

Ministry of Education flags steady increase in Private School Enrolment in States and decreasing enrolments in government and aided schools

Based on data from **UDISE+ (36% private school enrolment in 2023-24)**, the Ministry has asked the states to take steps to reverse the trend of decreasing enrolment in government schools.

- E.g. Andhra Pradesh (2023-24) has 73% government schools which enroll ~46% of students whereas, the ~25% private schools enroll ~52% of the total students.

Factors leading to increase in private school enrolment over public schools

- **Rising demand for Quality Education:** Parents prefer Private schools, perceived to provide better **quality education, infrastructure, and teaching standards.**
- **Investment:** Public investment in education was **4.6% of the GDP in 2021** which reduced to **4.1% in 2022.** (World Bank)
 - ⊕ This is **lower than 6%** of the GDP as envisaged in the **NEP 2020.**
- **State regulation and Monitoring:** Administrative inefficiencies and corruption in public institutions impact learning outcomes.
 - ⊕ E.g. Teacher absenteeism, ineffective implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Mid Day Meal etc.
- **Others:** Increasing per capita income, augmented accessibility of private schools etc.



Positive Implications

- **Increased accessibility** of schools with **availability** of educational **choice** due to growth of private institutions.
 - E.g. Under **Right to Education Act (2009)**, private schools are mandated to offer 25% **seats** to students from **low-income families.**
- **Increasing educational choice** in type, style and quality of education.
- **Wider availability** of funding of education system by non-state education providers through innovative financing mechanisms.



Negative Implications

- **Commercialization of education:** It defeats the **principle of equality of educational opportunities and Right to Education (Article 21A)**; perpetuates economic and socio-cultural **inequality.**
 - E.g. widening urban-rural, caste and class disparities.
- **Disengaging public education:** Increasing presence of private schools undermines state's obligation leading to its disengagement in public education and further **deterioration of quality.**
- **Decreasing level of education** by having different standards of quality of education and teaching.

First-ever batch of 17 Female Cadets pass out from National Defense Academy (NDA)

This event marks a significant step towards **gender inclusivity** in the Indian military. It also signifies the **breaking of gender barriers** & sets a precedent for future generations of women aspiring to serve in India's defense services.

- In 2021 Supreme Court (SC) had directed to admit women in the NDA. Subsequently, the 1st batch was admitted in 2022.
- Established in **1954** in **Khadakwasla** near **Pune (Maharashtra)** NDA is the **Joint Services training academy & undergraduate school** of the Indian Armed Forces.
 - ⊕ It is the **first tri-service academy in the world.**

Significance of Women Participation in Defense forces

- **Gender equality:** Provision of non-discriminatory **opportunities** is in line with right to **equality (Articles 14, 15, 16).**
- **Talent Pool and Recruitment:** Women in the age of **cyber warfare** & digitally equipped weapons can handle weapons efficiently.
- **Humanitarian and Peacekeeping Missions:** Women can connect local populations, especially in societies where cultural norms may limit interactions with male soldiers.

Challenges:

- Lack of socio-cultural acceptance for women in defence and leadership, Physical Standards, Discrimination, lack of infrastructural facilities etc.

Evolution of Role of Women in Defence Forces



1888
Women's admission in Indian army begins in "Indian Military Nursing Service."



1992
Induction of women in Short Service Commission (SSC) outside medical services.



2020
Supreme Court grants Permanent Commission to women (Babita Puniya Case).

1950
Army Act prohibits female recruitment.

2015
Indian Air Force opens fighter pilot training to women.

2022
Entry of women in Corps of Military Police through Agniveer Scheme.



Zoonotic disease outbreaks reported under India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), 2018–2023

The analysis reveals that of the outbreaks reported in IDSP, 8.3% were zoonotic, with a median of **seven monthly zoonotic outbreaks**.

- **Japanese encephalitis accounted for 29.5% of zoonotic outbreaks**, followed by leptospirosis and scrub typhus.
- Northeast region contributed to around one-third of zoonotic disease outbreaks, followed by Southern region.

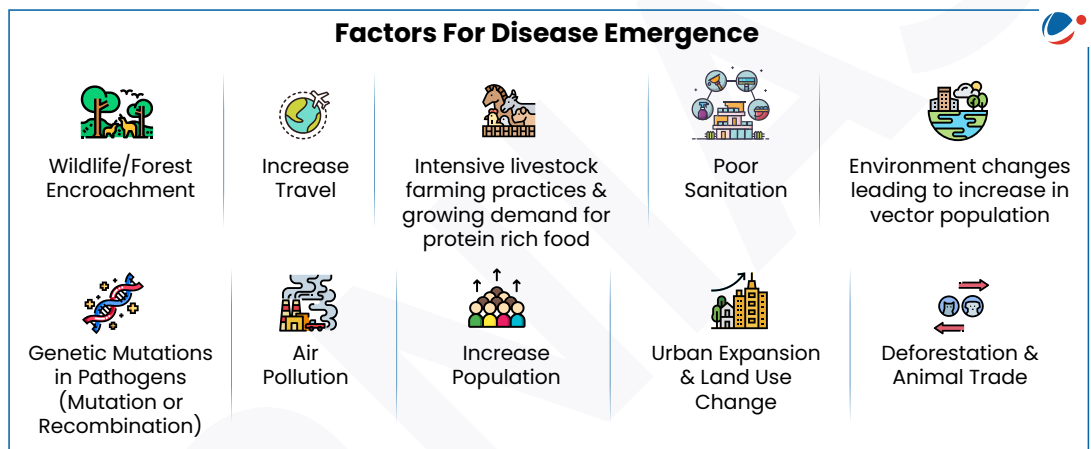
About Zoonotic Diseases

- Zoonoses are defined as those diseases and infections which are **naturally transmitted between vertebrate animals and people**. (WHO)
- Zoonotic pathogens may be **bacterial, viral or parasitic**, and can spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water or the environment.
- Globally, about millions of deaths occur every year from zoonoses and **60% of reported emerging infectious diseases globally are zoonoses**.

Initiatives taken

- **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)**: IDSP monitors data on six zoonotic diseases of human health importance i.e. Anthrax, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF), Rabies, Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), Leptospirosis and Scrub typhus.
- **National One Health Programme for Prevention and Control of Zoonosis**: Aims to institutionalize one health at national, state and district level, integrated surveillance, integrated community outreach program on One Health.
- **Disease Specific Programs**: National Rabies Control Program, Program for Prevention and Control of Leptospirosis and National Programme for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming.

Factors For Disease Emergence



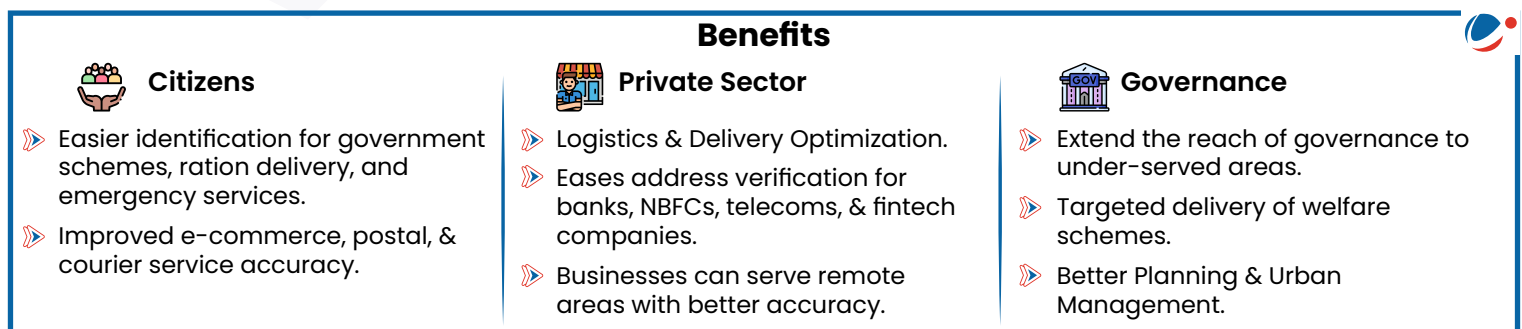
DHRUVA (Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address)

The **Department of Posts (DoP)** has released a comprehensive policy document outlining the framework for **DHRUVA**, a national-level **Digital Address Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**.

About DHRUVA

- **DHRUVA** is a **DPI** being developed by DoP to provide a **unique digital address for every home in India**.
 - ⊕ It creates a **secure digital environment** through which users can share accurate address information by leveraging a **geo-coded framework**.
- **Aim**: To recognize address information management as a foundational public infrastructure vital for effective governance, inclusive service delivery, and enhanced user experience.
- **Consists of 2 key Layers**:
 - ⊕ **Digital Postal Index Number (DIGIPIN)**: It is a **10-digit alpha-numeric code** representing geographic coordinates (latitude-longitude), developed by creating uniform (approximately 4x4 meter) grids on India's territory.
 - ◆ DIGIPIN uniquely identifies locations using **geospatial data**.
 - ⊕ **Digital Address Layer**: It is a **user-centric, consent-based system** built on DIGIPIN, allowing users to create customized labels to represent their DIGIPIN and descriptive addresses.
- **Key Features**: Privacy & Security; Interoperability and Openness; Scalability; Transparency & Accountability; Innovation Friendly etc.

Benefits



China launches International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed) in Hong Kong

33 Countries including China signed the **Convention on the Establishment of the IOMed**, headquartered in Hong Kong.

- **Article 33 of the UN Charter** provides for peaceful settlement of international disputes through negotiation, enquiry, **mediation, conciliation, arbitration**, judicial settlement or other peaceful means.
 - ⊕ To implement these dispute settlement methods, international organizations including **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** and the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** have been established.
 - ⊕ However, so far, there was **no established intergovernmental organization** for **mediation** method of dispute settlement.

Other International Dispute Settlement Organizations

- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):**
 - ⊕ It is the **principal judicial organ of the United Nations**, established in 1945 through **adoption of the UN Charter**.
 - ⊕ It is located in the **Hague (Peace Palace), Netherlands**.
 - ⊕ It settles **legal disputes submitted by States**, and gives **advisory opinions** on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.
- **Permanent Court of Arbitration:**
 - ⊕ **Aim:** Established in 1899 to facilitate arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution between states.
 - ◆ First permanent intergovernmental organization to provide such a forum.
 - ⊕ **Headquarter:** Peace Palace, Hague, Netherlands.



Russia has Called for the Revival of Russia-India-China (RIC) Format

Russia is pushing to revive the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral format citing signs of de-escalation in India-China border tensions.

About RIC Format

- **RIC** is an informal **trilateral strategic grouping**, originally conceptualized by Russia in the **late 1990s** to counterbalance to Western dominance.
- Over the years, it facilitated over **20 ministerial-level meetings**, fostering cooperation in foreign policy, economics, & security among the 3 nations.
- However, the format is dormant since the 2020 **Galwan Valley** clashes between India & China.

Importance

- **Largest Eurasian Countries:** RIC countries occupy over 19% of the global landmass & contribute to over **33% of global GDP**.
 - ⊕ All 3 countries are also members of **BRICS, G20, & Shanghai Cooperation Organization** etc.
- **Multilateralism:** It opposes unilateralism & support the idea of a **multipolar global governance model**.
- **Non Western Voice:** Offers an **alternative perspective on global issues**, advocating for equity & reforms in global institutions.
 - ⊕ All 3 are nuclear powers & Russia and China, are permanent members of UN Security Council.
- **Eurasian Integration:** Can complement projects like **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) & Eurasian Economic Union**.

Way Forward

For India, RIC format presents both opportunities & challenges. As India prioritizes **strategic autonomy**, it must balance opportunities in RIC avoiding being locked into any single camp, whether Western or non-Western.

Challenges to the RIC Revival

- **India-China Border Tensions:** Ongoing border disputes and trust deficit between India & China.
- **Strategic Balancing by India:** India's growing ties with the West and its role in the Quad may complicate its simultaneous engagement with the RIC grouping.
- **Russia-China dynamics:** Russia's growing closeness with China, especially in the wake of the Ukraine conflict, might raise concerns in India about the impartiality of the RIC platform.

Also In News



Provisional Annual GDP Estimates

National Statistics Office (NSO) releases the Provisional Estimates of Annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the Financial Year (FY) 2024-25.

Key Highlights

- **Real GDP** (GDP at Constant Prices) has been estimated to grow by **6.5% in FY 2024-25** while **Nominal GDP** (GDP at Current Prices) has witnessed a growth rate of **9.8%**.
- **Real Gross Value Added (GVA)** is estimated at ₹171.87 lakh crore in the FY 2024-25 while **Nominal GVA** is estimated at ₹300.22 lakh crore.
- **Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)** has reported a **7.2%** growth rate.
- **Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)** has recorded **7.1%** growth rate.



Fiscal Deficit

India's **Fiscal Deficit** stood at **4.8% of GDP for FY2024-25**, according to data released by the **Comptroller General of Accounts (CGA)**, meeting the revised estimate set by the **Union Budget FY2025-26**.

About Fiscal Deficit

- **Fiscal deficit** is the **difference** between the **government's total expenditure** and its **total receipts excluding borrowing**.
- **Gross fiscal deficit = Total expenditure – (Revenue receipts + Non-debt creating capital receipts)**
 - ⊕ Non-debt creating capital receipts are receipts which are not borrowings and do not give rise to debt. E.g. recovery of loans, proceeds from sale of PSUs.



Goa

On its statehood day, Goa becomes the **second state (after Mizoram)** to achieve **Full Functional Literacy** under the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram** (New India Literacy Programme).

- ULLAS is a **centrally sponsored initiative** which focuses on imparting functional literacy and enrich learners with critical life skills.

About Goa

- **India's smallest state** located on the Western Coast.
- **History:** Formed part of Mauryan Empire, and came under rule of Chalukyas of Badami, Rashtrakutas of Malkhed, Vijayanagara Empire and Bahmani Sultans.
 - ⊕ In **1510 AD**, **Afonso de Albuquerque** captured Goa from the **Sultan of Bijapur**.
 - ⊕ Liberated from **Portuguese** rule in **1961** and later formed as an Union Territory.
- **Major rivers:** Mandovi, Zuari, Chapora etc.



Vitamin B9

Nearly 41 % of urban adolescents in government schools across north India suffer from folate or vitamin B9 deficiency: AIIMS

About Vitamin B9 (Folate or Folic Acid)

- **Folate** is the **natural form of vitamin B9**, **water-soluble** and naturally found in many foods.
- **Function:** Helps to **form DNA and RNA** and is involved in **protein metabolism**.
 - ⊕ It is also needed to produce **healthy red blood cells** and is critical during periods of rapid growth, **such as during pregnancy and fetal development**.
- **Sources of folate include:** Dark green leafy vegetables, Beans, Peanuts etc.
- **Folate deficiency** leads to **blockade of DNA synthesis** and, inter alia, the symptoms of **megaloblastic anemia**.



Birch Glacier

Birch Glacier in Switzerland catastrophically failed, generating a massive landslide that has partially buried Blatten village.

- The collapse of the Birch Glacier also impacted the **Lonza River**.

Birch Glacier

- **Birch Glacier** is located in the **Lötschental valley in northern Switzerland**.
- Experts believe climate change played a central role in the glacier's collapse.
 - ⊕ Rising global temperatures have led to the **rapid retreat of glaciers** and the thawing of alpine permafrost, which acts as the glue holding mountain slopes together.
- Switzerland, **home to the largest number of glaciers in Europe**, has witnessed a dramatic loss of nearly 40% of its glacial volume since the year 2000.



Kawal Tiger Reserve

Telangana Government declared the Tiger Corridor Area connecting the **Kawal Tiger Reserve** in Telangana with the **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** in Maharashtra as '**Kumram Bheem Conservation Reserve**'.

About Kawal Tiger Reserve

- Located in **Sahyadri Mountain Ranges** along the banks of River **Godavari** in Telangana.
- Situated in **southern-most tip of Central Indian Tiger Landscape**, having linkages with Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) and Indravati Tiger Reserve (Chhattisgarh).
- **Flora:** Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest and Southern Dry Mixed Deciduous Forest.
- **Fauna:** Tiger, Leopard, Nilgai, Chinkara, Fox, Jackal etc.



National Florence Nightingale Awards

President of India presented the **National Florence Nightingale Awards for 2025 to 15 nurses** for their exemplary service in strengthening public health delivery.

About National Florence Nightingale Awards

- It was instituted by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 1973**.
- It aims to **recognize the meritorious services of nurses** and is presented to Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and Lady Health Visitors.
- Each award includes a **Certificate of Merit**, a cash prize of ₹1,00,000, and a medal.

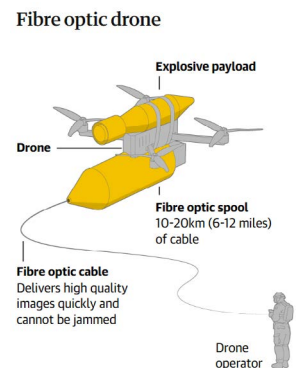


Fibre Optic Drone

The **fibre optics First-Person-View (FPV)** drones are being used in the Russia-Ukraine war.

About Fibre optics First-Person-View (FPV) drones

- They are wired kamikaze drones which use **fibre optics** instead of **radio waves** for navigation.
 - ⊕ **Fibre optics** uses very thin glass or plastic threads through which **light can travel to carry information**. It works on the principle of **total internal reflection**.
- The drone operator gets **access to high quality images at high speed**, improving **navigability and precision targeting**.
- **Features:** Difficult to detect, immune from being electronically intercepted, longer battery life, more accurate navigation in difficult terrains.
- **Drawbacks:** Can be slower and the cable could get entangled in obstacles.



Place in News



Nigeria (Capital: Abuja)

At least 111 dead in Nigeria floods as country struggles with climate shifts.

Political Features

- **Location:** West African country.
- **Bordering countries:** Niger (north), Chad and Cameroon (east), Benin (west), and the Gulf of Guinea (south).
- It is Africa's **most populous country**.
- Nigeria is a **federal republic** with a **bicameral legislature**.

Geographical Features

- **Climate:** Predominantly tropical, varying by region.
 - ⊕ **Harmattan Wind:** Dry wind from the northeast; lasts over 3 months in the north.
- **Major Rivers:** Niger River, Benue River, Cross River etc.
- **Lake Chad:** Freshwater Lake located at the conjunction of Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger.
- **Major Mountains:** Chappal Waddi, Mount Dimlang etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI