

NEWS TODAY

Union Budget 2024-25 announces the scrapping of angel tax for all investors

Removing the Angel Tax transforms India's startup ecosystem, creating a more robust and supportive investment environment.

- The changes to the angel tax system will take effect on **April 1, 2025**

What is Angel tax?

- Introduced in **2012** under the Finance Act, 2012
- It falls under Section 56 (II) (viib) **of the Income Tax Act, 1961.**
- It refers to the tax that the government **imposes on funding raised by unlisted companies, or startups** if their valuation exceeds the company's fair market value (FMV).
 - ⊕ **FMV** refers to the price set for selling or purchasing an asset in the open market.
 - ⊕ The excess amount was treated as income and taxed at a **rate of 30.9 %.**
- **Purpose:** To curb money laundering and prevent tax avoidance.
- **Reason for scrapping**
 - ⊕ **To Reduce Compliance Burden for Startups.**
 - ⊕ **Methodology:** The assessing officer used the **discounted cash flow (DCF) method** to determine fair market value, which is considered an unfavorable practice for startups.
 - ◆ DCF evaluates investment by discounting the estimated future cash flows.
 - ⊕ It **reduces FDI (foreign direct investment)** into India.
 - ⊕ Abolishing the Angel Tax is also **in line with the government's Startup India initiative.**

Startup India initiative

- **Launched** in 2016.
- **Objective:** Supporting entrepreneurs, building a robust startup ecosystem and transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers.
- **Implemented by:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Union Budget announced corridor projects for the Vishnupad and the Mahabodhi Temple

These will be **modelled on the successful Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor**, to transform them into world-class pilgrim and tourist destinations.

About the Vishnupad Temple

- **Location:** on the banks of the Falgu river, Gaya, Bihar
- **Dedicated** to Lord Vishnu
- The old temple was renovated by the **queen of Indore, Devi Ahilyabai in the eighteenth century.**
- **Feature:** A 40 cm-long footprint is believed to be Lord Vishnu's, marking the spot where he defeated Gayasur.

About Mahabodhi Temple

- **Location:** at the base of bodhi (peepal) tree where Buddha attained nirvana, Bodhgaya, Bihar
- **Built by:** **Emperor Asoka built the first shrine** in 3rd B.C, **vedika (railing)** of the temple belongs to the post **Mauryan period (100 BC)** and many of the **sculptures** belong to **Pala period.**
 - ⊕ Present temple is mostly a **colonial period reconstruction.**
- **Design:** **Neither Nagara nor Dravida** (It is narrow like a nagara temple, rises without curving like a dravida).
 - ⊕ **Temple Architectural Styles in India:** Nagara (North), Dravida (South) and Vesar (Mixing of north and south)
- **Features:** one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick.
- **Recognition:** **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

Buddhist Architecture:

- **Stupa:** It is a dome-shaped structure that contains relics of the Buddha or other sacred objects. **E.g. Sanchi Stupa**
- **Chaityas:** Buddhist hall of worship. **E.g. Chaitya hall at Karla, Maharashtra**
- **Viharas:** Buddhist monastery buildings for the monks. **E.g. Nalanda University is a mahavihara.**

Centre to partner with private sector to develop Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs): Budget 2024-25

This announcement marks a historic shift in India's nuclear policy, as the **Atomic Energy Act of 1962** did not permit private sector participation in nuclear energy generation.

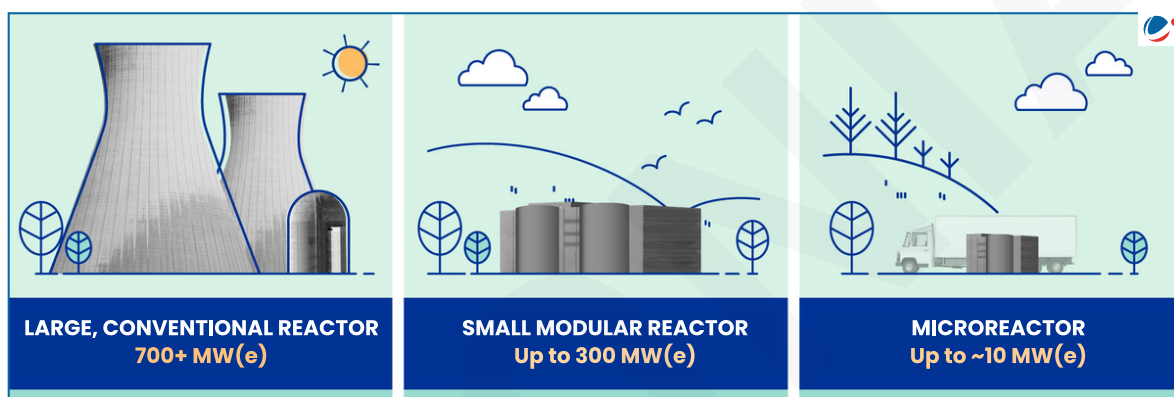
- BSRs are aligned with global trends where **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** are gaining attention.
- Unlike **SMRs**, which are an entirely new concept involving **factory-made, easily assembled reactors**, **BSRs** are based on India's **existing Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor technology**.
- They can enhance the contribution of **Nuclear energy in India's energy basket** (current share of **nuclear energy is 1.6%**).

About Small Modular Reactors

- They are **advanced nuclear reactors** that have a power capacity of up to **300 MW(e) per unit**.
- There are more than **80 SMR designs and concepts globally**. Most of them are in **various developmental stages**.

Significance of the SMRs

- **Reduced fuel requirements**, require less frequent refueling, every 3 - 7 years, compared to 1 -2 years for conventional plants (IAEA).
- **Saves construction time** as prefabricated units of SMRs can be manufactured, shipped and installed on site.
- **Eliminate or significantly lower the potential for unsafe releases** of radioactivity to the environment.



The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report, 2024 released

The report has been prepared by **five specialized agencies of the United Nations-FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO**.

- The theme of the report focuses on the **financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms**.

Need for the New Definition

- **Absence of a coherent picture of the financial resources** spent on food security and nutrition.
- **Existence of Multiple definitions** creating problems like underfinanced areas, issue accountability of institutions, and tracking of progress.

The report puts forward a new definition of financing for food security and nutrition

- Refers to the **public and private financial resources, both domestic and foreign**, directed towards eradicating hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition.
- It aims at **availability, access, utilization and stability of nutritious and safe foods, along with strengthening the resilience of agrifood systems**.

Current gaps in financing

- **Public spending on agriculture per capita** is very low and not steadily growing in low-income countries (LICs) and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs)
- Food security and nutrition take less than a quarter of official **development assistance and other official flows** and seem to have been less of a priority for donors.

Status of Food Security and Nutrition

- The world is far off track to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger**.
- **1 in 11 people** faced hunger globally in 2023.
- **Between 713 and 757 million people** were estimated to be undernourished in 2023.
- An estimated **28.9 percent of the global population** were moderately or severely food insecure in 2023.

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tests Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System

BMD System seek to **defend against an attack by launching interceptors** that would hit and destroy incoming missiles on impact.

- **DRDO's successful flight-tests of Phase-II AD Endo-atmospheric missile** demonstrated the indigenous capability to defend against **ballistic missiles of 5,000 km class**.
- The Target Missile was detected by **weapon system radars deployed on land and sea** and activated the **Air Defence (AD) interceptor system**
- The flight test **fully met all the trial objectives validating complete network-centric warfare weapon system consisting of:**
 - ⊖ **Long-range sensors,**
 - ⊖ **Low latency communication system** and Mission Control Centre, and
 - ⊖ **Advance interceptor missiles**

India's BMD programme:

- **Aim:** To deploy a layered missile shield to protect the country from ballistic missile attacks.
- Consists of **Two phases**
- **Phase 1** of the BMD, which can intercept ballistic missiles with a **range of 2,000 km**, has already been deployed and consists of:
 - ⊖ **Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) missile** for exo-atmospheric ranges (50-80 km)
 - ⊖ **Advanced Area Defence (AAD) missile** for endo-atmospheric ranges (15-30 km).
- **Phase II:** Consists of two missiles, **AD-1 and AD-2**
 - ⊖ In November 2022, DRDO successfully tested a **long-range interceptor missile (AD-1)**

India, United Kingdom launched ambitious Technology Security Initiative (TSI)

TSI aims to **enhance collaboration in critical and emerging technologies (CET)** across key sectors, building on the **India-UK Roadmap 2030**.

- **Coordinated by National Security Advisors (NSAs)** of both countries, the initiative will focus on fostering meaningful **technology value chain partnerships**.
- New bilateral initiatives will also be launched, accelerating **cooperation among government bodies, technology and research centers, industry, and academia** in telecoms, critical minerals, semiconductors, quantum technology etc.

What is the relevance of the UK to India?

- **Strategic Convergence:** Both nations are **concerned about an assertive China** in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Defence cooperation:** UK could play a crucial role in **co-developing defence technology** and ensuring India's **maritime security**.
 - ⊖ Joint military exercises include **Ajeya Warrior (Army), Konkan (Navy), and Cobra Warrior (multi-national air exercise)**.
- **Trade and Investment:** Under Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP), they aim to **double bilateral trade by 2030** and are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
 - ⊖ The **India-UK Infrastructure Finance Bridge** supports India's National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** The UK has pledged to share advanced technology with India, similar to what it shares with its top international partners.



Also in News



Sangameswar Temple

Sangameswar Temple is **submerged due to flooding in Krishna river**.

- Sangameswara temple in Nandyal district (Andhra Pradesh) **submerges annually in the backwaters of the Srisailem dam**.

Sangameswar Temple

- The **Nagara-style temple is dedicated to the Lord Shiva**.
- It was built by the **Chalukya dynasty on the confluence of rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra** along with five other tributaries (hence the name Sangameswara)

Other Sangameswar Temples in India:

- **Sri Ketaki Sangameswara Swamy Temple, Telangana**
- **Sangameswar temple, Bhavani, Tamil Nadu**
- **Sangameswar temple, Karnataka** (part of a Group of monuments at Pattadakal which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site).



Artificial Reefs

300 artificial reefs were deployed off the coast of Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu).

About Artificial Reefs

- These are **technology interventions used to rehabilitate or improve natural habitats**, increase productivity and manage aquatic resources including habitat enhancement.
- **Department of Fisheries** is promoting it under **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for rejuvenating coastal fisheries**

Advantages

- **Reduce wave damage on coasts**, help the regeneration of marine ecosystems and acts as a **carbon sink**.
- **Enhance recreational fisheries**, and eco-tourism, creating suitable areas for diving and reducing conflicts.
- **Restricts bottom trawling** in the near shore areas.



Right to Shelter

The Supreme Court (SC) urged a balance between **railway infrastructure development and the right to shelter** people accused of illegally living on railway land.

About Right to Shelter

- It is a **fundamental right**, which springs from the **right to residence under Article 19 (1) (e) and the right to life under Article 21**.
- It was affirmed by SC in **U.P. AvasEvamVikasParishad vs. Friends Coop. Housing Society Ltd. (1996)**



Right to be forgotten

Supreme Court will examine the issue of the 'right to be forgotten' concerning digital privacy.

Right to be Forgotten:

- It is also known as the '**right to erasure**' and deals with individual rights to have **control of the use of personal data by organisations**.
- In Justice K.S. Puttaswamy case (2017), the SC favoured the recognition of this right.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 does not mention** the 'right to be forgotten'.
- Europe's **GDPR law covers the right to be forgotten**.

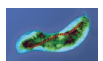


Rule 267 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business

Rajya Sabha Chairman expressed **concern over the misuse of Rule 267**, which allows the **suspension of rules to discuss urgent matters**.

Rule 267

- This rule is **meant for exceptional circumstances** and has been invoked **only six times in 36 years** (last invoked in 2016).
- It is considered to be similar to the **adjournment motion in Lok Sabha** that allows for the scheduled business to be set aside to discuss matters of urgent public importance.



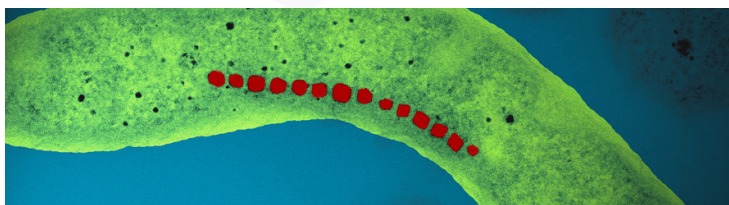
Magnetotactic bacteria (MTB)

A study found that **rock varnish in Ladakh**, containing **magnetofossils**, could help **identify habitable environments in space**.

- Magnetofossils are **fossil remains of magnetic particles produced by MTB**.

About MTB

- MTB are **widespread, motile, diverse prokaryotes**
- They **biomineralize** a unique organelle called the **magnetosome** (consists of magnetic iron mineral).
- These bacteria **bacteria can orientate themselves within Earth's geomagnetic field**.



Dark Oxygen

Scientists discovered 'dark' oxygen **13,100-feet deep** in the Pacific Ocean.

About Dark oxygen

- According to the study, it is generated by **metallic nodules present on the seafloor**.
- These natural metal formations appear to **catalyze the splitting of seawater (H₂O)** into hydrogen and oxygen.
- Previously, it was believed that **most of the oxygen came from marine plants** performing photosynthesis, a process which is dependent on sunlight.
- Discovery challenges **existing paradigms about oxygen production** in Earth's most inaccessible marine environments.



Bioplastics

Some Small holder farmers of Nagaland are **replacing plastics with compostable bioplastic bags made from Cassava starch**.

Bioplastics

- **Biobased polymers** produced from **renewable resources** including **carbohydrates, vegetable oils**, etc. in the presence of **microorganisms**.
- **Degradable by microbes** (such as fungi, bacteria, and yeasts), leading to the production of **CO₂, water, and biomass**.
- Alternative to plastic with similar physical properties to synthetic plastics and have a low carbon footprint.



Domestic Money Transfer (DMT)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a review revised framework for domestic money transfer

- The framework for **Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in 2011**.
- The framework is revised by RBI under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.
- Review was done as there has been significant increase in the **availability of banking outlets, developments in payment systems for funds transfers, etc**.
- Revised framework **shall come into effect** from November 01, 2024.



MERCOSUR

Bolivia became a full member of **MERCOSUR**.

About MERCOSUR

- It is **Southern Common Market** (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials) in latin america.
- It was established by **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991**, and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia.
 - ⊖ **Venezuela** has been suspended since December 1, 2016.
- **Objective:** facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital and people among the four member countries.
- India has a **Preferential Trade Agreement** with MERCOSUR.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI