

Surge in Female Workforce Participation

Recent PLFS data shows that the **women's employment rate (WPR)** grew from 22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24.

- Unemployment rate dipped from **5.6 per cent to 3.2 per cent** in the same period.
- Female employment grew by **96% in rural areas** and by **43% in urban areas**.
- **Women-Led Entrepreneurship**
 - ⊕ **Rise in Self-Employment:** Female self-employment increased by 30%, from 51.9% in 2017-18 to 67.4% in 2023-24.
 - ⊕ **Startups:** Nearly 50% of DPIIT-registered startups have at least one woman director.
 - ⊕ **Access to Finance:** Women received 68% of total **MUDRA** loans and form 44% of **PM SVANidhi** beneficiaries, promoting financial inclusion and self-reliance.
 - ⊕ **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** The number of women-led MSMEs almost doubled, from 1 crore in 2010-11 to 1.92 crore in 2023-24, generating over 89 lakh jobs for women.
- **Gender budgets have increased by 429%** in the last decade, signifying a paradigm shift **from women's development to women-led development**.
- Ensuring **70% female workforce participation** is identified as a critical pillar for achieving the vision of **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

Women's development and Women-led development

- **Women development** involves programmes designed to help women, without necessarily involving them in their planning, implementation and evaluation.
- **Women-led development** is a paradigm shift where women are seen not just as women, but as leaders, decision-makers and innovators in the process of development.

Tribal Ministry Seeks Separate Census for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

If finalised, **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI)** will count PVTGs independently in the **upcoming Census (2027)**.

Need for Separate Census for PVTGs

- PVTGs have historically remained **underrepresented in official data**.
 - ⊕ **Around 40 of the 75 PVTGs** are listed as STs and were included in the 2011 Census.
 - ◆ The remaining groups, often sub-sections of larger ST communities, were not distinctly enumerated.
- For **designing targeted, need-based programmes**, e.g., the PM-JANMAN programme, to bridge socio-economic gaps for PVTGs across over 200 districts.

About PVTGs

- They are among the most marginalized and vulnerable sections among tribal communities.
 - ⊕ The **Dhebar Commission** in the early 1960s first recognised these groups.
- There are **75 identified PVTGs in 18 States**, and the **Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.
 - ⊕ A recent centre habitation-level survey estimated the PVTG population to be **45.56 lakh**.
 - ⊕ Largest populations: **Madhya Pradesh (12.28L)**, **Maharashtra (6.2L)**, **Andhra Pradesh (4.9L)**.
- **Criteria for identification include**
 - ⊕ Pre-agricultural level of technology,
 - ⊕ Low level of literacy,
 - ⊕ Economic backwardness,
 - ⊕ A declining or stagnant population.

Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI)

- **Set up in 1949** and comes under the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - ⊕ **Housing & Population Census:** Under Census Act, 1948.
 - ⊕ **Civil Registration System (CRS):** Under the **Registration of Births & Deaths (RBD) Act (1969)** which provides for the compulsory registration of births and deaths.
 - ⊕ **Sample Registration System (SRS):** Important source of vital rates like Birth Rate, Death Rate, Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate.
 - ⊕ **National Population Register (NPR):** In pursuance to provisions contained in **Citizenship Rules, 2003** framed under the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
 - ⊕ **Mother Tongue Survey:** Documents the linguistic features of the selected mother tongues.

Trump's Intel Deal and the Reinvention of U.S. State Capitalism

The U.S. acquiring a 10% stake in Intel marks a notable shift in its traditional free-market capitalist model towards a more **State-Led Capitalism**.

- The government's investment is structured as a **passive, non-voting ownership stake**.

Brief History of State-led capitalism

- In the 1960s, European countries such as France and Britain intervened in **strategic sectors like computers and aerospace** to create competition on a global scale.
- In India, **PSUs were established** to facilitate rapid industrialisation, ensure state control over strategic sectors, and promote balanced regional development after independence.

About State-led Capitalism

- An economic system where the **government exerts significant control over the economy**, often through ownership of key industries and strategic resource allocation, while still operating within a market-based framework.

Pros	Cons
Ensures strategic control over critical industries . Eg- Atomic Energy.	Risk of inefficiency, corruption, and political interference. Eg- Losses in Air India.
Promotes long-term investments in sectors unattractive to private players.	Can crowd out private sector competition and innovation.
Safeguards national security and employment.	Fiscal burden on taxpayers.

About Free Market Capitalism

- An economic system characterized by **private ownership of the means of production**, minimal government intervention, and decisions made through the forces of supply and demand.

Pros	Cons
Encourages competition, innovation , and efficiency.	Market failures in essential sectors (health, environment, infrastructure).
Attracts global investment and fosters entrepreneurship .	Can widen inequality and neglect strategic needs .

Gram Sabhas hold authority to prepare CFR management plans

Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has clarified that **Community Forest Resource (CFR) Gram Sabhas**, through their CFR Management Committees, hold sole authority to formulate **CFR Management Plans (CFRMP)** as per **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**.

- This clarification came after the Chhattisgarh forest department issued an order designating itself as the nodal agency for implementing CFR rights, contradicting FRA provisions.
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006** aims to correct historical injustices faced by forest-dwelling communities and secure their livelihood and food needs.

Community Forest Resource (CFR) management plans

- **CFRMPs advance social equity by involving marginalised groups**, including women and tribal youth, in decision-making and economic activity, aligning with the FRA's vision of environmental justice.
 - ⊕ These plan must be tailored to their unique ecological, cultural and socio-economic contexts.
- This **community-led model stands in stark contrast to the top-down**, positioning Gram Sabhas as stewards of both sustainable forest management and resilient livelihoods.
- To facilitate this process, the **Union government in 2023 launched the Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan**.
 - ⊕ It is a separate programme that **enabled State governments to empanel NGOs to assist Gram Sabhas** in preparing CFR management plans.

Commercial, prohibited speeches not part of fundamental rights: SC

The court was hearing a case against social media comedians for “abusing freedom of speech and expression” by making insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities.

Key Judicial Observations

- **Commercial & Prohibited Speech Not Protected:** Freedom of speech (**Art. 19(1)(a)**) does not cover commercial speech or prohibited speech.
 - ⊖ **Hate speech/Prohibited speech:** Expressions that promote or incite **enmity, hatred, or violence against a group** based on inherent characteristics such as **religion, race, caste, or ethnicity**.
 - ⊖ **Commercial speech:** Advertising and related **forms of speech with economic intent**.
- **Accountability of Influencers:** Influencers with a large following **must act responsibly**.
- **Penal Action & Compensation:** Suggested proportionate **punitive measures under IT Rules and Cinematograph Act**.
- **Social Media Guidelines:** Court asked government to draft **comprehensive guidelines for regulating online content**.

SC Judgement related to Free Speech

- **Amish Devgan v. Union of India (2020):** It differentiated between **free speech and hate/prohibited speech and emphasised the responsibility** of influencers with wide reach.
- **Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015):** SC held that legitimate online expression cannot be **curtailed in the absence of imminent harm**.

Legal Framework for Online Content Regulation in India

- **The IT Act, 2000, and its amendments** regulate online content, with **Section 69A** empowering the government to block access to information.
- **Cinematograph Act, 1952**, prohibits content that criticises, maligns, or slanders a person or group.



Also in News



Guidelines/SOPs for Animal Blood Transfusion and Blood Banks

It is released by **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)**.

- The guidelines provide a **national framework for safe, ethical, and scientifically sound transfusion practices**.
 - ⊖ **Blood transfusion is globally recognized as a life-saving intervention**, essential for managing trauma, severe anaemia, surgical blood loss, infectious diseases, and **coagulation disorders in animals**.

Key highlights of Guideline

- Establish **national guidelines** for donor selection, blood collection, storage, and transfusion protocols.
- Integrate **One Health principles** to reduce zoonotic risks.
- Lay the foundation for a **national veterinary blood bank network**.
- **Support veterinary education, training, and research**.



World Food Programme

The Government of India and the **World Food Programme (WFP)** announced a **collaboration** aimed at addressing the **global hunger crisis**.

About United Nations WFP

- It is the **world's largest humanitarian organization** dedicated to saving lives in **emergencies and using food assistance** to build pathways toward **peace, stability, and prosperity**.
- It supports people recovering from **conflicts, disasters, and the impacts of climate change** by providing essential food aid and technical assistance.
- WFP operates in over **120 countries (including India)**.
- It was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2020**.



Tawi River

India warned Pakistan about a potential flood in river Tawi as a "humanitarian gesture".

- India communicated flood warnings through diplomatic channels, rather than through the Indus Waters Commission as required under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).
- **IWT remains in abeyance** after the Pahalgam attack.

About Tawi River

- **Origin:** It originates from the **Kailash Kund glacier (Kali Kund)** near **Bhaderwah** in **Doda district**.
- **Tributary:** Left bank tributary of Chenab River.
- **Importance:** Considered as the "Lifeline" of Jammu city.



Snow Leopard

A study in Jammu and Kashmir reveals that common leopards are encroaching on snow leopard habitats possibly due to climate change.

About Snowleopard

- **Habitat in India:** Largely found in **Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- **Features:** Smokey-grey fur with dark rosettes; solitary; active at dawn and dusk.
 - ⊖ Unlike the other big cats like tigers and lions **cannot roar**.
- State animal of **Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - ⊖ **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
 - ⊖ **CITES:** Appendix I
 - ⊖ **India:** Schedule I and IV of **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.



Rare Earth Magnet

Automakers are cutting features and seeking alternatives due to a shortage of rare earth magnets.

About Rare Earth Magnets

- These are types of permanent magnets made from **alloys of rare earth** elements.
 - ⊖ The rare earth elements (REE) are a set of seventeen elements.
- **Properties:** High density, high conductivity, exceptional magnetic strength, and high energy density.
- **Types of Magnets:** Mainly of two types: Neodymium (NdFeB) and Samarium-Cobalt (SmCo).
- **Applications:** Enable compact, powerful magnets used in electronics, clean energy, healthcare, and automotive industries.

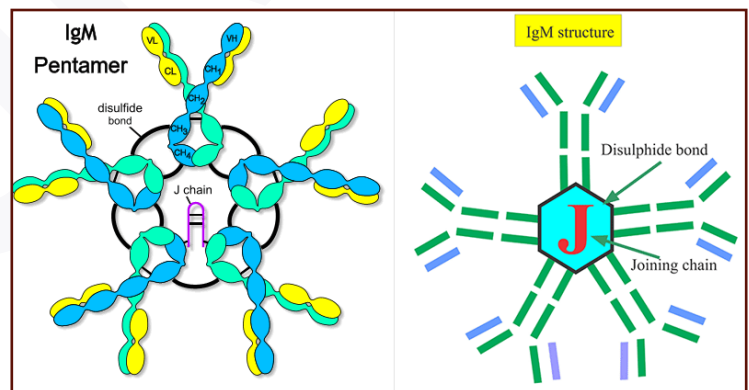


Immunoglobulin M (IgM) Antibody

New study shows that IgM antibodies **can also act as mechanical stabilisers of harmful proteins**.

About Immunoglobulin M (IgM) Antibody

- It's the **largest and first antibody** immune system makes when fighting off viruses, bacteria, parasites or other harmful invaders.
 - ⊖ Antibodies are **protective proteins** produced by the immune system.
- It's also the first antibody the immune system starts to develop as a **fetus**.
- They are found in **blood and lymph**.



Place in News



Fiji Islands (Capital: Suva)

India and Fiji have announced new measures to strengthen defence and maritime security cooperation.

Political Features

- **Location:** The Republic of Fiji is in the South Pacific Ocean.
- It comprises about 330 islands and 500 smaller islets and reefs.

Geographical Features

- **Major Islands:** Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.
- **Topography:** Volcanic larger islands; Mount Tomaniivi (1,324 m) is the highest peak.
- **Coral Islands:** Smaller islands are coral and surrounded by reefs.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR