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FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



› ROAD TO VIKSIT BHARAT › PURPLE POTATO – BIOFORTIFICATION › WOMEN EMPLOYMENT

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FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you guage your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS

Syllabus: GS III - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *How is S-400 air defence system technically superior to any other system presently available in the world?* ***(2021)***

Q) *Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard* ***(2020)***

WHY IN NEWS

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, **Rajya Sabha MP Dr Ajeet Madhavrao Gopchade proposed a unified defence logistics framework** modelled on the US Defence Logistics Agency (DLA) **to support Integrated Theatre Commands (ITCs)** through joint logistics and resource sharing.

INTRODUCTION

Integrated Theatre Commands (ITCs) aim to bring the operational resources of the Army, Navy and Air Force under a **unified command structure** for joint operations. The **Department of Military Affairs, established in 2020,** is mandated to facilitate military command restructuring, including the establishment of joint and theatre commands.

ABOUT INTEGRATED THEATRE COMMANDS (ITC)

- **Meaning:** They are **unified military formations** that bring together the **Army, Navy and Air Force under a single commander** for operations within a defined geographical area or for a specific mission.
- **Aim:** To promote **jointness, integration and synergy** among the three services by coordinating personnel, equipment, logistics and operational planning.
- **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):** The CDS promotes jointness among the three services and facilitates the restructuring of military commands.
- **Legal foundation:** The **Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, 2023** provides a framework for unified command and disciplinary powers in notified inter-services organisations.

CURRENT STATUS

- **Existing Command Structure:**



- **Latest position:**
  - The Defence Secretary stated on 23 October 2026 that a **blueprint for theatre commands had been prepared and was awaiting approval** at the highest level.
  - The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has yet to approve the proposal.
- **Three proposed commands:**
  - **Western Theatre Command:** Focus on Pakistan.
  - **Northern Theatre Command:** Focus on China.
  - **Maritime Theatre Command:** Focus on maritime security.

IMPORTANCE

- **Faster decision-making:** A unified commander can coordinate forces and respond more rapidly to emerging threats.
- **Optimal resource utilisation:** Reduces duplication in logistics, intelligence, surveillance, communications and support infrastructure.
- **Multi-front preparedness:** Improves coordination against threats from China and Pakistan, including the possibility of simultaneous conflicts.
- **Multi-domain warfare:** Integrates operations across land, sea, air, space and cyberspace, including drone and precision-strike capabilities.
- **Better intelligence sharing:** Promotes a common operational picture through integrated surveillance, intelligence and communications networks.

GLOBAL SCENARIO

US HAS 11 UNIFIED COMBATANT COMMANDS:
6 'geographic' to handle different part of the globe (Indo-Pacific Command covers entire Asia-Pacific, including India);
5 'functional' to handle nuclear arsenal, special operations, space, cyberspace and transport/mobility

CHINA RE-ORGANISED 2.3-MILLION PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY INTO 5 THEATRE COMMANDS IN EARLY-2016.
The Western Theatre Command handles entire Line of Actual Control with India, from eastern Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Kargil Review Committee (1999):

- Recommended **major reforms in higher defence management following the Kargil War,** including stronger jointness among the three services.
- Its recommendations helped **lead to proposals for a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** and the **operationalization of India's first integrated tri-service command** (the Andaman and Nicobar Command).

Shekatkar Committee (2016):

- Recommended reforms to improve the armed forces' combat capability and efficiency.
- Its recommendations are central to the **proposed restructuring into distinct, threat-based operational commands** – Northern, Western and Maritime Theatre Commands.

CHALLENGES

- **Inter-service differences:** Differences among the Army, Navy and Air Force over command structures, operational authority and implementation can delay reforms.
- **Air power allocation:** The Indian Air Force (IAF) has raised concerns that **dividing its limited combat aircraft** among separate theatres could **reduce operational flexibility and strategic concentration of air power.**
- **Command and control:** Defining the authority of theatre commanders vis-à-vis service chiefs and the CDS is complex.
- **Organisational resistance:** Reorganisation of long-established service-specific commands may encounter institutional and cultural resistance.
- **Risk of excessive centralisation:** Poorly designed command arrangements could create additional decision-making layers instead of speeding up operations.

WAY FORWARD

- **Phased implementation:** Introduce theatre commands in stages, supported by operational assessments, simulations and lessons from joint exercises.
- **Consensus among services:** Resolve differences through sustained consultation and establish clearly defined roles for theatre commanders, service chiefs and the CDS.
- **Strengthen joint institutions:** Expand integrated planning, intelligence sharing, joint logistics, common communications and tri-service training.
- **Technology integration:** Develop interoperable command-and-control systems incorporating artificial intelligence, drones, cyber capabilities, space-based surveillance and real-time intelligence.
  - **Example:** During Operation Sindoor (2025), the Air Force's Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) worked alongside the Army's Akashteer and the Navy's Trigun.
- **Adequate resources:** Ensure that restructuring is backed by appropriate funding, modern equipment, trained personnel and logistics infrastructure.
  - **Data:** The Union Budget 2026–27 allocated ₹7.85 lakh crore to the Ministry of Defence.
- **Regular review:** Assess operational effectiveness, decision-making speed, resource utilisation and readiness through periodic independent reviews.

CONCLUSION

Establishing Integrated Theatre Commands is an ongoing defence reform, with the proposed structure requiring government approval and further implementation decisions. Their effectiveness will depend on **clear command arrangements, inter-service coordination and the optimal utilisation of military resources.**

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the role of Integrated Theatre Commands in enhancing India's preparedness for multi-front and multi-domain warfare. **(10 marks, 150 words)**

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Distinguish between 'care economy' and 'monetized economy'. How can care economy be brought into monetized economy through women empowerment?* ***(2021)***

Q) *Empowering women is the key to control population growth." Discuss.* ***(2019)***

WHY IN NEWS

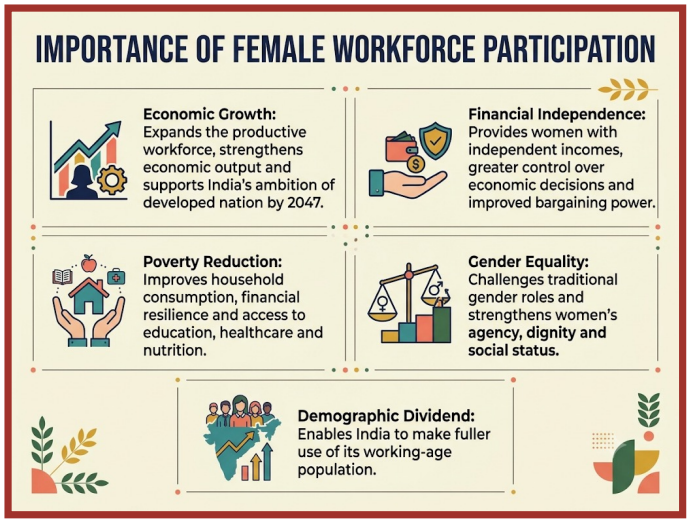
The Press Information Bureau (PIB) released a backgrounder on "Women, Work and Enterprise: India's Push for Better Livelihoods" , highlighting initiatives to improve women's employment, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

India's women's employment landscape is gradually shifting from increased labour force participation towards better-quality work and economic empowerment. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) shows that the **female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) among women aged 15 years and above rose from 23.3% in 2017–18 to 40% in 2025**, highlighting progress towards inclusive and women-led development.

CURRENT STATUS

- **Women in Employment:** An estimated **20 crore women** aged 15 years and above were employed in India in 2025.
- **Women-Owned MSMEs:** Around **3.69 crore registered Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were women-owned** as of October 2026, accounting for approximately 38% of registrations.
- **Women in Startups:** Over **1.07 lakh recognised startups had at least one woman director or partner** by March 2026, representing approximately 48% of recognised startups.
- **Manufacturing and Technology:**
  - Nearly 70% of the direct workforce in mobile phone manufacturing as of July 2026
  - Around 25% of the semiconductor workforce as of March 2025.
- **Civil Aviation:** Women accounted for 15% of pilots, 15% of air traffic controllers, 11% of flight dispatchers and 33% of Flight Operations Inspectors in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), as of June 2025.
- **Women in Scientific Research:** Women's participation in Science, Technology and Engineering (STEM) research careers rose from **13% in 2000–01 to 29% in 2023–24.**



GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- **Swavalambini Scheme:** Provides young women with entrepreneurship training, financial and market guidance, legal support and 21 weeks of mentorship.
- **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY):** Provides collateral-free loans up to ₹20 lakh. Women accounted for approximately two-thirds of loans sanctioned since the scheme's inception



- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS):** Promotes paid on-the-job training and practical work experience.
- **NAVYA:** Launched in 2025 to provide targeted skilling

to 3,850 adolescent girls in non-traditional and future-oriented job roles. By 31 August 2026, 1,105 girls had been trained.

- **Maternity Benefits:** Eligible women are entitled to up to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave. Other provisions include nursing breaks, crèche facilities in establishments with at least 50 workers, and maternity-related medical benefits.

CHALLENGES

- **Quality of Employment:** Rising participation does not automatically ensure adequate wages, stable employment, social security or career progression.
- **Informal and Precarious Work:** Women in informal employment may lack written contracts, paid leave, social protection and access to effective grievance mechanisms.
- **Unpaid Care Responsibilities:** Unequal responsibility for childcare, household work and eldercare can restrict women's availability for paid employment.
- **Limited Access to Finance and Markets:** Women entrepreneurs may face difficulties obtaining affordable credit, building business networks and accessing larger markets.
- **Workplace Safety and Mobility:** Harassment, inadequate transport, unsafe working conditions and insufficient childcare facilities can affect women's ability to enter and remain in employment.

WAY FORWARD

- **Expand Care Infrastructure:** Strengthen affordable childcare, crèche facilities, and community-based care systems to reduce unpaid care burdens.
  - **Example: Palna Scheme** (under Mission Shakti) upgrades Anganwadis into standardized crèches
- **Promote Formalisation:** Extend written contracts, social security and grievance redressal mechanisms to women in informal and platform-based employment.
  - **Example:** Registration of female domestic and gig workers on the **e-Shram portal**.
- **Improve Access to Finance:** Expand affordable credit, financial literacy, mentorship and business development support for women-led enterprises.
  - **Example: Stand-Up India** scheme requires banks to fund at least one woman entrepreneur per branch.
- **Ensure Safe Workplaces:** Enforce workplace sexual harassment laws, improve safe transport and ensure appropriate safeguards for women working night shifts.
  - **Example:** Mandatory constitution of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) under the **POSH Act, 2013**.
- **Encourage Shared Care Responsibilities:** Promote equitable sharing of domestic and care work and encourage family-friendly workplace policies.
  - **Example:** The Nordic model of parental leave uses **non-transferable, "use-it-or-lose-it" quotas** reserved individually for each parent.
- **Improve Women's Representation:** Expand opportunities for women in leadership, technical occupations, management and decision-making positions.
  - **Example: SEBI's regulatory mandate** requiring the top 1,000 listed entities to appoint at least one independent female director.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening care infrastructure, workplace safety, skill development and access to finance and markets can transform women from participants in economic growth into equal contributors and leaders in **building a Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Women's economic empowerment is essential for achieving inclusive growth and the vision of Viksit Bharat." Analyse **(10 marks, 150 words)**

PURPLE POTATO – BIOFORTIFICATION: AN ANALYSIS

Syllabus: GS III - Biotechnology

PYQ Mapping

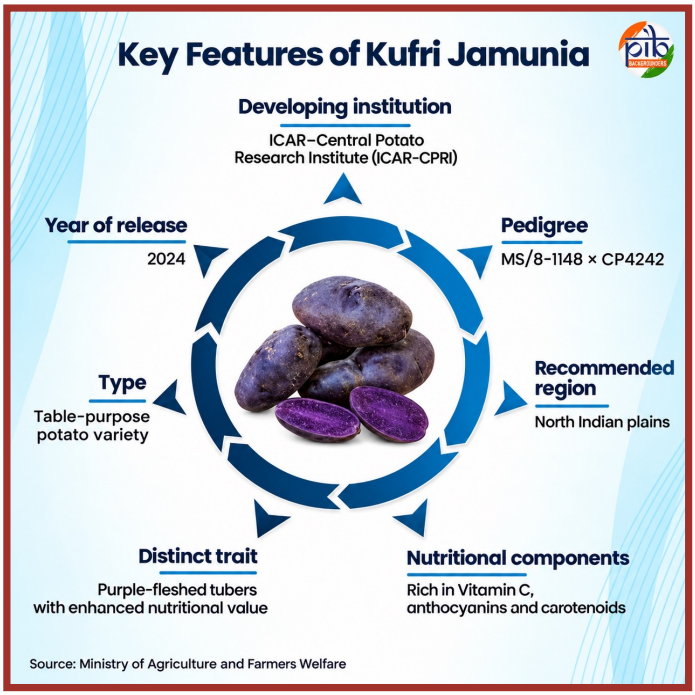
Q) *What are the research and developmental achievements in applied biotechnology? How will these achievements help to uplift the poorer sections of the society?* ***(2021)***

Why in the News?

The ICAR–Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI) has developed Kufri Jamunia, a nutrient-rich purple potato variety, highlighting the potential of biofortification to combat hidden hunger and strengthen nutritional security in India.

Introduction

While India has made significant strides in food production, hidden hunger caused by micronutrient deficiencies remains a major challenge. In this context, biofortification offers a sustainable approach to transforming staple crops into sources of better nutrition. The development of Kufri Jamunia, a nutrient-rich purple potato, exemplifies the convergence of agricultural innovation, nutritional security and sustainable development.



Kufri Jamunia

- **Developed by:** ICAR–CPRI, Shimla
- **Release year:** 2024
- **Colour:** Dark purple skin and purple flesh
- **Yield:** 32–35 tonnes/hectare under recommended cultivation practices
- **Recommended region:** North Indian plains



What is Biofortification?

Biofortification is the process of increasing the nutritional content of food crops during their growth, primarily through conventional plant breeding, biotechnology or improved agronomic practices. Its objective is to tackle micronutrient deficiencies, particularly among populations dependent on staple crops.

Biofortification	Food fortification
Nutrients enhanced within the crop	Nutrients added during processing
Example: Iron-rich pearl millet	**Example:** Iodised salt
Can reach people consuming locally grown crops	Depends on processing and distribution systems

Nutritional Significance of Purple Potato

The purple colour of Kufri Jamunia is primarily associated with anthocyanins, naturally occurring flavonoid pigments with antioxidant properties.

Nutrient (per 100 g)	Kufri Jamunia	Common potato
Vitamin C	42.75 mg	23.15 mg
Zinc	2.28 mg	0.28 mg
Iron	3.22 mg	0.57 mg

Key scientific features:

- **Anthocyanins:** Antioxidant pigments responsible for purple colouring.
- **Vitamin C:** Supports immune function, collagen formation and absorption of non-heme iron.
- **Iron:** Essential for haemoglobin synthesis and preventing iron-deficiency anaemia.
- **Zinc:** Important for immunity, growth and wound healing.
- **Carotenoids:** Plant pigments, some of which can act as precursors of vitamin A.

Significance of Purple Potato Biofortification

- **Nutritional security:** Can improve dietary micronutrient availability and complement efforts against hidden hunger.
- **Agricultural diversification:** Encourages cultivation of nutrient-rich varieties rather than focusing exclusively on production volume.
- **Farmers' income:** Distinctive colour and nutritional profile may create premium markets and opportunities for value addition.
- **Food processing:** Can be used in flour, bakery products, traditional dishes and other processed foods.
- **Sustainable intervention:** Nutrient enhancement through crop breeding can benefit successive harvests without requiring industrial nutrient addition.

Challenges and Concerns

- **Low awareness:** Farmers and consumers may be unfamiliar with purple potatoes and their nutritional benefits.
- **Limited seed availability:** Scaling cultivation requires affordable, quality planting material and strong extension services.
- **Nutrient bioavailability:** Higher nutrient content does not automatically translate into greater absorption; cooking methods and dietary factors influence outcomes.
- **Market uncertainty:** Demand, pricing and procurement channels for specialty potatoes remain important concerns.
- **Agro-climatic limitations:** Performance needs continued evaluation beyond recommended cultivation regions.
- **Dietary limitations:** Potato biofortification alone cannot address protein deficiencies or all forms of micronutrient malnutrition.

Government Initiatives and Institutional Support

- **ICAR's Biofortification Programme:** Research and development of micronutrient-rich crop varieties.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** Provides a nutrition-policy framework with which biofortified crops could be linked.
- **PM-POSHAN:** Offers potential opportunities to incorporate locally appropriate nutrient-rich produce into school meals.
- **HarvestPlus:** An international initiative supporting research and adoption of biofortified crops.

Way Forward

- **Research and development:** Strengthen region-specific breeding, nutrient-retention testing and human nutrition studies.
- **Seed accessibility:** Expand certified planting-material production through agricultural institutions and farmer networks.
- **Farmer incentives:** Promote demonstration farms, market linkages and food-processing enterprises.
- **Nutrition integration:** Evaluate suitable biofortified foods for public nutrition programmes based on cost, acceptability and evidence.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Educate consumers about hidden hunger and the importance of diversified diets.

Conclusion

The development of Kufri Jamunia reflects India's transition from a food-security approach centred on calorie availability to a nutrition-security approach centred on dietary quality. However, successful adoption requires scientific validation, affordable planting material, consumer acceptance and market support. Biofortification should therefore complement, rather than replace, dietary diversification and existing nutrition interventions.

Sample Question

Q) Biofortification has emerged as an important strategy for addressing hidden hunger in India. Discuss its potential and limitations with special reference to the development of purple potato varieties. **(250 words, 15 marks)**

KURUKSHETHRA SEPTEMBER 2026

THE ROAD TO VIKSIT BHARAT

HEALTH AS THE ENGINE OF GROWTH

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

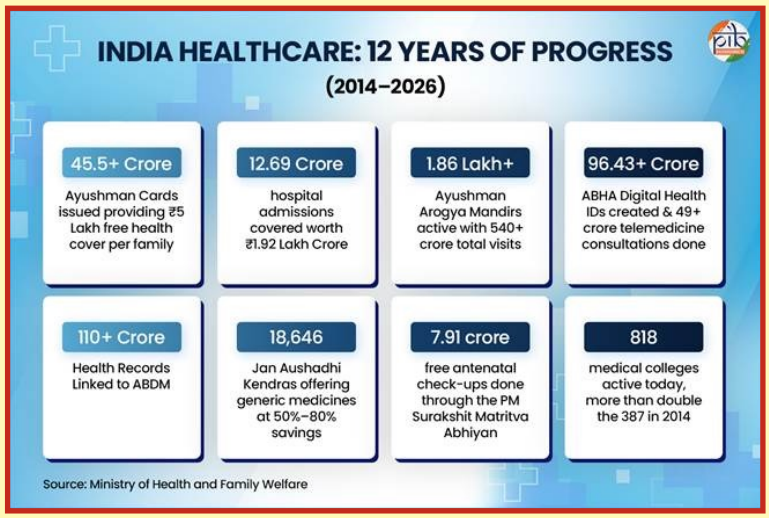
- Provides a health insurance cover of **₹5 lakh per family per year** for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and empanelled private hospitals.
- The scheme has been **extended to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above,** irrespective of socioeconomic status.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)

- Guarantees free, comprehensive, and high-quality antenatal care (ANC) to all pregnant women in their second or third trimesters on the **9th of every month**

eSanjeevani

- India's national telemedicine platform has delivered over **49 crore consultations** since its launch in 2019. Over **2.4 lakh healthcare providers** are now on the platform.



BUILDING CAPABILITIES, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Key Data Points

- **Startup Ecosystem:** Over 2.23 lakh startups are recognized, generating more than 23.36 lakh direct jobs (as of 31 March 2026).
- **Women in Startups:** More than 1.07 lakh recognized startups feature at least one woman director or partner.

INNOVATION TRANSFORMING RURAL INDIA

NIDHI-PRAYAS

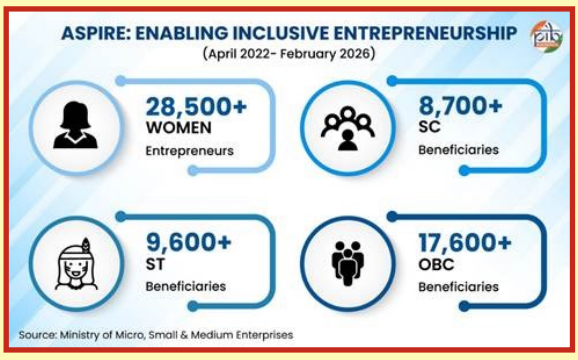
- A Department of Science and Technology (DST) initiative that s**upports innovators in converting ideas into working prototypes.**
- By 2025–26, it had supported 2,408 innovators, producing around 1,790 prototypes.

Strengthening, Upscaling & Nurturing Local Innovations for Livelihood (SUNIL)

- Strengthens the livelihoods of **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** through locally appropriate, field-tested Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) solutions, skill development and social enterprise creation.

ASPIRE (A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship)

- Promotes rural entrepreneurship through Livelihood Business Incubators.



- By June 2026, 109 incubators had been approved across 27 States and Union Territories.

Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)

- A sub-scheme of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) under the Ministry of Rural Development.
- Promotes **rural non-farm enterprises by supporting Self-Help Group (SHG)** members and their families with financial assistance, business training, mentoring and market linkages.

PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)

- Supports micro food-processing enterprises through financial assistance, training, branding and marketing, with emphasis on the **One District One Product (ODOP) approach.**
- By July 2026, the scheme had crossed 2 lakh credit-linked loan sanctions.
- Women accounted for approximately 44% of beneficiaries.

State-Level Agri-Tech Hubs

- **Maharashtra** launched the MahaAgri-AI Policy 2025-2029 with a ₹500 crore allocation
- **Kerala** initiated the World Bank-supported KERA project to fund climate-resilient agriculture and up to 150 startups.

Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)

- Enacted under the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, under the Ministry of Rural Development. It came into force nationwide on 1 July 2026, replacing MGNREGA.
- Guarantees **125 days of wage employment per financial year** to every eligible rural household whose adult members volunteer for **unskilled manual work,** enhancing rural livelihood security.

COOPERATIVES FOR SHARED PROSPERITY

Krishi Sakhi Convergence Programme (KSCP)

- A joint initiative of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the Ministry of Rural Development**, launched under the Lakhpati Didi initiative to train and certify rural women as **agricultural para-extension workers.**
- Krishi Sakhis are **experienced women farmers who receive 56 days of training** in sustainable agriculture, soil health, natural farming, seed management, livestock management and bio-inputs.



CLIMATE READY RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

National Unified Scheme for Compressed Biogas (CBG) – GOBARdhan

- Approved by the Union Cabinet in August 2026, with an outlay of ₹23,731 crore for FY 2026–27 to FY 2035–36.
- It is administered by the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.**
- Promotes the conversion of cattle dung, agricultural residue and organic waste into Compressed Biogas (CBG), supporting clean energy, waste management, rural livelihoods and reduced dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Key Data Points

- **Climate Vulnerability:** Over **75% of Indian districts** (home to over 638 million people) are **hotspots for extreme climate events**, and extreme floods have increased nearly eightfold over the past 50 years.
- **Economic and Human Impact:** Between 1995 and 2024, India experienced nearly **430 extreme weather events** causing roughly $170 billion in economic losses and 80,000 fatalities.
- **Plastic Roads:** By July 2025, 43,700 km of roads were constructed using waste plastic technology.

Examples of Strategic Implementation

- **Modhera, Gujarat:** The first village in India powered entirely by solar energy, featuring 1,300 rooftop panels that eliminated electricity bills and generated supplementary income through grid sales.
- **Killai, Tamil Nadu:** Transformed from a vulnerable coastal settlement into a model climate-resilient village through ecosystem restoration and renewable energy under the state's Climate Resilient Villages programme.

EMPOWERING PANCHAYATS SHGS AND YOUTH

SabhaSaar

- An **AI-powered tool available in 23 language**s used by Gram Panchayats to **digitally document and summarize Gram Sabha meetings.**
- By January 2026, 1.11 lakh Gram Panchayats used the tool, generating 3.6 lakh minutes of meetings.

Examples

- **Chembilode Gram Panchayat (Kerala):** Used Kudumbashree neighbourhood groups to circulate Gram Sabha notices and increase women's participation in local decision-making.
- **Gandhar Gram Panchayat (Punjab):** Followed the "Drain First, Road Later" principle, prioritising drainage before road construction to address waterlogging and prevent road damage.

RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- Aims to install rooftop solar systems to make households active participants in energy generation while reducing electricity bills.
- Targeting 1 crore households by 2026-27, the scheme had **installed 39.72 lakh systems by July 22, 2026,** creating an estimated 17 lakh jobs.

PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan)

- Launched in March 2019 by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** to **provide energy and water security to farmers** and increase their income.
- **Three Components:**
  - **Component A:** Decentralised grid-connected solar power plants (up to 2 MW).
  - **Component B:** Installation of standalone solar agricultural pumps.
  - **Component C:** Solarisation of existing grid-connected agricultural pumps, including feeder-level solarisation.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- Launched in January 2023 by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, with an outlay of ₹19,744 crore up to FY 2029–30.
- To make India a global hub for green hydrogen production, use and export.
- **By 2030, it targets 5 million metric tonnes (MMT)** of annual production capacity and around 125 GW of additional renewable energy capacity.

Key Data Points

- **Total Renewable Capacity:** Reached 288.59 GW (including large hydro) by June 30, 2026, comprising 162.15 GW of solar and 57.44 GW of wind power.
- **Non-Fossil Fuel Milestone:** India achieved 50% cumulative installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources in June 2025, over five years ahead of its 2030 Paris Agreement commitment. The ultimate target is 500 GW by 2030

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

NAXAL-FREE INDIA – TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNAL SECURITY

Why in the News?

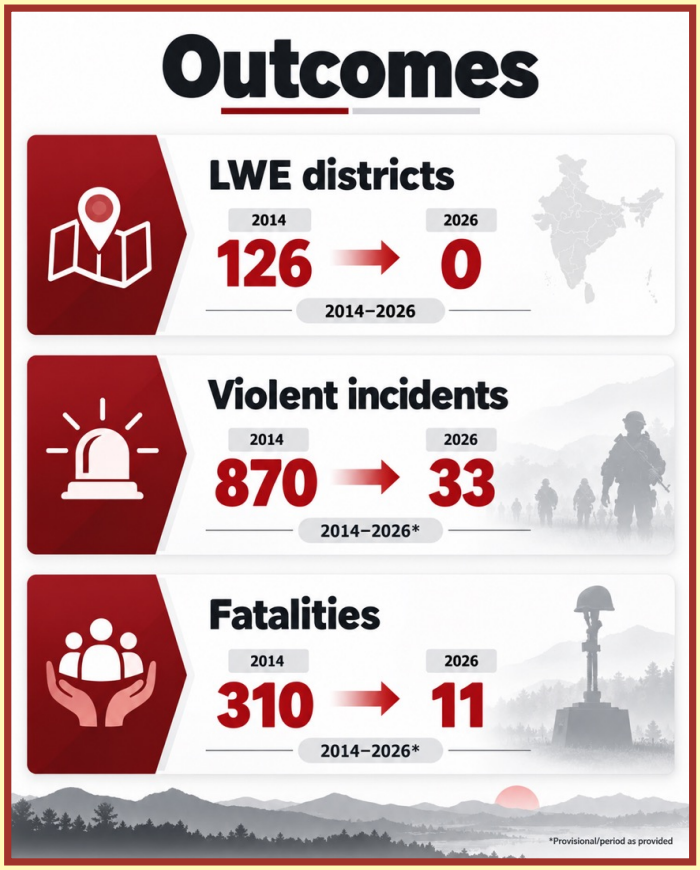
According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, India became effectively free from Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) by 31 March 2026, with no district remaining classified as LWE-affected.

Introduction

- Originating from the Naxalbari uprising of 1967, Left-Wing Extremism became a major internal security challenge in India, driven by Maoist ideology and aggravated by socio-economic grievances, governance deficits and regional inequalities.

Factors Behind the Decline of Naxalism

- **Integrated security operations:** Deployment of CAPFs, CoBRA, District Reserve Guards (DRG) and specialised state forces weakened Maoist networks.
- **Intelligence-driven operations:** Drones, satellite imagery, surveillance technology and improved intelligence sharing strengthened counter-insurgency capabilities.
- **Institutional coordination:** The National Policy and Action Plan (2015) promoted cooperation between the Centre, states and security agencies.
- **Financial disruption:** NIA and ED investigations targeted extremist financing and support networks.
- **Surrender and rehabilitation:** Financial assistance, vocational training and livelihood opportunities encouraged cadres to return to mainstream society.



Way Forward

- Strengthen community policing, intelligence networks, rehabilitation programmes, local self-governance and continued monitoring of formerly affected regions.

Conclusion

- India's progress against LWE demonstrates the effectiveness of a security–development–governance approach. Sustaining peace requires transforming operational success into long-term institutional trust and inclusive development.

COUNTER-INSURGENCY STRATEGY – SECURITY, TECHNOLOGY AND COORDINATION

Introduction

- Modern counter-insurgency extends beyond military operations to encompass intelligence, technological capabilities, financial disruption, rehabilitation and administrative coordination. India's anti-Naxal strategy illustrates this multidimensional approach.

Key Components of India's Counter-Insurgency Strategy

1. National Policy and Action Plan, 2015

- Adopted a whole-of-government approach to LWE.

- Integrated security, development and protection of local communities.

2. Specialised Security Architecture

- **CoBRA:** Commando Battalion for Resolute Action.
- **DRG:** District Reserve Guard, using local terrain knowledge.
- **STF:** Special Task Forces for targeted operations.
- Fortified police stations and forward security camps improved operational reach.

3. Technology-Led Operations

- UAVs and satellite imagery for surveillance.
- Geospatial intelligence and communication monitoring.
- Data analytics to identify suspicious movements and patterns.

4. Financial and Organisational Disruption

- Investigations by the NIA and ED targeted extremist funding.
- Improved inter-state intelligence coordination disrupted logistical support networks.

5. Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- Surrender incentives and skill training supported the return of former cadres to civilian life.
- Community engagement helped rebuild confidence in public institutions.

Key Government Schemes

Scheme	Objective
Security Related Expenditure (SRE)	Operational expenses, training and rehabilitation support
Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS)	Strengthen police infrastructure and specialised security capabilities
Special Central Assistance (SCA)	Address critical infrastructure and development gaps

Challenges

- Preventing regrouping and ideological radicalisation.
- Ensuring intelligence operations respect constitutional rights.
- Sustaining Centre–State coordination after major security operations.
- Avoiding civilian harm and protecting forest-dependent communities.

Way Forward

- Develop a technology-enabled, intelligence-led and people-centric security architecture with independent accountability, local police capacity and strong rehabilitation systems.

Conclusion

- The future of counter-insurgency lies in combining smart security with democratic accountability. Lasting success depends not merely on eliminating armed networks but on strengthening citizens' confidence in constitutional governance.

FROM RED CORRIDOR TO DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR – TRIBAL WELFARE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Introduction

- Left-Wing Extremism in India was aggravated by development deficits, tribal marginalisation, land-related grievances and weak state presence. Sustainable peace therefore requires addressing these structural challenges through inclusive development and community empowerment.

Key Dimensions of Socio-Economic Transformation

- **Infrastructure development:** Construction of 15,189 km of roads and commissioning of 9,497 mobile towers improved connectivity in LWE-affected regions.
- **Financial inclusion:** Opening of 1,804 bank branches and installation of 1,321 ATMs expanded access to formal banking.
- **Education and skills:** Sanctioning of 259 Eklavya Model Residential Schools and establishment of 49 Skill Development Centres strengthened educational opportunities.
- **Tribal welfare:** PM-JANMAN and Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan seek to address infrastructure

and service-delivery gaps.

- **Cultural inclusion:** Initiatives such as Bastar Pandum and Bastar Olympics encourage tribal participation and preserve cultural identity.

Case Study: Bastar, Chhattisgarh



Bastar illustrates the transition from conflict-affected territory towards development-oriented governance.

- **Bastariya Battalion (2017):** Recruitment of local tribal youth into security forces strengthened local participation.
- **Infrastructure:** Over 3,240 km of roads and 889 mobile towers improved connectivity.
- **Rehabilitation:** A plan was prepared to rehabilitate approximately 3,000 surrendered cadres.
- **Cultural revival:** Bastar Pandum and Bastar Olympics have supported community participation and cultural identity.

Continuing Challenges

- Historical land alienation and forest-rights disputes.
- Displacement and environmental concerns associated with mining.
- Limited quality employment and healthcare in remote regions.
- Ensuring meaningful tribal participation in local decision-making.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen tribal rights:** Effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and PESA Act, 1996.
- **Participatory governance:** Empower Gram Sabhas and local self-governing institutions.
- **Livelihood diversification:** Promote forest-based enterprises, skill development and sustainable agriculture.
- **Conflict prevention:** Continue development and security support in the 37 Legacy and Thrust districts identified by the government.

Conclusion

Lasting peace in former Naxal-affected regions must move beyond the absence of violence towards social justice, tribal empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. The ultimate measure of success will be the restoration of dignity, democratic participation and equitable development.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Judicial Intervention to Safeguard Free and Fair Elections

- In ***YSRCP v. State of Andhra Pradesh (2026)***, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that free and fair elections form part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and that constitutional courts cannot remain passive when electoral processes are undermined by violence, intimidation or illegal practices.
- It clarified that judicial restraint during ongoing elections is not an absolute bar to intervention, as judicial review remains essential to safeguarding electoral integrity. The Court also emphasised the constitutional responsibility of State Election Commissions under Article 243ZA to ensure fair electoral participation and an unhindered nomination process.

Bribery Cannot Be Shielded Under Official Duty: Supreme Court

- In ***Tejaram v. State of Rajasthan (2026),*** the Supreme Court held that Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which requires prior approval for investigating certain offences involving public servants, does not apply to cases involving demands for bribes, as such acts are unrelated to official duties.
- The Court clarified that the provision protects only decisions or recommendations made in the discharge of official functions and cannot serve as blanket immunity against corruption investigations.

Supreme Court on Interim Compensation for Road Accident Victims

- In ***S. Rajaseekaran v. Union of India (2026)***, the Supreme Court directed the Centre to widely publicise the Compensation to Victims (Interim Relief) Scheme, 2026, framed under Section 164A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to ensure timely financial assistance and awareness among road accident victims.
- The Court emphasised that welfare legislation must be effectively implemented and made accessible to its intended beneficiaries. It also sought clarification on whether the scheme covers accidents involving uninsured vehicles, highlighting concerns over equitable compensation.

Supreme Court Strengthens Electoral Transparency and Voter Accountability

- In ***Rajkumar Madki v. Dr. Shailendra Beldale (2026)***, the Supreme Court held that ordinary citizens and voters can file criminal complaints against election candidates for furnishing false information or concealing material facts in election affidavits under Section 125A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- The Court clarified that Section 195(1) of the CrPC, which restricts private complaints for certain offences, does not apply to such cases, thereby strengthening citizen participation in electoral accountability. However, it emphasised that courts must prevent frivolous or politically motivated complaints, balancing accountability with protection against harassment.

Supreme Court Strengthens Anti-Human Trafficking Mechanism

- In ***Prajwala v. Union of India (2026)***, the Supreme Court directed all States and Union Territories to notify Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) as police stations to strengthen the investigation and prevention of human trafficking, particularly involving women and children subjected to sexual exploitation.
- The Court emphasised the effective implementation of its Victim Protection Plan framed under Article 142 of the Constitution, directing authorities to designate nodal officers, identify recognised welfare institutions under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, and ensure coordination between the Centre and States.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the Superintendent of Police (SP) in a district. One night, a luxury car driven by a 17-year-old boy at high speed hits a motorcycle, killing two persons and critically injuring another. Preliminary investigation reveals that the minor was driving without a valid licence and was allegedly under the influence of alcohol. The minor's father is a highly influential District Judge, who enjoys considerable respect within the local administration. Soon after the accident, the police received informal instructions from senior officials to handle the matter discreetly. The judge allegedly contacts senior police officers seeking leniency for his son, while attempts are made to portray an adult family driver as the person responsible for the accident. Meanwhile, CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts suggest that the minor was driving the vehicle. The victims belong to economically weaker families and demand justice. The incident attracts widespread media attention, triggering public protests and allegations that influential individuals receive preferential treatment under the law.

As the SP, you face a serious ethical dilemma between institutional pressure, professional integrity, impartial law enforcement and the constitutional principle of equality before the law.

Questions

a. Identify the ethical issues and stakeholders involved in the case.

b. What options are available to you as the SP? Evaluate their ethical implications.

c. How would you ensure a fair and impartial investigation while protecting the rights of the minor accused and securing justice for the victims?

d. Discuss how abuse of institutional influence, conflict of interest and preferential treatment undermine public trust in the criminal justice system.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Equality:** Kallakurichi SP Shahnaz Illyas ordered the lock of the Sri Kaliyuga Srinivasa Perumal Temple in Kuraal village, Tamil Nadu, to be broken after Dalit residents were allegedly denied entry for nearly 50 years. Police enabled them to offer prayers under protection, and 16 people were booked under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act over alleged caste discrimination.

2. **Environmental Ethics:** Bhopal's Kachra Cafe launched by the Bhopal Municipal Corporation allows residents to exchange segregated waste, including plastic, paper and e-waste, for food, groceries or digital "Kachra Coins". It promotes waste segregation, recycling and the circular economy, while supporting women's self-help groups (SHGs) through livelihood opportunities.

3. **Consumer Rights:** Bengaluru Consumer Commission ordered Berkowits Hair & Skin Clinic to pay ₹1 lakh compensation and ₹10,000 in legal costs to a woman who suffered facial burns and skin darkening during a ₹1,100 laser hair removal procedure. It also ordered a refund of ₹1,100 with 9% annual interest, citing deficiency in service and unfair trade practice.

4. **Lack of Accountability:** On 20 October 2026, Rajnandgaon SP Ankita Sharma, a Chhattisgarh IPS officer, fired an AK-47 into the air during Shastra Puja (weapon worship) on Dussehra. Following concerns over weapon-handling safety and police discipline, Chhattisgarh Police Headquarters issued her a show-cause notice seeking an explanation.

5. **Civic Responsibility:** Kolkata-based artist and heritage activist Mudar Patherya aged 63, has spent around a decade transforming nearly 400 electricity feeder boxes across the city into colourful artworks celebrating its cultural heritage and iconic personalities, funding the initiative himself.

6. **Empowerment:** Architect Shweta Runwal, inspired by her daughter Dhriti, who has Down syndrome, founded Tickle Your Art to transform artwork by neurodiverse artists into marketable products. Established in 2020, the social enterprise provides training and paid employment to neurodiverse artists.

7. **Innovation:** Vimal Kishore, a coffee-stall owner in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, developed Lailo, a customised car costing around ₹90,000, after a severe fever in infancy left his legs impaired and made conventional driving difficult. Funded by his coffee-stall earnings, the vehicle uses scooter parts and discarded Ambassador components and features solar power, GPS and a rear-view camera

MODEL ESSAY

"Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it."

Introduction

- Quote by ***Bertolt Brecht***
- In 1937, after Nazi German and Fascist Italian aircraft bombed Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, Pablo Picasso painted **Guernica**, depicting the horrors of civilian suffering – how art can challenge oppression and inspire political consciousness.
- Art is not merely a record of human triumphs and tragedies; it is a catalyst for social change.

Art as a Tool for Social Transformation

- **Forging Nationalist Identity:** Art builds collective identity and mobilises people against colonial rule. **Eg**: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Vande Mataram became a symbol of Indian nationalism.
- **Challenging Patriarchy:** Art questions gender roles and oppressive domestic expectations. **Eg**: Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) challenged traditional marriage norms through Nora's decision to leave her husband.
- **Anti-Fascist Resistance:** Art exposes authoritarianism through satire and ridicule. **Eg:** Charlie Chaplin's The Great Dictator (1940) mocked Hitler and Nazi ideology
- **Music as Political Resistance:** Music gives emotional force to protest and exposes systemic injustice. **Eg**: Billie Holiday's Strange Fruit (1939) brought public attention to the lynching of Black Americans.
- **LGBTQ+ Visibility:** Cinema challenges prejudice by portraying marginalised identities and relationships. **Eg**: Brokeback Mountain (2005) brought same-sex relationships into mainstream cinema.
- **Environmental Awakening:** Literature translates scientific concerns into public awareness and political pressure.**Eg**: Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) exposed the ecological dangers of pesticides.

Arguments Against Art as a Tool for Social Change

- **State Propaganda:** State-controlled art can promote ideology rather than independent thought. ***Eg:*** Soviet Socialist Realism portrayed idealised workers and farmers to glorify communism.
- **Commercialisation:** Markets can turn revolutionary symbols into profitable commodities. ***Eg:*** Che Guevara's portrait became a mass-produced fashion image on T-shirts.
- **Subjective Interpretation:** Audiences can interpret a work contrary to its creator's intention.
- **Escapism:** Entertainment may offer temporary relief rather than encourage social reform. ***Eg: Harry Potter*** provides a fantasy world for readers without necessarily motivating them to address real-world inequalities.

Synthesis

- By revealing poverty, discrimination and corruption, art challenges society's comfortable silence.
- Art transforms public awareness into resistance, reform and collective action

Conclusion

- **Picasso's Guernica illustrates the dual power of art:** a mirror exposing the horrors of war and a hammer challenging the ideologies that sustain it.
- Its greatest triumph is not capturing history on canvas, but rewriting what history makes possible.

Sample Quotes

- *He who cannot obey himself will be commanded." – Friedrich Nietzsche*
- *The need to be right is the sign of a vulgar mind." – Albert Camus*
- *The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.– George Bernard Shaw*

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS I: SOCIETY

Protection of Tribal Music and Intellectual Property Rights

- **Cultural Exploitation:** Tribal artists, particularly from Kerala's Paniya and Kattunayakan communities, face loss of recognition, commercial rights and royalties when their traditional music is used without adequate consent or compensation.
- **Research Finding:** A 2026 study published in the **Journal of Intellectual Property Rights (CSIR–NIScPR)** highlighted gaps in the Copyright Act, 1957, particularly concerning collective ownership of indigenous music.
- **Government Initiative:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the **Indian Performing Right Society (IPRS)**, launched Living Roots Originals (2026) to promote copyright protection, royalty-based income and economic empowerment of tribal musicians.

GS I: GEOGRAPHY

Record Pacific Ocean Warming and the Threat of a Super El Niño (2026–27)

- **Record Ocean Warming:** According to the ***U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),*** the Niño 3.4 region in the equatorial Pacific recorded a sea surface temperature of 30.06°C on October 5, 2026, the highest on record. NOAA estimated an 83% probability of a strong-to-very-strong El Niño during late 2026.

GS II: HEALTH

Medicine Overcharging and Gaps in Pharmaceutical Price Regulation

- **Weak Regulatory Enforcement:** According to the ***National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA),*** ₹8,447.4 crore (84%) of the ₹10,029.8 crore demanded from pharmaceutical companies for overcharging remained unrecovered as of March 2026. Over ₹5,800 crore was tied up in litigation.
- **Financial Burden on Households:** According to the ***National Statistics Office (NSO), Household Social Consumption: Health Survey (2025)***, medicines accounted for 19.4% of rural and 14.9% of urban hospitalisation expenditure, highlighting affordability challenges and the need for stronger price regulation.

GS II: EDUCATION

Inadequate Toilet Facilities for Children with Disabilities

- **Infrastructure Deficit:** According to The Hindu (October 2026), fewer than 4 in 10 schools in India have usable toilets for children with disabilities, highlighting major gaps in inclusive educational infrastructure.
- The ***UDISE+ 2024–25 Report (Ministry of Education)*** reveals that only 33.4% of schools have toilets accessible to Children with Special Needs (CwSN), compared with 16.64% in 2018–19, indicating progress but persistent exclusion.

GS III: EMPLOYMENT

Regional Disparities in Female Labour Force Participation in India

- **Rising Female Workforce Participation:** According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), rural Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) increased from 33% in 2019–20 to 45.9% in 2025, while urban participation rose from 23.3% to 27.7%.
- **North-East Leading in Employment Growth:** According to The Hindu (October 2026), Arunachal Pradesh recorded the highest average annual increase in rural FLFPR at 8.28 percentage points, compared with the national

average of 2.58 percentage points. It also led urban growth at 5.24 percentage points annually.

GS II: JUDICIARY

Delayed Legal Aid and the Crisis of Undertrial Prisoners in India

- **Undertrial Crisis:** According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Prison Statistics India 2022, over 75% of India's prisoners were undertrials, placing India fourth globally in terms of the proportion of undertrial prisoners.
- **Institutional Study:** A legal aid programme conducted by Prayas (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) and the Fair Trial Fellowship (National Law University, Delhi) across eight Maharashtra prisons (2018–2023), covering over 22,000 undertrials, recorded an 84% bail application success rate, compared with 26% for applications in the same district courts. This comparison does not establish causation.

GS II: ELECTORAL REFORMS

Disproportionate Flagging of Muslim Voters in Delhi's Electoral Roll Revision

- The Hindu data report titled "Muslims disproportionately flagged in Delhi SIR" raises concerns about the disproportionate identification of Muslim voters during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, highlighting potential risks of exclusion from democratic participation.

GS I: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tribal Customary Laws and Women's Inheritance Rights

- **Judicial Observation:** In ***Bejla Oraon v. Kali Das Oraon (2026***), the Supreme Court upheld the requirement of strict proof of tribal customs in inheritance disputes. The ruling favoured succession through the male lineage under Oraon customary law, highlighting tensions between cultural autonomy and gender justice.
- **Legal Exclusion:** Under Section 2(2) of the ***Hindu Succession Act, 1956,*** Scheduled Tribes are excluded from the Act unless the Central Government directs otherwise. Consequently, women in some tribal communities face unequal inheritance rights under patriarchal customs, raising concerns under Articles 14 and 15.
- **Need for Legal Reform:** In ***Kamla Neti v. Special Land Acquisition Officer (2022)***, the Supreme Court urged the government to examine inheritance discrimination against tribal women. The debate highlights the need to balance tribal cultural autonomy, women's property rights and constitutional equality, with meaningful participation of tribal women in legal reforms.

GS III: ENVIRONMENT

Feral Dogs Emerging as a Major Threat to Vulture Conservation in India

- **Scientific Study:** A study published in the **journal Biological Conservation (2025)** found that feral dogs significantly disrupt vulture feeding at carcass dumpsites in Rajasthan's Jorbeer Conservation Reserve, Bikaner, reducing vultures' feeding time by nearly 50% compared with dog-free sites.
- **Ecological Threat:** Feral dogs compete with vultures for carcasses and aggressively displace them, threatening species such as Egyptian vultures, Himalayan griffons and Eurasian griffons. This adds to existing threats such as veterinary diclofenac poisoning and habitat degradation.
- **Institutional Recommendation:** Abi T. Vanak of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) emphasised the need for dog-proof vulture feeding zones, better carcass management and regulation of free-ranging dog populations. The findings reinforce the importance of integrated ecosystem management and India's Action Plan for Vulture Conservation (2020–2025).

GS III: CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change and Occupational Health Risks Among Food Workers

» **Global Report:** According to the ***International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food),*** 2026, nearly 1.4 billion people work in the global food system, of whom 30% (416 million) earn below a living wage. Agriculture accounts for nearly one-third of occupational deaths globally, highlighting unsafe working conditions.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

DIAMONDIYNE

- It is a newly synthesized, three-dimensional carbon allotrope featuring an expanded, porous diamond-like network with mixed sp–sp^3 carbon hybridization.

HEAT STORM

- It is a newly defined meteorological and environmental concept representing a massive, supersized heat wave that covers at least 1% of the Earth's surface (approximately 5.1 million square kilometers).

FOREVER CHEMICALS, OR PFAS (PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES)

- They are a group of over 10,000 man-made synthetic compounds that do not break down easily in the environment or the human body.

MUSHROOM ROCK (ALSO CALLED A ROCK PEDESTAL, PEDESTAL ROCK, OR GOUR)

- It is a naturally occurring geological formation shaped like a mushroom, featuring a broad, cap-like top supported by a narrower base.

EQUILIBRIUM PRICE

- It is the market price where the quantity demanded by consumers equals the quantity supplied by producers. It is also known as the market-clearing price because there is neither an excess surplus nor an unsatisfied shortage at this level.