

Supreme Court Advocates for Greater Representation of Women in Judiciary by Reinstating Female Judicial Officer

The lady judicial officer was removed by the **Rajasthan High Court** in 2020 for failing to disclose her earlier employment as a government teacher while applying for the civil judge's post.

- Also, the SC in **Pinky Meena v. The High Court of Judicature for Rajasthan** case underscored the underrepresentation of women in judiciary.

The Supreme Court Observed that:

- To holistically understand women's effective participation in the Judiciary, it is important to look at **three main phenomena**:
 - The entry of women into the legal profession;
 - The retention of women and growth of their numbers in the profession;
 - And the advancement of women, in numbers, to senior echelons of the profession.
- Also, Greater Representation of Women in the Judiciary will
 - Improve the overall quality of decision-making & enable better responses to diverse social and individual contexts and experiences.
 - Shift gender stereotypes, thereby, change attitudes & perceptions about appropriate roles of men & women.
 - Pave the way for greater representation in other decision-making positions. E.g., In the legislative and executive branches of government.
 - Increase women's willingness to seek justice and enforce their rights through the courts.

Underrepresentation of Women in Judiciary

- Supreme Court:** Since its establishment in 1950, the SC has had only **11 women judges**. In the last 75 years, there has been **no Dalit or tribal woman judge** in SC.
- High Courts:**
 - Only **13.4%** of judges of High Court are women (State of the Judiciary report, 2023).
 - No state except **Telangana and Sikkim** has more than **30% women judges** in High Courts (Indian Justice Report 2025).
 - Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Patna and Uttarakhand** High Courts have no women judges

The 1st State of the world's Animal Health Report

Released by the **World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)**, the report provides the **first comprehensive** global overview of animal health in a changing world.

- Headquartered in **Paris**, WOA was founded in **1924** as the **Office International des Epizooties** (renamed as WOA in 2003).
- It focuses on transparently **disseminating information on animal diseases**, improving animal health globally and thus builds a safer, healthier and more sustainable world.

Key Findings

- Shifting Disease Patterns:** Infectious animal diseases are **expanding into new geographical areas**, with nearly 47% having **zoonotic potential** (i.e., **transmittable from animals to humans**).
 - E.g., **Peste des Petits Ruminants** (affects sheep & goats), traditionally confined to developing nations, has now re-emerged in Europe.
- Rising Diseases Intensity:** Diseases like **African swine fever**, **avian influenza**, and **foot-and-mouth disease** are increasing in frequency & intensity, disrupting agrifood systems and **threatening food security, public health, and biodiversity**.
- Drivers of Disease Spread:** **Climate change & expanding global trade** are identified as major drivers.
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** By 2050, AMR is projected to cause livestock losses that jeopardise the **food security of 2 billion people** & result in a **US\$ 100 trillion economic loss**.
- Recommendations:**
 - Ensure **equitable access to safe, effective vaccines**, alongside other control measures like improved hygiene & biosecurity measures.
 - Investments to **strengthen national Veterinary Services**, greater global & regional coordination, improved **disease surveillance systems** etc.



Maternity Leave is Part of Reproductive Rights (K. Umadevi v. Government of Tamil Nadu): SC

The **Supreme Court (SC)** ruled that **maternity leave is an essential component of a woman's reproductive rights**, thereby reinforcing the constitutional and human rights of working women.

- The Court set aside a Madras HC order that had denied maternity leave to a woman on the birth of her **3rd child**, based on the State's policy limiting benefits to women with only 2 children.

Key Highlights of Judgment

- **Reproductive Right:** Maternity leave is an **integral part of maternity benefits** and forms a **core aspect of a woman's reproductive rights**.
- **Constitutional Protection:** A woman's **right to reproductive choices** is protected under **Article 21**, as a part of **personal liberty** (Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration case).
- **Human Rights:** Reproductive rights are enshrined in **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** & include the rights to **health, privacy, dignity, and equality**.
- **Social Justice:** The **maternity leave law** is designed to uphold **social justice** by supporting women's dual roles as mothers and workers, ensuring they can lead an **autonomous & dignified life**.
 - ⊕ While **population control is a valid policy objective**, it **cannot override fundamental reproductive rights**. A rational balance must be struck to serve the **broader goals of justice, equity, and welfare**.



Maternity Benefit Act

- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (amended in 2017)** provides for **paid maternity leave** and related benefits to women employees before and after childbirth.
- **Applicability:** Factories, mines, plantations, government establishments, shops & other **workplaces with 10 or more employees**.
 - ⊕ Women covered under the **Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948** also receive maternity benefits.
- **Maternity Leave: 26 weeks** of paid leave for women with less than two surviving children and 12 weeks for those with two or more children.

RBI Board Approves Transfer of Rs 2.69 Lakh Crore Surplus to Centre for 2024-25

The transferable surplus for 2024-25 has been arrived at on the basis of the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF) as approved by the Central Board.

- **Key Sources of RBI's Income:** Income from interest on government securities, Net interest from liquidity management tools (e.g., Liquidity Adjustment Facility), Loans, Interest earned on foreign currency investments

About the Economic Capital Framework (ECF)

- **Genesis:** ECF was adopted by RBI in 2019, based on the recommendations of the Bimal Jalan Committee.
 - ⊕ The ECF is an integral part of the **Enterprise-wide Risk Management (ERM) framework (2012)**.
- **Concept:** ECF provides a methodology for determining the appropriate level of risk provisions and profit distribution to be made under **Section 47 of the RBI Act, 1934**.
- **Therefore, maintaining adequate provisions** in the form of **Economic Capital** is crucial to absorb risks that may arise from any unforeseen events.
- **Components of Economic Capital under ECF:**
 - ⊕ **Realized Equity:** This consists of RBI's Capital, Reserve Fund, Contingency Fund (CF), and Asset Development Fund (ADF).
 - ◆ **Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB):** Component of **RBI's realized equity** to provide for monetary and financial stability, credit, and operational risks.
 - ⊕ **Revaluation Balances:** The unrealized gains, net of losses, resulting from exchange rate, gold price and interest rate movements.
- **Tenure of the Framework:** The Committee recommended the framework to be reviewed every 5 years.



Major Revisions in ECF

- **The risk provisioning under the CRB:** It has been expanded within a range of 4.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent of the RBI's balance sheet.
 - ⊕ **The increase** in CRB to 7.5 per cent for 2024-25 reduced the dividend.
 - ⊕ The RBI's CRB is the country's savings for a '**rainy day**' (a **financial stability crisis**) which the central bank consciously maintained in view of its role as **Lender of Last Resort (LoLR)**.
- **Market Risk:** Now includes both on- and off-balance sheet exposures; minor currency assets also covered.

US House Approves 'One, Big, Beautiful Bill' with 3.5% Outward Remittance Tax Provision

Called the 'Excise tax on remittance transfers', the newly proposed provision will be effective from January 1, 2026.

Remittances

- **Definition:** The movement of funds from the country of work back to a home country is known as remittances.
 - ⊕ In 2023, remittances back to home countries **totalled about \$656 billion**.
- India got **14.3% of global remittances** in 2024 (its highest ever).

Key highlights of the Bill

- **Remittance tax (excise tax)** will apply only to **non-US citizens** and US citizens are exempted.
 - ⊕ Affected groups include Visa holders (H-1B, F-1), Green card holders, etc.
- The bill reduced the **Outward remittance tax from 5% to 3.5%**.

Impact of Excise tax on remittance transfers

- **Global Economic ripple:** Countries like El Salvador, Mexico, India, which rely on US remittances, may face economic setbacks.
 - ⊕ The proposal may also discourage foreign workers from maintaining assets or employment in the US.
- **Dent India's Inward Remittance Flow:** The United States is the largest source of remittances to India, accounting for \$32.9 billion of the total remittance inflows in 2023-24.
- **A remittance tax could push some funds** from Indians in the U.S. to grey or black markets, bypassing regulation.

Related News: Liberalised Remittances Scheme

Student remittances under the Liberalised Remittances Scheme (LRS) in FY2025 dropped to a five-year low (\$2.92 billion), indicating reduced student outflows (RBI)

About Liberalised Remittances Scheme

- **Genesis:** Introduced in **2004 by Reserve Bank of India**.
- **Benefit:** All resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year for any permissible current or capital account transaction or a combination of both.
- There are **no restrictions** on the frequency of remittances under it.
- The Scheme is **not available to corporates, partnership firms, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), Trusts etc.**



Also In News



Payments Regulatory Board

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notified the **Payments Regulatory Board Regulations, 2025**, under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

- These regulations replace the earlier Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems Regulations, 2008.

About Payments Regulatory Board

- **Composition**
 - ⊕ **Chairperson:** RBI Governor
 - ⊕ **Ex-officio Members:** Deputy Governor in charge of payment systems, 1 RBI-nominated officer.
 - ⊕ **3 members** nominated by **Central Government**.
 - ⊕ Board may also invite experts from fields like payments, IT, cybersecurity, law etc.
- **Tenure of Members:** Government-nominated members will have a fixed tenure of 4 years and **no re-nomination** is allowed.
- **Meetings:** At least twice a year.
- **Quorum:** Minimum of **3 members**, including Chairperson or Deputy Governor.
- **Decisions:** by **majority vote**. In case of a tie, Chairperson has a casting vote.



Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has invited applications under the "**Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Clusters**" as part of the PMKSY.

About PMKSY

- **Type:** **Central Sector Scheme** approved in 2017. It has been continued till FY 2026 with an allocation of Rs. 4600 crore.
- **Ministry:** MoFPI
- **Objectives:**
 - ⊕ **Creation of modern infrastructure** for food processing mega food parks/ clusters and individual units.
 - ⊕ **To create** effective backward and forward linkages - linking farmers, processors and markets.
 - ⊕ **To create robust supply chain infrastructure** for perishables.

Scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro Processing Industries (APC)

- **Aim:** Development of **modern infrastructure and common facilities** to encourage group of entrepreneurs to set up food processing units based on a **cluster approach**.



Dual taxation on broadcasting services

Dual taxation on broadcasting services permissible in law: Supreme Court judgement

Key Highlights of Judgement

- **Dual taxation is permissible** as it taxes different aspects of the same activity under distinct legislative powers.
- **Centre** can levy **service tax** on broadcasting as a **service (under Entry 97, Union List)**.
 - ⊕ Service tax is charged on all services with few exceptions e.g., services covered in the negative list (Section 66d of Finance Act 1994).
- **States** can impose **entertainment tax** on the content delivered for entertainment (**under Entry 62, State List**).
 - ⊕ **Entertainment Tax** is a tax on commercial entertainment activities such as **cinematograph exhibitions, amusements and other forms of entertainment**.



White Himalayan Lily and Tree Fern

Uttarakhand Forest Department's latest report highlights the conservation of 2,228 plant species including White Himalayan Lily and Tree Fern.

About White Himalayan Lily (*Lilium polyphyllum*)

- A rare and fragrant lily species native to the **Himalayan region**, known for its **white or pink flowers** with dark spots and stripes.
- Rich in **active chemical constituents** like alkaloids and furocoumarins.
- Traditionally used to treat hyperdipsia, haematemesia, bronchitis, rheumatism, etc.
- **IUCN status:** Critically Endangered

About Tree ferns

- These are the **vascular plants** which don't have seeds, flowers, fruit or any kind of common reproductive part of plants.
- Known for **pharmacological properties** like antioxidant, antimicrobial, antibacterial, and anti-asthmatic effects.
- **Kumaon region** of **Uttarakhand** have a cluster of species of Tree ferns.



Supreme Court orders cadre review in all CAPFs

Supreme Court orders cadre review in all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) within 6 months.

- **CAPF are armed police organizations** under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **CAPFs include** Assam Rifles, Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force etc.

Key Highlights

- Promotions **must be the primary method** of filling posts within CAPFs to prevent **career stagnation** and to **safeguard the morale** of personnel.
- The SC also instructed that **deputation of officers to CAPFs up to the Senior Administrative Grade (SAG)** should be **progressively reduced within two years**.
 - ⊕ Currently, **senior positions in CAPFs** are largely occupied by officers on **deputation from the Indian Police Service (IPS)**, limiting promotion opportunities for personnel within the forces.



BRICS Trade Ministers' Meet

At the recent BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting, India called for dismantling of export controls among BRICS members.

Key Annexures Adopted:

- **BRICS Declaration on WTO Reform and Strengthening of Multilateral Trading System:** India's emphasised on proposal for a "30 for 30" initiative, suggesting 30 incremental reforms to mark the WTO's 30th anniversary in 2025.
- **BRICS Data Economy Governance Understanding:** Recognized Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as a crucial driver of digital transformation.
- **BRICS Trade and Sustainable Development Framework:** Affirmed that trade measures should not be misused for unjustifiable discrimination or disguised restrictions.



Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967

UAPA tribunal upholds Centre's decision to declare Meghalaya's Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLCC) as 'unlawful association' for another five years.

About UAPA 1967

- **Aim:** Effective **prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations** and for dealing with **terrorist activities**.
 - ⊕ It was **amended in 2019** to include the provision of designating **individuals as terrorists**, not just organizations.
- **UAPA Tribunal**
 - ⊕ The **Central Government can constitute the Tribunal** by notification in the Official Gazette.
 - ⊕ It consists of **one person**, who must be a **High Court Judge**.
 - ⊕ The **Central Government** provides necessary staff and covers all expenses from the **Consolidated Fund of India**.
 - ⊕ It has powers of a **civil court** under the **Code of Civil Procedure (1908)**.



Caraka & Susruta

Vice President of India inaugurated the statues of Caraka & Susruta installed at Raj Bhavan, Goa.

Caraka

- He was the royal physician in the Kushan Kingdom and is known as the father of medicine.
- **He authored the Caraka Samhita.**
 - ⊕ It records the proceedings of a conference on **Āyurveda, which took place at the Himalayan foothills**.
 - ⊕ Chaired by **physician Atreya**.
 - ⊕ Focuses on internal medicine and elaborates on the fundamental principles and management of health and diseases in Āyurveda.

Susruta

- He is considered the "Father of Plastic surgery".
- **Authored the Susruta Samhita.**
 - ⊕ Deals with surgery, anatomy and the topics of contemporary interest such as cataract and reconstructive surgery

Place in News



Australia (Capital: Canberra)

Australia's 'once-in-a-century' flooding leaves 50,000 stranded.

Political Features

- **Location:** Australia is the **smallest continent** and **6th largest country** on Earth, lying between the **Pacific and Indian oceans**.
 - ⊕ Australia is separated from Indonesia by Timor & Arafura seas (northwest), from Papua New Guinea by Coral Sea & Torres Strait (northeast).
- **Political System:** **Federal form of government & constitutional monarchy**.
 - ⊕ As a commonwealth of the UK, Australia's head of state is the **British monarch**.

Geographical Features

- More than 1/3rd of Australia is desert.
- **Major Mountain Ranges:** Great Dividing Range, Macdonnell Ranges
- **Major Rivers:** Murray-Darling, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan
- The **Great Barrier Reef**, off the east coast of Queensland, is the greatest mass of coral in the world.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI