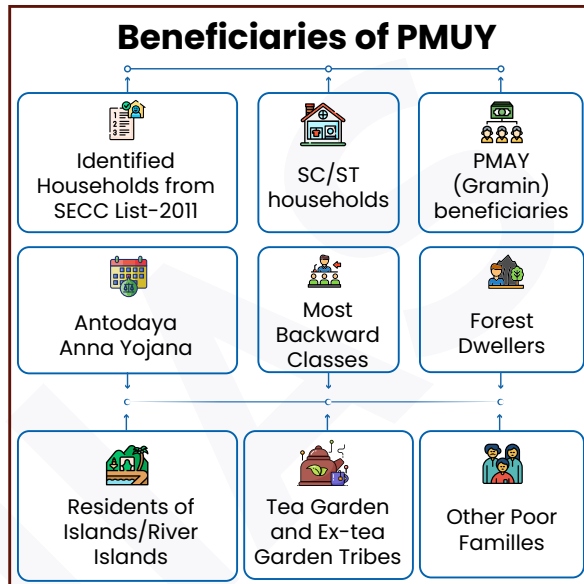


Government approves 25 lakh additional LPG connections under PM Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

With this expansion, the total number of PMUY connections will rise to 10.58 crore.

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) Scheme

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).
- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Launched:** Started in 2016 to provide 8 crore deposit-free LPG connections to rural poor.
 - ⊕ **Ujjwala 2.0 (Launched in 2021):** Additional allocation of 1.6 crore LPG Connections under PMUY scheme with special facility to migrant households.
 - ⊕ **Additional 75 lakh connections** were approved for FY 2023-24 to 2025-26 with the overall target of 10.35 crore LPG connections.
- **Implementation:** MoPNG in collaboration with Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), and state governments.
- **Eligibility:** An adult woman (atleast 18 years old) from the BPL families not having an LPG connection in her household satisfying either of following conditions (Refer infographic):
- **Benefits:**
 - ⊕ **Cash Assistance:** Rs.1600 for a connection for a 14.2 kg cylinder or Rs.1150 for a 5 kg cylinder.(Covers cost of a cylinder, pressure regulator, LPG hose, consumer card & Installation charges)
 - ⊕ Free first LPG refill and Stove (hot plate) along with deposit free connection.
 - ⊕ **Targeted Subsidy:** Rs.300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 12 refills per annum.
- **Exclusion:** Households with existing LPG connections from any Oil Marketing Company.
 - ⊕ A household with no adult female member is not eligible for Gas connection under the scheme.



Number of Polluted River Stretch' (PRS) Declined: Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

The CPCB tracks rivers health in **two-year cycles**, focusing particularly on **Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)** as a key indicator.

- **BOD** represents the **amount of oxygen consumed by bacteria** and other microorganisms while they **decompose organic matter** under **aerobic (oxygen is present) conditions** at a specified temperature.

Criteria for Deciding PRS

- The locations/ stretches of rivers where **BOD levels** exceed 3 mg/L, failing to meet the primary water quality standard for outdoor bathing, are classified as **polluted stretches or polluted locations**.
- PRS are categorized under **five Priority Classes (I to V)** on the basis of maximum BOD level observed.
 - ⊕ BOD of Priority I and V is more than 30.0 mg/ L and 3.0 – 6.0 mg/ L, respectively.

Initiatives Which Helped in Reducing River Pollution in India

- **Legislative & Policy Framework:** Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, etc.
- **National Missions & Flagship Programs:** National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), etc.
- **Community & Participatory Measures:** Swachh Bharat Mission.
- **Other:** Establishment of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs), etc.

Key Findings

- In 2023, monitoring recorded 296 polluted river stretches (PRS) across 271 rivers, compared to 311 PRS across 279 rivers in 2022.
- **Maharashtra** (54) had the maximum number of PRS or locations followed by Kerala (31).
- The number of '**Priority 1**' stretches reduced to 37 from 45 over the 2022 assessment.
 - ⊕ Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand had the maximum number of stretches or locations in 'Priority I'.

Time to Decriminalise Defamation: Supreme Court (SC)

During a recent hearing, the Supreme Court observed that the time has come to decriminalise defamation.

What is Defamation?

- **Defamation** is the act of communicating false information spoken, written, or published that harms the reputation of a person, group, or the immediate relatives of a person.
 - ⊕ Broadly classified into **two categories**, either libel (written words, images, or published work) or slander (information that is spoken).
- **Provisions/Status in India:**
 - ⊕ Under Indian law, a plaintiff can choose to sue for defamation as a criminal offence and/or as a civil offence.
 - ⊕ Currently, **Section 356** of the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita** criminalises defamation, replacing the earlier **Section 499** of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.

Why is there a need to Decriminalise Defamation?

- **Violates Freedom of Speech:** Criminal defamation rules could restrict **Article 19(1)(a)** rights, as fear of legal consequences may deter public expression of views.
- **Silences Dissent:** Can be used by private individuals to intimidate critics.
- **Other:** Threat to Freedom of the press, etc.

Recommendation and judgements related to Defamation

- **The Law Commission report (285th report):** It stressed that reputation, a vital facet of Article 21, cannot be compromised for another's freedom of speech at the cost of harming others' sentiments.
- The SC in **Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India (2016)** upheld **criminal defamation**, balancing free speech and the right to protect reputation.
- **State of Gujarat v. Hon'ble High Court of Gujarat (1998):** The court opined that an honour which is lost or life which is snuffed out cannot be recompensed.

Government extends ban imposed on National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN (K)) for 5 more years

Extension of ban **under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967** is because of NSCN (K)'s involvement in activities **prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India**.

- The group is actively involved in **insurgent activities**, extortion, and maintaining a nexus with other militant outfits in **Nagaland and some other North-Eastern states**.

Reasons for Insurgency in North-East

- **Political Alienation:** A post-colonial legacy of perceived neglect and limited political representation has fueled a sense of marginalization.
- **Ethnic and Cultural Aspirations:** Distinct tribal identities and their aspirations for autonomy have often manifested as armed movements.
- **Development Deficit:** Lack of economic opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and high unemployment rates.
- **Geopolitical Factors:** E.g., challenging terrain, porous international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh facilitate **easy movement of insurgents, arms and contraband**.



Steps Taken by the Government

- **Peace and Dialogue:** E.g., engaging through **peace accords**, such as **Mizo Peace Accord (1986)** and **Bodo Peace Accord (2020)**.
- **Inter-State Boundary Agreements:** Resolved long-standing disputes. **For example:** Assam and Arunachal Pradesh (2023) and Assam and Meghalaya (2022).
- **Constitutional provisions:** E.g., 5th & 6th schedule Provisions, Special status to Nagaland under article 371 (A), etc.
- **Developmental Initiatives:** E.g., through Schemes like **PM-DevINE** and increased funding for the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (**MDoNER**).

A balanced approach combining sustained dialogue, accelerated development, stronger border management and community participation is essential to achieve lasting peace and integration in the North-East.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger recently withdrew from International Criminal Court (ICC)

In a joint statement, all three countries accused the ICC of being “a **tool of neo-colonial repression** controlled by imperialist powers.”

About ICC (HQ: Hague, Netherlands)

- It is the **world's first permanent international criminal court**.
- **Origin:** Founded by **Rome Statute** (Adopted in 1998 and entered in force in 2002)
- **Jurisdiction:** Investigate, prosecute, and try **individuals (not groups or States)** accused of committing serious crimes
 - ⊕ **Crimes under ICC's jurisdiction:** Genocide, Crimes against humanity, War crimes, crime of aggression.
- **Membership:** 125 member countries
 - ⊕ **India, Israel, the US, Russia and China** are not parties to the Rome Statute.
- **Funding:** Mainly by States Parties.
- **Enforcement:** ICC's decisions are binding.

Issues with ICC

- **Perceived Bias:** It is accused of serving Western states' interests and functioning as a **neo-colonial or imperialist court**.
 - ⊕ **Neocolonialism:** Powerful countries exert **indirect control over developing nations** through **economic, political, cultural, or technological influence**.
- **Lack of Universal Jurisdiction:** Many powerful nations are not members, weakening the Court's reach.
 - ⊕ Also, only **Covers events occurred after July 1, 2002**.
- **Political Resistance:** E.g., France refused to enforce an ICC warrant against the Israeli PM, citing his head-of-state immunity as a non-member.
- **Enforcement Limitations:** The ICC lacks its own police force; it depends on member states for arrests and cooperation.

Also In News



Maitri 2.0 Cross-Incubation Programme

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) inaugurated the 2nd edition of India-Brazil **Cross-Incubation Programme in Agritech**, known as **Maitri 2.0**.

About Maitri 2.0

- It is a **joint initiative**, building up on Maitri 1.0, launched by ICAR to foster cooperation between Indian and Brazilian startups and innovators.
- **Objectives:**
 - ⊕ To strengthen resilient food systems by focusing on sustainable agriculture, digital technologies, and value-chain development.
 - ⊕ Provide a platform for co-incubation and cross-border startup exchanges.



Non-Deliverable Forward (NDF) Market

Standalone Primary Dealers (SPD) have been authorised by the Reserve Bank of India to deal in **non-deliverable rupee derivatives** in the **Non-Deliverable Forward (NDF) market**.

- **SPDs** are **primarily NBFCs** which have been granted authorisation to undertake the Primary Dealer activities in **Government Securities**.

About NDF market

- The NDF market is **typically an offshore market**, free from regulatory control of the currency's home monetary authority.
 - ⊕ **A Non-Deliverable Forward (NDF)** is a cash-settled derivative contract used to hedge on the exchange rate of currencies, particularly those with restrictions or capital controls.
- Unlike standard forward contracts, NDFs are **settled in cash**, typically in a freely convertible currency like the US dollar.





Production Gap Report 2025

Production Gap Report 2025 has been released by Stockholm Environment Institute, Climate Analytics, and International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Key Highlights

➤ Massive Overproduction:

- Planned fossil fuel production in 2030 will exceed levels consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C by more than 120% and to 2°C by 77%.
- Coal remains the most misaligned, with projected 2030 global output 500 % higher than the 1.5°C pathway.

➤ Fossil fuel subsidies by governments remain near record highs despite pledges to cut them.



Tirah Valley

More than 20 people were killed in the Tirah Valley of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in an explosion.

About Tirah Valley

- **Tirah is a mountainous tract** in west-central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan.
- It lies on the **Afghanistan-Pakistan border** between the Khyber Pass and Khanki Valley.
 - Khyber Pass, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province connects Kabul with Peshawar.
- It is inhabited mainly by **Afrīdī and Ōrakzay Pashtun tribes**.
- **The Tirah campaign (1897–98)** is notable in history in which the Afrīdī rose in a jihad (holy war) against the British, captured the Khyber posts, and attacked forts near Peshawar.

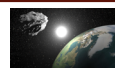


La Orchila Islands

Recently, Venezuela has begun military exercises on its Caribbean island of La Orchila as tensions soar amid US military activity in the region.

About the island

- **Location** : It is located off the coast of Venezuela in the Caribbean sea, Atlantic Ocean ,that hosts a Venezuelan military base.



Quasi-Moon

Astronomers have identified a tiny quasi-moon, 2025 PN7, orbiting near Earth for about 60 years.

About Quasi-Moon (a.k.a. Quasi-satellite)

- A quasi-moon is a celestial body that:
 - **Orbits the Sun**, appearing to travel with a planet due to a synchronized orbit.
 - Primarily influenced by the sun's gravity, not the planet.
 - Is **not a true moon**, as it does not directly orbit the planet.
- Astronomers have previously identified **6 known quasi-moons of Earth**.



Vyommitra

ISRO Chief V. Narayanan reveals AI-powered Vyommitra robot which will fly in an uncrewed Gaganyaan mission this December.

About Vyommitra

- **Developed by:** ISRO.
- AI-enabled half-humanoid robot.
- **Vyommitra is a name derived from two Sanskrit words** namely, "Vyoma" (meaning Space) and "Mitra" (meaning Friend).
- **This Female Robot Astronaut** is equipped with the capability to monitor Module Parameters, issue Alerts and execute Life Support operations.
- **Perform tasks** such as operating six panels and responding to the queries.



Siyom River

Recently, PM laid the foundation of 2 two hydroelectric projects (**Heo and Tato-I**) on Siyom River, in Arunachal Pradesh, close to the border with China.

About Siyom River

- **Originates** from the eastern Himalayas.
- Flows for much of its range from West to East, before joining the **Siang (name used for Brahmaputra River in Arunachal Pradesh)**.

Place in News



Morocco (Capital: Rabat)

India and Morocco signed a **MoU on defence cooperation** in Rabat.

Political Features

- Located in the **northwest corner of Africa**.
- It is the **only African country** with coastal exposure to both the **Atlantic Ocean** and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Land Borders:** Algeria and Western Sahara.

Geographical Features

- **Highest Point:** Mount Toubkal
- **Longest River:** Draa river
- The high **Atlas Mountains** separate the mild coastline from the harsh Sahara.

