

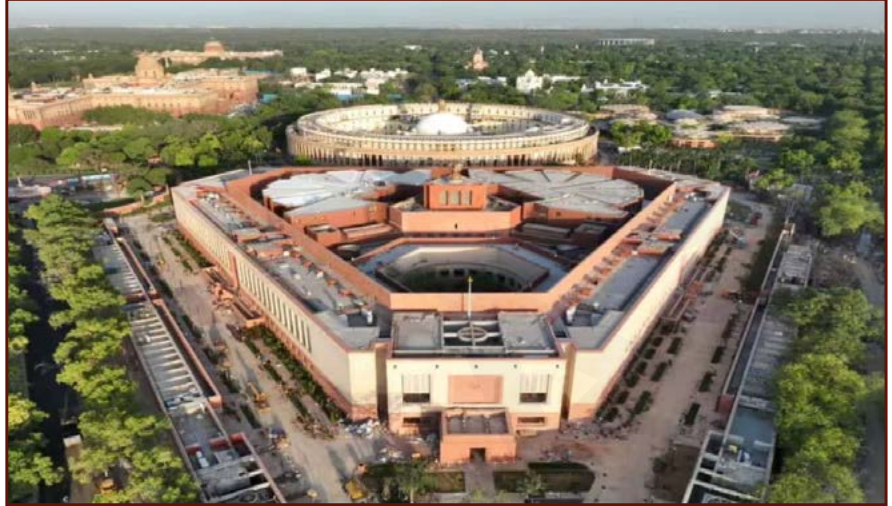
## DRPSC presents review of Autonomous Bodies under Department of Higher Education

The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports presented the report on Autonomous Bodies.

➤ **Autonomous bodies** are set up either through a specific **Act of Parliament** or as **societies** under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

### Key Issues with Autonomous Bodies

- **NTA:** Leakage (NEET-UG), postponement (CUET), declaration of results of examinations, vendor management, etc.
- **NAAC:** Long and Bureaucratic process of accreditation, corruption allegations etc.
- **UGC:** Vacant position of the Chairperson, Delay in Draft UGC Regulations, 2025 finalization, Infrastructure deficit and faculty (EWS) recruitment.



➤ **Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR):** Inadequacy of the current budget for the ICHR.

➤ **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR):** Non Implementation of recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission, staff shortage etc.

### Recommendations as per report

- **NTA:** Ensure transparency in paper setting, administration, and correction, timely conduct of examination, pen and paper mode etc.
- **NAAC:** The accreditation process for HEIs needs to be streamlined, flexibility for institutes in tribal and rural areas etc.
- **UGC:** New Chairperson, finalization of draft regulations (include caste-based harassment, disability) etc.
- **ICHR:** Increase the budget for the Council, infrastructure enhancement etc.
- **ICSSR:** Pay parity, staff appointment etc.

## India calls on Big Cat Range Nations to join International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

India also invited all big cat range countries to the Global Big Cats Summit, to be hosted by India, in New Delhi in 2026.

### About IBCA

- **Genesis:** Launched in 2023 by India for conservation of **seven big cat species** - tigers, lions, snow leopards, cheetahs, leopards, pumas and jaguars.
- **Organizational Nature:** IBCA is a **multi-country, multi-agency coalition** comprising of 95 big cat range countries, non-range countries, conservation partners, scientific organizations, business groups and corporates with an interest in big cat conservation.
- **Secretariat:** New Delhi, India.
- **Members:** 18 member countries and three observer countries.
  - ⊕ All UN member countries are eligible to become member.
- **Governance:** IBCA Assembly is the apex decision-making body comprising representatives from each member country.

### Big Cats

- Out of seven, **five big cats** viz. Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Cheetah are **found in India**.
  - ⊕ All big cats live solitary lives except Lions, which live in groups, called prides.
- **Ecological Significance:** They are apex predators vital to maintaining ecological balance and ecosystem health.
  - ⊕ These are **keystone species** which prevents overgrazing, protecting plantlife, seed dispersal and forest regeneration.
  - ⊕ Healthy big cat habitats are vital carbon sinks and help combat climate change.
  - ⊕ These are **flagship species** whose conservation provide protection to many other species sharing the same habitat.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss from deforestation, urbanization, and land use changes, leading to increased human-wildlife conflicts.

## Parliamentary disruptions in India

The 15-day Winter Session, now the 4th shortest since 2014, opened with immediate disruptions reflecting a long-term, cross-party pattern of institutionalised parliamentary obstruction.

- Weak institutional enforcement and reluctance of presiding officers to act without consensus erodes discipline and effective functioning.

Analysis of Parliamentary Obstruction ( 17th Lok Sabha)

- Reduced Sitting Days:** Parliament met for only 274 sittings, fewer than all previous full-term Lok Sabha.
- Minimal Committee Scrutiny:** Only 16% of Bills were referred to Parliamentary Committees (lowest in last 3 Lok Sabhas').
- Quality of Debate:** 31% of Lok Sabha time and 32% of Rajya Sabha time was devoted to non-legislative discussions.
- Declining Budget Examination:** Nearly 80% of the Union Budget was cleared without debate between 2019 and 2023.

Way Forward

- All-Party Code of Conduct:** Adopt a mutually agreed framework specifying acceptable protests and proportionate disciplinary measures.
- Statutory Fixed Parliamentary Calendar:** Establish a legally mandated annual schedule to ensure adequate sitting days.
- Enhance Accountability Mechanisms:** Safeguard Question Hour and Zero Hour from disruption and require mandatory discussion of Demands for Grants during the Budget.
- Strengthen Parliamentary Procedures:** Use technology for transparent tracking of attendance, debates, and Bills.

## Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy presented report on Performance Evaluation of Solar Power Projects

Committee evaluated solar potential of India, performance of solar power plants, and associated issues hindering progress of solar power projects in India.

Issues Highlighted	Recommendations
Delays in Land Acquisition affecting timely development of utility-scale solar projects	Creation of <b>single window clearance mechanism</b> bringing all stakeholders of Centre and State level at one place
Lengthy Process for forest and wildlife related clearances	Develop a <b>dedicated portal</b> , exclusively for all transmission related matters, onboarding all forest and wildlife related authorities
Delays in laying of transmission lines due to issues related to Right of Way compensation	Encourage states to adopt centre's recent guidelines on <b>Right of Way compensation</b> at market rate for effective transmission of non-fossil power
Inadequate Storage Facilities	Premier research institutions should be encouraged to undertake <b>storage related R&amp;D</b> by making provision for dedicated capital grants
Lack of Domestic Manufacturing Capability	Provide <b>adequate capital for High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC)</b> related R&D as well as training of manpower in HVDC related technology
Regional Imbalance in Solar Power Development	Promote <b>development of solar energy in areas having low solar capacity vis-à-vis potential</b> through timely central financial assistance release, regular monitoring and timely resolution of constraints

### Solar Energy in India

- Presently, India has **116 GW of solar power installed capacity** and targeted 292 GW solar power capacity by 2030.
- India's Solar Potential Map estimates a **total solar capacity of 748.98 Giga Watt peak (GWp)**.
- Initiatives:** PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, PM Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyaan (PM-KUSUM), Development of Solar Parks etc.

## Supreme Court directed 30% reservation for women in State Bar Councils

Supreme Court directed that 30% of the seats in the State Bar Councils – where elections are yet to be notified – must be represented by women advocates.

- For present year, court ordered 20% of seats to be filled by way of election of women members, and 10% by co-option.
  - Co-option** is the process whereby a person is appointed to the membership of an organization/group/council by invitation of the existing members.

### About Bar Council

- Advocates Act 1961** provides for establishment of Bar Council of India (BCI) and State Bar Councils (SBCs) in each state.
- SBCs admit persons as advocates on its roll and **safeguards their rights, privileges and interests** while BCI lays down **standards of professional conduct** and exercise supervision and control over SBCs.

### Status of Women in Judiciary

- Presently, there is **no woman member in the 20-member BCI** while across SBCs, women comprise merely 9 of 441 representatives.
- In higher judiciary, since independence, Supreme Court has **only had 11 women judges**, while only 13.4% of judges in High Courts are women.
- State of the Judiciary Report (2023) showed 36.3% of women are in the **district judiciary**.

### Barriers to Women representation in judiciary:

- Entry-level barriers:** The Judicial Service Rules in states require continuous legal practice, often difficult due to family responsibilities.
- Retention Challenges:** Career progression is hindered by rigid transfer policies and lack of supportive structures.
- Infrastructure Gaps:** Courts often lack women's washrooms, creche facilities and family friendly rooms.
- Cultural Norms:** Patriarchal norms prohibit the entry of women to the judiciary.

## Also in News



### Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) norms

India's proposed **CAFE III norms** have faced criticism from global agencies.

#### About CAFE norms

- Notified in:** 2017, under the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001**.
- First phase:** 2017-18, Second Phase: 2022-23.
- Objective:** To mitigate fuel consumption by **lowering CO2 emissions; aiming to reduce oil dependency and air pollution**.
- Applicability:** Petrol, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), CNG, hybrid, and electric passenger vehicles with gross vehicle weight (GVW) <3500kgs.



### Biostimulants

Biostimulants provide a **green solution for sustainable Indian agriculture**.

#### About Biostimulants

- They are substances or **micro-organisms that stimulate natural plant processes**, independent of nutrient content.
- Objective:** It is to enhance nutrient uptake, boost stress tolerance, **improve crop quality, and support resilience under dynamic climate stressors**.
- Regulated under:** Fertiliser Control Order (FCO), 1985.
- Significance:** Better nutrient-use efficiency, soil carbon sequestration, higher climate resilience, supports soil microbial biodiversity, contributes to a circular bioeconomy.



### Tsunami

A powerful 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck off northern Japan triggering a tsunami.

#### About Tsunami:

- Meaning:** A tsunami is a catastrophic ocean wave, **usually caused by a submarine earthquake, an underwater or coastal landslide, or a volcanic eruption**.
- Occurrence:** Pacific subduction zones produce 90% of the world's earthquakes/tsunamis (called "Ring of Fire").



### Cosmic filaments

University of Oxford researchers **reported a roughly 50-million-lightyear-long cosmic filament** traced by at least 14 galaxies.

#### About Cosmic Filaments

- Cosmic or galaxy filaments are the **largest 'threads' in the universe's cosmic web**.
  - A single **cosmic filament is a structure spanning hundreds of millions of lightyears, formed as a result of gravity pulling in gas, dark matter, and galaxies** into long, thin strands that link giant clusters of galaxies.
  - Filaments also surround large, empty regions of space called voids.
- Importance in Cosmology**
  - Help astronomers **study galaxy formation and distribution**.
  - Act as **highways feeding matter into dense regions**, influencing the growth of clusters.





## Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)

**Draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025** has met with strong protests by academicians as well as students.

### About ISI

- **Founded:** 1931
- **Founder:** Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, one of India's greatest statisticians.
- **Registration:** In April 1932, under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, and later re-registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act of 1961.
- Received the status of an **Institute of National Importance** in 1959 through an Act of Parliament.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata.
- **Objectives:**
  - ⊕ Advancement of statistical science and its interdisciplinary applications.
  - ⊕ Promotion of research in mathematics, computer science, economics, and social sciences.
- **Contribution:** Development of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), establishing the foundation of India's official statistical system, planning and economic modelling etc.



## Myeloma

An immune- and cancer cell-targeting antibody therapy has shown potential to eliminate residual traces of multiple myeloma.

### About Myeloma

- **Meaning:** Cancer of plasma cells (white blood cells that fight infections) in bone marrow.
- **Symptoms:** Bone pain (spine/chest/hips), tiredness, infections, nausea, constipation, weight loss, frequent urination, confusion.



## UHC Global Monitoring Report 2025

The Report jointly released by WHO and World Bank Group analyses progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

### Key Findings of the Report

- **Health service coverage**, measured by the Service Coverage Index (SCI), rose from 54 to 71 points between 2000 and 2023.
- **Share of people experiencing financial hardship** due to large and impoverishing out-of-pocket (OOP) health payments **declined from 34% to 26%** between 2000 and 2022.
- However, 4.6 billion people lack essential services, and 2.1 billion face financial hardship, with 1.6 billion pushed into or deeper into poverty.



## Stubble Burning Status Report 2025

Report warned that **India's current satellite based monitoring systems are capturing only a fraction** of actual fires due to their limited observation window.

- Current surveillance under the Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modeling from Space (CREAMS), led by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), relies **primarily on MODIS and VIIRS polar-orbiting satellites**.
  - ⊕ MODIS (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) and VIIRS (Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite) are satellite-based sensors that monitor active fires, vegetation, and environmental changes.
  - ⊕ These satellites orbit the Earth's poles and observe India only at **fixed times of the day**, from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.

## Place in News



### Cambodia (Capital: Phnom Penh)

Thailand recently launched airstrikes into Cambodia.

### Political Features

- It is a part of **ASEAN (Association for South East Asian Nations) grouping**.
- **Land Boundary:** Vietnam (east and southeast); Laos (northeast) and Thailand (northwest).
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Gulf of Thailand (southwest).

### Geographical Features

- **Natural resources:** oil and gas, timber, gemstones, iron ore, manganese, phosphates.
- **Largest lake:** Tonlé Sap Lake (Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake).
- **Major mountains:** Dangrek, Krâvanh (Cardamom) and Dâmrei with **Phnom Aural being highest peak**.
- **Major Rivers:** Mekong, Tonle Sap.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI