

# NEWS TODAY

## In Union Interim Budget 2024-25, Gender Budget shows the largest-ever rise of 38.6%

- Gender Budget Component accounted for 6.5 % of the total Budget.
  - ⊕ Allocation of women specific schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana increased considerably.
- **About Gender Budgeting**
  - ⊕ It aims to ensure that public resources are collected and spent efficiently based on differing gender needs and priorities.
    - ◆ In India, gender Budgeting was started in **2005-06**.
  - ⊕ It does not indicate a creation of a separate Budget for women; rather it seeks to **address the specific needs of women**.
  - ⊕ It broadly comprises two parts-
    - ◆ **Part A** includes programmes that are completely meant for women.
    - ◆ **Part B** includes all those programmes where at least 30% of the provisions are women-centric.
  - ⊕ It also comes under the **Samarthya, sub-scheme of Mission Shakti**.
    - ◆ **Mission Shakti** is an initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to empower Women.
      - » Mission Shakti's other sub scheme is Sambal which promotes safety and security of women.
  - ⊕ **Nodal Agency:** MWCD at central, similarly concerned department act as nodal agency at state/UTs and district level.
  - ⊕ For its implementation, **Ministry of Finance** issued direction to all central Ministries/Departments to set up **Gender Budget Cells**.
- **Challenges faced in Gender Budgeting:** Lack of coordination between different stakeholder, expertise in gender analysis and data, etc.

### Way to Make Gender Budgeting More Effective

- Conduct **gender analysis** of national and sub-national policies, legal frameworks, etc.
- **Assess** the adequacy of budget allocations to implement the **gender responsive policies** and programmes.
- Conduct and promote **gender-based impact assessments**, beneficiary needs assessment, etc.

## Blue Economy 2.0 Scheme announced in Union Interim Budget 2024-25

- **Blue Economy 2.0** is a blueprint to **make further progress on India's existing initiatives** to explore the potential of the Indian maritime blue economy.
  - ⊕ It aims to promote climate resilient activities (along with **restoration and adaptation measures**).
  - ⊕ It will emphasise on **coastal aquaculture and mariculture** in an integrated and **multi-sectoral approach**.
    - ◆ Aquaculture includes cultivation of aquatic animals and plants in natural or controlled marine or freshwater environments.
    - ◆ Mariculture pertains to marine and estuarine (brackish) waters.
- **Blue economy** is the "**sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.**"
  - ⊕ It involves tapping ocean resources for renewable energy, fisheries, ports, shipping, and tourism.
  - ⊕ India's blue economy is **estimated to be around \$1 trillion**.
- **Factors limiting the development of Blue Economy:**
  - ⊕ **Threat to Maritime security** e.g. recent Houthi attacks, etc.
  - ⊕ **Climate change and Pollution** due to human activities like use of plastics etc.
  - ⊕ **Other:** Lack of Infrastructure, high operating costs of shipping industry, high installation cost of tidal power plants etc.
- **Other Steps taken:**
  - ⊕ Deep Ocean Mission (mine the metals in the Indian oceans)
  - ⊕ Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
  - ⊕ SAGARMALA project
  - ⊕ Draft Blue Economy Policy

### Driving Factors of Blue economy in India

**7,516.6 km long coastline** including Island territories

**12 major ports, along with many non-major ports**

**Exclusive economic zones (EEZ)** extend over 2.2 million square km.

## PM GatiShakti to be utilized for three new major railway corridors announced under Interim Budget 2024-25

➤ This will enable **multi-modal connectivity**, including

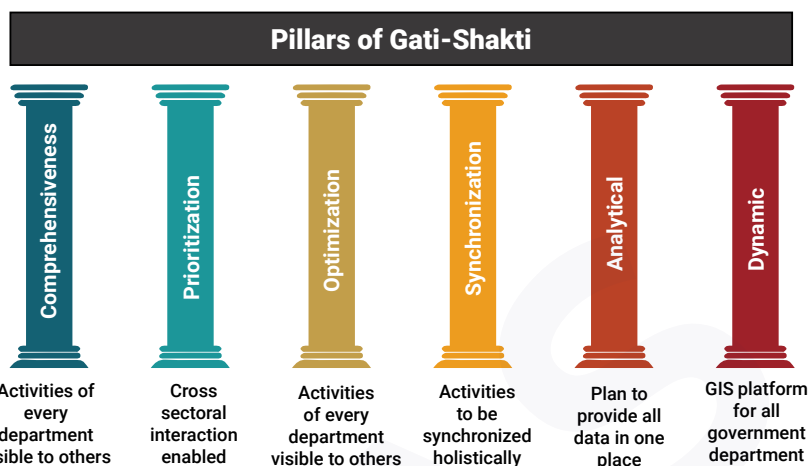
- ⊕ Energy, mineral, and cement corridors
- ⊕ Port connectivity corridors and
- ⊕ High traffic density corridors

➤ **Significance of the three Corridors**

- ⊕ Increase **logistics efficiency and reduction of cost of logistics** related to rail movement.
- ⊕ **Decongestion** of high density rail routes
- ⊕ **Facilitate modal shift** from road to rail and to coastal shipping
- ⊕ **Reduction of carbon footprint** in logistics.

➤ **About PM GatiShakti National Master Plan**

- ⊕ Launched in 2021 for providing **multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones**.
- ⊕ Provides a **comprehensive database** of the trunk & utility infrastructure, ongoing & future projects of various Infrastructure and Economic Ministries/Departments of Central Government and States/UTs.
- ⊕ This data is **integrated with the GIS-enabled PM Gati Shakti platform**, thereby and monitoring of the Next Generation infrastructure projects on a single portal.
- ⊕ Goal of **achieving self-reliance and a \$5 trillion economy by 2025**.
- ⊕ Focusses on economic growth driven by 7 engines namely: **Railways, Roads, Ports, Waterways, Airports, Mass Transport, and Logistics Infrastructure**.
- ⊕ **It incorporates various infrastructure schemes** like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, UDAN, etc.



## Government issues Guidelines for Pilot Projects for utilizing Green Hydrogen in the Shipping and Steel Sector

➤ Guidelines have been issued by the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM)**.

- ⊕ Guidelines call for **retrofitting existing ships** to run on Green Hydrogen and **developing bunkering and refueling facilities** on ports for Green Hydrogen fuels.
- ⊕ While also providing for the **use of hydrogen in blast furnaces** and the **substitution of fossil fuels with Hydrogen** in the Steel sector.

➤ **Significance:** Both sectors has potential for-

- ⊕ **decarbonization of economy**.
- ⊕ **reduced dependence on fuel imports** through the use of Green Hydrogen or its derivatives (Green Ammonia / Green Methanol) as fuel.

➤ Green hydrogen is defined as hydrogen produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using renewable electricity.

➤ **About NGHM:**

- ⊕ Mission was launched in 2023, to **facilitate demand creation, production, utilization, and export of Green Hydrogen**.

⊕ **Sub-schemes of Mission include:**

- ◆ **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT):** Supports domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and offers incentives for the production of green hydrogen.
- ◆ **Green Hydrogen Hubs:** Identify regions/areas capable of supporting large-scale production or utilization of Hydrogen as Green Hydrogen Hubs.

**NATIONAL GREEN HYDROGEN MISSION OUTCOMES**

- 5 MMT of green hydrogen by 2030
- 60-100 GW electrolyzer installations
- 6 lakh new green jobs
- 125 GW renewable energy for green hydrogen production
- 50 MMT of carbon abatement cumulatively
- Over ₹ 8 lakh crore investments

## 285<sup>th</sup> Report of Law Commission recommends Criminal defamation to be retained as part of new criminal laws

- It highlighted that **reputation flows from Article 21**, and being a facet of right to life and personal liberty, needs to be adequately protected against defamatory speech and imputations.
  - ⊕ Defamation is considered a **reasonable restriction** under **Article 19(2)** to the freedom of speech and expression in **Article 19(1)(a)**
- Defamation is any **false statement published or spoken deliberately, intentionally, knowingly** with the intention to damage someone's reputation.
  - ⊕ In India, defamation is **categorized as either criminal or civil**.
    - ◆ **Under criminal defamation**, individuals can be charged with an offence punishable by imprisonment or a fine.
    - ◆ **Civil defamation**, on the other hand, involves filing a lawsuit seeking compensation for damages caused by defamatory statements.
- **Legal and constitutional Provisions of Criminal Defamation**
  - ⊕ **The Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860** has comprehensive provisions pertaining to criminal defamation from Section 499-502.
    - ◆ **Section 499:** deals with overall definition of defamation.
    - ◆ **Section 500:** deals with punishment upto 2 years imprisonment or fine or both.
      - » **The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 adds community service as punishment as well.**
  - ⊕ **Section 124A** of IPC includes defamation against the state as an offence of Sedition.

### Supreme Court (SC) Judgements

- **Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India (2016)** supreme court upheld section 499 to be constitutionally valid
- **Chaman Lal v. State of Punjab (1970)**, SC established the criteria for proving good faith and bona fide in defamation cases.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Law Commission (LC) submits 284<sup>th</sup> Report titled Prevention of Damage to Public Property

- Commission took **suo motu** cognizance to prepare the report on account of **rising incidents of vandalism** and **consequent loss to the state exchequer**.
- Also, it highlighted the issue of **wilful obstruction** of public place or way.
  - ⊕ It said that only some States have provisions for dealing with obstructions on public pathways.
- **Key Recommendations:**
  - ⊕ **Amendment in the PDPP Act, 1984**, it should include
    - ◆ One of the conditions for bail should be the deposit of an amount equivalent to the estimate value of the property damaged.
  - ⊕ Enact **comprehensive law dealing with wilful obstruction**.
    - ◆ Also, related provision can be included in **BNS**.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions for Protection**
  - ⊕ **Fundamental Right** under **Article 19** implicitly contains the Right to protest.
    - ◆ However, demonstration which creates nuisance and disturbances are not covered under it.
  - ⊕ **Fundamental Duties, Article 51 A** (duty of every citizen to safeguard public property and to abjure violence).
  - ⊕ **Prevention of Damage to Public Property (PDPP), Act 1984** contains provisions dealing with **mischiefs** resulting in damage of public property.
  - ⊕ **Sections 425 to 440** of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** deal with it.
    - ◆ Several sections of **Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** (which will replace IPC) deal with it.

### Related Supreme Court Judgements

- **Bharat Kumar vs State of Kerala (1997):** Public authorities to initiate action for recovery of the damages caused to the State property.
- **Destruction of Public and Private Properties vs. State of Andhra Pradesh (2009):** SC suo motto appointed two committees.
  - ⊕ Also, provided guidelines on the basis of the recommendation.

## Also in News



### Mekong River

- **Town of Luang Prabang** in Laos, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, is facing the threat of losing its UNESCO status due to a dam project on Mekong river.
  - ⊕ Town reflects the **fusion of Lao traditional urban architecture with that of the colonial era**.
- **Mekong river:**
  - ⊕ **Trans-boundary river** in Southeast Asia originating in **Glaciers of Tibet** and drains in **South China Sea**.
  - ⊕ River flows through **China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam**.



### Types of US Visas

- US has announced a **steep increase in fees** for various categories of **non-immigrant visas** like the H-1B, L-1 and EB-5, the most popular among Indians.
- **H-1B visa** allows **US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations** that require theoretical or technical expertise.
- **L-1 visa** is a visa category in the US that is **designed for intracompany transferees**.
  - ⊕ It allows **multinational companies to transfer certain employees** from their foreign offices to work in the US temporarily.
- **EB-5, or US golden visa**, provides a special road for **overseas investors** and their families to **seek permanent residency and Green Cards in the United States**.



**World Wetland Day 2024 (WWD)**

- WWD 2024 was celebrated at **Sirpur Lake Indore, Madhya Pradesh (MP)** with theme- 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'
- WWD is observed on **2nd February every year** worldwide to commemorate the signing of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971.**
  - India has been a party to the Convention since **1982.**
- About Sirpur Lake**
  - It is a **human-made wetland.**
  - Located in the city of **Indore, MP.**
  - Lake is shallow, alkaline, nutrient-rich and prone to floods.

**Asteroid Ryugu**

- Study of **asteroid Ryugu samples** has provided evidence that the organic molecules which gave rise to life to our planet were brought here by ancient comets.
  - Comets are frozen leftovers from the formation of the solar system composed of dust, rock, and ice.
  - Samples were brought by the Hayabusa2, **asteroid-sampling spacecraft** of Japan.
- About Asteroid Ryugu**
  - It is a **diamond-shaped space rock.**
  - It orbits the sun between **Earth and Mars** and occasionally crosses Earth's orbit (therefore **classified as potentially hazardous**).
  - It is a **carbonaceous or C-type asteroid**, which means it contains a lot of carbon and water.

**Surajkund International Crafts Mela**

- The President inaugurated the **37th Surajkund International Crafts Mela** at Surajkund, Haryana.
- About Surajkund Mela**
  - It showcases the richness and diversity of the handicrafts, handlooms and cultural fabric of India.
  - Largest crafts fair in the world.
  - In 2013, the fair was upgraded to an international level.
  - Partner Nation:** Tanzania
  - Theme State:** Gujarat
  - Cultural Partner:** North-Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation

**GHAR PORTAL**

- GHAR (GO Home and Re-Unite) Portal** was launched earlier by **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).**
  - The portal **digitally monitor and track restoration and repatriation of children** as per the protocols under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- About NCPCR**
  - Apex body for **safeguarding children's rights.**
  - Constituted under the **Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.**
  - Consists of **1 chairperson and 6 members.**
  - Present reports to **central government annually.**
  - NCPCR has responsibilities under **POCSO Act (2012), RTE Act(2009)** as well.

**Input Service Distribution (ISD)**

- Interim budget has proposed to mandatorily register for ISD for companies** with branches in multiple cities to claim input tax credit.
  - Input Tax Credit** is the tax that a business pays on a purchase and can used to reduce its tax liability when it makes a sale.
- ISD is a mechanism (office) that **allows billing of common input services to one location of the company** and permitting it to distribute it to its branches with separate GST registration.
- This recent move is expected to **reduce disputes significantly.**

**Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**

- Delhi High Court has observed that the property seized under PMLA, has to be returned if the probe goes without proceedings after 365 days.
- It also said such seizure violates **Article 300 A** of the Constitution.
  - Article 300 A** provides that no person shall be deprived of his/her property except by authority of law.
- About PMLA, 2002**
  - It provides for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, **money-laundering** and for matters connected therewith.
  - Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) have** been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the Act.

**Places in News**



**Catalonia (Capital: Barcelona)**

- Catalonia has declared a state of emergency as it faces its worst drought on record.
- Political Features**
  - An autonomous region of **Spain.**
  - Located in north east of **Iberian Peninsula.**
  - Shares boundary with **France and Andorra** (North) and **Mediterranean Sea** (East).
- Geographical Features**
  - The **Pyrenees mountain range** separates Catalonia from France.
  - It falls under **Mediterranean climate.**
    - In this type of climate, summers are hot and dry whereas winters are rainy.
  - Major River:** Ebro River

