

NEWS TODAY

Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 introduced in Lok Sabha

- The objective of the Bill is to bring greater **transparency, fairness and credibility** to the public examination systems.
 - ⊕ It will supplement the other initiative government in this direction such as introducing self-attestation; shortening examination cycle (from 18-22 months to 6-10 months), etc.
- Will serve as a **model draft for States** to adopt at their discretion.
- **Need of the Bill:**
 - ⊕ **Malpractices** in public examinations lead to delays and **cancellation** of examinations adversely impacting the prospects of millions of youth.
 - ◆ Reportedly, **over the last five years**, leaks affected as many as **1.4 crore applicants** applying for a little over **1.04 lakh posts**.
 - ⊕ At present, there is **no specific substantive law** to deal with unfair means adopted or offences committed.
- **Key Features of the Bill:**
 - ⊕ **Coverage-** Examinations held by the Union Public Service Commission, the Staff Selection Commission, Railways, National Testing Agency etc.
 - ⊕ **Offences:** Will be cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable (involved parties cannot compromise).
 - ⊕ **Provisions for Punishment-**
 - ◆ Minimum of **3 to 5 years of imprisonment**.
 - ◆ Organized crimes group will face **5 to 10 years of imprisonment** and a **minimum fine of Rs 1 crore**.
- **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions** has also been decided to set up a **High level National Technical Committee on Public Examinations**.
 - ⊕ It shall look into developing protocol for insulating digital platforms, devising ways and means for developing effective IT security system.



The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 is introduced in the Rajya Sabha

- Bill will amend Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 enacted **under Article 252 of the Constitution**.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊕ **Empowers Central Government to:**
 - ◆ **Exempt certain categories of industrial plants** from provision relating to restriction on **new outlets and new discharges**.
 - ◆ Prescribe **manner of nomination of chairman of State Pollution Control Board**
 - ◆ **Issue guidelines for grant, refusal or cancellation of consent by any State Board** for establishment of any industry, operation, treatment, etc.
 - ◆ Appoint **Adjudicating officer** who is an officer **not below Joint Secretary to the Centre or a Secretary to the State** to hold an inquiry and to impose the penalty.
 - ⊕ **Penalty for Contravention:** Contraventions of provisions for which **no penalty has been provided** in the Act shall attract penalty of **Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15 lakhs**.
 - ◆ **Persistence of contravention** shall attract **penalty** which may extend to **Rs. 10,000 per day**.
 - ⊕ **Crediting Penalty amount:** To be credited to the **Environmental Protection Fund** established under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 - ⊕ **Appeal:** Appeal against the order of adjudicating officer may be made to the **National Green Tribunal**.

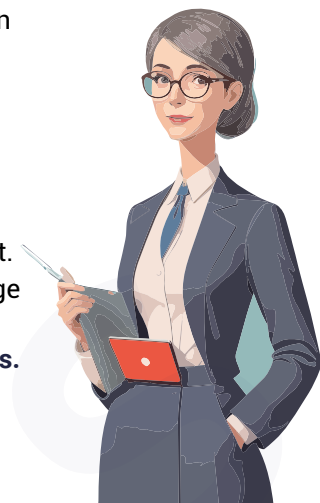


About Article 252 of Constitution

- ⊕ Empowers Parliament to legislate on any **matters with respect to which it lacks legislative power** except as provided in articles 249 and 250.
 - ◆ **Article 249 and Article 250** empower Parliament to legislate on matter in **State List** in the **national interest** and if **Proclamation of Emergency** is in operation.
- ⊕ Parliament can legislate on such matter, if **two or more state Legislatures pass resolution to this effect**.
 - ◆ **Any Such Act** by the Parliament shall apply to **States** passing such resolution and to any other State by which it is adopted.
 - ◆ Also, such Act could be **amended or repealed only by the Parliament**.

Women-owned MSMEs are underrepresented on the Udyam Registration Portal (URP)

- **Women-owned MSMEs constitute only 20.5% of MSMEs registered on the URP since its inception in 2020.**
 - ⊕ Also, these MSMEs contribute **only 10.22%** of the total turnover of Udyam-registered MSMEs.
- **By accelerating women's entrepreneurship, India could create over 30 million women-owned enterprises and around 150-170 million jobs (NITI Aayog).**
- **Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs**
 - ⊕ **Poor Digital and technical skills** due to low literacy rates, lack of access to mobile and Internet.
 - ⊕ **Inadequate access to formal credit** as most women do not have assets in their name to pledge as collateral.
 - ⊕ Most women-owned businesses are **home-run, micro, and informal** limiting their Market spaces.
 - ⊕ A disproportionate burden of **care economy, limited mobility for women, etc.**
- **Initiatives to promote women entrepreneurs**
 - ⊕ **Public Procurement Policy (2018):** Mandates at **least 3% annual procurement** from women-owned micro and small enterprises by Central Ministries/Departments/ Undertakings.
 - ⊕ **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro & Small Enterprises:** Provides additional concessions and guarantees for women entrepreneurs.
 - ⊕ **MSME Sustainable Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) Certification Scheme:** 100% subsidy on cost of ZED Certification for Women-owned MSMEs.
 - ⊕ **Upgradation & Mahila Coir Yojana'** under Coir Vikas Yojana program, **SAMARTH** initiative, etc.



About Udyam Registration Portal (URP)

- ⊕ Launched under Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) for formalisation of MSMEs.
- ⊕ Facilitates **online registration for MSMEs**, and generates **Unique Registration Number (URN)** and **Udyam Assist Certificate (UAC)** for MSMEs.
 - ◆ URN is **essential for a bank loan** to an MSME to be **classified under Priority Sector Lending (PSL)**.

Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

- **ASI is the principal source of Industrial Statistics in India.**
 - ⊕ It is conducted under the **Collection of Statistics (COS) Act, 2008.**
 - ⊕ It covers all factories registered under the **Factories Act, 1948.**
 - ◆ Also, covers unit under the **Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act 1966** etc.
 - ◆ However, defence establishments, oil storage and distribution depots, etc. are not covered under it.

Government Initiatives

- ⊕ **National Manufacturing Policy, 2011**
- ⊕ **Make in India initiative, 2014**
- ⊕ **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, 2021**
- ⊕ **Others-** Production Linked Incentive scheme, Industrial Corridor Development Programme, etc.

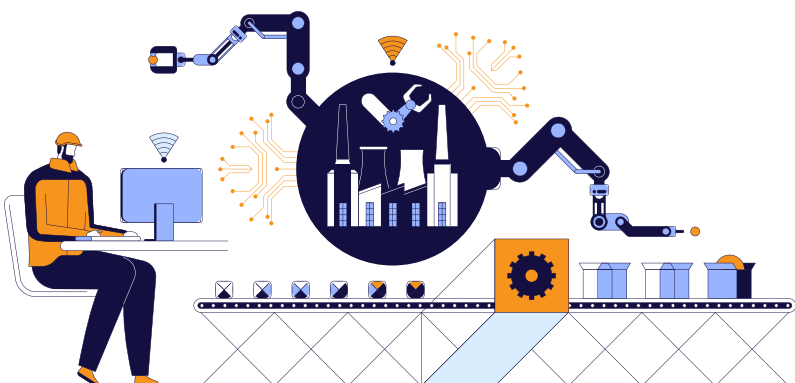
Key Highlights

- ⊕ In terms of **Gross Value Addition**, Gujarat remained at the top, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh
- ⊕ The top five states in terms of **employment** are Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- ⊕ **Manufacturing sector** showed **resilience** even after the disruption caused by the pandemic.
 - ◆ Main driver of resilience included **Manufacture of Basic metal, Coke & Refined Petroleum Products, Pharmaceutical Products, Motor vehicles, etc.**

About Manufacturing Sector

- ⊕ Contributes around **17%** in the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
 - ◆ India aims to increase share to **25%** by 2025.
- ⊕ There is huge potential exporting manufactured goods.
- ⊕ **Key Deriving factors:** Huge domestic demand, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), etc.

Challenges faced by Sector: Lack of Credit Availability, Low productivity in comparison to other countries like China, Vietnam etc., Informal or unorganised sector, Lack of skilled labour, Infrastructure bottlenecks etc.



SC issued notice on Haryana Govt. plea challenging striking down of 75% domicile quota in private jobs

- In November, 2023 Punjab and Haryana High Court quashed Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020.
 - ⊕ Court declared Act as **unconstitutional** and violative of **Part III (Fundamental rights)** of the Constitution of India.
- Act provided 75% reservation to locals in private sector jobs (having monthly salary of less than Rs. 30,000).
- Other States like Andhra Pradesh (2019) have also enacted similar acts.
- **Why states are pushing for local Reservation in the Private Sector?**
 - ⊕ **Private sector** is the **biggest job creator**, thus reservation can fulfill the commitment to social justice.
 - ⊕ States like Haryana are facing **high unemployment rate**.
 - ◆ Also, mechanization in agricultural is pushing local people toward private sector jobs.
 - ⊕ The private sector, benefits from the government i.e. tax concessions, cheaper loans etc. thus, can be asked to implement affirmative policy.
- **Concerns Raised**
 - ⊕ **Violates** Article 14, 16 (Right to equality) and 19 (5) (Right to freedom to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business).
 - ⊕ It may push **businesses to migrate** (due to lack skill workforce).
 - ⊕ Fuels **sons-of-the-soil syndrome (preferring locals)** in other states as well.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Against the fundamental principle of merit, etc.

MeitY transfers the technology for Smart Food Grain Storage System (SAFEETY) to the industry

- Technology for SAFEETY was developed by the **Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER)**.
 - ⊕ SAMEER is an **autonomous R&D institution** under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- It features **conveyorized loading & unloading of grain bags** having RFID for traceability, **online weight and moisture measurement** with **radio frequency-based removal of moisture** from grain.
- **Need for Scientific Food Grain Storage System**
 - ⊕ **Low production capacity:** India accounts for **18%** of the global **population** but only **11%** of the **arable land**.
 - ⊕ **Inadequate storage capacity:** India's foodgrain storage capacity is **only 145 MMT**, covering **47%** of the total production at **311 MMT**.
 - ⊕ **Food security:** FCI has grains beyond its buffer capacity which also requires a **robust network of foodgrain storage facilities**.
 - ⊕ **Economic viability of farming:** Robust storage will **reduce wastage**, keep farm **produce less volatile** to market fluctuations and **boost foodgrain exports**.
- **Initiatives for Scientific Food Grain Storage System**
 - ⊕ **"World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector"** approved to establish decentralized storage capacity at Primary Agricultural Credit Societies level.
 - ⊕ **Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI)** scheme for construction/renovation of godowns/ warehouses in rural areas.
 - ⊕ **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund** provides **financing facilities** for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets.

Also in News



Article 142 of Constitution

- Supreme Court invoked Article 142 to remit the 20-year sentence of a person convicted under **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012**.
 - ⊕ Judgement was delivered in response to **curative petition**.
 - ◆ A curative petition is the last recourse open to a petitioner after the review petition is dismissed.
- **About Article 142**
 - ⊕ Article exclusively enables the Supreme Court to issue or pass any order that it feels is necessary to provide **'complete justice'** in a case before it.
 - ⊕ Any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable **throughout the territory of India**.



ABHYAS - High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT)

- Flight trials of **ABHYAS-HEAT** were successfully carried out by the **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- **About ABHYAS**
 - ⊕ Designed for **autonomous flying** with the help of an auto-pilot.
 - ⊕ Indigenously developed by the **DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE)**.
 - ⊕ It has Radar Cross Section, Visual and Infrared augmentation system required for weapon practice.
 - ◆ It has also a **laptop-based Ground Control System**.
 - ⊕ **ABHYAS requires minimum logistics** and is **cost-effective** compared to imported equivalents.



Motion of Thanks

- Prime Minister replied to the 'Motion of Thanks' on the President's address.
 - ⊕ **Article 87** of the **Constitution** requires President's Address after each general election.
 - ⊕ Also, after the first session of every fiscal year addresses both Houses of Parliament.
- **Motion of Thanks**
 - ⊕ It is **moved in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha** after the President's address by Member of Parliament of the ruling party.
 - ⊕ The Motion of Thanks **must be passed in the House**. Its defeat amounts to the **defeat of the government**.
 - ⊕ It can be adopted with amendments.



FAME II Scheme

- **Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** said that **just 38%** of the **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid & Electric Vehicles II (FAME II)** subsidy has been used in FY24.
- **About FAME II**
 - ⊕ Expanded version of the **'FAME I (2015)**.
 - ⊕ FAME II was launched in 2019 for a period of 3 years.
 - ⊕ **Aims to encourage Faster adoption of Electric and hybrid vehicle**.
 - ⊕ Only **advanced battery** and registered vehicles will be incentivized under the scheme.
 - ⊕ Privately owned registered e-2Ws are covered.
 - ⊕ Also, supports creation of **charging Infrastructure** for electric vehicles.



Vaccine Safety Net (VSN)

- The **Healthy Indian Project (THIP)** has joined the WHO-led project **VSN**.
 - ⊕ THIP (a private company) is a **dedicated health information and fact-checking platform** with a particular focus on verified **vaccine safety information**.
- VSN initiated by the **WHO in 2003** aims to help **internet users find reliable information on vaccine safety**.
 - ⊕ **Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS)**, established in **1999**, supports the **VSN** by providing **advice and criteria for website quality and content**.



Non-Basmati Aromatic Rice Grading and Marking Rules, 2024

- Rules by Centre are expected to be applicable for grading and marketing of **five premium non-Basmati rice varieties** of West Bengal.
 - ⊕ These are **Gobindahog, Tulaipanji, Kalonunia** (all 3 have GI Tag), **Kataribhog, and Radhunipagal**.
- Under this, the **authorised packers** have to either set up their **own laboratory** or use an **approved packers laboratory** for testing the quality of rice.
- For **domestic trade**, packers have to follow **FSSAI standards** and for **export**, they need to comply with the **residual limits fixed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission** or **importing countries**.



GRAPES-3 (Gamma Ray Astronomy PeV Energies phase-3)

- GRAPES-3 discovered a **new feature in the cosmic-ray proton spectrum** at about **166 tera-electron-volt (TeV)** energy.
- GRAPES-3 in **Ooty (Tamil Nadu)** is a collaboration of **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai)** and other Indian Institution with **Japan**.
- It is designed to **study cosmic rays** with an array of **air shower detectors** and a large area **muon detector**.
 - ⊕ Cosmic rays considered to be the **most energetic particles in the universe**.
 - ⊕ They enter into Earth's atmosphere **from outer space** and induce a **shower of particles** that constitute **electrons, photons, muons, protons, neutrons etc.**



Electricity 2024 Report

- The report was released by the **International Energy Agency**.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊕ Electricity consumption from **data centres, artificial intelligence (AI) and the cryptocurrency sector** could **double by 2026**.
 - ⊕ **Clean electricity supply** is forecast to **meet all of the world's demand growth** through 2026.
 - ⊕ **Renewables** are set to provide **more than one-third of total electricity generation globally** by early 2025, overtaking coal.
 - ⊕ **India's electricity consumption** surpassed that of **Japan and Korea combined** at the end of 2023.
 - ⊕ Also, India posts the **fastest growth rate out to 2026** among major economies.

Personality in News



Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (1889 - 1964)

- She was **remembered on her Death Anniversary**.
- She played key role in both pre and post-Independence period.
- **Key Contributions:**
 - ⊕ Participated in the **'Salt March'** and **'Quit India Movement'**
 - ⊕ Fought battle against the various evil practices such as - **Slavery, Purdah system, Child marriage and Devdasi**.
 - ⊕ She played an important role as a member of the **Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly**.
 - ⊕ First **Health Minister** of Independent India.
 - ◆ She also laid the foundation of **AIIMS, Delhi**.
 - ⊕ **Major literary work:** *Woman in India, Challenge to Women, To women* etc.
- **Values:** Passionate, Courageous, Perseverance, and Determination.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR