

Districts most affected by Naxalism brought down to 3 from 6

Now only three districts of **Chhattisgarh** (Bijapur, Sukma and Narayanpur) are most affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

➤ The number of **LWE affected districts** has also been further brought down to just 11 from 18.

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India

➤ **Background:** Originated from the Naxalbari movement of 1967 in West Bengal.

➤ **Ideology:** Rooted in socio-economic inequalities and driven by Maoist principles, Naxalism has historically impacted some of the most remote, underdeveloped, and tribal-dominated regions of the country.

➤ The government has set a target to **completely eradicate** the **LWE by the 31st of March 2026**.

India's multidimensional counter-LWE strategy

➤ **National Action Plan and Policy (2015):**

⌚ It includes targeting of top leaders as well as over ground workers, countering the nefarious ideology, choking of finances, enhanced coordination between states and centre governments, etc.

➤ **SAMADHAN strategy:** It includes Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation and training, etc.

➤ **Development Interventions:**

⌚ **Financial Inclusion** efforts including opening bank branches, ATMs, and post offices, and operationalizing Banking Correspondents.

⌚ **Skill Development and Education** initiatives like establishing ITIs, Skill Development Centres, and Eklavya Model Residential Schools.

⌚ **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** for providing personal amenities and benefitting the local population.

➤ **Community Engagement and Perception Management:** E.g., Civic Action Programme (CAP) humanizes security forces and builds rapport between them and local people.

➤ **Other:** Surrender-cum-rehabilitation of naxalites, etc.

Supreme Court Allows Limited Use of Green Crackers in Delhi-NCR

The Supreme Court has **temporarily eased the blanket ban** on firecrackers in the **Delhi-NCR**, allowing the use of **government-approved green crackers**.

Key Highlights of SC Directions

➤ Usage is strictly limited to **specified days and time slots**.

➤ Only **NEERI-approved** crackers can be sold through **authorized outlets**.

➤ Crackers containing **banned chemicals** or sold **via e-commerce platforms** remain **prohibited**.

➤ **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** will monitor air quality to assess the impact of this temporary relaxation.

Significance

➤ **The SC's decision reflects a pragmatic balance between** environmental protection **and** cultural traditions, **recognizing the need to respect both public health and festive sentiments**.

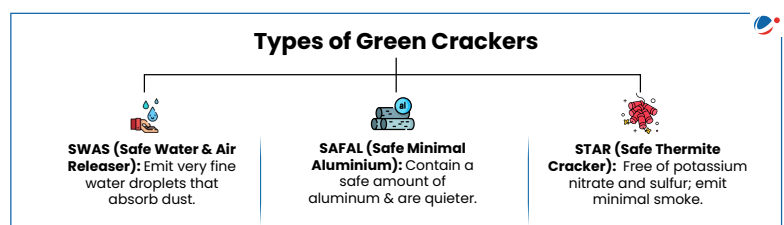
➤ It may also serve as a pilot initiative for evidence-based policymaking, **depending on the air quality data collected during this period**.

What are Green Crackers?

➤ Developed by **CSIR-NEERI**, green crackers are designed to **reduce environmental impact** compared to traditional fireworks.

➤ While **not entirely pollution-free**, they **cut particulate matter (PM) emissions by at least 30%** and exclude harmful chemicals such as **barium nitrate, arsenic, lithium, and mercury**.

➤ They were first introduced in the **Arjun Gopal vs Union of India (2018)** judgment, which **banned conventional firecrackers**.



RBI Governor suggested other central banks to promote CBDCs over stablecoin

The suggestion comes in the backdrop of recent global developments such as **Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins Act (GENIUS Act)**, **Digital Asset Basic Act bill** of South Korea, etc.

About Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) and Stablecoin

- CBDC is a new form of money that exists only in digital form.
 - ⊕ Instead of printing money, the **central bank issues** widely accessible digital coins so that digital transactions and transfers become simple.

- A **stablecoin** is a programmable **cryptocurrency** whose value is **pegged** to another asset, most often the US Dollar or other currencies.

Why does CBDC need to be preferred over Stablecoin ?

- **Sovereign Backing:** CBDC are considered legal tender, i.e. they are recognised and accepted by the government for every transaction.
 - ⊕ CBDCs operate within a **regulated framework**, ensuring consumer protection, etc. unlike many stablecoins which lack regulatory oversight.
- **Cross-Border Payment Efficiency:** CBDCs can simplify and speed up international trade payments, reducing reliance on intermediaries like SWIFT.
- **Other:** Better integration with monetary policy, promotes inclusive and low-cost public payment systems, etc.

CBDC in India

- **Digital Rupee** is India's CBDC.
- It is issued by the RBI in digital form and offers features similar to physical cash like convenience of use, guarantee of RBI, finality of settlement, etc.
- It is **stored** in the user's **digital wallet** and can be used to receive / send money, and / or make payment for transactions, just like any physical ₹ note.
- The RBI is currently conducting pilot projects of two types of CBDCs – retail and wholesale.
 - ⊕ **Retail CBDC:** It is available to the general public via digital wallets, smartphone apps, etc.
 - ⊕ **Wholesale CBDCs:** Used among banks and other licensed financial institutions for interbank payments and securities transactions.

Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) highlights imbalanced fertilizer subsidies undermining yields and soil health

The CACP highlighted issues related with fertilizers in its recent report **Price Policy for Rabi Crops, Marketing Season 2024-25**.

Key Issues Highlighted

- **Decreasing fertilizer response:** Foodgrain production per kg of NPK fell from **12 kg (1960-69)** to **3 kg in 2020**.
- **Impact of Subsidy Structure:** Overuse of urea due to subsidies has caused **nutrient imbalances** and **lopsided soil fertility**.
- **Uneven Fertilizer Use:** In some States and districts, **per hectare use is higher** than required quantity, while in others, the use is very low.
 - ⊕ E.g., Some districts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu record > **500 KG per hectare** use which is far above recommended levels.
- **Dependent on imports of both raw materials and finished fertilizers:** About 30 % of demand is met through imports.

Recommendations of CACP

- **Phased Urea Price Increase:** Use subsidy savings to support P & K fertilizers.
- **Promote Integrated Nutrient Management (INM):** It integrates chemical fertilizers, organic manure, and bio-fertilizers.
- **Strengthening Soil Testing:** Upgrade labs, install modern equipment, and train staff for real-time soil analysis and advisory services.

Measures to address Fertilizers related Issues

- Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme.
- PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness Generation, Nourishment, and Amelioration of Mother-Earth (PM-PRANAM).
- Other Soil Health Card, Neem-Coated Urea, promotion of nano fertilizers, etc.



Decline of Pax Americana

The global order established after World War II, known as **Pax Americana**, is undergoing significant transformation and showing signs of strain.

- Historically, the **U.S. championed liberal democracy, open markets, & multilateral cooperation**, fostering security and economic growth.
- However, recent developments indicate a shift away from this model, creating a **leadership vacuum** in global affairs.

Factors Contributing Decline of Pax Americana

➤ Past:

- **Contradictory Actions:** U.S. interventions in Vietnam, the Middle East, and the 2008 financial crisis undermined its credibility.

➤ Current:

- **Policy Shifts:** President Trump's "**America First**" approach, including aggressive trade policies, further weakened U.S. influence.
- **Weakening of Multilateral Institutions:** Withdrawal from international agreements diminished **soft power**.

China's Rising Influence

- China is leveraging the U.S. retreat to position itself as a **defender of multilateralism**, expanding influence via initiatives like **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
- It has become the **largest trading partner for over 100 countries**, strengthening its regional & global presence.
- However, its **assertive foreign policy** in the **South China Sea**, human rights concerns, debt diplomacy, etc. limit its soft power and global acceptability.

Way Forward

- The decline of Pax Americana may lead to a more **fragmented world order (Pax Multipolaris)** & offers opportunities for nations like **India** to emerge as responsible global actors, shaping a more inclusive and equitable international system.

Opportunities for India

- India is pursuing **strategic autonomy**, aiming to fill the leadership vacuum through platforms like **BRICS**.
- By **diversifying economic partnerships, attracting investments, and advocating global reforms**, India can balance relations with major powers while advancing the interests of the **Global South**.



Also In News



IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

India's renowned wildlife conservationist, Vivek Menon, has been elected as the new Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) for the 2025-2029.

IUCN SSC

- It was established in 1949.
- It is a **science-based network** of more than **10,500** volunteer experts from almost every country of the world.
- **Role:** To provide **information to IUCN** on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, etc.



Samudra Shakti Exercise

5th Samudra Shakti exercise commenced in Visakhapatnam
About Samudra Shakti Exercise

- It is an India-Indonesia joint bilateral maritime exercise.
- It has two phases i.e., Harbour phase and Sea phase.



India-Canada Relations

India and Canada agreed on a new roadmap for their relations after talks between their foreign ministers.

- Relations between the two nations were strained for nearly two years after the Former Canadian Prime Minister alleged India's involvement in the assassination of a Sikh separatist.

Key-highlights

- Re-establish the **Canada-India Ministerial Energy Dialogue (CIMED)**.
- **Promote two-way trade for LNG & LPG** and investment in the oil and gas Exploration & Production sector, including clean technologies.
- Re-launch the **Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (JSTCC)**.
- **Collaborate on sustainable low-carbon fuels and technologies** such as green hydrogen, biofuels, Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) and electric mobility.
- **Emphasis on research partnerships in emerging technologies** (such as AI, cybersecurity, and fintech).



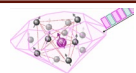
UN Human Rights Council

India Elected Unopposed to UN Human Rights Council for the Seventh Time.

- India is elected for a three-year term (2026–28) starting next year.

About UN Human Rights Council

- Overview:** It is an intergovernmental body within the United Nations system that promotes and protects human rights globally.
- Genesis:** Established in 2006 by the General Assembly by replacing the Commission on Human Rights.
- Membership:** It has 47 members elected annually by the UN General Assembly, serving three-year terms with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- Function:** Provides a global forum on human rights, adopts resolutions, reviews member states, and mandates investigations and special procedures.



Time Rondeau Crystal (TRC)

Scientists have discovered a new phase of matter called a time rondeau crystal.

About Time Rondeau Crystal

- It is a state of matter that exhibits a **unique mix of order and disorder over time**.
 - Unlike normal crystals, which have a repeating pattern in space, this crystal shows a **pattern in time**.
- Its behavior is **partly ordered and partly random**, not repeating exactly like traditional time crystals.
- This phase has been observed in **quantum systems**, such as **nuclear spins in diamonds**, under controlled experimental conditions.
- Significance:** Enhances **quantum computing**, applications in **time-sensitive technologies** etc.



REDD+

Only a small number of tropical forests carbon offset projects under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (REDD+) have achieved significant cuts in deforestation

About REDD+

- Developed by Parties to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
- REDD stands for '**Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation** in developing countries.
- The '+' stands for **additional forest-related activities that protect the climate, namely sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks**.
 - Under it, **developing countries can receive results-based payments for emission reductions** when they reduce deforestation.
- Part of the **Paris Agreement**.



Greenhouse Gas Bulletin by WMO

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released its 21st Greenhouse Gas Bulletin detailing the state of greenhouse gases.

Key Highlights

- Record CO2 Levels:** Atmospheric CO2 reached 423.9 ppm in 2024, up 3.5 ppm from 2023 (largest annual increase since records began in 1957).
- Warmest Year:** 2024 was the warmest year on record, with global temperatures 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels, breaching the 1.5°C Paris Agreement threshold for the first time.
- Radiative forcing (or climate forcing):** Long-lived greenhouse gases increased by 54%.
 - Radiative forcing** is defined as a measure that **allows for the approximate comparison of the climatic effects of various changes to the planet**.
 - Large radiative forcing indicates proportionate change in global mean temperature.
- Other Greenhouse Gases:** Methane and nitrous oxide also increased above pre-industrial levels.



Henley Passport Index

India's passport has **slipped to 85th rank** in **Henley Passport Index, 2025**.

- Singapore has strongest passports in the world

About Henley Passport Index

- It is released by **Henley & Partners**, a global leader in residence and citizenship planning.
- It is a ranking of all the **world's passports according to the number of destinations and their holders can access without a prior visa**.
- The index is based on **exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- Significance:** The stronger the passport, the more countries its holders can enter without a prior visa, a privilege that reflects diplomatic ties, economic influence, and international trust.



Prussian Blue Capsule

India has provided **critical Prussian Blue capsules** to Indonesia to help mitigate the effects of **Cesium-137 (Cs-137) contamination**.

- Cs-137 is a radioactive isotope produced during **nuclear fission** and used in medical devices and industrial gauges.
- Its exposure can cause **burns, acute radiation sickness, and even death**.

About Prussian Blue Capsules

- Prussian Blue works by **trapping radioactive cesium and thallium in the intestines**, preventing their absorption into the body.
- By helping eliminate these materials from the body, it **reduces radiation exposure** and limits potential health damage.

Place in News



Kyrgyzstan (Capital: Bishkek)

India, Kyrgyz Republic Agree to Strengthen Cooperation on Counterterrorism and Regional Security.

Political Features

- Location:** Central Asia.
- Bordering Nations:** Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Formerly it was a republic of the U.S.S.R., and declared its independence on August 31, 1991.

Geographical Features

- Major Mountain Ranges:** Tien Shan, Kok Shaal-Tau, Alay, Trans-Alay, etc.
- Highest Point:** Victory (Pobedy) Peak (7,439 m).
- Major Rivers:** Naryn, Chu, Syr Darya
- Major Lakes:** Lake Ysyk (Issyk-Kul)



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI