

# NEWS TODAY

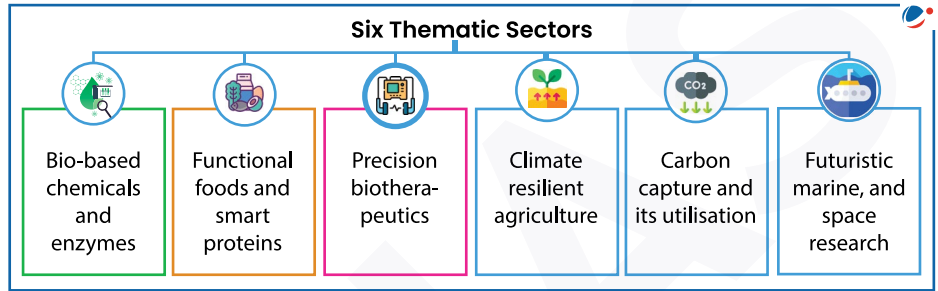
## Cabinet approves BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) Policy

BioE3 Policy aims to foster high-performance biomanufacturing and broadly focuses on the six strategic/thematic sectors (refer infographic).

➤ **High-performance biomanufacturing** is the ability to promote the manufacturing of bio-based products through the integration of advanced biotechnological processes.

### Salient Features

- Innovation-driven support to R&D and entrepreneurship.
- Acceleration of technology development and commercialization by establishing **Biomufacturing & Bio-AI hubs** and **Bio-foundry**.
- Prioritizing regenerative bio-economy models of green growth.
- Facilitating the expansion of India's skilled workforce and job creation.



### Benefits

- Further strengthen the Government's initiatives, such as '**Net Zero**' carbon economy & '**Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)**'.
- Accelerated '**Green Growth**' by promoting '**Circular circular bio-economy**' in India.
- Policy will foster a future that is more sustainable, innovative, and responsive to global challenges and lays down the **bio-vision for Viksit Bharat**.

### Indian Biotechnology sector

- Valued at **\$151.1 billion in 2023** and is projected to reach **\$300 billion by 2030**.
- India, with a **3% share of the global biotechnology industry**, is ranked **third in Asia** and is among the **top 12 biotech destinations in the world**.
- Key initiatives include National Biopharma Mission, financial support by **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council**, etc.

## No bar on Anticipatory bail under SC/ST Act unless Prima Facie Offence is made out: Supreme Court

Recently, a 2-Judge bench of the Supreme Court held that bar on anticipatory bail under **Section 18 of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** is not applicable unless a prima facie case under the Act is made out against the accused.

➤ **Section 18 of the Act** states that **Section 438 of the CrPC, which provides for anticipatory bail, shall not apply** in relation to cases involving offence under the Act.

### Other Key Highlights of the judgement

- Court observed that **mere insult of a member of SC or ST is not an offence** under the SC/ ST Act unless the accused had the **intention to humiliate based on caste identity**.
- **Only intentional insult or intimidation caused by entrenched social norms** like untouchability or caste superiority, qualifies as the type of insult or intimidation envisioned by the Act.

### Anticipatory bail

- It is a **direction by High Court or the Court of Session** to release a person on bail, **apprehending arrest** on accusation of having committed a **non-bailable offence**.
- **Section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** contained provisions related to anticipatory bail.
- Under reformed criminal laws, **Section 482 of Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023)** contains relevant provisions for anticipatory bail.

### SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

- **Objective:** To prevent commission of offences against the members of SCs/STs, **Special Courts** for trial of such offences, and provision for **relief and rehabilitation** of victims.
- **Salient Features**
  - ⊕ The **accused must not be a member of the SC/ST**.
  - ⊕ **Offences** include employing members of SC/ ST for Manual Scavenging, dedicating SC/ ST women to deity, temple, etc., as devadasi, denial of customary right of passage to places of public resort, among others.
  - ⊕ It also provides for punishment for **neglect of duties under the Act by public servants** not being a member of SC/ ST.

## LWE will be completely eliminated in before March 2026: Union Home Minister

While addressing a press conference on Left Wing Extremism (LWE), Union Minister for Home Affairs stated that LWE will be completely eradicated in the country before March 2026.

- LWE or Naxal insurgency in India **began with a 1967 uprising in Naxalbari** (West Bengal), inspired by **Maoist ideology**, advocating for the **violent overthrow of the political system**.

### Current Status of LWE in India

- **LWE-affected districts: 38 districts across 9 states** as against 96 in 2010.
- **Most LWE Affected Districts** (contributing approximately 90% of the LWE violence): Reduced to 12 in 2024 against 35 in 2018.

### Measures taken to counter LWE in India

- **National Policy and Action Plan (2015)** to address LWE which led to development of **operational strategy 'SAMADHAN'** which included Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation and training, etc.
- **Security related measures:** Security Related Expenditure scheme, Scheme for construction of Fortified Police Stations, redeployment of CRPF Battalions, etc.
  - ⊕ It also included **offensive strategies** such as joint operations to entangle naxals, financial choking, establishment of separate vertical within NIA for investigation, etc.
- **Developmental interventions:** Civic Action Programme, Road Connectivity Project, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, Aspirational District Programme, etc.

### Factors responsible for Persistence of LWE

- **Socio-economic:** Land alienation, social exclusion based on castes, sub-optimal access to basic amenities like education, healthcare, etc.
- **Governance issues:** Ineffective implementation of Forest Rights Act and PESA Act, state-highhandedness as reflected in policies like Salwa Judum, etc.
- **LWE strategies:** Exploitation of local grievances, deep roots in local communities, ideological appeal of LWE, etc.

## Union Cabinet approves the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

It is based on the recommendations of **T. V. Somanathan Committee (2023)**, will be effective from **April 1, 2025**.

- The UPS proposes to amalgamate advantages of **both Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and New Pension Scheme (NPS)**.

### Key Features of Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

- **Assured Pension: 50% of the average basic pay drawn** over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a **minimum qualifying service of 25 years**.
  - ⊕ It will be **proportionate** for a lesser service period (minimum service of **10 years**).
  - ⊕ Under **OPS**, however, **50% of last drawn salary** is considered in place of average of 12 months, whereas NPS being a **Market-linked scheme, has no assured pension**.
- **Assured Family Pension:** On **demise**, pension amounting **60%** of employee's pension before demise.
- **Assured minimum pension: ₹10,000/month** (minimum service 10 years)
  - ⊕ **Increased from the ₹9,000/month** available under OPS and NPS.
- **Inflation Indexation:** In form of **Dearness Relief** based on **All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW)**, similar to service employees. (**Similar to OPS**)
- **Lumpsum payment on superannuation:** In addition to **gratuity, 1/10th of monthly salary+ Dearness Allowance** for every completed six months of service.
  - ⊕ It will **not reduce the quantum of assured pension**.



## PM participates in 'Lakhpati Didi Sammelan' at Jalgaon

Recently, certificates to 11 lakh new Lakhpati Didis and ₹2,500 crore Revolving Fund were released.

### Lakhpati Didis

- She is a Self-Help Group (SHG) member who earns an annual household income of Rupees One Lakh or more.
  - ⊕ Self-help groups (SHGs) are informal groups formed to address common problems, emphasizing mutual support.
- **Lakhpati Didi** is an outcome of the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, not a separate scheme.
  - ⊕ There are over **1 crore** Lakhpati Didis at present (As of June 30, 2024).
  - ⊕ **Interim Budget 2024-25:** Enhanced target for Lakhpati Didi from 2 crore to 3 crore.

### Challenges of Women led SHGs

- Lack of knowledge and guidance about finances, government schemes; poor marketing strategies; Product quality issues etc.

### Measures taken to Promote SHG

- **Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission**
  - ⊕ Revolving Fund (RF) and Community Investment Fund (CIF) to SHGs
  - ⊕ **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)**, a sub-scheme under the DAY-NRLM program, supports SHGs to set-up small enterprises in the non-farm sector.
- **SHG-Bank Linkage Program** by NABARD for financial inclusion of SHGs.
- **SARAS Collection** (Government e-Marketplace): a Store Front for marketing of SHG products.

## Union Cabinet approved Unified Scheme 'Vigyan Dhara'

Recently, Union Cabinet approved continuation of the three umbrella schemes, merged into a **unified central sector scheme** namely 'Vigyan Dhara' of Department of Science and Technology (DST).

### About Vigyan Dhara Scheme

- **Objective:** To promote S&T capacity building as well as research, innovation and technology development towards strengthening the Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem in the country.
- **3-broad components:**
  - ⊕ Science and Technology (S&T) Institutional and Human Capacity Building;
  - ⊕ Research and Development; and
  - ⊕ Innovation, Technology Development, and Deployment.
- **Outlay:** ₹ 10,579.84 crore during the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- Research and development component of the scheme will be **aligned with the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**.
  - ⊕ ANRF has been established under **ANRF Act, 2023** to **seed, grow and promote** R&D and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.
- **Significance**
  - ⊕ Merger of schemes would enhance **efficiency in fund utilization and establish synchronization** among the sub-schemes/ programs.
  - ⊕ Contribute to building **critical human resource pool** to strengthen the science and technology landscape and **expand R&D base** of the country towards **improving the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) researcher count**.

## Also in News



### Sonobuoys

Recently, the US approved potential sale of **anti-submarine warfare Sonobuoys** and related equipment to India.

### About Sonobuoys

- They are **expendable, electro-mechanical Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) tactical sonar systems**, transmitting information about submarine activity.
- They use a **transducer and a radio transmitter** to record and transmit underwater sounds.
- **3-types:**
  - ⊕ **Passive sonobuoys:** Use underwater microphone to listen for sound energy from a target,
  - ⊕ **Active sonobuoy:** Use a transducer to send an acoustic signal and then listen for the return echo off an object and
  - ⊕ **Special Purpose buoys:** Provide additional information about the environment, such as water temperature or wave height.



### Scrub Typhus

Recently, Chief Minister of Meghalaya tested positive for Scrub Typhus.

### About Scrub Typhus

- Also known as **bush typhus**, it is a disease caused by **bacteria** called **Orientia tsutsugamushi**.
- It is spread to people through **bites of infected chiggers (larval mites)**.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, headache, body aches, and rash, a scab-like region at the chigger bite site (eschar) etc.
- **No vaccine** is available for scrub typhus.
- Most cases of scrub typhus occur in rural areas of **South East Asia, China, Indian subcontinent, Northern Australia**, etc.



### Schedule M of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1945

Pharmaceutical Companies sought more time to implement revised manufacturing practices rules under Schedule M of the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1945**.

- **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** revised rules under Schedule M in January 2024 to **align domestic good manufacturing practices (GMP) recommendations with global standards**, particularly those of the WHO.

#### About Schedule M

- It prescribes the **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for pharmaceutical products**.
  - ⊕ **GMPs are mandatory standards** which build and bring quality into a product by way of control on materials, methods, machines, processes, etc.
  - ⊕ GMP was **first incorporated in Schedule M in 1988**.



### The Great Nicobar Project

Recently Environment Minister has clarified that Great Nicobar project will not affect the tribals.

#### The Great Nicobar Project

- **Strategic Importance:** The Great Nicobar project, involving a port, airport, power plant, and township, is of national, defense, and strategic significance.
- **Project costs:** Rs 72,000 crore
- **Transshipment Port Potential:** strategically located near international shipping routes.
- **Tribal Safeguards:** Provisions to protect the **Shompen tribe**; with a **net increase in tribal reserve land**.



### Marshyangdi River

A tourist bus plunged into the Marshyangdi River, killing at least 14 Indians.

#### About Marshyangdi River

- It is a **snow-fed perennial Himalayan River** in Nepal with a length of about 150 km.
- The Marshyangdi is a **major tributary of the Gandaki River**, which joins the Ganga river at Hajipur near Patna.
  - ⊕ The **Gandaki River is known as the Narayani** in the plains of Nepal and as the **Gandak** in India.
- It is famous for **river rafting**, and several **hydro-projects** have been constructed on the river.



### Atacama Salt Flat

A study by Researchers at the University of Chile found that Chile's Atacama salt flat is sinking due to lithium brine extraction.

#### About Atacama Salt Flat

- Also known as **Salar de Atacama**, it is the **biggest salt deposit in Chile**.
- It has a **rough white surface** below which there is a **large salt lake**.
  - ⊕ Lake under the salt flat has one of the largest **lithium reserves** in the world.
- It lies in **Chile's Atacama Desert**, probably the driest place on the planet.
- The northern part of the basin is the **San Pedro River delta**.



### Sonoluminescence

**Pistol shrimp (family Alpheidae)** exhibit Sonoluminescence by rapidly snapping their claws.

#### About Sonoluminescence:

- It refers to the phenomenon of **producing light through the irradiation of liquids with ultrasonic waves**.
  - ⊕ It is formed when **bubbles formed by cavitation** in liquids **interact with powerful sound waves**.
- The **alternating high and low pressure of sound waves** leads to **rapid expansion and contraction of bubbles**.
  - ⊕ This results in **intense temperature rise, ionization of gases within the bubble and release of light energy**.



### Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is running a nationwide campaign for the PM-JANMAN

#### PM JANMAN

- Launched to provide PVTG households and habitations with **basic facilities** such as safe housing, clean drinking water etc. in 3 years.
- Aims to cover **75 PVTG communities** residing in 18 States and 1 UT.
- **Total budgetary outlay: Rs.24,104 Cr**
- It focuses on **11 critical interventions** being implemented by 9 Ministries such as Pucca houses, connecting roads by the Ministry of Rural Development.

## Personality in news



### Shivaram Hari Rajguru (1908 - 1931)

Great Indian Freedom Fighter Shivaram Rajguru was remembered on his **116<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary** (August 24).

#### About Shivaram Hari Rajguru

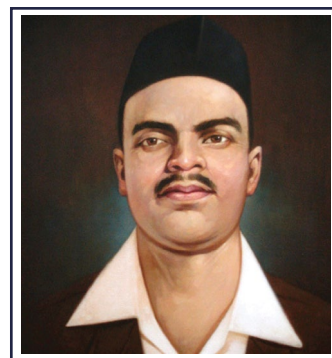
- Born in **Khed village** (renamed as Rajgurunagar) near Pune (Maharashtra).
- He was a **key member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)**.

#### Key Contributions

- He along with **Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh** participated in the **assassination of British officer John Saunders** in 1928 to **avenge death of Lala Lajpat Rai**.
- **On March 23, 1931**, all the three great freedom fighters, Rajguru, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev were hanged till death by the British Government at Lahore.
  - ⊕ **March 23** is observed as 'Shaheed Diwas' to pay tribute to their martyrdom.

#### Values

- Patriotism, Courage, Selflessness, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI