Factly Weekly

Compilation

2025

For UPSC CSE Prelims Exam

INDEX

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Combined Commanders' Conference 2025

News: PM Narendra Modi reviewed security and operational preparedness at the **16th Combined Commanders' Conference in Kolkata** on 15 September 2025.

About Combined Commanders' Conference 2025

Figure 1. Source – PMO

- The CCC is a **biennial apex-level forum of the Armed Forces** that brings top civil and military leadership together **to shape future preparedness**.
- **Theme of 2025**
  - Central theme: **"Year of Reforms – Transforming for the Future."**
  - Focus areas: **Reforms, Transformation & Change, and Operational Preparedness.**
- The Prime Minister was briefed on operational **readiness in the "new normal" created by Operation Sindoor** and on the future of warfare amid emerging technology and tactics.
- **Senior participants** include the Defence Minister, National Security Adviser, Minister of State for Defence, Chief of Defence Staff, the three Service Chiefs, Defence Secretary, and other senior officials.
- **Significance**
  - **Holistic review and roadmap:** Conducts a holistic review of structural, administrative, and operational matters and develops the roadmap to implement the Prime Minister's vision.
  - **Reform-centric modernisation:** Reflects commitment to **institutional reforms, deeper integration, and technological modernisation** to address evolving challenges.
  - **Multi-domain operational readiness:** Sustains **high multi-domain operational preparedness** amid **increasing global uncertainties**.
  - **Agile Posture & Inclusive Decision-Making:** Strengthens an **agile and decisive** force posture while ensuring inclusive decision-making through interactive sessions that bring field perspectives to top-level deliberations.

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

News: India will host the 89th IEC General Meeting at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 15–19 September 2025.

About International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

Figure 2. Source – IEC

- It is a **global standard-setting organization** that prepares and publishes **international standards for electrical, electronic, and related technologies** to ensure **safety, efficiency, and interoperability**.
- **Establishment:** Founded in 1906 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Membership:** Comprises 89 member countries, including India.
- **Functions:**

- Develops international standards for power generation, transmission and distribution, renewable energy, semiconductors, batteries, nanotechnology, and smart grids.
- Promotes harmonized technical rules to facilitate global trade and technological cooperation, working with **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** and **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.

- **Significance for India**
  - **Hosting & history:** India hosts the 89th GM; **fourth time after 1960, 1997, 2013.**
  - **BIS in global governance:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) representation in ISO/IEC bodies to **align national priorities with international best practices**.
  - **India's IEC membership & expert contribution:** India is a full IEC member via BIS; experts contribute on renewable energy, smart grids, e-mobility, and energy storage.
  - **Global Secretariat (LVDC):** India will serve as the Global Secretariat for Low Voltage Direct Current (LVDC).
  - **Scale & agenda of GM:** 89th GM exhibition is the "**Largest" electrotechnical exhibition in India.** It will feature 150+ committee meetings and workshops on sustainability, AI, e-mobility, inclusivity, and an all-electric and connected society.
  - **Talent pipeline:** BIS builds talent through student chapters, a six-month internship, and the IEC Young Professionals Programme hosting 93 participants.

Exercise Pacific Reach 2025 (XPR 25)

News: India is participating in Exercise Pacific Reach 2025 (XPR 25), commencing on 15 September 2025, under Eastern Fleet command.
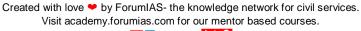
About Exercise Pacific Reach 2025 (XPR 25)

Figure 3. Source – AIR

- XPR 25 is a **biennial submarine rescue exercise**
- It is **hosted by Singapore** with **40+ nations as participants or observers**.
- The exercise will mainly be conducted in **two phases:**
  - **Harbour phase:** This phase will involve in-depth discussions on submarine rescue systems, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), medical symposium and cross deck visits between the participating nations.
  - **Sea phase:** This phase of the exercise would witness INS Nistar and SRU(E) engaging in multiple intervention and rescue operations with participating assets in South China Sea.
- **Location**: XPR 25 is hosted by Singapore, with a **harbour phase in Singapore** and a **sea phase in the South China Sea**.

About INS Nistar

- **Type and status:** Latest **indigenously designed and constructed** Diving Support Vessel (DSV) of the Indian Navy.
- **Commissioning: 18 July 2025.**
- **Command:** Functions under the **Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet**.
- **Role in XPR 25:** Will act as **mothership (MoSHIP) for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV)**.

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- **Key onboard capabilities:** It has- **Side Scan Sonar**, **work-class and observation-class ROVs**, and **expansive deep-sea diving systems**. It is capable of **rescue operations till depths of 650 meters**

Manki–Munda system

News: Adivasis from the Ho tribe in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum recently protested against the Deputy Commissioner, accusing interference in their traditional Manki-Munda self-governance system after the removal of village heads (Mundas).
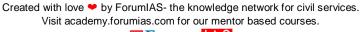
About Manki–Munda system

Figure 4. Source – IE

- The Manki–Munda system is a **centuries-old, decentralised** form of self-governance practiced by the **Ho Adivasi community** in **Jharkhand's Kolhan region.**
- It revolves around hereditary village **headmen (Mundas)** and **regional chiefs (Mankis),** handling internal disputes and social matters rather than revenue or taxation.
- Each village traditionally has one **Munda**, the hereditary head of the village.
- The Munda resolves socio-political disputes at the local level, ensuring harmony and custom adherence within the village.
- A **Manki** is the head of a **Pir** (cluster of 8–15 villages). If a dispute cannot be resolved at the village level by a Munda, it escalates to the Manki for resolution at the regional level. Before British intervention, the system had no tax or revenue obligations.
- With the Permanent Settlement Act (1793), **zamindars encroached on Ho land, triggering tribal revolts such as the Ho Rebellion (1821-22) and Kol Rebellion (1831-32).**
- **Wilkinson's Rules (1833): Captain Thomas Wilkinson** created **31 rules** in 1833 to **codify** the Manki-Munda system. These rules **formalized the Manki-Munda system** and made the leaders act as agents of the British. While the system seemed to protect tribal autonomy, it integrated Kolhan into British India.
- **Changes Under British Rule:** The population of **outsiders (dikkus)** grew from **1,579** in **1867** to **15,755** in **1897** due to railways. The **concept of private property** was introduced, and **Mundas and Mankis** became **raiyats (tenants)** with land deeds.
- After India's independence, **Wilkinson's Rules** continued to apply in Kolhan.
- In **2000**, the **Patna High Court** declared the rules as **customs**, not formal law, but allowed their continuation.
- **Nyay Manch** was proposed in **2021** to modernize the system but has not been implemented.
- **Demands for Reform**
  - Some members of the **Ho community**, especially youth, demand **reforms** in the system.
  - They propose ending **hereditary leadership** and allowing **educated individuals** (tribal and non-tribal) to take leadership roles.

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○ The lack of **formal education** among some **Mundas and Mankis** creates difficulties in modern administration.

About the Ho Tribe

- The Ho tribe is an **Austroasiatic Munda ethnic group** primarily located in **Jharkhand's Kolhan region and northern Odisha**. Smaller populations are found in **West Bengal, Bihar, Bangladesh, and Nepal.**
- The Ho tribe is the **fourth-largest Scheduled Tribe in Jharkhand**, following the Santals, Kurukhs, and Mundas.
- As per the 2011 Census, **they constitute 10.7% of Jharkhand's and 7.3% of Odisha's Scheduled Tribe population.**
- The tribe speaks the **Ho language,** an Austroasiatic language closely related to Mundari.
- They have several dialects, including **Lohara, Chaibasa, and Thakurmunda, and a native script known as Warang Citi.**
- The majority of the **Ho tribe are engaged in agriculture, cultivating crops like rice and vegetables.** They are also involved in iron ore mining, contributing to the regional economy.
- A large portion (52.8% as per the 2011 Census) of the Ho people follow **Sarnaism, a nature-centric indigenous religion.**
- **Women hold a high status in Ho society,** with traditional practices supporting gender equality.
- The tribe follows a **bride-price system, with payments ranging from ₹101 to ₹1,001,** which, though symbolic, often delays marriages and leads to a female-majority population.
- **Festivals and Cultural Arts:** Key festivals include **Mage Parab**, **Baa Porob**, and **Sohrai**, which celebrate agriculture and the Sal forests.
- The Ho tribe is known for its traditional dances, often accompanied by instruments like the **Dama** (drum) and **Rutu** (flute), which play an important role in their cultural expressions.

Gyan Bharatam Portal

News: Recently, PM launches the Gyan Bharatam Portal which is a dedicated digital platform to accelerate manuscript digitisation, preservation, and public access.

About Gyan Bharatam Portal

- It is a **dedicated digital platform** aimed **at accelerating the digitization, preservation, and public access to India's vast manuscript heritage.**
- **Mission:** It supports the Gyan Bharatam Mission, which **seeks to become the voice of India's culture, literature, and knowledge legacy.**
- **Aim:** It aims to **become an important educational resource for scholars and the general public interested in India's cultural and intellectual history.**
- **Thematic Focus:** The portal was launched during the International Conference on Gyan Bharatam, themed

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"Reclaiming India's Knowledge Legacy through Manuscript Heritage."

- **Key Areas of Focus:** The conference addressed **critical areas such as manuscript conservation, digitization technologies, metadata standards, and the decipherment of ancient scripts.**
- **Unlocking Historical Knowledge:** The portal **helps unlock India's rich intellectual and cultural heritage,** making it available for global exploration and learning.
- **Research and Innovation:** It **serves as a vast data bank for new research, academic exploration, and innovation** in cultural and creative industries.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** The portal not only serves as a preservation tool but also plays a role in fostering cultural diplomacy, allowing India to showcase its rich heritage on the global stage.
- **Key Features of the Gyan Bharatam Portal**
  - **Digitization of Manuscripts:** The portal facilitates the process of converting ancient manuscripts into digital format for wider access and preservation.
  - **Preservation and Accessibility:** It ensures the safe preservation of valuable manuscripts while making them accessible to scholars, researchers, and the public.
  - **Integration of Technology:** The platform utilizes modern technologies to aid in the conservation and digitization of manuscripts, ensuring accuracy and quality.
  - **Global Significance and Economic Potential**
    - **Cultural and Creative Industries:** With a global value of 2.5 trillion dollars, the digitization of India's manuscript wealth contributes to the cultural sector, supporting both research and economic growth.
    - **Global Knowledge Dialogue:** The portal positions India's manuscripts as central to a global dialogue on knowledge, culture, and heritage.

Operation Weed Out

News: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), under pan-India Operation Weed Out, seized 108.67 kg hydroponic weed in 20 days.

About Operation Weed Out

Figure 5. Source – AIR

- An ongoing **pan-India anti-drug enforcement drive** targeting hydroponic weed smuggling, based on specific intelligence inputs.
- **Conducted by**: **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)**.It is India's primary anti-smuggling and economic intelligence agency operating under the **Ministry of Finance, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).**
- **Aim**
  - To act firmly against drug syndicates smuggling hydroponic weed into India **under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.
  - To reinforcing the Government of **India's vision of a Nasha Mukt Bharat**.

About hydroponic weed

- **Cannabis** grown **without soil** in a controlled environment using nutrient-rich water solutions.
- Roots supported by **inert media** such as rockwool, clay pellets, peat moss, or perlite.

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- Method allows precise control, enabling faster growth, higher yields, and potentially more potent buds.

Carlsberg Ridge

News: India signed an exploration **contract with the Jamaica-based ISA** in Delhi on September 15, 2025, the first licence to explore polymetallic sulphur nodules in the Carlsberg Ridge.

About Carlsberg Ridge

Figure 6. Source – Britannica

- It is a **mid-oceanic ridge (a divergent plate boundary) in the Indian Ocean**, specifically in the Arabian Sea and the northwest Indian Ocean.
- The ridge extends from the **triple junction of the African, Indian, and Australian plates**, northwest to the Gulf of Aden.
- It **separates the Arabian Sea** to the northeast from the **Somali Basin** to the southwest, turns west around Socotra, and links to the East African Rift via the Gulf of Aden.

- It forms the **boundary between the Indian and Arabian tectonic plates**, extending from near Rodrigues Island to the Owen fracture zone.
- Its mean **depth is about 1,800–3,600 metres below sea level**, and it rises roughly 2,100 metres above the seafloor.
- It spans about 3,00,000 sq km and coincides with a belt of seismic activity, with numerous earthquake epicentres.

Significance of Carlsberg Ridge for India

1. **Resource Potential:** The area hosts **polymetallic nodules rich in manganese, cobalt, nickel, and copper, with reported trace elements such as copper, lead, and zinc.**
2. **Capability Building:** The licence supports India's aims in **subsea technology, robotics, and environmental impact assessment** while acknowledging concerns over seabed mining impacts.
3. **Energy Security:** Securing potential supplies of critical minerals is important for manufacturing competitiveness and energy security during the clean-energy transition.
4. **Strategic Deterrence**: Exploration rights help block competing claims, amid reports of Chinese ships scouring the region.

Chhath Mahaparva

News: The Ministry of Culture met diplomats from the UAE, Suriname, and the Netherlands at IGNCA to seek support for Chhath Mahaparva's nomination to UNESCO's **ICH** Representative List.

About Chhath Mahaparva

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Figure 7. Source – HT

- Chhath Mahaparva is dedicated to the **Sun God and Goddess Chhathi Maiya**.
- It is known for **simplicity, devotion, and self-discipline**, and upholds ecological and egalitarian values.
- **History:** Considered one of the **oldest Vedic rituals**, with references to sun worship found in the **Rig Veda** and in stories related to **Karna (Mahabharata)**.
- **Prominent areas of celebration:** Widely observed in **Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal**, and among **diaspora communities** in Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, the UAE, and the Netherlands.

About Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

- Intangible cultural heritage comprises practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as their cultural heritage.
- **India** already has **15 elements inscribed** on UNESCO's Representative List.
- To know more about this topic, click **here**.

AI for Viksit Bharat Roadmap and NITI Frontier Tech Repository

News: NITI Aayog launched two transformative initiatives recently under its **Frontier Tech Hub**: **AI for Viksit Bharat Roadmap: Opportunity for Accelerated Economic Growth** and **NITI Frontier Tech Repository**.

About AI for Viksit Bharat Roadmap

Figure 8. Source – PIB

- **Launched by:** NITI Aayog
- **Aim:** To accelerate India's transformation to **Viksit Bharat by 2047** by leveraging frontier technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- **Objective:** To provide a practical action plan to translate AI's promise into real-world outcomes for economic growth and innovation.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Accelerating AI adoption across industries** to enhance productivity and efficiency.
  - **Transforming R&D with Generative AI** to help India leapfrog into innovation-driven opportunities.
  - **Sector-specific Action Plan** to ensure measurable impact at the national and local level.
  - It emphasis on **AI-assisted technologies in all districts** to drive inclusive development.

About NITI Frontier Tech Repository

- **Launched by**: NITI Aayog
- **Objective:** To showcase and scale real-world applications of frontier technologies deployed across India.
- **Key Features**

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- It contains **200+ impact stories** across four major sectors — **Agriculture, Healthcare, Education, and National Security**.
- It highlights successful use cases by **states and startups** demonstrating technology-led transformation.
- It provides a **knowledge-sharing platform** for districts and states to adopt and replicate successful models.
- **Support Initiatives Announced**
  - **Frontier 50 Initiative:** NITI Aayog will support 50 Aspirational Districts/Blocks to pick use cases from the Repository and deploy frontier technologies to accelerate service saturation.
  - **NITI Frontier Tech Impact Awards:** Recognizes three states excelling in technology adoption in governance, education, healthcare, and livelihoods, and supports them to scale transformative outcomes.

Significance of Both Initiatives

- It catalyzes **grassroots adoption** of advanced technologies.
- It inspires states and districts to **scale frontier technology solutions** for measurable outcomes.
- It enables India to **anticipate and lead future tech disruptions** by strengthening supply chains, defining global standards, and forging alliances.
- It promotes an **inclusive and collaborative innovation ecosystem** to realize the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)

News: The deadline for the National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS) on the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) has been extended to 30 September 2025.

About National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)

Figure 9. Source – Shiksha Press

- **Implemented by:** Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- **Aims:** To provide financial support to meritorious students from economically weaker sections to reduce drop-outs after Class VIII and encourage completion of education up to Class XII.
- **Objective of the Scheme:** To award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop-out at Class VIII and encourage them to continue their education at the secondary stage.

- **Scope and Coverage:** The scheme awards one lakh fresh scholarships every year to students of Class IX.
  - The scholarship is renewed for Classes X to XII subject to satisfactory academic performance.
  - Applicable only to students studying in State Government, Government-aided, and local body schools.

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- **Scholarship Amount:** Each selected student receives ₹12,000 per annum (₹1,000 per month). The scholarship is credited directly to the student's bank account through DBT mode via PFMS.
- **Eligibility Criteria**
  - Parental income must not exceed ₹3.50 lakh per annum.
  - Students must secure at least 55% marks in Class VII (relaxable by 5% for SC/ST students) to appear in the selection test.
  - Selection tests are conducted by State/UT governments.
- **Key Benefits of the Scheme**
  - It provides direct financial support to poor but meritorious students.
  - It helps reduce drop-outs and ensures continuity in education.
  - It promotes equity in access to quality secondary and higher secondary education.

Air Defence RADARS

News: The Army began procuring advanced air-defence radars to plug border gaps, four months after Operation Sindoor, when hundreds of Pakistani UAVs breached Indian airspace.

About Air Defence RADARS

Figure 10. Source – DRDO

- Radar is the **acronym for Radio Detection And Ranging.**
- It is a specialized **electronic system that uses radio waves** to determine the direction, distance (using time delay), and velocity (through Doppler Shift) of target objects.
- **Uses:** Radars are used by the military to search, detect, identify, and help destroy aerial threats.
- **Components:**
  - **Transmitter:** Sends out **radio signals.**
  - **Receiver:** Collects reflected signals from targets.
- **Types of radars:**
  - **Surveillance radars:** These systems continuously surveil the skies to detect aerial objects, whose detections are analysed by an operator, increasingly with computer assistance, for identification.
  - **Fire control radars:** These systems provide targeting support to surface-to-air guns or missiles so that identified aerial threats can be engaged effectively.
- **Radar Cross-Sections (RCS):** It is a measure of how detectable an object is by radar, usually represented in sq. m.
  - The **larger the RCS, greater the detectability**.
  - The RCS is **not only the function of the size** of an aerial object but also its **specific design features**: the basic thrust of modern stealth technology is to reduce an aircraft's RCS.

Indian Defence Forces' Radar Capabilities

- Both the **army and the Indian Air Force** have both **surveillance** and f**ire control** radars, including Low Level Light Weight Radars (**LLLRs**) for low-altitude.

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- **Indian Army** primarily uses **Flycatchers** (indigenously upgraded Super Fledermaus/USFM) and the **AD tactical control radar for fire control.**
- The **IAF** controls most **high- and medium-power radars** with ranges of up to several hundred kilometres for higher-altitude tracking of larger threats such as fighter jets, transport aircraft, and AWACS.
- IAF employs **fire control radars** including the **3D central acquisition radar and the Rajendra radar**.
- **India's Air Defence Infrastructure**
  - **Missile systems:** India has the Russian S-400 system and the indigenous Akash missile system.
  - **Army's Akashteer system:** It integrates radars, sensors, air defence guns, and communications to generate a real-time operational air picture.
  - **IAF's IACCS (Integrated Air Command and Control System):** It unifies data from multiple assets to enable coordinated detection and interception.
  - **Mission Sudarshan Chakra:** It is an ongoing modernisation programme; DRDO has recently tested the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System.
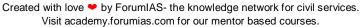
Japanese Encephalitis (JE)

News: A new study found waning immunity to Japanese encephalitis virus may predispose individuals to more severe dengue, highlighting timing of JE vaccine boosters.

About Japanese Encephalitis (JE)

Figure 11. Source – MoHFW

- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is a **mosquito-borne flavivirus** and a major **cause of viral encephalitis in Asia.**
- It belongs to the **same genus as dengue, Zika, yellow fever, and West Nile viruses.**
- **Most JEV infections are mild** or asymptomatic, but **about 1 in 250 becomes severe**, and among this severe cases the **fatality rate can be as high as 30%.**
- The **incubation period is 4–14 days**.
- **Symptom** : Severe disease presents with high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, seizures, and spastic paralysis.
- **Transmission through:**
  - Bites of infected **Culex mosquitoes, mainly Culex tritaeniorhynchus.**
  - An **enzootic cycle between mosquitoes, pigs, and/or water birds.**
  - **Humans**, once infected, **do not develop sufficient viraemia to infect feeding mosquitoes**.
- **Seasonality**: It is a warm-season epidemics in temperate Asia; year-round transmission in tropics/subtropics, intensifying during rains and pre-harvest in rice regions.

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- **Treatment**: There is **no specific antiviral therapy** for Japanese Encephalitis. Encephalitis is a **medical emergency** and requires **urgent supportive care**..
- **Prevention**
  - **Vaccination: Safe and effective vaccines exist** (inactivated Vero cell-derived, live attenuated, live recombinant). one inactivated and both live vaccines are WHO-prequalified.
  - **Policy:** WHO recommends JE immunization where it is a public health priority, with strong surveillance and a one-time catch-up at introduction.
- **Key facts**
  - First documented JE case: **1871 in Japan**.
  - **Risk areas:** 24 countries in **South-East Asia and Western Pacific Regions** have JEV transmission risk, which includes more than 3 billion people.
  - JE primarily **affects children**.
    - Most **adults** in endemic countries have **natural immunity** after childhood infection, but **individuals of any age may be affected**.

Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025

News: Recently, the World Intellectual Property Organisation's (WIPO) published Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025.

About the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025

Top 10 Most Innovative Countries in the World 2025:

Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025

GII Rank 2025	Country	GII Score 2025	Income Group Rank	Region Rank
1	Switzerland	66	1	1
2	Sweden	62.6	2	2
3	United States	61.7	3	1
4	Republic of Korea	60	4	1
5	Singapore	59.9	5	2
6	United Kingdom	59.1	6	3
7	Finland	57.7	7	4
8	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	57	8	5
9	Denmark	56.9	9	6
10	China	56.6	1	3

Figure 12. Source: IE

- Published by: The Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 is published **annually** by the **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).**
- It **evaluates 139 economies** using more than 80 indicators measuring innovation inputs and outputs.
- The index tracks trends in **research and development (R&D), technology creation, market sophistication, and institutional performance.**
- **Global R&D growth slowed to 2.9 percent in 2024** and is projected to decline further to 2.3 percent in 2025.
- This represents the lowest level of R&D growth since the 2010 financial crisis.
- **Rankings**

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- ○ **Switzerland remains the most innovative country in the world according to the GII 2025.**
- ○ **Sweden ranks second with a GII score of 62.6.**
- ○ The **United States ranks third** with a GII score of 61.7.
- ○ **China enters and strengthens its position in the global top ten** by leading in patents and technology outputs.
- **Regional Innovation Highlights**
  - ○ Europe **leads as the most innovative region,** with 15 countries in the global top 25, including six in the top 10.
  - ○ **North America remains strong,** led by the **United States at rank three and Canada at rank seventeen.**
  - ○ **Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania continue to emerge as global innovation hubs,** with six economies in the top 25.

About India's Rank in the GII 2025

- India **ranks thirty-eighth globally in the GII 2025, moving up from rank forty-eight in 2020.**
- India holds the **first position among lower-middle-income economies** and the **first position in the Central and Southern Asia region.**
- India **performs best in Knowledge and Technology Outputs, where it ranks twenty-second.**
- India also **performs relatively well in Market Sophistication, where it ranks thirty-eighth.**
- India **shows weaker performance in Business Sophistication (rank sixty-four), Infrastructure (rank sixty-one), and Institutions (rank fifty-eight).**
- India ranks **thirty-eighth globally,** showing steady improvement over the last five years.
- **India lags behind both China and the United States** but continues to climb the innovation rankings.

Speed Skating World Championships 2025

News: The Prime Minister congratulated Anandkumar Velkumar on winning the gold medal at the 2025 Speed Skating World Championships. He became the first Indian to achieve a world title in skating.

About Speed Skating World Championships 2025

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Source: thelogicalindian.com

- **2025 edition:** The **2025 Speed Skating World Championships** is organised in **Beidaihe, China,** from **13 to 21 September 2025.**
- **Venue: Beidaihe,** a renowned beach resort in Qinhuangdao city, will host the event at the **Beidaihe International Roller Skating Center,** featuring a 200 m indoor track, state-of-the-art facilities, and an outdoor road circuit.
- **First Edition:** The event traces back to the **first edition in 1937.**
- It will bring together the **world's fastest skaters for nine days of competition.**
- **Participation:** Over **40 nations** are expected to compete, including strong teams from **China, India, Chinese Taipei, Korea, Colombia, Italy, France, and the USA.**
- **Events:** The championship includes events like **Men's Sprint Races, Women's Sprint Races, Women's Long-Distance Events and Men's Long-Distance Events.**
- **Event Significance:** This championship marks **a major return of world-class speed skating to China following the World Games,** promising high-speed action, record-breaking performances, and intense international rivalry.

National Policy on Geothermal Energy (2025)

News: The Government of India has recently announced the National Policy on Geothermal Energy (2025) to drive the clean energy transition and advance the nation's Net Zero 2070 commitment.

About the National Policy on Geothermal Energy (2025)

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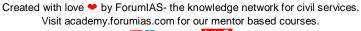Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor based courses.
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Source: BS

- The **Government of India has notified the National Policy on Geothermal Energy (2025)** to accelerate clean energy transition, diversify renewable sources, and support **India's Net Zero 2070 commitment**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (**MNRE**)
- The policy focuses on **research, innovation, technology development, ecosystem creation, capacity building, and partnerships** to harness the untapped potential of geothermal energy.
- **Scope and Applications:**
  - **Clean Power and Direct Use**: Promotes power generation, district heating, agriculture, aquaculture, and Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHPs) for space cooling and heating.
  - **Comprehensive Framework**: Provides guidelines for exploration, development, and utilization of geothermal resources in India.

Key Highlights of the Policy

- **Research and Best Practices**: Promotes research, inter-ministerial collaboration, and the adoption of global best practices for geothermal energy development, with regulatory and stewardship responsibilities vested in the Ministry.
- **Integration with National Goals**: Seeks to align geothermal energy development with India's Net Zero (2070) target and broader renewable energy objectives.
- **Diverse Applications**: Focuses on electricity generation, space heating and cooling, agriculture (greenhouses and cold storage), tourism, and desalination.
- **Technological Innovation**: Encourages R&D of advanced systems, including hybrid geothermal-solar plants, retrofitting of abandoned oil wells, and Enhanced/Advanced Geothermal Systems (EGS/AGS).
- **Local Innovation and Partnerships**: Emphasizes indigenous innovation, joint ventures, and the repurposing of existing oil and gas infrastructure.
- **Collaboration**: Promotes partnerships with international geothermal bodies, pioneering nations, state governments, oil and gas companies, and research institutions.
- **Ecosystem Development**: Aims to establish a strong public-private ecosystem to support the long-term growth of the geothermal sector.

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- **Capacity Building**: Focuses on knowledge sharing, training, and human resource development within the sector.

Blue Ports Framework

News: The Department of Fisheries (DoF), under the MoFAHD and FAO launched a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and held the first webinar to advance India's Blue Ports framework.

About Blue Ports Framework

Source – Marine Network

Blue Ports Framework	It is a DoF-led approach to **build Smart and Integrated Fishing Harbours** that **blend technological innovation with environmental stewardship**, ensuring safer, cleaner, and more **efficient post-harvest operations**.
Initiative by	**Department of Fisheries (DoF), MoFAHD** in collaboration with the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** under its **Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)**.
Aim	1. Strengthen fishing **ports' technical capacities** for ecological sustainability, **economic viability, and social inclusion**. 2. Enhance **traceability, climate resilience, service delivery**, and **stakeholder empowerment** across the aquatic value chain.
Key features	**Investment:** Three pilot harbours approved with a total investment of ₹369.80 crore under PMMSY. **3 Pilot Harbours: Vanakbara (Diu), Karaikal (Puducherry), Jakhau (Gujarat).** **Technologies used: IoT devices, sensor networks, satellite communication, data analytics;** integration of **5G, artificial intelligence, automation, and digital platforms** for real-time decision-making and efficient operations.

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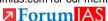|	• **Supporting schemes:** Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana **(PMMSY)** and Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund **(FIDF).**

NE-SPARKS Initiative

News: Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia interacted virtually with NE-SPARKS student visitors to ISRO HQ.

About NE-SPARKS Initiative

Source – PIB

NE-SPARKS	It is North East Students' Programme for Awareness, Reach, and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS).
Launched by	It is a flagship initiative supported by the **Ministry of Development of North-East Region (MDoNER)** in collaboration with **8 North Eastern States** and **ISRO**.
Purpose	To ignite **curiosity** and foster **awareness about space science and technology** among **students** from the North Eastern Region (**NER**) of India.

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Eligibility	It envisages exposure visits for **800 meritorious science students (100 from each state of 8 NER)** to premier ISRO Centres at Bengaluru.
Time period	Eight batches **from April 2025 to December 2025**, with at least one month between batches.
Funding Mechanism	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (**MDoNER) and State Governments** in a **60:40 ratio**.
Implementing Ministry	**MDoNER**
Implementing Agency	**North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC)** as nodal agency from **ISRO**, with support from Capacity Building & Public Outreach (CBPO), ISRO HQ. In **collaboration with eight NER state governments.**
Objectives	Bridge geographical and informational gaps through immersive exposure to India's space research and exploration. To inspire students to envision futures in STEM by witnessing cutting-edge technologies and interacting with eminent scientists and engineers.

Seven Indian sites have been added to UNESCO's Tentative List

News: Seven Indian natural heritage sites have been added to UNESCO's Tentative List, **raising India's total from 62 to 69 properties.**

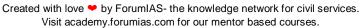**Seven Indian sites have been added to UNESCO's Tentative List**

Figure 13. Source – AIR

● India now has 69 Tentative List sites: **49 cultural, 17 natural, and 3 mixed.**

● Inclusion in the Tentative List **is a prerequisite for nomination to the World Heritage List.**

● This milestone **reflects India's commitment to preserving natural and cultural legacy.**

● The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) compiled and submitted the entries, receiving appreciation from India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO.
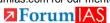
● **India hosted the 46th World Heritage Committee Session in July 2024 at New Delh**i, with over 2000 delegates from more than 140 countries.

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- **7 New sites are –**

Sites	Location	Key Features
Deccan Traps at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar	Western Ghats of Maharashtra (within the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary-a UNESCO World Heritage Site.)	• Home to some of the **best-preserved and studied lava flows in the world**. • These sites form **part of the massive Deccan Traps**. • This the site is **identified as geo-heritage site by Geological survey of India**.
Geological Heritage of St. Mary's Island Cluster	**Karnataka**	• Known for its **rare columnar basaltic rock formations**. • This island cluster dates back to the **Late Cretaceous period**, offering a geological snapshot from around 85 million years ago. • It have been declared as **National Geological Monument by GSI since 1978.** • The site falls under Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)
Meghalayan Age Caves	**Meghalaya**	• This cave systems serve as the **global reference point for the Meghalayan Age in the Holocene Epoch**. • This reflect **significant climate and geological transitions**. • Mawmluh cave has already been listed among the **global first 100 geologically important site** in the world.
Naga Hill Ophiolite	**Nagaland (situated within one of the 18 mega biodiversity hotspots)**	• It is a **rare exposure of ophiolite rocks.** • These hills **represent oceanic crust uplifted onto continental plates**—offering deep insights into tectonic processes and mid-ocean ridge dynamics. • The site **overlaps with Fakim Wildlife sanctuary.** • **Geological Survey of India has declared it as a National Geological Monument.**
Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red Sand Hills)	**Andhra Pradesh(coastal tract of Visakhapatnam)**	• This site was **first documented by William King**, the deputy superintendent of the GSI, back in 1886. • These visually striking red sand formations **showcase unique paleo-climatic and**

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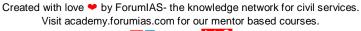|		coastal geomorphological features that reveal Earth's climatic history and dynamic evolution.
Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills	**Andhra Pradesh (within the Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve and Venkateswara National Park)**	• This site features the **Eparchaean Unconformity,** refers to a rare and fascinating **geological boundary that represents the interface between ancient Precambrian rocks and much younger**, overlying geological formations • It also includes the **iconic Silathoranam (Natural Arch)**.
Varkala Cliffs	**Kerala (faces the Arabian Sea)**	• The scenic cliffs along Kerala's **coastline expose the Warkalli Formation of the Mio–Pliocene age**. • They also feature **natural springs and striking erosional landforms**, offering both scientific and touristic value.

Corporate Bond Index Derivatives

News: Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have been in advanced talks to encourage trading in corporate bond index derivatives to deepen the debt market.

About Corporate Bond Index Derivatives

Figure 14. ET

• **Definition**: Corporate bond index derivatives are **financial contracts that derive their value from an index of corporate bonds.**

○ They **allow investors to trade** on the overall **performance of a basket of bonds, rather than individual bond securities**.

• **Purpose**: The primary aim is **to deepen the corporate bond market and provide a tool for risk management and speculation.**

○ They enable investors to **hedge or speculate on the future performance of corporate bonds.**

• **Boosting Liquidity**: By introducing these derivatives, authorities aim **to enhance liquidity in the corporate bond market, making it more accessible for investors, especially retail and institutional investors.**

• **Institutional Dominance**: The corporate bond market is **mainly dominated by institutional investors** such as banks, insurers, pension funds, and mutual funds, with retail and foreign investors remaining on the fringes.

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- **Potential Impact**: If successful, this initiative may **stimulate further growth in corporate bond markets**, offering more opportunities for investment and fostering a deeper, more liquid market for corporate debt instruments.
- **Challenges**: Previous attempts **to boost corporate bond trading via derivatives faced difficulties in gaining traction.**
  - However, the current approach focuses on aligning it with equity trading, which may foster quicker adoption.

Chabahar Port

News: Recently, the United States has revoked the sanctions waiver for Iran's Chabahar Port.

About Chabahar Port
- **Location:** It is a **deep-water port located** in **Iran's Sistan–Baluchistan province** on the **Gulf of Oman**, near the **mouth of the Strait of Hormuz**.
- **It is the only Iranian port** with direct access to the **Indian Ocean**.
- **Components:** It comprises **two terminals**: Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.
- **Strategic importance:** It is strategically positioned close to **Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India**, enhancing its role as a regional hub.
  - It acts as a **key transit center** in the **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
  - **INSTC** links the **Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf** to the **Caspian Sea via Iran**, and onward to **northern Europe via Saint Petersburg, Russia**.
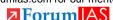 - Distances from India: **Kandla Port (550 nautical miles)** and **Mumbai Port (786 nautical miles)**.

About Chabahar Project – India's Role
- **Tripartite agreement signed in May 2016** between **India, Iran, and Afghanistan** to develop the **Shahid Beheshti Terminal**.
- It marks **India's first foreign port development project** aims to establish an **international transport and transit corridor** through Chabahar.
- It includes construction of a **rail line from Chabahar Port to Zahedan** in Iran.
- It enables India to **bypass Pakistan** for trade with **Afghanistan and Central Asia**.
- It is expected to serve as a **hub for transit trade** between **India, Iran, and Afghanistan**.
- It provides an **alternative route** to the traditional **Silk Road passing through China**.

Gulf of Finland

News: Estonia reported three Russian MiG-31s violated its airspace over the Gulf of Finland for 12 minutes.

About Gulf of Finland

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Source – iStock

- **Location:** It is the easternmost **extension of the Baltic Sea** located in **Northern Europe**.
- **Boundaries**: It is bordered by **Finland in the north, Russia in the east** and **Estonia in the south.**
- **Extension:** The Gulf of Finland extends from Saint Petersburg in the east to the Hanko Peninsula in the west.
- **Climate:** This region faces a **humid continental climate** with hot summers and relatively **harsh winters.**
- **Coasts feature:** The northern shore is highly curved and rocky, with bays such as **Vyborg Bay** and the **Porkkalanniemi and Hanko Peninsulas**,
  - The **southern shore** is smoother, **shallower**, and marked by the **Baltic Klint.**
- **Major rivers**: It receives numerous rivers, notably **Neva and Narva**; others include **Kymi, Luga, Vanta, Pirita**, and more.
- **Major ports:** Some of the major ports in the gulf include the **Russian ports of St. Petersburg** and **Kronshtadt**; the **Finnish ports of Helsinki, Porkkala, and Kotka**; and the **Estonian port of Tallinn**.
- **Connections:** It is connected to **Lake Saimaa via the Saimaa Canal.**
- **Major islands:** The **Kotlin Island** is the largest of the islands.
- **Water property:** It has **very low salinity** and remains **ice-covered for three to five months** each winter.
- **International recognition:** The Gulf of Finland's southern coast was designated a **Ramsar Wetland** on September 13, 1994.

Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Adamya

News: ICGS Adamya, the first of eight Adamya-class Fast Patrol Vessels, was commissioned at Paradip Port, Odisha, on September 19, 2025.
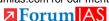
About Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Adamya

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Figure 15. Source – TH

- It is a Fast Patrol Vessel of the Indian Coast Guard for **surveillance of maritime zones** and other duties **as per the ICG charter** to safeguard India's maritime interests.
- **Developed by:** It is designed and built by **Goa Shipyard Limited** under '**8 FPV Project**'.
- **Naming:** "Adamya" means **indomitable**, reflecting the Coast Guard's commitment to safe, secure, and clean seas.
- **Features**
  - It is a **51-metre**, approximately **320-tonne Fast Patrol Vessel** of the Indian Coast Guard and the **lead ship of its class**.
  - **Indigenous technology:** It is **first ICG ship** fitted with indigenously developed **two Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPP)** and **gearboxes** for superior maneuverability and operational flexibility.
  - It has Integrated Bridge System, Integrated Platform Management System, and Automated Power Management System augment efficiency and automation.
  - **Propulsion and performance:** It is powered by **two 3,000 KW diesel engines**, it attains a **maximum speed of 28 knots** and has an **endurance of 1,500 nautical miles at economical speed** for sustained patrols..
  - **Weapons and systems**: Adamya is equipped with a **30 mm CRN-91 gun and two 12.7 mm** stabilised remote-controlled machine guns, all supported by fire-control systems for precise engagements.
  - **Strategic role**: It will strengthen maritime **surveillance, deterrence, and quick reaction on the Eastern Seaboard**, reinforcing India's maritime security architecture.

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

News: India has been re-elected to the Council of Administration (CA) and the Postal Operations Council (POC) of the Universal Postal Union during the 28th UPU Congress in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

About Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Source – UPU

- It is a **specialized agency** of the United Nations responsible for **coordinating international postal policies** and ensuring a **seamless global postal system**.
- It is the **second oldest international organization** worldwide.

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Key facts about UPU

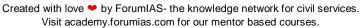| Established	Established by the Treaty of Bern in 1874.
Headquarters	Berne, Switzerland
Members	• **Any** UN member state **may join** the UPU. • A non-UN state may join if at least **two-thirds of UPU members approve**. • The UPU currently has **192** member countries. • **India** has been a member **since 1874** and continues to actively participate.
Functions	• It performs advisory, mediating, and liaison roles and provides technical assistance where needed. • It frames rules for international mail exchanges. • It issues recommendations to grow mail, parcel, and financial services and improve service quality.
Governance Structure	I. **Universal Postal Congress:** Congress is the supreme authority of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and meets every four years. II. **Council of Administration:** The Council ensures the continuity of the UPU's work between Congresses, supervises its activities and studies regulatory, administrative, legislative and legal issues. III. **Postal Operations Council:** The Postal Operations Council (POC) is the technical and operational mind of the UPU and consists of 48 member countries, elected during Congress. IV. **International Bureau:** Fulfilling a secretariat function, the International Bureau provides logistical and technical support to the UPU's bodies.

- **UPI–UPU Integration project:** Launch of the UPI-UPU Integration project (Department of Posts, NPCI International, UPU) to **link UPI with the UPU Interconnection Platform** for secure, affordable cross-border remittances.

Supercomputers

News: A powerful new supercomputer is being developed that will place Essex at the centre of the UK's artificial intelligence (AI) revolution.

About Supercomputers
- Supercomputers are the **most powerful computers** in the world.
- They **solve very large, complex, and calculation-heavy problems** that normal computers cannot handle.
- A supercomputer is more like a **giant data center** full of cabinets connected together.
- A supercomputer is made up of **thousands of processors working at the same time**. These **processors are arranged in layers,** including CPUs (Central Processing Units) and GPUs (Graphics Processing Units).

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- **Each processor handles a small part of the problem** and together they provide answers much faster than a single processor could.
- They use **parallel computing**, which means many calculations are done simultaneously.
- Supercomputers **use a lot of electricity as they need efficient power distribution and cooling systems** to avoid overheating.
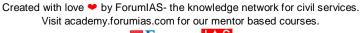- **Components of a Supercomputer**
  - **Processors:** CPUs and GPUs perform calculations.
  - **Nodes:** Groups of processors connected together to work as a single unit.
  - **Network Connection:** High-speed connections link nodes so data can be transferred quickly.
  - **Memory & Storage:** Each node has its own memory, and large storage systems hold huge amounts of data.
  - **Cooling Systems:** Because they produce a lot of heat, supercomputers need advanced cooling with air, water, or special liquids.
- **Software Used in Supercomputers**
  - Special software **manages how thousands of processors work together.**
  - It **schedules tasks, controls data flow,** and ensures efficient communication.
  - Programmers use special languages and tools like **MPI (Message Passing Interface)** or **OpenMP** to write software for supercomputers.
  - A **scheduler** decides which processor runs which task and for how long.
- **Uses of Supercomputers**
  - Supercomputers are used for **weather forecasting and climate modeling** to predict weather patterns and study changes in the environment.
  - They are used in **space research and simulations** to model the behavior of planets, stars, and other celestial bodies.
  - Supercomputers help **discover new medicines** by simulating chemical reactions and analyzing large biological datasets.
  - They are used for **studying black holes, gravitational waves, and nuclear reactions** to understand complex physical phenomena.
  - Supercomputers are also used for **running artificial intelligence and machine learning models** to process massive amounts of data and improve accuracy.

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India and Supercomputers

- India's supercomputing journey began in the late 1980s when Western countries refused to export high-end machines.
- This led to the creation of the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** in **1988**.
- India developed its **first series** of supercomputers called **PARAM** in the **1990s**.
- Today, India has powerful systems like **PARAM Siddhi-AI** at C-DAC and **AIRAWAT** for AI computing.
- Facilities like **NCMRWF (Noida)** and **IITM (Pune)** use supercomputers for weather forecasting and climate modeling.
- **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM):** India launched the **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)** in **2015** as a **joint project** of the Department of Science and Technology (**DST**) and the Ministry of Electronics and IT (**MeitY**), **implemented by C-DAC and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.**
  - **Goal:** Its goal is to build a **network of 70+ high-performance computing facilities** across India, with capacities ranging from terafops to petafops, and to develop indigenous hardware and software.
  - India's current **fastest supercomputer is AIRAWAT-PSAI at C-DAC in Pune**; it's ranked inside the **top 100** in the canonical top 500 list worldwide.

Exercise Amogh Fury

News: The Indian Army's Sapta Shakti Command carried out the 'AMOGH FURY' integrated firepower exercise at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

About Exercise Amogh Fury

Source: India Today

Conducted By	**Sapta Shakti Command** of the **Indian Army**.

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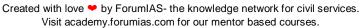| Location	Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Thar Desert, **Rajasthan**.
Purpose	To test combat power, coordination, and operational readiness under real-time battle conditions.
Objectives	- It assesses preparedness for **multi-domain operations**. - It demonstrates **integration of combat arms** using **modern technologies**. - It refines **procedures to counter emerging threats**. - It provides **pragmatic training** under realistic combat conditions.
Key Features	**Integrated Firepower Display:** It showcased **integrated manoeuvres involving battle tanks, infantry combat vehicles, attack helicopters, long-range artillery, and drones**. - These assets were **deployed together to highlight the Army's ability to synchronise ground and air operations for both offensive and defensive actions**. - A major emphasis of 'Amogh Fury' was on **integrating modern technologies such as network-centric communication systems, command-and-control architecture, and real-time surveillance and targeting systems**. - These technologies created a **unified operational picture that enhanced decision-making and coordination across various units**.
Significance	- The exercise provided realistic combat training for all ranks, refining procedures to counter emerging threats. - It also strengthened synergy among combat arms, support units, and services, showcasing the Army's efforts to develop cohesive, technology-driven responses for modern warfare.

Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS) 3.0

News: The Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS) 3.0 was launched recently by the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry in New Delhi.

About Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS) 3.0

Figure 16. Source – FISME

- It is the **latest iteration** of a government **initiative aimed** at **benchmarking** and **enhancing the competitiveness** of **industrial parks** across India.
- **Launch:** IPRS 3.0 was launched on **20 September 2025** by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry in New Delhi.
- **Developed by**: DPIIT with support from the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.

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- **Objective**: To benchmark, assess and improve **industrial parks' competitiveness and infrastructure** in India.
- **Purpose and Benefits:**
  - **Reliable Data**: Provides stakeholders and investors with **credible, transparent information**.
  - **Benchmarking**: Allows comparison of **industrial park performance across the country**.
  - **Best Practices**: Encourages **adoption of global standards** and sustainable practices.
  - **Policy Support**: Helps policymakers **design targeted interventions** and improve competitiveness.
  - **Boost to Make in India**: Strengthens India's industrial ecosystem and **global competitiveness**.
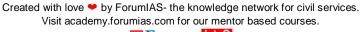- **Key Features of IPRS 3.0**
  - IPRS 3.0 introduces **expanded parameters such as sustainability, green infrastructure, logistics connectivity, digitalization, skill linkages, and enhanced tenant feedback mechanisms**.
  - Under IPRS 3.0, industrial parks will be **categorized into Leaders, Challengers, and Aspirers based on their performance** across key indicators.
  - The system will provide **clear and transparent ratings to enable better benchmarking of facilities and competitiveness**.
- **Impact on States and Union Territories**
  - **Showcase Top Parks**: States and Union Territories will be able to showcase their best-performing industrial parks under the new rating system.
  - **Identify Gaps**: The initiative will help identify gaps in infrastructure and services that require improvement.
  - **Attract Investments**: IPRS 3.0 will **encourage investments from both domestic and global investors by providing credible data**.
  - **Employment Generation**: The system will also **support employment generation and skill development initiatives**.
  - **Strengthen Ecosystem**: It will strengthen the industrial and investment ecosystem in different regions of the country

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

News: Malayalam superstar **Mohanlal** has been selected as the recipient of the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2023.**

About Dadasaheb Phalke Award

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Source: NEWS18

- The **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** was instituted in **1969** by the Government of India.
- The award was established to **commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke**, who is regarded as the father of Indian cinema.
- It **is the highest honour in Indian cinema.**
- It is presented to individuals for their **outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema**.
- **Award:** The award comprises a **Swarna Kamal (Golden Lotus) medallion**, a **ceremonial shawl**, and a **cash prize of ₹10 lakh.**
- The **first recipient** of the award was **Devika Rani**.
- Dadasaheb Phalke directed **India's first full-length feature film**, *Raja Harishchandra*, **in 1913**.
- Among the recent honourees are **Mithun Chakraborty (2022)**, **Waheeda Rehman (2021)**, and **Asha Parekh (2020)**.

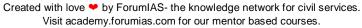## Data User's Conference on the Time Use Survey (TUS), 2024

News: Recently, the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in collaboration with Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram organised a Data User's Conference on Time Use Survey (TUS), 2024.

About Time Use Survey (TUS), 2024

AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN A DAY PER PERSON

	2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Self-care and maintenance	729	723	710	706
Employment and related activities	459	333	473	341
Learning	426	423	415	413
Unpaid domestic services for household members	97	299	88	289
Culture, leisure, mass media, sports	164	165	177	164
Socialising and communication, community participation and religious practice	147	139	138	139
Unpaid volunteer, trainee and other unpaid work	102	99	139	108
Unpaid caregiving services for household members	76	134	75	137
Production of goods for own final use	198	116	137	104

All units in minutes   Source: MoSPI

Figure 17. Source – NSO

- **Period conducted:** January – December 2024.
- **Conducted By:** National Statistics Office (**NSO**), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
- **It is the second All-India Survey** builds upon the first all-India TUS conducted in 2019.
- **Purpose:** To measure how individuals allocate their time to various **paid, unpaid, and other activities** over a **24-hour reference period**.
- **Objectives of TUS:**
  - It **measures participation of men and women in paid and unpaid activities.**

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- o It **provides data on unpaid caregiving, volunteer work, and unpaid domestic services.**
- o It **captures time spent on learning, socialising, leisure, culture, self-care**, and other activities.
- o It **generates comparative insights** between 2019 and 2024 to track shifts in time use patterns.

About Time Use Survey (TUS), 2024

- **Data Collection Method:** CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews).
- **Reference Period:** 24 hours (from 4:00 AM of the previous day to 4:00 AM on the day of the interview).
- **Recording:** Activities logged in 30-minute slots; up to three activities per slot if ≥10 minutes were spent.
- **Population Covered:** Persons aged 6 years and above.
- **Coverage**
  - o **Households Covered:**1,39,487 (Rural: 83,247; Urban: 56,240).
  - o **Individuals Covered:**4,54,192 persons aged 6+ years (Rural: 2,85,389; Urban: 1,68,803).
- **Major Indicators Produced:**
  - o **Participation Rate:** Percentage of persons performing an activity during the day.
  - o **Average Time Spent per Participant:** Time spent per day by only those participating in the activity.
  - o **Average Time Spent per Person:** Time spent per day by the whole population, including non-participants—helps allocate the total 1440 minutes/day across activities.
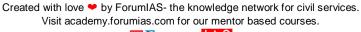
Key Highlights of TUS, 2024

- **Rise in Employment Participation:** 75% of males and 25% of females (age 15–59) participated in employment-related activities.
- **Shift from Unpaid to Paid Work (Women):** Time spent by females in unpaid domestic services reduced from 315 minutes/day (2019) to 305 minutes/day (2024).
- **Caregiving Activities:**
  - o 41% of females (age 15–59) engaged in caregiving for household members vs. 21.4% of males.
  - o **Average time spent per day:** Females 140 minutes; Males 74 minutes.
- **Producing Goods for Own Final Use:** 24.6% of rural population aged 15–59 participated, spending 121 minutes/day.
- **Learning Activities (Children 6–14 years):** 89.3% participated, spending 413 minutes/day.
- **Culture, Leisure & Sports:** People aged 6+ spent 11% of their day in these activities (2019: 9.9%).
- **Self-Care and Maintenance:** Persons aged 6+ spent 708 minutes/day (Females 706; Males 710)

CPCB Report on River Pollution

News: The CPCB's latest assessment indicates a slight decline in the number of polluted river stretches across India.

About polluted river stretch

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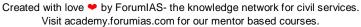**ForumIAS**

- According to CPCB, a "polluted river stretch" is where **two or more polluted locations occur in a continuous sequence on a river where BOD levels exceed 3 mg/L, rendering water unfit for bathing.**
- **Classification of Pollution Levels**
  - CPCB categorizes polluted river stretches into **five priority categories** based on BOD.
  - **Priority Class V**: BOD 3.1–6 mg/L (least polluted, needs low intervention).
  - **Priority Class I**: BOD exceeding 30 mg/L (most polluted, needs urgent attention).
  - **BOD < 3 mg/L**: Generally fit for bathing.

Findings of CPCB Report on River Pollution

- **Marginal Improvement:** The Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) 2023 assessment shows a slight improvement in river water quality, with the number of polluted stretches reducing from **311 in 2022 to 296 in 2023**, covering **271 rivers across 32 states and Union Territories**.
- **Most Affected States: Maharashtra** remains the worst affected with **54 polluted river stretches**. Other states with significant pollution include **Kerala (31)**, **Madhya Pradesh and Manipur (18 each)**, and **Karnataka (14)**.
- **Priority Classifications**
  - **Priority I (BOD > 30 mg/L)** – Most polluted stretches needing urgent intervention dropped from **46 in 2022 to 37 in 2023**. Notable examples include the **Yamuna (Delhi)**, **Sabarmati (Ahmedabad)**, **Chambal (Madhya Pradesh)**, and parts of the **Tungabhadra and Sarabanga rivers**.
  - **Priority V (BOD 3.1–6 mg/L)** – Less polluted stretches requiring minimal intervention.
- **Rivers Showing Deterioration:** Despite overall gains, certain rivers show worsening quality, including the **Jhelum (J&K)**, **Ganga and Sikrahna (Bihar)**, **Hasdeo and Mahanadi (Chhattisgarh)**, **Cauvery and Tungabhadra (Karnataka)**, **Periyar (Kerala)**, and **Krishna (Telangana)**.
- **Long-Term Monitoring:** CPCB, along with State Pollution Control Boards, monitors water quality at **over 4,700 locations** under the **National Water Quality Monitoring Programme**, tracking rivers, lakes, drains, and canals.
- **Institutional Interventions:** Following the **2018 National Green Tribunal (NGT) directive**, all states are required to develop **river rejuvenation action plans**. The current CPCB report highlights **catchment area management, sewage treatment, and floodplain protection** as key measures to control river pollution.

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Ballon d'Or Award, 2025

News: The 69th Ballon d'Or ceremony will be held on September 22, 2025, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

About Ballon d'Or Award, 2025
- The Ballon d'Or is the **most prestigious individual award** in football, presented annually by *France Football* **since 1956.**
- It honors the **best football players worldwide based on their performances** during the previous season.
- The Ballon d'Or was **first awarded in 1956** and was initially restricted to European players.
- In 1995, e**ligibility expanded to include all players active in European clubs.**
- **By 2007**, it became a global award **open to all professional footballers** worldwide.
- The winner of the Ballon d'Or is **chosen by an international panel of journalists**.
- Each country in the top 100 of the **FIFA rankings is represented by one journalist on the voting panel.**
- Jurors rank their top ten players, and points are assigned according to these rankings to determine the final winner.
- **New categories:** New categories have been introduced **this year 2025**, including-
  - Women's Yashin Trophy, the Women's Gerd Müller Trophy, and the Women's Kopa Trophy, to celebrate the **achievements of female players**.
- **Notable Winners:** Lionel Messi holds the record for the most Ballon d'Or titles, having won eight times.
  - Cristiano Ronaldo has won the award five times.
- **2025 editions: Ousmane Dembélé** was crowned the world's best player of the season, winning the Ballon d'Or in a triumphant night for his club Paris Saint-Germain.
  - Barcelona's **Aitana Bonmatí**, a consistent trophy winner, secured the women's award on Monday.

National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2025

News: Recently, the National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2025 were presented during the 28th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG).

About National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2025

- The **National e-Governance Awards (NAeG) 2025** were presented during the **28th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG)**.
- **Administered by:** Instituted by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)**.

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- This is the **first time a category has been created for grassroots-level initiatives in Gram Panchayats** for deepening digital service delivery.
- It highlights the **government's vision that "Good Governance is best delivered through Digital Governance."**
- **Award Categories and Winners**
  - **Gold Award:** Rohini Gram Panchayat, Dhule District**, Maharashtra.**
  - **Silver Award:** West Majlishpur Gram Panchayat, West Tripura District, **Tripura.**
  - **Jury Awards:** Palsana Gram Panchayat, Surat District, **Gujarat** and Suakati Gram Panchayat, Kendujhar District, **Odisha.**
- **Other noticeable Awardees**
  - **MP's Sampada 2.0 initiative** has won the **National e-Governance Gold Award 2025**, recognized for making property and document registration fully paperless.
- **Rewards given**
  - Each award includes a **trophy, a certificate, and financial incentives**.
  - **Gold Award winners receive Rs.10 lakh**, and **Silver Award winners receive Rs.5 lakh**.
  - The financial incentives must be **reinvested in strengthening citizen-centric initiatives**

Maitri 2.0 Cross-Incubation Programme

News: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched the second edition of the Brazil–India Cross-Incubation Programme in Agritech (Maitri 2.0) on 22 September 2025 in New Delhi.
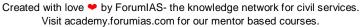
About Maitri 2.0 Cross-Incubation Programme

Source – ICAR

- **Maitri 2.0** is the **second edition** of the **India–Brazil Cross-Incubation Programme in Agritech.**
- **Launched by:** It is launched by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).**
- **Aim:** To foster innovation-driven growth and collaboration between Indian and Brazilian **agri-tech ecosystems**.
- It reflects the **broader Brazil–India strategic partnership,** aligning with the leaders' shared vision for cooperation in agriculture, emerging technologies, and food and nutritional security.
- **Key Features of Maitri 2.0**
  - **Cross-Incubation and Startup Linkages:** It promotes exchange of best practices, technologies, and business models.

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- ○ **Innovation-Driven Collaboration:** It focuses on sustainable agriculture, digital technologies, value-chain development, and climate-resilient practices through joint research to address food security, extreme weather, and climate change.
- ○ **IP and Commercialization Support:** It builds on **ICAR's portfolio of 1,800+ patents and 5,000+ licensing agreements** and also facilitates technology transfer, joint IP ownership, and equitable commercialization.
- ○ **Five-Day Cross-Border Agri-Tech Event:** It brings together policymakers, venture investors, corporates, and early-stage as well as growth-stage startups from both nations.
- ○ **Aligned With India–Brazil Roadmap:** It implements **two pillars** from the bilateral **10-year roadmap:** *Food Security and Agricultural Cooperation and Science, Technology & Innovation Cooperation.*

Bagram Air Base

News: The Taliban administration has reportedly turned down U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to reclaim the Bagram Air Base.

About Bagram Air Base

Figure 18. Source – Daily Mail

- ● **Location:** It is the **largest military airfield in Afghanistan**, located north of **Kabul**.
- ● **Strategic importance:** It is situated in a **strategic location** near **Iran, Pakistan, China's Xinjiang province, and Central Asia.**
- ● **Origin:** The base was **built by the Soviet Union during the Cold War** and used for its operations until the late 1980s.
- ○ After the U.S. entered Afghanistan in **2001**, it **modernized and expanded the base**.
- ● It served as a **central hub for air missions, intelligence gathering, and logistics** throughout the **war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda**.
- ● The air base had **runways longer than many international airports**, hardened shelters, hospitals, and large fuel depots.
- ● Bagram housed a **large prison complex** where detainees were kept.

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