% subsidy or ₹50 lakh; rises to 35% in **Poorvanchal, Vindhyanchal, and Bundelkhand** (max ₹50 lakh).
- ✦ Outdoor Shooting Support:
 - 📎 25% discount on accommodation in UP STDC hotels/motels.
 - 📎 Government guest house rooms at standard rates for film crews.
- ✦ Film Education Support:
 - 📎 ₹25,000 stipend per student refunded for training 10 students each at FTII Pune and Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute Kolkata..
- ✦ Nodal Agency:
 - 📎 The implementation and coordination of the film policy are managed by **Film Bandhu**, the state's official film promotion body.

Uttar Pradesh Abolishes District-wise Quota under NFSA

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to **scrap the district-wise quota system** for beneficiary allocation under the [National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013](#) to ensure more equitable coverage of eligible families, especially in backward and underserved districts.

Key Points

Current Scenario in the State:

- ✦ The Central government determines the **food grain allocation for each state under the NFSA** based on a fixed population coverage of 64.46% in rural areas and 78.54% in urban areas.

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💡 Policy Change:

- ✦ Removal of District-wise Quota:
 - ✍ Uttar Pradesh **traditionally followed an additional district-wise cap**, allocating beneficiaries per district.
 - ✍ This **resulted in a disproportionate distribution** that favored relatively prosperous districts such as Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar, leaving poorer districts **often unable to accommodate all eligible families**.
- ✦ Introduction of State-wide Allocation:
 - ✍ The new system will use **state-wide population data** and **eligibility norms** to allocate benefits.
 - ✍ This is **expected to ensure that distribution aligns more closely** with the eligibility criteria set forth in the Act, **rather than being constrained by arbitrary administrative limits**.

💡 Impact on Beneficiary Coverage:

- ✦ As part of the redistribution process, 5,000 new beneficiaries have been added in each of the districts of Sitapur, Barabanki, and Lalitpur.
- ✦ These additions were made by reallocating the corresponding number of beneficiaries from **Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar**.
- ✦ In the **Bundelkhand region**, the NFSA coverage is being increased to **90%**.
- ✦ In several **deserving districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh**, the coverage is being raised to **85%**.

💡 Administrative Performance:

- ✦ According to the April report from the **Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS)** portal, the **Department of Food and Civil Supplies** ranked **fourth** in resolving public complaints.
 - ✍ It was ranked just behind the **Khadi and Village Industries, Cooperative Department, and Excise Department**.
- ✦ Departments that ranked among the bottom four include **Industries and Infrastructure Development, Housing and Urban Planning, Environment and Climate Change, and Women Welfare**.

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

💡 About NFSA:

- ✦ It was enacted on **5th July 2013**, with the aim of ensuring food and nutritional security in India.
- ✦ It marked a shift from a welfare-based approach to a **rights-based approach** by legally entitling a significant portion of the population to receive subsidized food grains.

💡 Objectives:

- ✦ The Act aims to provide **access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices** to people to live a life with dignity.
- ✦ It seeks to ensure that **food security is a legal right** for eligible individuals.
- ✦ It also promotes **women empowerment** by designating the eldest woman (aged 18 years or above) as the head of the household for ration card purposes.

💡 Coverage and Entitlements:

- ✦ The NFSA legally entitled up to **75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population** to receive food grains at subsidized rates.
 - ✍ This covers approximately **81.34 crore individuals** across India.

💡 Categories of Beneficiaries:

- ✦ **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** households, considered the poorest of the poor, are entitled to **35 kilograms of food grains per family per month**.
- ✦ **Priority households** are entitled to receive **5 kilograms of food grains per person per month**.

💡 Prices for Food Grains:

- ✦ The Act specifies subsidized prices for food grains:
 - ✍ **Rice** is provided at ₹3 per kilogram.
 - ✍ **Wheat** is provided at ₹2 per kilogram.
 - ✍ **Coarse grains** are provided at ₹1 per kilogram.
- ✦ These prices were initially set for three years from the date of implementation but have been **extended periodically** by the central government.

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Responsibilities Under NFSA:

- ✦ Central Government:
 - ✍ The central government is responsible for allocating food grains to States and Union Territories.
 - ✍ It manages the transportation of food grains to designated depots and provides financial assistance for further distribution.
 - ✍ It also holds the power to make rules for the implementation of the Act under **Section 39**.
- ✦ State and Union Territory Governments:
 - ✍ State/UT governments are responsible for **identifying eligible households, issuing ration cards, and distributing food grains** through **Fair Price Shops (FPS)**.
 - ✍ They must also **monitor the FPS network**, issue licenses, and **establish grievance redressal systems**.

Additional Provisions:

- ✦ In case of **non-supply of entitled food grains or meals**, beneficiaries are entitled to a **Food Security Allowance**, which must be provided by the state government.
- ✦ A **“Tide Over Allocation”** is available to protect states whose NFSA allocation is lower than their previous TPDS allocation.
- ✦ The central government has notified several rules under the Act, including:
 - ✍ Food Security Allowance Rules, 2015
 - ✍ Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015
 - ✍ Assistance to State Governments Rules, 2015

Buffer Mein Safar Yojana

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Forest and Wildlife Department** has launched a new **ecotourism** initiative named **‘Buffer Mein Safar Yojana’**.

Key Points

Buffer Mein Safar Yojana

Objectives of the Scheme:

- ✦ The primary goal of the scheme is to promote **sustainable and eco-friendly tourism** in the buffer zones of tiger reserves.
- ✦ The initiative seeks to **empower local communities** by offering them training and **employment** opportunities within the **tourism** sector.
- ✦ It also aims to strengthen **wildlife conservation** efforts by encouraging community-led protection of biodiversity.

Significance:

- ✦ The initiative is expected to significantly contribute to **Uttar Pradesh’s goal** of becoming a **leading ecotourism destination** in India.
- ✦ The integrated approach of combining **tourism, conservation, and local employment** may also serve as a **model for other states** seeking to balance ecological sustainability with economic growth.

Implementation Regions:

- ✦ Key Tiger Reserves and Buffer Zones:
 - ✍ The scheme is being implemented in major tiger reserve buffer zones such as **Dudhwa, Pilibhit, and Lakhimpur Kheri**, which are known for their rich biodiversity and proximity to the **India-Nepal border**.
 - ✍ Additional ecologically significant areas like **Sohagibarwa** and **Katarniaghat wildlife sanctuaries** have also been included under the scheme.
- ✦ Special Ecological Spot:
 - ✍ **Semrai Lake**, an important stopover for **migratory birds**, is being developed as a part of the ecotourism circuit.
 - 🏠 This will provide birdwatchers with new opportunities to explore

Tourism Infrastructure Development:

- ✦ A **modern information centre** has been established at the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** to enhance visitor engagement.

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- ✦ The centre will offer educational insights into the region's flora and fauna, along with detailed information about conservation efforts.

Dudhwa National Park

- 💡 It is located in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, near the Indo-Nepal border.
- 💡 It was established in 1977 as a National Park (Wildlife Sanctuary since 1958).
- 💡 **Wildlife & Ecosystem:**
 - ✦ Home to **Bengal tigers, leopards, elephants, sloth bears**, and 450+ bird species
 - ✦ Features a diverse ecosystem like **grasslands, swamps, and dense forests**
- 💡 **Conservation & Ecotourism:**
 - ✦ Known for **habitat restoration** and **reintroduction** of endangered species like the **barasingha**
 - ✦ Promotes **eco-tourism** to support local communities and preserve the environment

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

- 💡 In September 2008, it was declared as the 45th **Tiger Reserve of India** under the **Project Tiger initiative**.
- 💡 **Geography:**
 - ✦ The **northern boundary** of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve lies along the **Indo-Nepal border**, providing a natural international frontier.
 - ✦ The **southern boundary** is defined by the **Sharda and Khakra rivers**, which contribute to the region's rich biodiversity and water resources.
- 💡 **Ecological Significance:**
 - ✦ Represents a prime example of the **Terai ecosystem**, known for its **open grasslands, sal forests, water bodies, and rich biodiversity**
 - ✦ Identified by the **Wildlife Institute of India** for its unique **ecological and behavioral tiger adaptations** specific to the Terai region
- 💡 **Flora and Fauna:** Key wildlife includes **tigers, swamp deer, Bengal florican, hog deer, leopards**, and a rich prey base (cheetal, sambar, wild boar, blue bull, etc.)

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

- 💡 It is located in **Uttar Pradesh's Terai region**, **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary** spans around **400 sq. km** and lies along the **Ghaghara River**.
- 💡 It was established in **1975** and designated a **Tiger Reserve in 2008**, it is a key part of the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve**.
- 💡 **Biodiversity:**
 - ✦ Home to **Bengal tigers, Indian elephants, leopards, sloth bears**, and the endangered **Gangetic dolphin**.
 - ✦ Rich prey base includes **hog deer, swamp deer**, and more.
 - ✦ It is home to over **350 bird species**, including **Indian skimmer, osprey, great hornbill, and kingfishers**.
 - ✦ The sanctuary features **dense sal forests**, along with **teak, jamun**, and **medicinal plants**.

High-Yielding Varieties of Soybean

Why in News?

Ahead of the **Kharif 2025 season**, the Department of Agriculture has **recommended specific high-yielding soybean varieties for cultivation in the Bundelkhand region** of Uttar Pradesh to optimize yields under local agro-climatic conditions.

Key Points

- 💡 **Centrally Notified High-Yielding Varieties:** These varieties have demonstrated excellent adaptability to the **rainfall patterns, soil types**, and temperature profiles typical of the Bundelkhand region.
 - ✦ No additional state-specific soybean varieties have been notified exclusively for Uttar Pradesh.
- 💡 **Suitability to Regional Conditions:** They are expected to perform well in medium to deep **black soils** and under **monsoon**-dependent rainfall patterns.

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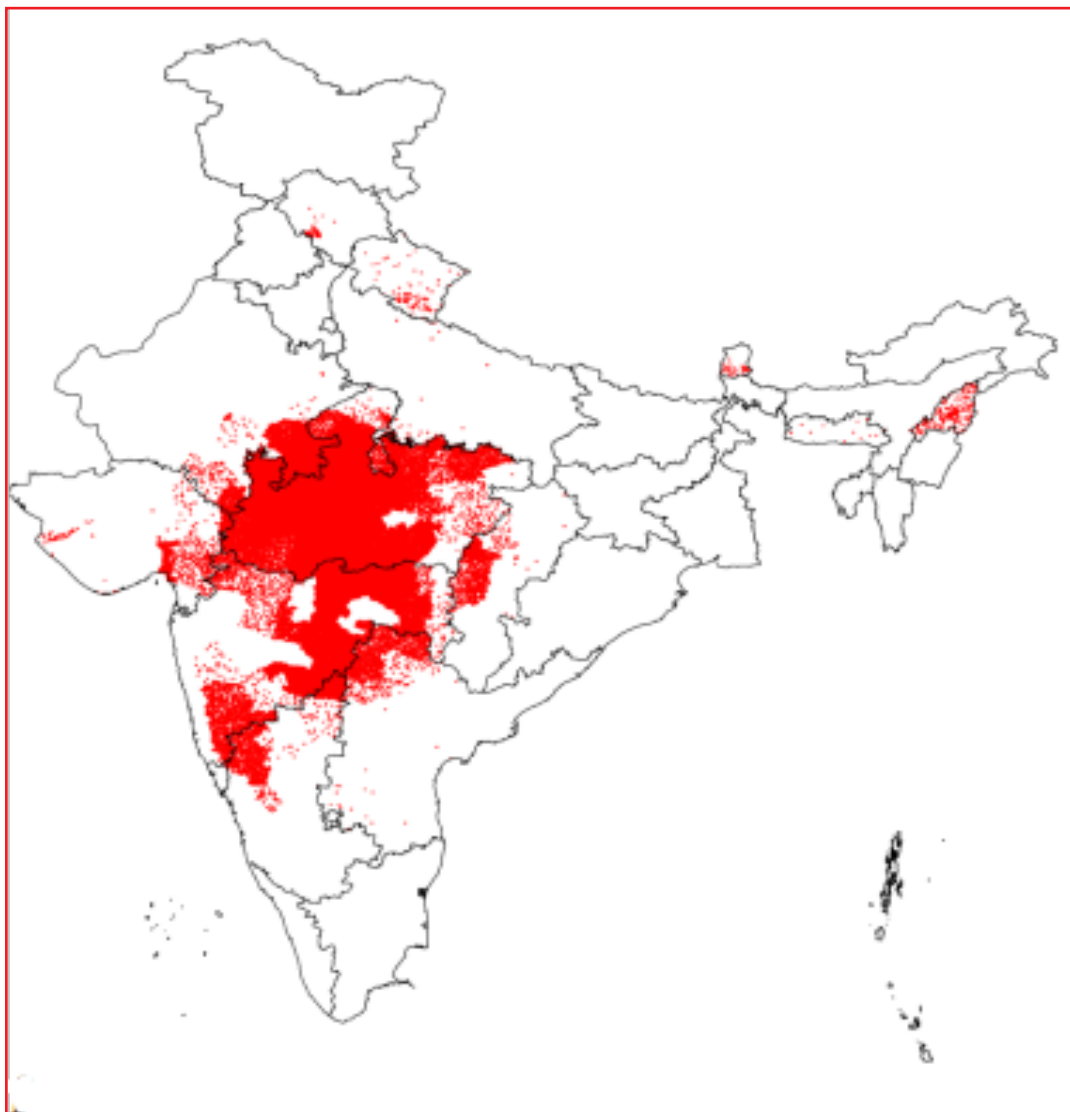
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- 📌 **Soybean Cultivation in India:** The cultivation is currently concentrated in a few key states, contributing around 4% to global soybean production.
 - ✦ The major soybean-growing states include **Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.**
- 📌 **Significance of Soybean Cultivation:**
 - ✦ **Water Efficiency:** Soybean requires considerably less water than paddy, making it a highly suitable crop for regions with limited water availability.
 - ✦ **Economic Viability:** Due to its **lower input costs and decent yield potential**, soybean cultivation can offer farmers earnings that are comparable to, or even better than, those from paddy farming.
 - ✦ **Soil Health:** As a legume, soybean enriches soil nitrogen, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.
 - ✦ **Crop Diversification:** Soybean can be effectively integrated into **crop rotation** systems such as soybean–wheat, soybean–peas–summer moong etc., helping farmers diversify their **cropping patterns** and reduce reliance on water-intensive paddy cultivation.
 - ✦ **Market and Nutrition Value:** Soybean is rich in both protein and oil content, making it valuable for food, animal feed, and various industrial applications.



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Kharif Crops

- 💡 **Kharif crops** are the crops that are **sown during the rainy season**, which in India typically lasts from **June to September**.
- 💡 These crops require **a lot of water and hot weather** to grow, and they **depend heavily on monsoon rains**.
- 💡 **Sowing and Harvesting:**
 - ✦ **Sowing Time:** June to July (beginning of the monsoon)
 - ✦ **Harvesting Time:** October to November (end of the monsoon)
- 💡 **Common Kharif Crops:**
 - ✦ **Paddy (rice), Maize (corn), Groundnut (peanut), Cotton**, etc.

Rabi Crops

- 💡 **Rabi crops** are grown in the **winter season**, from **October to March**.
- 💡 These crops are typically **sown after the monsoon ends** and require **cooler climates** during the growth period and **warm, dry conditions at the time of harvesting**.
- 💡 **Sowing and Harvesting:**
 - ✦ **Sowing Time:** October to November
 - ✦ **Harvesting Time:** March to April
- 💡 **Common Rabi Crops:** **Wheat, Gram (chana), Pea, Mustard, Linseed**, etc.

- ✦ Its primary goal is to create a more **conductive, inclusive, and modern learning environment** for students across the state.

Key Features of Project Alankar:

- ✦ **Upgradation of physical infrastructure** including newly constructed classrooms, science labs, libraries, computer labs, and smart classrooms.
- ✦ **Provision of essential amenities** such as clean drinking water and hygienic toilets, particularly focusing on girls' sanitation facilities.
- ✦ Development of specialized schools under the scheme:
 - 📎 **Chief Minister Model Schools** (pre-primary to Class 12) and **Chief Minister Abhyudaya Schools** (pre-primary to Class 8) are also being developed.
 - 🏠 These schools have state-of-the-art facilities, including **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** laboratories, computer labs, etc.
 - 🏠 Each Abhyudaya School, designed to accommodate 450 students, was allocated Rs 1.42 crore for development
- ✦ **Renovation and modernization** of 141 Sanskrit schools across 7 districts, with dedicated funding of Rs 14.94 crore for their rejuvenation.

Funding and Implementation:

- ✦ Funding sources for Project Alankar include the state government, **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Gram Panchayats, urban local bodies**, corporate **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** contributions, and voluntary donations.
- ✦ Implementation is **rigorously monitored by district-level committees** headed by district magistrates and overseen by the state education director.

Impact and Outcomes:

- ✦ According to the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024**, government secondary school enrolment **increased by 23%** between 2022-23 and 2024-25.
- ✦ Primary school attendance (classes 1–5) **rose by 11.5%** from 2010 to 2024, while upper primary attendance (classes 6–8) grew by 9.6% between 2018 and 2024 — **the highest in the country**.

Project Alankar

Why in News?

Project Alankar, an educational reform initiative by the Uttar Pradesh government, has been widely appreciated during a meeting chaired by the **Prime Minister** in New Delhi.

Key Points

Project Alankar

- 💡 **About:** It was launched on **1st October 2021**, by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✦ It aims to achieve **100% compliance** with 35 infrastructure and facility benchmarks in 2,441 government secondary schools.

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- ✦ Usage of school libraries surged by 55.2%, and access to girls' toilet facilities improved by 54.4%, reflecting better sanitation and learning support.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

💡 **About:** Introduced in the **Union Budget 2018-19**, Samagra Shiksha is a comprehensive program covering education from **pre-nursery to Class 12** to ensure equitable learning outcomes.

💡 Key Features:

- ✦ **Integration of Schemes:** It subsumes three earlier schemes:
- ✦ **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Focused on universal primary education.
- ✦ **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):** Aimed at secondary education.
- ✦ **Teacher Education (TE):** Focused on training teachers.
- ✦ **Sector-Wide Development Approach:** It streamlines implementation across all levels (state, district, and sub-district) instead of fragmented project-based objectives.
- ✦ **Alignment with SDGs:** Ensures free, equitable, and quality education (**SDG 4.1**) while eliminating gender disparities and ensuring access for vulnerable groups (**SDG 4.5**).
- 💡 **Implementation:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** implemented through a single State Implementation Society (SIS) at the State/UT level.
 - ✦ SIS is a state-registered body implementing CSS and development programs.

importance and protection of turtles, **Uttar Pradesh emerged as a leading state in India for turtle conservation.**

Key Points

💡 Turtle Species in India:

- ✦ India is home to **30 species of freshwater turtles**, **26** of which are listed under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- ✦ India also hosts **5 sea turtle species: Olive Ridley, Green, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, and Leatherback**. All of which are protected under **Schedule I of WPA, 1972**.

💡 Species in Uttar Pradesh:

- ✦ Out of 30 species of turtles found in India, **15 are found in UP**, including Brahmani, Pacheda, Kori Pacheda, Kalitoh, Kala Kacchua, Haldi Baath Kacchua, Saal Kacchua Tilakdhari, Dhor Kacchua, Bhootkatha Kacchua, Pahadi Trikutki Kacchua, Sundari Kacchua, Morpankhi Kacchua, Katahwa Litherhwa, Syontar Fighter, Parvati Kacchua, and others.

💡 Uttar Pradesh's Conservation Efforts:

- ✦ The **Sarnath Turtle Breeding and Rehabilitation Centre**, which was renovated and redeveloped in 2017, has conserved 3,298 turtles from 2017 to 2025 and released them into the **Ganga** to keep the ecosystem of the river healthy in Varanasi.
 - 📌 The inclusion of the **Turtle Rehabilitation Centre in Namami Gange** since 2017 has also **reduced smuggling of turtles**.
 - 📌 Several other conservation centres have been established, including those in Kukrail, Sarnath and Chambal.
- ✦ Under the **Namami Gange Programme**, a turtle sanctuary was set up near Prayagraj in 2020.
 - 📌 It covers 30 km of the catchment areas of the River Ganga and surrounding coastal areas. It **stretches across three districts**—starting from Kothari Meja in Prayagraj, passing through Mirzapur and Bhadohi, and reaches up to Uparwar.

World Turtle Day 2025: UP's Turtle Conservation Efforts

Why in News?

As the world marked **World Turtle Day on 23rd May**, aimed at raising awareness about the ecological

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PTR's Plan to Curb Illegal Trafficking of Turtles

- 💡 **Authorities at Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR)** on World Turtle Day 2025 unveiled a long-term strategic plan to curb illegal turtle trafficking, promote scientific conservation, and restore habitats.
 - ✦ Freshwater turtles are frequently smuggled to countries including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand for use in traditional medicine, and consumption of meat, eggs, and even blood.
- 💡 Pilibhit-Kheri region is one of the five most sensitive turtle-trafficking zones in Uttar Pradesh by the **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** during its **2018 Operation Save Kurma**.
 - ✦ **Uttar Pradesh ranks third in turtle diversity** after Assam and West Bengal, with 13 of the (15) species found in Pilibhit's rivers, lakes, Sharda Sagar Dam, and other water bodies.
- 💡 The plan includes rehabilitating identified turtle traffickers by linking them with **govt-subsidised pisciculture schemes** as a sustainable livelihood option. **This is the first initiative of its kind in Uttar Pradesh.**
 - ✦ A **Turtle Conservation and Research Centre** is also being set up along **River Mala**, funded by **CAMPA**.

Turtles

💡 About:

- ✦ **Turtles** are **reptiles** distinguished by a **cartilaginous shell** developed from their ribs, forming a **protective shield**.
- ✦ Unlike other animals with shells, **turtles cannot shed or exit their shell**, as it is an **integral part of their skeleton**.

💡 Habitat:

- ✦ Turtles can live in **both freshwater and marine (sea) environments**.

💡 Characteristics:

- ✦ Turtles are **cold-blooded (ectothermic)** species, i.e., they can **regulate their body temperature by moving between warmer and cooler environments**.

- ✦ Like other ectotherms such as **insects, fish, and amphibians**, they exhibit **slow metabolism** and can **survive extended periods without food or water**.

- ✦ **Species in UP like Katahwa, Morpankhi, Saal, and Sundari** play an essential role in keeping water bodies clean and ecologically balanced amidst growing pollution concerns.

💡 Significance:

- ✦ Turtles are considered one of the oldest and longest-living creatures on earth and play a vital role in maintaining aquatic ecosystems. Often referred to as the **"cleaners of water bodies"**, these creatures help control pollution in rivers, ponds and lakes.

💡 Turtles vs Tortoise:

- ✦ **Tortoises** differ from other turtles primarily by being **strictly terrestrial**, while **many turtle species are partially aquatic**.
- ✦ Although **all tortoises are turtles**, not all turtles are tortoises. They are generally shy, solitary animals that lay eggs on land by burying them in nests.

Operation Save Kurma

- 💡 To curb the commercial exploitation of the turtles and tortoises **Operation Save Kurma was launched in 2016**, focussing on the major states related to poaching, transportation and illegal trade of live turtles and tortoises.
- 💡 The operation involved 10 States – **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal**.

Shaadi Anudan Yojana

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government, under the **Shaadi Anudan Yojana**, provided marriage grants to **1 lakh Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** families in the financial year 2024–25 — twice the number of beneficiaries recorded in 2024.

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- Despite the achievement, social audit findings and field reports **suggest that while access has improved, systemic inefficiencies persist.**

Key Points

Shaadi Anudan Yojana (Marriage Grant Scheme)

- About & Objective:**
 - It provides financial assistance for the marriage of daughters from poor, helpless, and **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** families belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.
- Eligibility Criteria:**
 - The applicants **must be from the OBCs** as recognized by the state government.
 - However, individuals from minority communities who also fall under the OBC category are **not eligible under this scheme.**
 - The age of the girl and boy **must be 18 years and 21 years** or more respectively.
 - Top priority is given in granting subsidies for the marriage of destitute widows, disabled, landless and suffered by natural disaster.
- Grant Amount: ₹20,000 per marriage.**
 - Grants will be allowed up to a **maximum of 2 daughters** from a family.
- Reason for the Increase in the Number of Beneficiaries:** The significant increase is primarily due to the revision of the income eligibility criteria. Previously restricted to urban and rural families BPL, **the income limit has now been raised to Rs 1 lakh**, enabling more families to avail of the scheme.
 - Furthermore, **income eligibility has been standardised for both urban and rural beneficiaries.**

Challenges Related to the Scheme

- Delay in Disbursement:** Beneficiaries in rural districts face a **4–6 month wait** for disbursement, forcing many families to **borrow money** to cover wedding expenses.
- Last-Mile Delivery Gaps:** According to a **2024 social audit**, only **68% of recipients** received their funds **before the wedding**, affecting the timeliness of financial support.

- High Application Rejection Rate:** Around **23% of applications** were **rejected** due to issues with **documentation**, causing further delays and complications.

- Verification Bottlenecks:** **Manual processes** and **bureaucratic delays** in verification hinder the **timely delivery** of support to beneficiaries.

Measures that Can be Taken

- The department **plans awareness campaigns** to **improve last-mile delivery**, acknowledging the need for streamlined processes to achieve its inclusive development goals.
- Regularly collect beneficiary feedback to identify needs and challenges, **using insights to improve and tailor the program for greater impact.**
- Establish **regular monitoring and evaluation** to assess effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Schemes Related to the Empowerment of OBCs

- SHREYAS (Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers) Scheme:** The **SHREYAS** scheme is an umbrella program consisting of four sub-schemes aimed at providing educational opportunities and financial support to economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) students.
- PM-YASASVI (PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBCs and Others):** The **PM-YASASVI** scheme provides **full financial support** to students from **OBC, EBC, and Denotified, Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)** categories for higher education beyond Class XII.
 - Funded 100% by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, it covers students in institutions notified by the Ministry starting from the **2021-22** financial year.
- OBC Pre Matric Scholarship- Uttar Pradesh:** The **OBC Pre Matric Scholarship** is designed to support students who are financially disadvantaged and pursuing secondary education in Class 9 or 10.

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UP Sets Two World Records in Infrastructure Development

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has set **two world records** in **road construction** within just **24 hours** by constructing a 10-kilometre **crash barrier** and laying 34.24 lane kilometres of **bituminous concrete road**.

- These records were officially recognized by the **Golden Book of World Records**, **Asia Book of Records**, and **Indian Book of Records**.

Key Points

Location of the Road Construction

- The construction work was carried out on the **Ganga Motorway Project between Hardoi and Unnao districts**. This motorway is part of **India's longest state-owned expressway**.

Golden Book of World Records

- The **Golden Book of World Records (GBWR)** is a global platform that helps people showcase their talents by setting or breaking records.
- It offers a simple online process, supports **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** activities, and updates records daily for easy access and recognition.

Asia Book of Records

- Asia Book of Records, **headquartered in India and Vietnam**, operates under the World Records Union and collaborates with several national record books across Asia and beyond.
- It was **founded in 2008** to recognize unique talents and unrecognized sports across Asia, creating a platform where national record holders can compete for continental recognition.
- With a **database of over 40,000 records**, it publishes an annual edition in partnership with WorldKing, distributed globally.

Indian Book of Records

- India Book of Records, **the leading authority on Indian records since 2006**, focuses on pushing human limits for individual and collective growth.

- It has been **published every year for 19 years** and is **the only record book to do so**, with editors from different countries.

Campaign to Eradicate Child Labour by 2027

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has launched a comprehensive state-wide campaign to **eradicate child labour by 2027**.

Key Points

Campaign to Eliminate Child Labour

- The campaign **aims to raise awareness, provide education**, and support rehabilitation so that every child can access opportunities for growth and learning.
- The government will organise **special awareness programs on 12th June 2025**, aligning with the **World Day Against Child Labour**, to intensify public engagement.

Uttar Pradesh's Efforts in Bonded Labour Eradication and Child Rehabilitation

- The government has taken a **firm stand against bonded labour**, rehabilitating 1,408 individuals between 2018–19 and 2024–25.
 - These individuals have received Rs 18.17 crore in financial aid, helping them rebuild independent and dignified lives.
- Between 2017–18 and 2024–25**, the UP government has **rehabilitated 12,426 children**, helping them to continue their education.
- The **state has provided economic assistance to 1,089 families**, ensuring they do not depend on child labour for income.
- Under the **Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana**, the government has enrolled 2,000 working children in schools.
 - The UP government launched this state-level **initiative in 2020 to combat child labour** through a targeted, structured approach.

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- ✦ The scheme seeks to **reintegrate child labourers into the formal education** system, ensuring their right to learning and a dignified future.

World Day Against Child Labour

About:

- ✦ The **World Day Against Child Labour** is observed annually on **12th June**.
- ✦ The day aims to draw global attention to the scale of child labour and the urgent actions needed to eliminate it.

Global Collaboration:

- ✦ The day serves as a **platform to unite governments, employers' and workers' organisations**, civil society groups, and citizens from across the world.
- ✦ It focuses on **highlighting the challenges faced by child labourers** and identifying practical solutions to end their exploitation.

Child Labour Eradication and the SDG Framework:

- ✦ The elimination of child labour is a key objective under the **UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7**.
- ✦ SDG 8.7 calls for immediate and effective measures to:
 - ✍ Eradicate forced labour
 - ✍ End modern slavery and human trafficking
 - ✍ Prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers

Bonded Labour

- 💡 Bonded labour, defined by the **National Human Rights Commission of India**, is a form of **slavery called debt bondage** that has persisted for centuries.
- 💡 It is considered the **most severe form of modern slavery**, where workers are forced to work for long periods with little pay. This can include being coerced to work without pay for a specific period by an employer as a way to settle a debt.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Child Labour

- 💡 **Article 23:** It prohibits **trafficking in human beings** and forced labour, ensuring protection against exploitation and degrading work conditions.
- 💡 **Article 24:** States that a child **under 14 years cannot be employed** to perform any hazardous work.
- 💡 **Article 39:** Outlines principles that the State should follow, including ensuring equal rights to livelihood for men and women, equal pay for equal work, protection of workers' health and **children's well-being, and opportunities for children to develop** in a healthy and dignified manner.

Infrastructure Development for Tourism

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government will spend ₹4,560 crore in 2025–26 to upgrade roads connecting important religious and historical sites.

- 💡 The plan covers 272 projects aimed at boosting religious tourism, improving infrastructure, and making travel easier for devotees.

Key Points

About the Project:

- ✦ **Major focus areas include: Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura, Chitrakoot,** Prayagraj, Naimisharanya, and Mirzapur.
 - ✍ These places are of significant religious, cultural, and mythological importance.
- ✦ Roads selected typically witness an **average footfall of 5 lakh devotees per year**.
- ✦ Execution will be managed jointly by the **Public Works Department (PWD)** and the **Religious Works Department**.
- ✦ The **Principal Secretary of Religious Works Department** has approved the road strengthening efforts.
- ✦ **Land Acquisition Considerations:** Priority is given to routes that require minimal land acquisition to ensure fast-tracked implementation.

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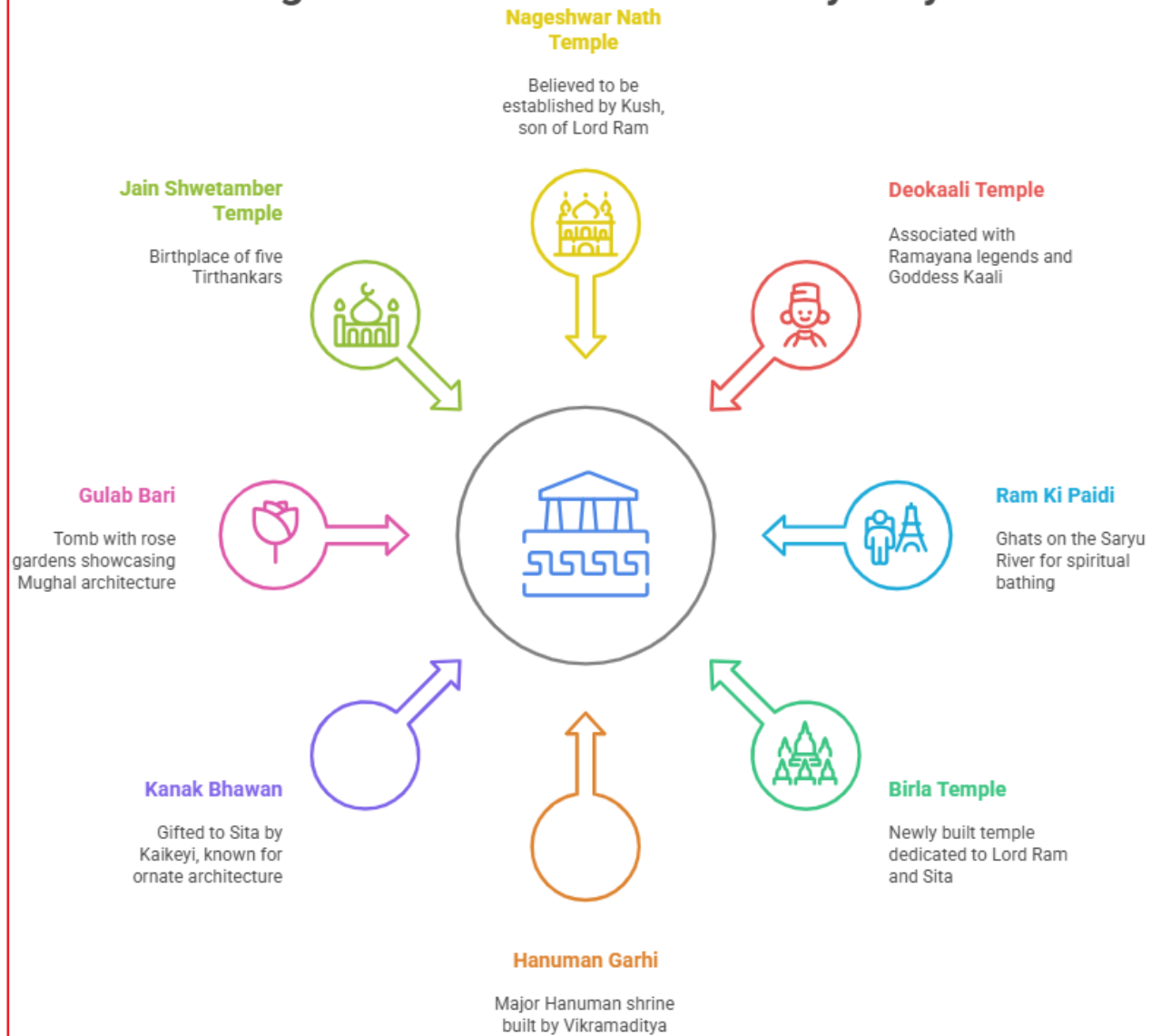
✦ **Key Project Features:**

- ✎ Road widening and strengthening
- ✎ Surface repairs and lane markings
- ✎ Pedestrian sidewalks and carriageway upgrades
- ✎ Beautification and expansion
- ✎ Traffic management enhancements
- ✎ Improved road safety standards

✦ **Significance:**

- ✎ Reduced travel time and enhanced safety for pilgrims.
- ✎ Smoother, more organized journeys for tourists and devotees.
- ✎ Boost in religious tourism and local economic development.

Religious and Scenic Sites of Ayodhya



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Tourist Places of Varanasi

- 🔦 **Sarnath:** Located 10 km northeast of Varanasi near the confluence of the Ganges and Varuna rivers, Sarnath is a significant Buddhist site where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon.
- 🔦 **Ganga Ghat:** The ghats of Varanasi are iconic riverfront steps on the banks of the Ganges. The city has 88 ghats, most of which are used for bathing and religious rituals.
- 🔦 **Shree Kashi Vishvanath Temple:** One of India's most revered temples, dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is a major spiritual center and an important pilgrimage site.
- 🔦 **BHU (Banaras Hindu University):** Situated in the historic city of Varanasi, also known as **Kashi or the City of Lights**, BHU is a landmark educational and spiritual hub surrounded by many important religious places.

Mathura & Vrindavan Region

- 🔦 **Shri Krishna Janmbhoomi (Mathura):** The sacred site marks the birthplace of Lord Krishna, believed to be where he manifested in a prison cell.
- 🔦 **Shri Dwarkadhish Temple (Mathura):** One of the oldest and largest temples in Mathura, dedicated to Lord Krishna in his Dwarkadhish (King of Dwarka) form.
- 🔦 **Raman Reti, Gokul:** Situated near Mathura, Raman Reti (or Raman Van) is believed to be the sacred land where young Krishna played in the sands.
- 🔦 **Shri Banke Bihari Mandir (Vrindavan):** A major Krishna temple in Vrindavan, known for its unique worship style and deep spiritual atmosphere. It attracts thousands of devotees daily.
- 🔦 **ISKCON Temple, Vrindavan:** Also known as the Sri Krishna Balrama Mandir, this is the first temple built by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and a hub of Krishna devotion worldwide.
- 🔦 **Shri Radha Rani Mandir (Barsana):** Located in Barsana, this temple is dedicated to Radha Rani and is a major pilgrimage site in the Braj region, drawing large crowds during festivals like Holi.

Chitrakoot

- 🔦 **Ram Ghat:** A sacred ghat on the banks of the Mandakini River where Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman are believed to have bathed. It is a hub of spiritual activity, especially during festivals.
- 🔦 **Kamadgiri:** A forested hill believed to be the original Chitrakoot. Devotees undertake a parikrama (circumambulation) around the hill, considering it extremely sacred.
- 🔦 **Bharat Milap Mandir:** Located on Kamadgiri Parikrama path, this temple marks the site where Bharat met Lord Ram to persuade him to return to Ayodhya.
- 🔦 **Hanuman Dhara:** A scenic spot on a hilltop where a stream flows over a Hanuman idol. It is believed that Lord Ram calmed Hanuman's anger here after the burning of Lanka.
- 🔦 **Sati Anusuya Ashram:** An ancient ashram associated with the sage Atri and his wife Anusuya. It is surrounded by tranquil forests and natural springs.

Shahi Jama Masjid Dispute & Places of Worship Act 1991

Why in News?

The Allahabad High Court upheld a trial court's decision to appoint an advocate commissioner to survey the **Shahi Jama Masjid** in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district.

Key Points

Shahi Jama Masjid Dispute

- 🔦 **Background:** The case originated from a petition filed by local residents in a Sambhal court, claiming that the site was originally a Shri Harihar temple, which allegedly was demolished by Mughal emperor Babur in 1529.
- 🔦 **Legal Status:** The Shahi Jama Masjid is a protected monument under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904**. It is listed by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** as a Monument of National Importance.

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Shahi Jama Masjid & Places of Worship Act, 1991:

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, is at the center of this dispute.

- ✦ The Act stipulates that the religious character of places of worship as they existed on **15th August 1947, must be preserved, and prohibits** any changes to the religious identity of such places.
- ✦ The Shahi Jama Masjid dispute challenges the Act's provisions by seeking to alter the mosque's religious character.

Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

✦ **About:** The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, aims to preserve the religious status of places of worship, preventing conversions between **different religious denominations or within the same denomination.**

- ✦ The Act seeks to **maintain communal harmony** by freezing the religious character of these places and preventing disputes over such conversions.

Key Provisions of the Act:

- ✦ **Section 3:** Prohibits the conversion of any place of worship, **either in full or in part**, from one religious denomination to another.
- ✦ **Section 4(1):** Mandates that the religious identity of a place of worship must remain unchanged from its status on **15th August 1947**. Any attempt to alter the religious character is prohibited.
- ✦ **Section 4(2):** Terminates all ongoing legal proceedings concerning the conversion of a place of worship's religious character prior to 15th August 1947, and prevents the initiation of new cases challenging the religious status of such places.
- ✦ **Section 5 (Exceptions):** The specific dispute at **Ayodhya (Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi)**, which was exempted from the Act.
 - ✦ The Act also exempted: Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site

covered by the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.**

- ✦ Cases that have already been resolved or settled by mutual agreement.
- ✦ Conversions that occurred before the Act's commencement.
- ✦ **Section 6 (Penalties):** The Act establishes strict penalties for violations, including imprisonment of up to three years and fines for attempting to change the religious character of a place of worship.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

✦ ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.

- ✦ **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.

✦ It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.

- ✦ Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.

✦ It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI.**

- ✦ Alexander Cunningham is also known as the **"Father of Indian Archaeology"**.

86th Grandmaster of India

Why in News?

Srihari LR of Tamil Nadu became the **86th Grandmaster (GM) of India** at the Asian Individual Men's Chess Championship 2025 in Al Ain, UAE.

Key Points

✦ **Srihari LR's Journey to the GM Title:**

- ✦ Srihari earned his **first GM norm** at the **Qatar Masters in 2023**, and the **second at the Chennai GM Open in 2024.**

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- ✦ He crossed the 2500 Elo rating in August 2024, but it took him almost 10 months to secure the final norm.
 - 📌 The **Elo rating system** measures the relative strength of a player in some games, such as chess, compared to other players.

📌 Grandmasters of India:

- ✦ The **first Indian Grandmaster** was **Vishwanathan Anand**, achieving the title in **1988**.
- ✦ The **first Indian woman Grandmaster** was **Koneru Humpy**, who achieved the title in **2002** at the age of 15, becoming the world's youngest female Grandmaster at the time.
 - 📌 Currently, there are **three women Grandmasters in India**: Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, and R. Vaishali.
- ✦ The **first Indian International Master** was **Manuel Aron** in **1961**, and the **first Indian woman** to achieve the **International Master title** was **Jayshree Khadikar** in **1979**.

International Chess Federation (FIDE)

📌 About:

- ✦ FIDE is the global governing body for the sport of chess.
- ✦ It was **founded in 1924 in Paris, France**.
- ✦ Headquartered in **Lausanne, Switzerland**.
- ✦ It **oversees and regulates** all international chess competitions.
- ✦ Established as a **non-governmental institution**, FIDE was officially **recognized** as a Global Sporting Organization by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** in **1999**.

📌 FIDE's Motto:

- ✦ **"Gens una sumus"** – Latin for **"We are one family"**, emphasizing unity in the global chess community.

📌 Core Activities of FIDE:

- ✦ Issues country rankings based on the average ratings of top 10 overall players and top 10 female players.
- ✦ Regulates rules, norms, and conduct of **all international chess tournaments**.
- ✦ Serves as a central platform linking national chess federations worldwide.

National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

Why in News?

A programme focused on the **National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)** was organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Bareilly.

- 📌 It aimed to **socially and economically empower sanitation workers** and promote safe, dignified livelihoods.

Key Points

National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

- 📌 **About:** It is a collaborative initiative by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** and the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.

- ✦ It was **launched in 2023-24** as a **Central Sector Scheme** with a budget allocation of **349.73 crores** for the period from 2023-24 to 2025-26.
- ✦ It primarily aims to **eliminate manual scavenging** and promote the **safety and dignity of sanitation workers**.
- ✦ Key Components:
 - 📌 **SSWs** employed by **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** are to be profiled for targeted interventions.
 - 📌 SSWs receive occupational safety training, **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** kits, and health insurance under **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**.
 - 📌 The scheme promotes **self-employment and formal employment** by providing **capital subsidies** to turn **SSWs** into "sanipreneurs" or sanitation entrepreneurs.
 - 📌 Waste Pickers engaged in **Solid Waste Management** have been included as a component under the NAMASTE scheme in 2024.

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Objectives:

- ✦ To **socially and economically empower sanitation workers**, especially those engaged in hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning.
- ✦ To ensure workers have access to **safe, dignified, and sustainable livelihoods** by mechanizing sanitation work and reducing health risks.
- ✦ To promote **inclusion, safety, and welfare** of workers through the distribution of PPE and healthcare benefits.

Significance of the Programme

- 💡 The programme is a vital step towards **improving the socio-economic conditions** of sanitation workers who often face hazardous working environments and social stigma.
- 💡 The emphasis on mechanization under NAMASTE reduces manual scavenging, promoting **healthier and safer work conditions**.
- 💡 Distribution of Ayushman cards under the (AB-PMJAY) ensures **access to health services**, crucial for workers exposed to occupational health risks.
- 💡 Providing sewing machines promotes **alternative livelihood opportunities**, fostering skill diversification and economic stability.
- 💡 NAMASTE aligns with the government's broader objectives of **social justice, inclusion, and welfare** for marginalized communities.
- 💡 The programme helps in achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly those related to decent work, health, and well-being (SDGs 3 & 8).

Manual Scavenging

- 💡 Manual scavenging is defined as “the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers”.
- 💡 India banned the practice under the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR)**.
- 💡 The Act **recognizes manual scavenging as a “dehumanizing practice”** and seeks to address the historical injustices faced by manual scavengers.

Schemes Related to Manual Scavenging

- 💡 Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SESRM)
- 💡 [National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation \(NSKFDC\)](#)
- 💡 [Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan](#)
- 💡 [Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0](#)
- 💡 [The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission \(DAY-NULM\)](#)

India's first Jungle Safari Vistadome Train**Why in News?**

The Indian Railways and the government of Uttar Pradesh introduced **India's first Vistadome jungle safari train**.

Key Points**Jungle Safari Vistadome Train****About:**

- ✦ This initiative will connect the **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary** with the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve**, offering passengers a chance to experience the state's rich biodiversity.
- ✦ At present, the service operates on weekends but plans are being firmed up to expand it to daily operations, **making it accessible to more visitors year-round**.

One Destination, Three Forests:

- ✦ This plan is part of the “**One Destination, Three Forests**” theme by the **Eco Tourism Board of Uttar Pradesh**.
- ✦ It aims to bring **Dudhwa National Park, Katarniaghat, and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary** together as **one combined tourist destination** for a richer and more connected wildlife experience.

Economic Importance:

- ✦ The train is **expected to boost** local tourism, create new jobs, and support sustainable development.

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

- 💡 It is **situated in the Upper Ganga Plain**, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh, covering 400.6 sq km with a rich and diverse ecosystem.

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- 💡 It was **established in 1975**. In 1987, it was brought under the purview of the **'Project Tiger'**, and together with the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and the Dudhwa National Park it forms the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.
- ✦ **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary was later declared a Tiger Reserve in 2008.**
- 💡 It hosts animals like chital, deer, wild boar, tiger, elephant, and leopard, and endangered species such as **gharial, rhinoceros, Gangetic dolphin, swamp deer**, hispid hare, Bengal florican, and **vultures**.
- 💡 It features mixed deciduous forests of sal and teak, grasslands, swamps, and **wetlands**, with the Girwa River maintaining ecosystem balance.

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- 💡 Located in the **Terai region of Uttar Pradesh on the Indo-Nepal border**, within Lakhimpur-Kheri district.
- 💡 Known for its rich biodiversity, **it is home to Bengal tiger**, Indian rhinoceros, swamp deer, leopard, and many bird species.
- ✦ Part of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), which includes:
 - 📍 Dudhwa National Park
 - 📍 Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary
 - 📍 Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary
- ✦ These **three areas form the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger**, protecting the last viable population of Royal Bengal Tigers in the state.
- ✦ Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Sanctuary joined the reserve in 1987, and Katarniaghat joined in 2000.



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New Products added in One District One Product

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government included 12 new products under [the One District One Product \(ODOP\)](#) scheme .

Key Points

About One District One Product Scheme:

- ✦ This scheme was launched by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on **24 January 2018**.
- ✦ Under this, **specific and traditional products of each district of the state are identified** and given a Geographical **Indication (GI) tag** , which certifies that the products belong to a particular region.
- ✦ The state government provides **financial assistance, group marketing facilities and other resources to the entrepreneurs to get these products recognized in the national and international markets** .
- ✦ The major objectives of the scheme include:
 - ✍ Creation of new employment opportunities in the state
 - ✍ To boost the exports of the state
 - ✍ To contribute towards making **Uttar Pradesh a trillion dollar economy by the year 2029**
- ✦ **Till now 62 products were listed** under this scheme , but after adding **12 new products this number has increased to 74** .
- ✦ **The 12 new products that have been added are:**
 - ✦ **Baghpat** – Agricultural machinery and related equipment
 - ✦ **Saharanpur** - Hosiery Products
 - ✦ **Firozabad** – Food Processing **Ghaziabad** – Metal, Textiles & Apparels
 - ✦ **Amroha** – Metal and Wooden Handicrafts

- ✦ **Agra** - Petha industry and all kinds of footwear
- ✦ **Hamirpur** - Metal Products
- ✦ **Bareilly** - Wood Products
- ✦ **Etta** - Chicory Product
- ✦ **Pratapgarh** – Food Processing
- ✦ **Bijnor** – Brushes and related products
- ✦ **Ballia** – Sattu Products

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- ✦ A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a **name or mark used on special products** that belong to a specific geographical location or origin.
- ✦ The GI tag ensures that only **authorised users or people residing in the geographical region** are allowed to use the name of a popular product.
- ✦ It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
 - ✦ A registered GI tag is **valid for 10 years** .
- ✦ GI registration is overseen by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- ✦ **Legal Framework:**
 - ✦ It is regulated and guided by the WTO Agreement on **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)**.

India's Largest Titanium and Superalloy Plant

Why in News?

Union **Defence Minister** and **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister** inaugurated India 's largest **Titanium and Superalloy Materials Plant in Lucknow** .

Key Points

About the Plant:

- ✦ This **titanium plant** is operated by Aeroalloy Technologies Limited, a subsidiary of PTC Industries Limited.

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- ✦ The plant is spread over an area of **50 acres** and has an **annual production capacity of 6,000 tonnes**, making it the **world's largest single-site titanium remelting facility**.
- ✦ The state-of-the-art technologies being used at this plant include:
 - ✍ **Vacuum arc remelting (VAR)**
 - ✍ **Electron Beam (EB)**
 - ✍ **Plasma Arc Melting (PAM)**
 - ✍ **Vacuum Induction Melting (VIM)**
- ✦ These technologies will make domestic production of **aerospace-grade materials** possible.
- 💡 Along with the titanium plant, the foundation stone of **seven additional advanced facilities** was also laid. Prominent among them are:
 - ✦ **Aerospace Precision Casting Plants** : Which make single crystal castings, which are important for jet engines.
 - ✦ **Aerospace Forge Shop and Mill Products Plant**: The need for manufacturing critical materials such as billets, bars and plates will be eliminated.
 - ✦ **Aerospace Precision Machining Shop**: which provides capability for ready-to-assemble ultra-precision CNC machined components.
- 💡 The project is being developed under the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor**, which aims to promote **self-reliance in defence production**.

Titanium

- 💡 Its symbol Ti and atomic number 22, known for its high strength-to-weight ratio, excellent corrosion resistance, and ability to withstand high temperatures.
- 💡 It is a light and strong metal. It is as **strong as steel, but much lighter than that**.

- 💡 Titanium is the preferred material for making underwater objects because it can withstand heavy water pressure even at great depths and does not rust.
- 💡 Titanium metal is used in making alloys with aluminium, molybdenum, manganese, iron and other metals. These alloys of titanium are used in **the aviation industry**.
- 💡 Titanium is a component of joint replacement parts, including the hip ball and socket.
- 💡 Titanium is also used in **dental implants**.

Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor

- 💡 It is an ambitious project aimed at reducing the foreign dependency of **the Indian aerospace and defence sector**.
- 💡 It will have 6 nodes – Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi and Lucknow.
- 💡 **Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA)** was made the **nodal agency** to execute the project in collaboration with various state agencies.
- 💡 The aim of this corridor is **to establish the state as one of the largest and advanced defence manufacturing hubs** and put it on the world map.
 - ✦ **Defence Corridor** refers to a route or path used by **public sector, private sector** and **micro, small and medium enterprises** for domestic production of defence equipment as well as to enhance equipment/operational capabilities of the defence forces.

Gomti River

Why in News?

Environmental experts and citizens have raised concerns about **the Gomti River**, as it struggles with plummeting oxygen levels, **high fecal coliform** counts, and a heavy load of **untreated sewage**.

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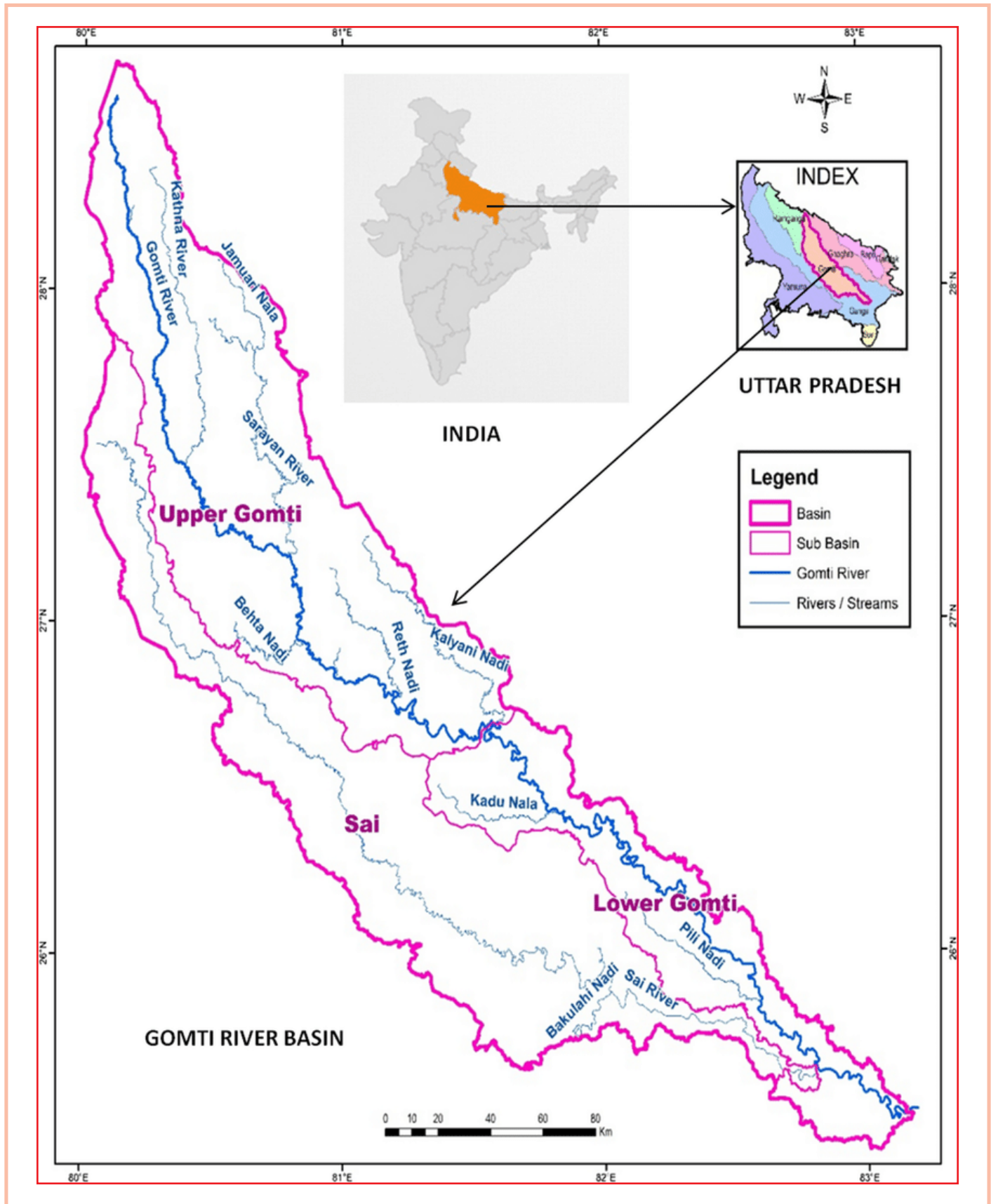


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Key Points

🔦 River Profile:

- ✦ Gomti is a 960-km long tributary of the **Ganga River**.
- ✦ It **originates from Madho Tanda in Pilibhit district and merges with the Ganga** at Kaithi in Ghazipur.
- ✦ In Lucknow, the river faces increasing threats from urbanisation, including low oxygen levels and rising faecal contamination.

🔦 Urbanisation Pressure and Sewage Burden:

- ✦ Rapid population growth and city expansion are straining Gomti's ecological balance.
- ✦ The city currently treats 450 MLD out of 730 MLD needed; around 280 MLD of untreated sewage flows directly into the river.

🔦 Mega Township Projects:

- ✦ The **Lucknow Development Authority (LDA)** is planning four major projects: Wellness City, IT City, Educational City, and Prabandhnagar.
- ✦ Other key developments include Anant Nagar (Mohaan Road) and Aero City (Amausi Airport).
- ✦ These townships lie along major corridors and will further increase population density and sewage load on Gomti.

🔦 Need for Sustainable Urban Planning:

- ✦ Environmentalists stress the urgency of scientific urban planning, including **integrated drainage, green spaces, Sewage Treatment Plants, and water reuse systems**.

🔦 Public Health Concerns:

- ✦ Sharp rise in faecal coliform levels and falling oxygen in the river present serious health and ecological risks.
- ✦ Untreated discharge from nullahs and inadequate infrastructure pose a threat to both aquatic life and human health.

MoU Between CIL and UPRVUNL

Why in News?

Coal India Limited (CIL) and **Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL)** have signed

a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to set up a **solar power project** in the state.

Key Points

🔦 About the MoU:

- ✦ This agreement is part of CIL's **strategic initiative in the green energy sector**.
 - 📎 It is a strong step towards meeting the **rapidly growing energy demand of Uttar Pradesh**.
- ✦ This is a **non-binding agreement with the aim of setting up a solar power project of 500 MW capacity** within Uttar Pradesh .

🔦 Solar Energy:

- ✦ Solar energy, known as energy obtained from the sun, is a clean and **renewable energy** source. It is harnessed through solar technology, which is mainly of two types:
 - 📎 **Solar Thermal:** In this the heat of the sun is used to heat water.
 - 📎 **Solar Photovoltaic (PV):** It uses the photovoltaic effect to convert the sun's rays into electrical energy.

✦ Uses:

- 📎 Solar technologies are scalable and flexible, capable of powering entire cities through solar farms.
- 📎 Electricity can be supplied even to remote areas through decentralized systems.
- 📎 Homes and commercial buildings can be provided with energy by installing solar panels on rooftops.

🏠 **Example :** Cochin International Airport is one such example where solar energy is being used effectively.

✦ Importance:

- 📎 Reduction in **dependence on fossil fuels**.
- 📎 Reducing **carbon emissions**.
- 📎 Improvement in **air quality**.
- 📎 Promote **energy access and security**.

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Coal India Limited (CIL)

- 💡 **Introduction:** CIL is a government-owned **coal mining company in India**, responsible for production and management of coal resources in the country.
 - ✦ It was **established in 1975** and is the world's largest coal producing mining company .
- 💡 **Organisational Structure:** CIL is classified as a 'Maharatna' public sector enterprise. It operates through 8 subsidiaries like **Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL)**.
 - ✦ **Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL)** is the largest coal producing subsidiary of CIL.
- 💡 **Strategic Importance:** More than half of India's installed power capacity is coal-based, with CIL supplying about 78% of the country's total coal production.
 - ✦ Coal also contributes 40% to India's primary commercial energy needs.
- 💡 **Mining Capacity:** CIL operates in 84 mining areas across eight Indian states and manages a total of 313 active mines.

Uttar Pradesh State Power Generation Corporation Limited (UPRVUNL)

- 💡 It is a thermal power generation undertaking wholly owned by the state government, which operates five thermal power plants located in different areas of the state.
- 💡 It was formed on 25 August 1980 under the **Companies Act, 1956** to construct new thermal power projects in the state.
- 💡 The first project constructed by the corporation was **Unchahar Thermal Power Station (2x210 MW)** , which was handed over to NTPC on 13 February 1992.
- 💡 Later, under the **Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Reform Act 1999** and **Uttar Pradesh Transfer Scheme 2000**, Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Board was reorganized and divided into three public sector undertakings:
 - ✦ Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Generation Corporation Limited (for electricity generation)
 - ✦ Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (for electricity distribution)
 - ✦ Uttar Pradesh Power Transmission Corporation Limited (for electricity transmission).

Chip Design Center Launched in Noida

Why in News?

The **Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology** inaugurated India's first **3-nanometer (3nm) chip design centre in Noida**, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- 💡 **Achievement of 3nm technology:**
 - ✦ This technology is much more advanced than the existing 7nm and 5nm.
 - ✦ This enables **higher performance, lower energy consumption, and greater computing efficiency**.
 - ✦ It represents the pinnacle of innovation at the design level, which is now being realised in India.
 - ✦ This centre has been established by **Renesas Electronics India**, a company of Japanese origin.
 - ✦ **Supporting the Government Strategy:**
 - 📎 This initiative is part of **the Indian government's** broader strategy to develop the semiconductor ecosystem.
 - 📎 The government is looking to empower **the semiconductor ecosystem** by incorporating design, manufacturing, **ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, Packaging)** and supply of related equipment.
 - 📎 It is being implemented under **India's Semiconductor Mission** and **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**.
- 💡 **Global recognition and confidence :**
 - 📎 India's semiconductor capabilities are being appreciated at global forums like **the World Economic Forum (Davos)**.
 - 📎 This has increased the confidence of **international companies and investors** towards India.

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India's Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

Introduction:

- ✦ ISM was **launched in 2021** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** with a total financial outlay of Rs.76,000 crore.
- ✦ This is part of a comprehensive programme to develop a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in the country.
- ✦ The objective of this program is to provide financial support to companies investing in the semiconductor, display manufacturing and design ecosystem .
- ✦ It is envisaged that ISM will act as the nodal agency for efficient, consistent and smooth implementation of the schemes under the leadership of global experts from the semiconductor and display industry.

Ingredients:

- ✦ Plans to set up semiconductor fabs in India:
 - ✍ It provides financial assistance to eligible applicants for setting up **semiconductor fab (manufacturing plant)** with the aim of attracting investments for setting up semiconductor wafer fabrication facilities in the country.

Semiconductor chips:

- ✦ It is a small electronic device made from a **semiconductor (silicon or germanium)**, which serves as the basic building block of most electronic circuits.
- ✦ These chips can contain billions of microscopic switches on a chip smaller than a fingernail.
- ✦ The basic component of a semiconductor chip is a **silicon wafer** built of tiny transistors , which control electric current according to various computational instructions.
- ✦ It performs various functions, such as processing data , storing information or controlling electronic devices.
- ✦ They are a vital part of almost every modern electronic device, including smartphones, computers, and integrated circuits.

New UPSC Chairman Appointed

Why in News?

Former Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar has been appointed **the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**.

Key Points

Union Public Service Commission

- ✦ The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is a **constitutional body**. Part XIV of the Indian Constitution contains provisions relating to the composition, appointment and removal, powers and functions of its members under **Articles 315 to 323**.
- ✦ **Appointment of Members:** The Chairman and other members of the UPSC are appointed by the **President of India**.
- ✦ **Office:** Any member of the UPSC will hold office for a **term of six years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier**.
- ✦ **Re-appointment:** No person who has once held office as a member of a Public Service Commission shall be eligible for reappointment to his office.
- ✦ **Resignation:** A member of the Union Public Service Commission may resign from his office by writing to the President of India.
- ✦ **Removal/Suspension of Members:** The Chairman or any other member of the Union Public Service Commission shall be removed from his office only by order of the President of India.
 - ✍ The President may also suspend the Chairperson or any other Member before the completion of his office, in respect of which a reference is made to **the Supreme Court**.
- ✦ **Removal:** The Chairman or any other member of the UPSC may be removed if he:
 - ✍ has been declared bankrupt.
 - ✍ Engages in any paid employment outside the duties of the office during his term of office.

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- ✍ is, in the opinion of the President, unfit to continue in office by reason of infirmity of mind or body.
- ✦ **Regulating the conditions of service:** Power of the President of India in the case of UPSC:
 - ✍ Determines the number of members of the Commission and their conditions of service.
 - ✍ Makes provision for the number of employees of the Commission and their conditions of service.
- ✦ **Restriction on Powers:** The service conditions of members of the UPSC shall not be amended in any manner after their appointment.
- ✦ **Power to extend functions:** The Legislature of a State may make provision for the exercise of additional functions by the UPSC or the SPSC in respect of the services of the Union or a State and in respect of the services of any local authority or other body corporate constituted by law or any public institution.
- ✦ **Expenses:** The expenses of the UPSC, including salaries, allowances and pensions of members or employees of the Commission, are met from the Consolidated **Fund of India**.
- 💡 **Submission of Reports:** The UPSC submits an annual report of the work done by the Commission to the President of India.
 - ✦ A memorandum has to be submitted to the President in respect of those cases in which the advice of the Commission has not been accepted.
 - ✍ The reasons for rejection will have to be presented before each House of Parliament before being presented to the President.

Brahmos Missile

Why in News?

BrahMos supersonic cruise missile production unit was inaugurated by the Union Defence Minister in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.



Key Points

💡 About Brahmos Missile:

- ✦ An Indo-Russian joint venture, the BrahMos missile has a range of **290 km** and is the **world's fastest cruise missile** with a top speed of Mach 2.8 (about three times the speed of sound).
 - ✍ It is named after the **Brahmaputra River** of India and the **Moskva River** of Russia.
- ✦ It is a two-stage (**solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in the second**) missile.
- ✦ It is a multiplatform missile which **can be launched with great accuracy from land, air and sea having multi-capability capabilities** and can operate during day and night despite bad weather.
- ✦ It operates on the "fire and forget" principle i.e. it does not require guidance after launch.

💡 About Lucknow Brahmos Unit:

- ✦ The unit has been set up under the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UP DIC)** at a cost of **Rs 300 crore**.
- ✦ It is a **joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** of the Government of India and the Russian company **NPOM**.
 - ✍ India has a share of **50.5%** and Russia has a share of **49.5%** in it.
- ✦ **In the first phase, parts** of the BrahMos missile will be assembled here and later **the full manufacturing work** will be started.
- ✦ The unit will manufacture **100 to 150 next-generation missiles per year**.

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- ✦ The new version's weight has been reduced from 2,900 kg to 1,290 kg.
- ✦ Its range will be more than 300 km.

Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor

- 💡 It is an ambitious project aimed at reducing the foreign dependency of the Indian aerospace and defence sector.
- 💡 It has 6 nodes – Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi and Lucknow.
- 💡 Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has been made the nodal agency to execute the project in collaboration with various state agencies.
- 💡 The aim of this corridor is to establish the state as one of the largest and advanced defence manufacturing hubs and put it on the world map.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

Introduction:

- ✦ DRDO was established in 1958 by merging the Indian Army's Technical Development Establishment (TDE), Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DTDP) and Defence Science Organisation (DSO).
- ✦ DRDO is the research and development wing of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- ✦ Initially DRDO had 10 laboratories, currently it operates 41 laboratories and 5 DRDO Young Scientist Laboratories (DYSL).

Principle:

- ✦ The guiding principle of DRDO is “Balasya Mulam Vijnanam” (power lies in science), which guides the nation in both peace and war situations.

Mission:

- ✦ Its mission is to achieve self-reliance in critical defence technologies and systems by equipping the Indian Armed Forces with state-of-the-art weapon systems and equipment as per the requirements of the three services.

UP-AGREES and AI Pragma Programme

Why in News?

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh launched the 'UP-AGREES' and 'AI Pragma' programmes in Lucknow in the presence of the World Bank President.

Key Points

About UP-AGREES:

- ✦ It will be implemented in 28 districts of Purvanchal and Bundelkhand regions of Uttar Pradesh.
- ✦ Its main objective is to increase agricultural productivity, ensure conservation of natural resources and increase the income of farmers.
- ✦ The Rs 3,900 crore project includes a Rs 2,737 crore World Bank loan and RS 1,166 crore from the state government.
- ✦ The 6-year loan, repayable over 35 years at 1.23% interest, will benefit 10 lakh farmers—30% of them women.
- ✦ The project will link 10,000 women producer groups and send 500 farmers abroad for advanced training.

AI Pragma Program:

- ✦ The main objective of the 'AI Pragma' program is to establish Uttar Pradesh as a leading state in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies.
- ✦ Under this program, 10 lakh youth will be provided training and certification in cutting-edge technologies like AI, machine learning, data analytics and cyber security.
- ✦ This initiative will promote AI based startups in the state, increase employment opportunities and create a digitally skilled workforce.
- ✦ The programme will be conducted in collaboration with various state departments like Education, Health, Agriculture, Revenue, Secretariat Administration.

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World Bank

📌 About:

- ✦ It was **established in 1944** as the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the IMF. The IBRD later became the World Bank.
- ✦ The World Bank Group is a **unique global partnership of five institutions working** to advance lasting solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
- ✦ The World Bank is one of the specialized agencies of **the United Nations**.

📌 Member:

- ✦ **189 countries** are its members.
- ✦ **India** is also its member.

📌 Five Development Institutions:

- ✦ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- ✦ International Development Association (IDA)
- ✦ International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- ✦ Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
- ✦ International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
- ✦ India is not a member of ICSID.

Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)

Why in discussion?

Under **Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)**, the UP government signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee** to provide **world-class technical skills** to the youth of the state .

Key Points

📌 About the MoU:

- ✦ Through this agreement , technical collaboration has been established between **the State Government and IIT Roorkee with**

the aim of equipping the youth with cutting-edge technical skills .

- ✦ The youth will get the following facilities under the guidance of **experts from IIT Roorkee**:
 - ✍ Advanced Technical Training
 - ✍ Innovation-Driven Education
 - ✍ Research opportunities
 - ✍ **Startup Support** & Consulting
- ✦ This initiative will enable the youth **to compete at the national and international level**, thereby strengthening their **employability**.

Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)

- 📌 Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission was established on **September 13, 2013** as a society registered under **the Societies Registration Act, 1860** under the **Department of Vocational Education & Skill Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh**.
- 📌 A **National Skill Development Policy** was launched in **2009** with a target to **skill 500 million people by 2022**.
 - ✦ Under the national scheme, the **state of Uttar Pradesh** aims to **skill over 4 million youth** by the end of the **12th Five Year Plan**.
- 📌 UPSDM has been established to achieve this goal and provide employable skills to the youth of the state.
- 📌 It is essential to coordinate all skill development initiatives by leveraging the **State Skill Development Policy**.
- 📌 It empanelled private training partners besides government training partners to conduct skill development training.

Meerut Tops in GST Collection

Why in News?

In **April 2025** , **Meerut Zone of Uttar Pradesh** secured **first place** in the state in **GST collection** under the State Tax Department.

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Key Points

About GST Collection:

- ✦ According to the state tax department portal, GST collection by Meerut zone in April 2024 was Rs 147.34 crore, while the target for April 2025 was set at Rs 287.08 crore.

✍ **Meerut Zone** achieved a major part of the target by collecting revenue of **Rs 211.87 crore in April this year.**

- ✦ The Excise Department also made a significant contribution to the revenue, with liquor sales earning Rs 103 crore in April 2025, which is Rs 42.04 crore more than Rs 78.96 crore received last year (April 2024).

✍ This success has been possible due to increasing tax compliance, awareness among traders, improvements in ITC rules and strengthening of digital monitoring systems.

✍ The expansion of industries such as telecommunications, manufacturing, education and the service sector has fueled this accumulation.

Others:

- ✦ Lucknow's Corporate Circle Headquarters remained at the second position in the state.
- ✦ Gautam Buddha Nagar, Lucknow Second Zone and Bareilly Zone remained at the third, fourth and fifth positions respectively.

Goods and Services Tax

✦ **Introduction:** GST is a value added tax system levied on the supply of goods and services in India.

- ✦ It is a comprehensive indirect tax which was implemented in India on July 1, 2017 through the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016 with the slogan 'One Nation One Tax'.

Benefits of GST:

- ✦ **Simplified tax regime:** GST replaced several indirect taxes, making compliance easier and reducing paperwork for businesses.

- ✦ **Increased Transparency:** The online GST portal simplifies tax administration and promotes transparency in the system.

- ✦ **Reduction in tax burden:** The elimination of cascading taxes benefits consumers as prices are lower.

- ✦ **Boost economic growth:** By removing tax barriers and improving efficiency, GST is expected to contribute to higher economic growth and job creation.

✦ **GST Council:** The GST Council is a constitutional body responsible for making recommendations on issues relating to the implementation of GST in India.

- ✦ The GST Council was constituted by the President as per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution.

Veer Rath Park

Why in News?

Veer Rath Park, along with a museum and open-air theatre, will be developed in Noida, Uttar Pradesh to honour the heroes of the freedom struggle.

Key Points

About the park:

- ✦ This park is being established in Nalgarh village near Noida-Greater Noida Expressway with the aim of preserving and showcasing the legacy of 32 freedom fighters.

✍ Historically, Nalgarh village has been the refuge of Shaheed **Bhagat Singh**, Rajguru, Sukhdev, **Subhash Chandra Bose** and Colonel Karnail Singh of the **Azad Hind Fauj**.

✍ It is believed that these fighters stayed here and prepared strategies to attack the British army.

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- ✦ This park will be established on approximately **22 acres of land**, with an estimated cost of **Rs 42 crore**.
- ✦ The park will also have a **museum** that will house **stone statues of freedom fighters** along with **informational exhibits**.
 - ✍ **Stories of freedom fighters and army personnel** will also be inscribed on the walls of the museum .
- ✦ Wartime tanks and fighter jets will symbolically showcase **India's military heritage**, while a laser show will inspire patriotism. An open-air theatre will host **cultural programmes** themed on **India's independence**.

Azad Hind Fauj (INA)

- 💡 **Introduction:** It was a **military force** formed with the **aim of countering British rule** in India during the **Second World War** and played an important role in **India's freedom struggle**.
- 💡 **Formation:**
 - ✦ **Mohan Singh:** He proposed raising an army from **Indian prisoners of war (POWs)** and received Japanese support. He initially led the INA, recruiting about 40,000 soldiers.
 - ✍ However, conflict with the Japanese over the number of troops led to their removal.
 - ✦ **Rashbehari Bose:** He was an experienced revolutionary and played an important role in garnering support for the INA and formed the **Indian Independence League** in Tokyo (1942).
 - ✦ **Subhas Chandra Bose:** On **25 August 1943**, Bose was appointed **Supreme Commander of the INA** and later on 21 October 1943, he established the **Provisional Government of Free India** or **Azad Hind in Singapore**.
 - ✍ It was ratified by **nine countries**, including Japan, Germany, Italy, and China (led by Wang Jingwei).

Mission Shakti

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government's Mission Shakti campaign** has set a new benchmark in **women empowerment** by reaching over 9 crore women across the state.

Key Points

💡 About Mission Shakti Campaign :

- ✦ **'Mission Shakti'** is an **ambitious multi-dimensional scheme** of the Uttar Pradesh Government aimed at ensuring **safety, dignity and self-reliance** of women and girls .
- ✦ It was launched on **17 October 2020** and till now this campaign has been completed in **five phases**.

💡 Achievements and Statistics :

- ✦ **1,707 potential child marriages** were prevented, ensuring the protection of the rights of girls.
- ✦ **Women Helpline 1090** has successfully resolved **7.78 lakh cases** so far .
- ✦ **One Stop Centres** provided relief in **more than 2.10 lakh cases** of violence and abuse .
- ✦ Through the **Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana**, benefits were provided to **23.40 lakh girls** .
- ✦ More than 2 lakh girls were identified in the **aspiring districts** and were given assistance for their **overall development**.

💡 Investing in security infrastructure:

- ✦ **100 pink police booths** have been set up in the state .
- ✦ **The 1090 call centre** has been expanded with **80 additional terminals** .
- ✦ **More than 1,100 pink toilets** have been constructed in **189 urban bodies** .
- ✦ Outreach has been done to **villages, schools, colleges and urban wards** through special events, training sessions and campaigns .
- ✦ Workshops have been organised on **cyber crime, domestic violence, mental health, legal rights, financial literacy** .

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Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Scheme

Introduction:

- ✦ It was launched in **April 2019** by the **Women Welfare Department** in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✦ Under the scheme, **financial assistance of Rs. 15,000** is given to the family when a girl child is born in the family.
- ✦ This amount is given as an incentive in six phases, from the birth of the daughter till she graduates .
- ✦ Maximum two daughters from a family can get benefit of this scheme.

Objective:

- ✦ The main objectives of the scheme are elimination of **female foeticide** , **prevention of child marriage**, increase in health and education and promotion of self-reliance .

Global Service Centre in UP

Why in News?

To attract global investment, the **Uttar Pradesh government** has approved the **Global Capability Centres (GCC) Policy**.

Key Points

About the Policy:

- ✦ The policy aims to drive UP toward its ambitious **goal of becoming a USD 1-trillion economy**.
- ✦ Officials expect the policy to attract global players in **IT, banking, healthcare, engineering, and next-generation technologies**.
- ✦ The policy offers attractive incentives and has been framed after studying global best practices.

Technologies Covered by GCCs:

- ✦ GCCs being set up in UP include cutting-edge domains such as:
 - ✍ [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#)
 - ✍ Machine Learning
 - ✍ Cloud Computing
 - ✍ [Cybersecurity](#)
 - ✍ [Robotic Process Automation](#)
 - ✍ Engineering design and development

Sectors and Companies Already on Board:

- ✦ **Global firms** in banking, financial services, insurance, automotive, electronics, and **semiconductor manufacturing** have **begun operations in UP**.
- ✦ **Microsoft** has laid the foundation for a 10,000-seater **development centre in Noida**.
- ✦ **MAQ Software** has set up a 3,000-seater engineering centre.
- ✦ The state is also working to **attract GCCs to Varanasi, Kanpur, and Prayagraj, alongside Noida and NCR**.

Global Capability Centers (GCCs)

- ✦ GCCs represent **offshore establishments set up by companies** to deliver a range of services to their parent entities.
- ✦ Operating as internal entities within the global corporate framework, these centres **offer specialised capabilities including IT services, research and development, customer support, and various other business functions**.
- ✦ GCCs play a crucial role in **capitalising on cost efficiencies, tapping into talent reservoirs, and fostering collaboration** between parent enterprises and their offshore counterparts.
- ✦ **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** can provide a **fertile ground for GCCs** to flourish by offering several advantages like tax breaks, simplified regulations and streamlined bureaucracy.

Piprahwa Relics

Why in News?

The Central Government has launched a **strong diplomatic and legal campaign to stop** Sotheby's in Hong Kong from **auctioning the sacred Piprahwa Relics**, which are believed to be the **remains of Lord Buddha**.



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Key Points

About Piprahwa Relics:

- ✦ Excavators discovered the Piprahwa Relics in 1898 at the Piprahwa Stupa in Uttar Pradesh, believed to be ancient Kapilavastu, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
- ✦ The relics include bone fragments, crystal caskets, gold ornaments, and other ritual offerings.
- ✦ An inscription in **Brahmi script** on one casket links the relics directly to Lord Buddha, stating they were deposited by the **Sakya clan**.

Legal Protection of the Relics:

- ✦ India classifies the relics as 'AA' antiquities, granting them the highest level of legal protection under national law.
- ✦ Indian law prohibits their sale or export, making any attempt to auction or remove them illegal.
- ✦ While most relics were handed to the Indian Museum, Kolkata in 1899, descendants of British excavator William Claxton Peppé retained some relics, now surfacing in the auction market.

India's Immediate Action:

- ✦ After learning of the proposed Sotheby's auction in Hong Kong, the Ministry of Culture issued a legal notice demanding an immediate halt.
- ✦ The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** contacted India's Consulate General in Hong Kong to seek intervention.

Kapilavastu Relics

- ✦ The discovery of an inscribed casket in 1898 at the stupa site in Piprahwa (near UP's Siddharthnagar) helped identify the place with the ancient Kapilavastu.
- ✦ The inscription on the casket's lid refers to the relics of Buddha and his community, the Sakya.
- ✦ A further excavation of the stupa by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1971-77 brought to light two more steatite relic caskets, containing a total of 22 sacred bone relics, which are now under the care of the National Museum.
- ✦ This was followed by the discovery of more than 40 terracotta sealings from different levels and spots in the eastern monastery at Piprahwa, establishing that Piprahwa was the ancient Kapilavastu.

GAUTAM BUDDHA


Believed to be 8th of the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu (Dashavatar)

BIRTH


- Born as Siddhartha (563 BC)
- Birthplace - Lumbini (Nepal) near Kapilavastu

PARENTS


- Father - elected ruler of Kapilavastu; headed Shakya republican clan
- Mother - princess from Koshalan dynasty




IMPORTANT EVENTS



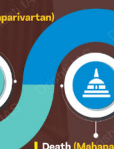
Buddha's Birth



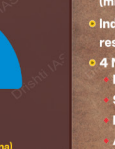
The Great Departure (Mahabhinishkramana)



Enlightenment (Nirvana)



First Sermon (Dhammachakraparivartan)



Death (Mahaparinirvana)

Buddha referred to himself as Tathagata (one who has thus come/gone) and has been addressed as Bhagavat (in Buddhist texts)


CONTEMPORARIES

- Vardhaman Mahavira
- Bimbisara
- Ajatshatru

OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH BUDDHA

- Bodhi Gaya (Enlightenment) (named Buddha after attaining enlightenment)
- Sarnath (first sermon)
- Vaishali (Last sermon)
- Kushinagara (death place (487 BC))

BUDDHISM



ORIGIN

- 6th century BC, based on the teachings of Gautam Buddha

MAIN FEATURES

- Essence - Attainment of enlightenment (Nibbana)
- Supreme Deity - None

BUDDHISM REJECTS

- Authenticity of Vedas
- Concept of soul (atman) (unlike Jainism)

PRINCIPLES

- Avoid the extremes; follow Madhyam Marg (middle path)
- Individualistic component (everyone is responsible for their own happiness)
- 4 Noble Truths:
 - Dukkha (suffering)
 - Samudya (cause of suffering)
 - Nirodha (suffering could be ended)
 - Atthanga Magga (8-fold path to achieve this)
- 8-Fold Path:
 - Right - view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, mindfulness, effort and concentration

Buddha's teachings were rehearsed, authenticated & divided in 3 Pitakas at the 1st Buddhist Council
These teachings were written down c. 26 BC in Pali

4 BUDDHIST COUNCILS

Buddhist Council	Patron	Venue	Chairman	Year
First	Ajatshatru	Rajgriha	Mahakasyapa	483 BC
Second	Kalashoka	Vaishali	Sabbakami	383 BC
Third	Ashoka	Patliputra	Mogaliputra	250 BC
Fourth	Kanishka	Kundalban (Kashmir)	Vasumitra	72 AD

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Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank

Why in News?

Aryavart Bank, Prathama Bank, and Baroda UP Bank—three **regional rural banks** in Uttar Pradesh—have been merged into a single entity, named 'Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank'.

Key Points

About Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank :

- ✦ The objective of this bank is to ensure **financial inclusion**, **integrated management** and **better customer services** in rural areas.
- ✦ This new bank came into existence from **1st May 2025** under the notification of the **Ministry of Finance, Government of India**.
- ✦ The jurisdiction of this newly formed bank will extend to 26 districts of Uttar Pradesh, in which operations will be carried out through a total of 22 regional offices.
- ✦ The headquarters of this newly formed bank will be established in **Lucknow** and it will be operated under the sponsorship of **Bank of Baroda**.

Benefits:

- ✦ **Ease in loan disbursal** : Quick loan approval to farmers, self-employed rural entrepreneurs.
- ✦ **Expansion of digital services** : Facilities like mobile banking, **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**, net banking will reach remote villages.
- ✦ **Monitoring of Facilities** : A special committee has been formed by **NABARD** which will assess the convenience of the customers.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- 💡 NABARD is a development bank that primarily **focuses on the rural areas of the country**. It is the **apex banking institution for providing finance for agriculture and rural development**.
- 💡 Its **headquarters is located in Mumbai**, the financial capital of the country.
- 💡 Apart from agriculture, it is responsible for the development of small industries, cottage industries and rural projects.
- 💡 It is a statutory body established in the year 1982 under the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981**.

Ration Card for Transgenders

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced a **special drive** to issue **ration cards** to **transgender** citizens under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.

Key Points

Status of Transgender Community:

- ✦ The Government was informed through the report by the **Uttar Pradesh Transgender Welfare Board** that a large number of **transgender persons are deprived of permanent employment and government schemes**.
- ✦ Due to social discrimination they are also **deprived of basic facilities like food security, pension, health services**.

Intervention of Chief Minister :

- ✦ Taking cognizance of this report, the **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** has directed that:
 - 📎 The ration card distribution process should be made **simple, fast and transparent**.
 - 📎 This work should be completed before the launch of the state's '**Zero Poverty**' programme.
 - 📎 All districts have been instructed to **identify transgender persons who do not have ration cards and issue them documents**.
 - 📎 These beneficiaries should be added to the '**eligible household**' category and brought under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.

Importance:

- ✦ This will promote **social inclusion** and provide **equal rights and dignity** to the transgender community.
- ✦ By ensuring **food security**, their **economic condition** will be strengthened.
- ✦ **Administrative reforms** and transparency will make the reach of **welfare schemes** more effective.

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National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013

- 💡 **Notified:** September 10, 2013
- 💡 **Objective:** It aims to provide food and nutrition security to the people by providing them with an adequate quantity of good quality food at affordable prices to lead a dignified life.
- 💡 **Coverage:** 75% of rural population and 50% of urban population eligible to receive subsidized food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- 💡 The National Food Security Act (NFSA) overall covers 67 per cent of the country's total population.
- 💡 **Eligibility:**
 - ✦ Priority households covered under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), as per State Government guidelines.
 - ✦ Houses covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana.
- 💡 **Provision:**
 - ✦ 5 kg food grains per person per month, including rice at Rs 3 per kg, wheat at Rs 2 per kg and coarse grains at Rs 1 per kg.
 - ✦ However, under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, the existing provision of 35 kg foodgrains per family per month will continue.
 - ✦ There is a provision to provide maternity benefit of at least Rs 6000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers in addition to food during pregnancy and six months after the birth of the child.
 - ✦ Food for children upto 14 years of age.
 - ✦ Food security allowance to the beneficiaries in case of non-supply of food grains or meals.
 - ✦ Establishing grievance redressal mechanisms at district and state levels.

Key Points

- 💡 **About Pulitzer Prize:**
 - ✦ The Pulitzer Prize is considered **America's most prestigious honor in the field of journalism.**
 - ✦ This award was **started in the year 1917**, which is **administered by Columbia University and the 'Pulitzer Prize Board'**.
 - 📎 The Pulitzer Prize Board is **composed of judges** appointed by Columbia University.
 - ✦ This award is **named in honor of renowned newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer**, who bequeathed **funds in his will to establish the School of Journalism** at Columbia University and to institute the Pulitzer Prize.
- 💡 **Reward:**
 - ✦ Each award winner carries a **certificate and prize money of USD 15,000** and the award winner in the **'Public Service Category'** receives a **gold medal**.
- 💡 **Pulitzer Prize 2025:**
 - ✦ The Pulitzer Prizes for the year 2025 were given in a **total of 23 categories**, including **15 categories of journalism** and **8 categories of books, drama, music etc.**
 - ✦ List of winners include:
 - 📎 **Fiction:** Percival Everett won the award for his novel **'James'**, which tells the story of **'Huckleberry Finn'** from the point of view of a slave.
 - 📎 **Drama:** Branden Jacobs-Jenkins was honored for **"Purpose,"** which delves into the inner complexities of a wealthy black family.
 - 📎 **Journalism:** The New York Times won four Pulitzers, The New Yorker three, and The Washington Post three for their swift reporting on the Trump assassination attempt.
 - 📎 **Public Service:** Kavita Suarna, Lizzie Presser, Cassandra Jaramillo and Stacy Kranitz (reporting on deaths of pregnant women due to obscure abortion law exceptions).

Pulitzer Prize 2025

Why in News?

The **Pulitzer Prizes 2025**, honoring **outstanding contributions to journalism and the arts**, were announced by the Pulitzer Prize Board.

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- ✍ **Investigative Reporting:** Reuters Staff (Supply chain expose on fentanyl crisis).
- ✍ **Explanation:** Azam Ahmed, Christina Goldbaum and Matthew Aikins (NYT).
- ✍ **Local reporting:** Alissa Zhu, Nick Thiem and Jessica Gallagher (Baltimore fentanyl crisis).
- ✍ **National Reporting:** Wall Street Journal Staff (reporting on Elon Musk).
- ✍ **International reporting:** Declan Walsh and NYT staff (reporting on the Sudan conflict).
- ✍ **Special Writing:** Mark Warren (Esquire).
- ✍ **Commentary:** Mosab Abu Toha (The New Yorker).
- ✍ **Review:** Alexandra Lang (Bloomberg CityLab).
- ✍ **Editorial writing:** Raj Mankad, Sharon Steinman, Lisa Falkenberg and Leah Binkowitz (Houston Chronicle).
- ✍ **Featured reporting and commentary:** Ann Telnes (Washington Post).
- ✍ **Breaking News Photography:** Doug Mills (NYT).
- ✍ **Exclusive photography:** Moises Saman (The New Yorker).
- ✍ **Audio reporting:** The New Yorker Staff.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports honoured Olympians Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty with the **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award** for the year 2023 .

Key Points

- 💡 **About Major Dhyanchand Khel Ratna Award:**
 - ✦ It is considered India's highest sporting honour.

- ✦ It is given for the most outstanding performance by a sportsperson **in the field of sports during the last four years** .
- ✦ In this, the winners are given a **medal, certificate and a prize money of Rs 25 lakh** .
- ✦ **The award was** instituted in the year **1991–92**; it was earlier called **the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award** , which was renamed as **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award** in the year **2021**.
- ✦ This award is given by **the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**.

Major Dhyan Chand

- 💡 Major Dhyan Chand was born on **29 August 1905 in Prayagraj**.
- 💡 He was a field hockey player who played international hockey **from the year 1926 to 1949**.
 - ✦ He was a **three-time Olympic gold medalist**, winning gold in the **1928, 1932, and 1936** Olympic editions.
- 💡 His exceptional skills in the game earned him the title of **'Hockey Wizard'**.
 - ✦ Dhyan Chand, along with his brother Roop Singh, contributed significantly to India's tally of 35 goals, leading to them being known as the **'Hockey Twins'**.
 - ✦ In **1934**, Dhyan Chand was honoured with the **captaincy of the Indian team**.
- 💡 Major Dhyan Chand retired from the Army as a Major in the year 1956 and was awarded the **Padma Bhushan**.
- 💡 **National Sports Day** is celebrated every year on **29 August on the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand** to honour his contribution and promote sports culture.

Krishi Sakhi in UP

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has decided to train women as **'Krishi Sakhi'** to promote **natural farming**.

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Key Points

💡 About Krishi Sakhi Scheme :

- ✦ This initiative formally **recognises the role of women in agriculture**, and is a strong step towards making them **economically and socially self-reliant**.
- ✦ Selection Process & Role:
- ✦ Those women will be selected as 'Krishi Sakhi' who will:
 - ✍ Be a **local resident** .
 - ✍ Be associated with **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** or be **active in agricultural work** .
 - ✍ Have a minimum of **primary education (literacy is compulsory)**.
- ✦ Their role includes:
 - ✍ Raising **awareness among farmers** about natural farming benefits.
 - ✍ Receiving and sharing training on **organic inputs and seed treatment**.
 - ✍ Monitoring agricultural clusters and reporting farmer issues to **Krishi Vigyan Kendras**.
 - ✍ Promoting **collective farming** through women's groups.
- ✦ Training and Honorarium:
 - ✍ These women will be given regular training by **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)** on topics like **natural farming, organic product production, experimental methods, disease control** .
 - ✍ During the training they will be provided with **field demonstrations , visual aids, and toolkits** .
 - 🏠 **Two Bio-input Research Centres** will be established in each district .
 - ✍ 'Krishi Sakhis' will be paid **an honorarium of Rs 5,000 per month, which will become a source of fixed income** for rural women.
 - 🏠 Additionally, **performance-based incentives** may also be given in some areas.

Natural Farming

- 💡 Natural farming is a **chemical-free agricultural method** based on locally available resources.
- 💡 It promotes **traditional indigenous methods** that free producers from dependence on external inputs.
- 💡 The major focuses of natural farming are **on-farm biomass recycling with biomass mulching, on-farm use of indigenous cow dung and urine, pest management through diversity, on-farm vegetable mixing and exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs** directly or indirectly.
- 💡 Since no synthetic chemicals are used in natural farming, it is less hazardous to health .
- 💡 These foods have high nutritional content and provide better health benefits.
- 💡 Natural Farming aims to make farming viable and aspirational by reducing costs and risks, increasing the net income of farmers as a result of uniform yield and income from intercropping .

Autobiography of Anandiben Patel

Why in News?

The autobiographical book '**Chunautiyaan Mujhe Pasand Hain**' of **Governor Anandiben Patel** was released by the Vice President of India at **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow** .

Key Points

💡 About the Book:

- ✦ This book depicts his struggles and achievements in **politics, administration and social life** .
- ✦ The book mentions her journey from being a simple worker to becoming **the first woman Chief Minister of Gujarat** and then **Governor of Uttar Pradesh**.
- ✦ It presents examples of **women's leadership, struggle and empowerment**.

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💡 Anandiben Patel:

- ✦ Anandiben Patel is currently the **Governor of Uttar Pradesh** and is known as an **influential woman leader** in Indian politics .
- ✦ She was **born on 21 November 1941** in a Patidar family in Kharod village of Mehsana district of Gujarat.
- ✦ She launched the **e-Zameen programme**, which computerised land records and digitised farmers' thumb impressions and photographs .

Governor

💡 About:

- ✦ The Governor is the executive head of the state. **Traditionally**, he should not belong to the state where he is appointed, so that he can remain free from local politics.
 - ✍ Apart from this, while appointing a Governor, it is **necessary for the President to consult the Chief Minister regarding the affairs of the state so that constitutional order is ensured in the state.**
- ✦ The Governor is **neither directly elected by the people** nor is he indirectly elected under the constitutional process like the President.
- ✦ He is **appointed** by order of **the President under his seal.**
- ✦ He **holds office at the pleasure of the President** and can be removed by the President at any time.

💡 Terms of Governor's Office:

- ✦ The Raj Bhavan (official corporation) will be available to him without rent.
- ✦ He shall be entitled to all emoluments , **privileges and allowances as may be determined by the Parliament.**
- ✦ If the person is appointed as the Governor of two or more States, these emoluments and allowances will be provided jointly by the States as per **the norms set by the President .**
- ✦ His financial achievements and allowances during his tenure **cannot be underestimated.**

💡 Privilege:

- ✦ **Under Article 361**, he enjoys **personal immunity** from legal liability for his official acts .
- ✦ During his term of office, he enjoys immunity from trial in **criminal proceedings (even if involving personal action).**
- ✦ **He cannot be arrested and put in jail.**
 - ✍ However, civil legal proceedings can be initiated against them for personal activities after **giving two months' notice.**

Night Landing Airstrip in UP

Why in News?

The 3.5 kilometre stretch of the **Ganga Expressway** in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh will be the first expressway in the country where **Indian Air Force** fighter planes will be able to land at night.

Key Points

💡 About Ganga Expressway :

- ✦ **Ganga Expressway** is the **second longest expressway** in the country after Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway.
- ✦ It is an ambitious initiative with an estimated **length of 594 kilometres.**
- ✦ Connecting the state from east to west, **this expressway** will pass through 518 villages in 12 districts, **significantly reducing the travel time between Meerut and Prayagraj.**

💡 Strategic Approach:

- ✦ Uttar Pradesh now has three such expressways where **landing facility for fighter jets is available** - Lucknow-Agra Expressway , Purvanchal Expressway and Ganga Expressway.
- ✦ This is the first time that state-of-the-art fighter aircraft like **Rafale, Mirage** and **Jaguar** will land at night on an **expressway** in India .
- ✦ This airstrip **will serve as** an alternate runway for the Indian Air Force **in case of war or disaster.**

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Rafale

- ⚡ Rafale is a French **twin-engine and multirole fighter aircraft**, designed by Dassault Aviation of France.
- ⚡ State-of-the-art technology has been used in this fighter plane and it is a **4.5 Generation fighter plane**.
- ⚡ The Meteor Missile, **SCALP Cruise Missile and MICA Missile System** present in the Rafale fighter aircraft make it very important from the security point of view.
- ⚡ Rafale can fly at a speed of 2,222.6 kilometres per hour and an altitude of 50,000 feet.
- ⚡ This fighter aircraft is approximately 15.27 metres long and can carry 9,500 kilograms of bombs and ammunition at a time.

Jaguar

- ⚡ The Jaguar is a **versatile aircraft used for ground attack, air defense, and reconnaissance missions**.
- ⚡ It is a **Fifth-generation (5G) fighter aircraft capable of operating in heavily contested combat zones**, characterised by the **presence of the most advanced air and ground threats**, both current and anticipated.
- ⚡ 5G fighter jets have **stealth capabilities** and can cruise at **supersonic speeds** without engaging afterburners.
- ⚡ It **stands out from fourth-generation (4G) peers** due to its multi-spectral **low-observable design, self-protection, radar jamming capabilities, and integrated avionics**.
- ⚡ The squadrons of **MiG-21s, MiG-29s, Jaguars, and Mirage 2000s** are scheduled to be phased out by the middle of the next decade.

Red Crowned Roofed Turtle

Why in News?

The **Red Crowned Roofed Turtle** has returned to the **Ganga River** after an absence of **three decades**.

- ⚡ This success is a **historic biodiversity conservation achievement** under the **Namami**

Gange Mission and the **Turtle Survival Alliance India (TSAFI)** project.



Key Points

- ⚡ **About the Red Crowned Roofed Turtle:**
 - ✦ **Scientific name:** Batagur kachuga.
 - ✦ **Common Names:** Bengal Roof Turtle, Red Crowned Roofed Turtle.
- ⚡ **About:**
 - ✦ The Red Crown Roofed Turtle is **one of the 24 species endemic to India**, the males of which are characterized by bright colours like red, yellow, white and blue on the face and neck.
- ⚡ **Distribution:**
 - ✦ It is a **freshwater turtle species found in deep-flowing rivers with nesting sites**.
 - ✦ Historically the species **was widespread in the Ganges River in both India and Bangladesh**. It is also found in the Brahmaputra basin.
 - ✦ Currently the **National Chambal River Gharial Sanctuary in India** is the only area that has a **significant population of the species**, but this protected area and habitat are also now under threat.
- ⚡ **Threats:**
 - ✦ **Large coastal and riverine projects disrupt river flow** and increase water pollution.
 - ✦ Subpopulations suffer due to **entanglement in fishing nets and disturbances from human activity**.
 - ✦ **Pollution, irrigation-related water extraction, and unregulated dam flows** degrade natural habitats.

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- ✦ **Sand bar habitats** used for hunting are shrinking due to **increased mining** and seasonal agriculture along the Ganga River.
- ✦ Overharvesting for **illegal consumption and international wildlife trade** poses a serious threat.

💡 Protection Status:

- ✦ **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List** : Critically Endangered
- ✦ **Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972**: Schedule I
- ✦ **CITES** : Appendix II

💡 Rehabilitation

- ✦ The turtles were released in the **Haiderpur wetland** in **Uttar Pradesh** . This area is located along the river Ganga and its ecosystem was considered **suited for the rehabilitation of turtles**.
 - ✍ The turtles were divided into two groups – one was released in the upper part of the Ganga Barrage and the other in the lower part.
- ✦ **Each turtle is fitted with a tracking device to monitor** their movements and adaptation to the environment.

Turtle Survival Alliance India (TSAFI)

- 💡 TSAFI represents the **Indian chapter of the global Turtle Survival Alliance**, which is committed to **protecting freshwater turtles and tortoises worldwide**.
- 💡 It works to **safeguard turtles and tortoises** from major threats such as **habitat destruction, illegal wildlife trade**, and the impacts of **climate change**.
- 💡 **The organisation undertakes diverse initiatives, including:**
 - ✦ Scientific research on turtle species and habitats
 - ✦ On-ground conservation projects
 - ✦ Public education and awareness campaigns
- 💡 TSAFI aims to ensure the **long-term survival of turtle species in India** by combining community involvement with scientific expertise.

National Chambal Sanctuary

- 💡 The **National Chambal Sanctuary**, located at the trijunction of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - ✦ It is a fragile lotic ecosystem, which is a critically important breeding ground for **gharials - fish-eating crocodiles**.
- 💡 The sanctuary is protected under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**, and is listed as an **'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area'**.
- 💡 The sanctuary is also a **proposed Ramsar site**, and over 320 species of resident and migratory birds inhabit the area.

Namami Gange Programme

- 💡 Namami Gange Programme is an integrated conservation mission, approved by the **Central Government in June 2014** as a **'Flagship Programme'** to achieve the twin objectives of **effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga**.
- 💡 It is being operated under the Ministry of Water Resources, Department of River Development and **Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti** .
- 💡 In the second phase of Namami Gange Programme (2021-26), the states will focus on speedy completion of projects and preparation of credible **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)** for projects in Ganga tributary towns.
- 💡 Attention is also being paid to the revival of **small rivers and wetlands**.

Sacred Buddha Relics of Sarnath

Why in News?

Sacred Buddha relics from Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh will be displayed during **the United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) celebrations** in Vietnam in **May 2025**.

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Key Points

📌 About Buddha Relics:

- ✦ These relics are enshrined in **the Moolgandha Kuti Viharaya Monastery located in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh**. It is run by **the Mahabodhi Society, which** was founded by **Anagarika Dharmapala**.
- ✦ The remains were excavated by **H. Longhurst** at **Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh)** during **1927–1931**.
- ✦ These relics were handed over to the Mahabodhi Society on 27 December 1932 by **Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni** on behalf of **the Viceroy of India**.
- ✦ The event is being organised in collaboration with **the Ministry of Culture, Government of India** and **the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**.

📌 United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV):

- ✦ **Vesak Day** is the holiest day in Buddhism, celebrated to commemorate **the birth, enlightenment and Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha**.

- ✦ **The United Nations General Assembly** passed a resolution on **December 15, 1999** recognizing it as **an international day**.
- ✦ The first official event was held in **2000** at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York**.
- ✦ The theme of UN Vesak Day 2025 is **“Buddhist Approach to Unity and Inclusion for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development”**.

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

- 📌 It is the **largest religious Buddhist organization**.
- 📌 The aim of the association is to **build the role of Buddhism on the global stage**, to help preserve Buddhism’s heritage, share knowledge and promote its values, and to represent Buddhism through meaningful participation in global dialogue.
- 📌 In **November 2011** the **‘Global Buddhist Congregation’ (GBC)** was hosted in **New Delhi**, where the attendees unanimously adopted a resolution to form an international umbrella body—the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**.
- 📌 **Headquarters: Delhi (India)**.



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Key Points

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