

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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GENDER BUDGETING

Context

- The Gender Budget reached **1% of GDP estimates in 2024-25 for the first time.**

About

- Women-led development remains at the core of announcements made by the Finance Minister (FM) in this year's Budget.
- Overall allocations currently stand at **more than ₹3 lakh crore for pro-women programmes.**
- There has been a remarkable **218.8 percent rise in the budget allocation** for women's welfare from FY14 to FY25.

What is Gender Budgeting?

- Gender budgeting is a strategy that includes **gender considerations in the budgeting process.**
- It was first introduced in **2005-06.**
- It involves **analysing and allocating budget**

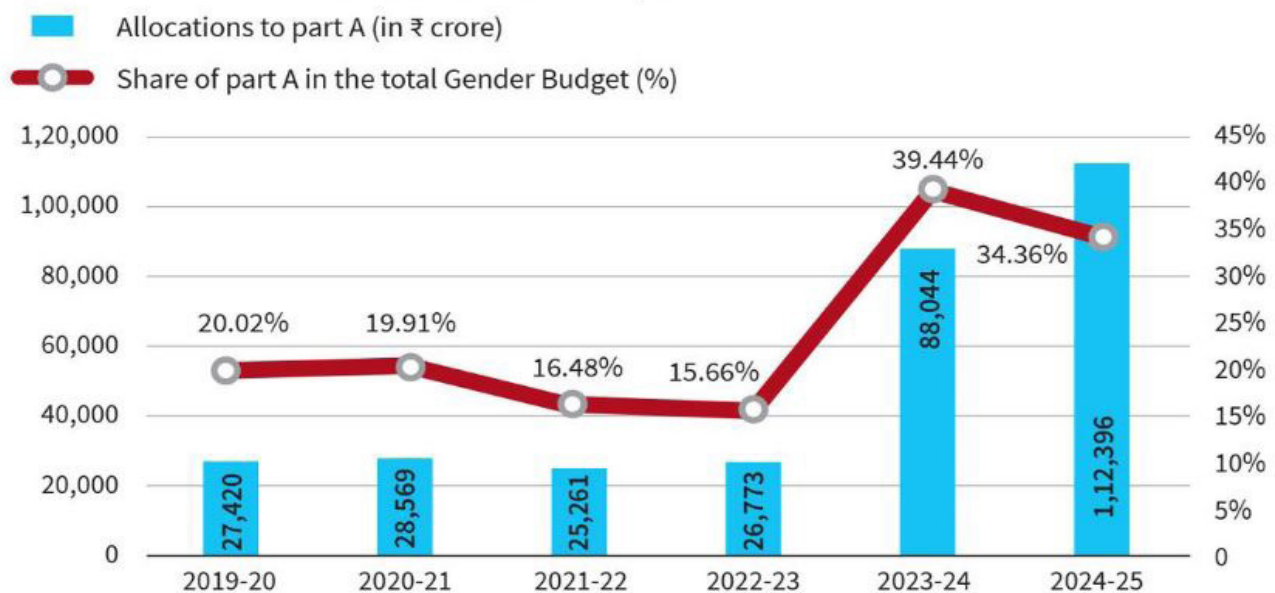
resources in a way that addresses the specific needs and priorities of women and girls and promotes gender-sensitive policies and programs.

Gender Budget 2023-24

- The previous Gender Budgets consistently reported an **average share of 5%** of the total budgetary allocations.
- This year the share of allocations to pro-women schemes stands at approximately **6.8%** of the total budget expenditure for 2024-25, which is way above the usual trends.
- The Gender Budget is divided **into three parts.**
 - While Part A covers schemes with 100% provision for women, Part B includes schemes with 30-99% allocations for women.
 - For the first time ever, Part C includes schemes with allocations of up to 30% for women.

Figure 1: The allocations under part A and the share in the total Budget

Part A reports expenditures in schemes with 100% allocation for women. Since BE 2023-24, there has been a sudden increase in the allocations in part A.



Significance

- The Economic Survey highlights the importance of women-led development, starting with the **health and education of the girl child.**
- Key indicators show progress in this area, with the national sex ratio at birth (SRB) improving from 918 to 930, and the maternal mortality rate decreasing from 130 to 97 per lakh live births.

- **Women's participation in skill development has increased.**

- ◆ Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), it grew from 42.7 per cent in FY16 to 52.3 per cent in FY24.
- ◆ The Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme has 82 percent female beneficiaries.
- ◆ Women's involvement in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) rose from 9.8 per cent in FY16 to 13.3 percent in FY24.
- ◆ In the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), it went up from 7.7 percent in FY17 to 20.8 per cent in FY24.

Government initiatives

- **Mission Shakti** is a women empowerment programme launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) for the period 2021-2025.
 - ◆ It aims to strengthen interventions for women's welfare, safety, and empowerment, making women equal partners in nation-building.
- **Initiatives like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, and PM Matru Vandana Yojana** have also contributed to significant improvements in the welfare and empowerment of women and girls.
- **The Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 programmes** focus on improving women's health beyond just calorie intake and improving overall health and immunity with proper micronutrients.
- **The Women in Science and Engineering-KIRAN (WISE KIRAN) program** has supported nearly 1,962 women scientists from 2018 to 2023.

Conclusion

- Incorporating explanations for allocations in GBS would not only ensure accounting accuracy but will help in gender audits and provide pathways for improved gender outcomes in government programmes.
- Several years of advocating for improved reporting in the GBS by experts is reflected in the inclusion of a third part.

- Gender responsive budgeting is a powerful tool to close the gender gaps in an economy.

Source: TH

WORKING MECHANISM FOR CONSULTATION & COORDINATION (WMCC) ON INDIA-CHINA BORDER AFFAIRS

Context

- Recently, the 31st meeting of the **Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination (WMCC) on India-China Border Affairs** was held in Beijing.

About the WMCC

- It is an institutional framework established to **facilitate communication, coordination, and management** of border-related issues **between India and China**.
- It was **set up through an India-China agreement in 2012**. It emerged as a response to the need for improved institutionalised information exchange regarding border matters.
- The idea for such a mechanism was **first suggested by Wen Jiabao**, the then Premier of China, in 2010.

Composition and Function

- The WMCC includes representatives from both **countries' Foreign and Defence Ministries**.
- Its primary objectives are to address border problems, enhance communication, and promote cooperation.
- Specifically, the WMCC focuses on the India-China border areas, where tensions and disputes have historically existed.

WMCC on India-China Border Affairs

- It was activated after the face-off on the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** began in 2020.
- The discussion was **'in-depth, constructive and forward-looking'**, and both sides agreed to maintain the momentum through established diplomatic and military channels.
- The talks come amid indications that the two countries are making efforts to resolve the stand-off along the **LAC in eastern Ladakh**.

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into **three sectors**:
 - ♦ the **eastern sector** which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim;
 - ♦ the **middle sector** in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and;
 - ♦ the **western sector** in Ladakh.
- LAC in the eastern sector consisting of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim is called the **McMahon Line** which is 1,140 km long.



Major friction points along the India-China border

- **Depsang Plains:** This area is located in the northernmost part of Ladakh and has seen incursions by Chinese troops in the past.
- **Demchok:** This area is located in eastern Ladakh and has seen disputes over the boundary between India and China.
- **Pangong Lake:** This area has been a major flashpoint between the two countries, with Chinese troops attempting to change the status quo on the LAC in the region.
- **Gogra and Hot Springs:** These two areas are located in eastern Ladakh and have seen standoffs between Indian and Chinese troops in recent years.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** This northeastern Indian state is claimed by China as part of its territory and has been a major point of contention between the two countries.

How is the LAC different from the Line of Control with Pakistan?

- The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the UN after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by DGMOs of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- The LAC, is only a concept and it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map or demarcated on the ground.

Importance of Peace for India and China

- **Economic cooperation:** India and China are two of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies and improved relations can help to increase trade and investment.
- **Regional stability:** India and China are two major powers in Asia, and their relations have a significant impact on regional stability.
- **Border security:** A peaceful relationship between the two countries is essential to maintain border security and avoid any conflicts or misunderstandings along the border.
- **Geopolitics:** India and China are both major players in the global geopolitical landscape whose peaceful co-existence is essential to create a more stable and predictable international environment.

Challenges in Peace Process

- **Military Build-up:** The military build-up by both countries along the border has increased tensions and made the peace process more challenging.
- **Historical Issues:** Historical issues, including the 1962 Sino-Indian War, continue to affect relations between the two countries.
- **Border Disputes:** Despite several rounds of talks, the two sides have not been able to reach a lasting solution to the border dispute especially along the LAC.

Way Ahead

- India-China peace process requires sustained efforts from both sides to address these challenges and build mutual trust and understanding.

- There is a need to continue discussions through military and diplomatic channels and to actively implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries to further stabilise the border situation.
- Overall, peace between India and China is essential for the economic, political, and strategic interests of both countries, as well as for regional and global stability.

Source: TH

VEHICLE SCRAPPING POLICY TO PHASE OUT POLLUTING VEHICLES

Context

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched the Voluntary Vehicle Modernization Program or Vehicle Scrapping Policy to create an ecosystem for phasing out unfit polluting vehicles across the country.

About

- The Program and Policy will be implemented through a network of **Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs)** and **Automated Testing Stations (ATSS)**.
- Presently, there are **sixty-plus RVSFs** across 17 States / UTs and **seventy-five ATSS** across 12 States / UTs operational in the country.
- Recognising the importance of Fleet Modernization and Circular Economy, multiple Commercial and Passenger Vehicle Manufacturers have agreed to offer discounts for a limited period against a **Certificate of Deposit (Scrappage Certificate)**.
 - ♦ Commercial Vehicle and Passenger Vehicle manufacturers have shown a willingness to offer discounts for a limited period of two years and one year respectively.

Advantages of Vehicle Scrapping Policy

- **Rise in demand for new cars:** With old vehicles being scrapped, the demand for new vehicles will rise. More than 51 lakh light motor vehicles (private and commercial) are more than 20 years old.
- **Employment growth:** Establishing scrapping centers and the increase in vehicle sales will lead to job creation in various sectors including manufacturing, services, and recycling.
- **Better air quality:** Scrapping unfit vehicles will result in less air pollution and better air quality.
- **Best price for scrap:** Vehicle owners will get the best price for car scrappage for workable parts

such as tyres. The recycling industry will also be more active leading to higher revenue.

- **Better Fuel Efficiency:** Newer vehicles are generally more fuel-efficient, leading to savings in fuel consumption and reducing the country's dependency on fossil fuels.

Challenges

- **Financial Burden:** Owners of older vehicles, particularly those from lower-income groups, find it financially burdensome to replace their vehicles, even with incentives.
- **Waste Management Challenges:** The scrapping of millions of vehicles lead to challenges in managing the waste generated, including hazardous materials like batteries, oil, and electronic components.
- **Market Disruptions:** The sudden influx of scrapped vehicles and the push for new ones could create disruptions in the automotive market, affecting prices and demand unpredictably.

Way Ahead

- To fully realize the potential of the scheme there is a need to ensure that **scrapping centers are easily accessible** to vehicle owners, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Also establish a **mechanism for regularly reviewing the policy's impact** and make necessary adjustments based on technological advancements and changing environmental needs.
- Provide **support for small businesses and workers in the unorganized sector** who may be affected by the policy. This could include retraining programs, financial assistance, or opportunities to transition into the new automotive ecosystem.

Source: AIR

\$15-BN PUSH FOR PHASE 2 OF SEMICONDUCTORS MANUFACTURING POLICY

Context

- India ramps up its semiconductor ambitions with a **\$15-billion** incentive to emerge as a global chip hub, following in the footsteps of the US, Taiwan, and South Korea.

About

- The revised blueprint focuses on capital support for raw materials, gases, and chemicals essential for chip fabrication.

- However, the capex subsidy for assembly and testing plants, which had been raised to **50 percent**, can be reduced under the new plan.
- In March 2024, the government approved proposals to set up **three semiconductor units** in **Gujarat and Assam** with an estimated investment of **Rs 1.26 lakh crore**.
- Now the government is **looking at advanced fabrication technologies** and **micro-LED displays**, signaling a shift towards more complex elements of the chip ecosystem.
- Micron Technology's ATMP **plant in Gujarat's Sanand is running 133 days behind schedule**, due to the company's inability to hire sufficient construction headcount.
- **Research and Development:** India currently lacks original research in semiconductor design, where the future of the chip is decided.
- **Power supply:** An uninterrupted supply of power is central to the process, with just seconds of fluctuations or spikes causing millions in losses.
- **Water intensive:** Chip-making requires gallons of ultrapure water in a single day.

What is a Semiconductor?

- Semiconductors also referred to as 'chips' are highly complex products to design and manufacture, providing the essential functionality for electronic devices to process, store and transmit data.
- The chip comprises interconnections of **transistors, diodes, capacitors** and **resistors**, layered on a wafer sheet of silicon.

Earlier policy

- In the first iteration of the incentive policy, which was released in **2021**, the Union government had offered a **30 per cent capex subsidy** for chip packaging and testing plants.
- However, in 2022, it had increased the subsidy for such plants to **50 per cent**.

Global Scenario in Chip Manufacturing

- About **70%** of the current global manufacturing capacity is confined to **South Korea, Taiwan and China**, with **the US** and **Japan** making up for much of the rest.
- Taiwan and South Korea make up about **80%** of the global foundry base for chips.
- Only one company, the Netherlands-based ASML, produces EUV (extreme ultraviolet lithography) devices, without which it is not possible to make an advanced chip.

Challenges faced by India's semiconductor industry

- **India's close allies**, like the US and EU, also sense the semiconductor opportunity and have rolled out more lucrative incentive schemes than India.
- **Talent pool:** While India is the biggest back office for design engineers of all major chip companies, skilled talent that can work on factory floors of a fabrication plant is still hard to come by.

Significance of the project

- **Job Creation:** Semiconductor manufacturing facilities in India will create many direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- **Reduced Dependence on Imports:** India currently relies on imported semiconductor chips for various electronic devices.
 - ♦ Establishing a domestic semiconductor industry will enhance the country's self-reliance and resilience in times of geopolitical tensions or disruptions in global supply chains.
- **Export Opportunities:** With a competitive semiconductor industry, India can export chips and related products to other countries, generating revenue and improving its trade balance.
- **Strategic Importance:** Semiconductor chips are critical components in various strategic sectors such as defense, aerospace, and telecommunications.
 - ♦ Having a domestic semiconductor industry ensures greater control over the supply chain and reduces vulnerabilities to disruptions or external pressures.

Other Initiatives for Semiconductor Industry

- **India Semiconductor Mission:** It has been set up as an Independent Business Division within Digital India Corporation having administrative and financial autonomy to formulate and drive India's long-term strategies for developing semiconductors and display manufacturing facilities and semiconductor design ecosystem.
- **Production Linked Incentive scheme:** Incentives are being provided for semiconductor design and packaging.
- **QUAD Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiatives:** To assess the capacity, pinpoint

vulnerabilities, and enhance supply chain security for semiconductor and its critical components.

Way Ahead

- By establishing the semiconductor industries, India can increase its influence in the global technology landscape.
- India can also attract foreign investment, foster innovation, and stimulate other sectors such as electronics, telecommunications, and information technology. A robust industry will significantly contribute to India's GDP growth.

Source: IE

INS ARIGHAAT AND NUCLEAR POLICY OF INDIA

In News

- India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, the INS Arighaat, was commissioned into service at Visakhapatnam

About INS Arighaat

- It features several technological upgrades compared to its predecessor, **INS Arihant**.
- Both submarines share the same reactor and dimensions but Arighaat incorporates advanced design and manufacturing technology.
- **Construction and Indigenization:** The submarine involved advanced technology, special materials, and skilled workmanship.
 - ♦ It includes indigenous systems and equipment developed by Indian scientists and industry.
- **Importance :** INS Arighaat enhances **India's nuclear triad**, which includes land-based missiles, aircraft, and nuclear-powered submarines (SSBNs) with ballistic missiles.
 - ♦ It strengthens India's nuclear deterrence and contributes to maintaining regional strategic balance.

INS Arihant

- INS Arihant was the first of its kind, commissioned in 2016 after its launch in 2009.
- INS Arihant is armed with a K-15 SLBM (750 km range) and a K-4 SLBM (3,500 km range) is under development.
- The K-4 SLBM will enhance India's undersea nuclear deterrence.
 - ♦ The nuclear triad completion was announced in November 2018.
- A third submarine in the class is under construction, expected to be larger and more capable.

Nuclear Doctrine:

- **Historical Context:** In 1962 India's nuclear weapons development began after the 1962 war with China and China's 1964 nuclear test.
 - ♦ In 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test, Pokhran-I, termed as a "peaceful nuclear explosion."
 - ♦ In 1998 India conducted Pokhran-II tests, which included fission and thermonuclear devices, demonstrating capability to integrate nuclear warheads with its missile program.
- **Features**
 - ♦ **Credible Minimum Deterrence:** India aims to maintain a credible minimum deterrence.
 - ♦ **No First Use (NFU) Policy:** Nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or forces.
 - ♦ **Massive Retaliation:** Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
 - ♦ **Authorization:** Nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorized by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).
 - ♦ **Non-Use Against Non-Nuclear States:** India will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
 - ♦ **Response to Biological/Chemical Attacks:** India retains the option of nuclear retaliation in the event of a major biological or chemical attack.
 - ♦ **Export Controls and Treaties:** Continued strict controls on nuclear and missile-related material exports, participation in the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations, and adherence to the moratorium on nuclear tests.
 - ♦ **Commitment to Disarmament:** Ongoing commitment to global, verifiable, and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

Challenges and Issues

- India still lags behind bigger nuclear powers, with the US, Russia, and China possessing more advanced nuclear subs.
- China's expanding fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and Pakistan's potential development of sea-based nuclear deterrence pose challenges to India.
- Some argue India's "No First Use" (NFU) policy and emphasis on a small arsenal may undermine credible deterrence.

- Critics believe the doctrine's focus on "minimum deterrence" and "massive retaliation" may not be sufficient against evolving threats.

Suggestion and Way Forward

- China's advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities and increased submarine deployments in the Indian Ocean highlight the need for India's robust deterrence.
- India's nuclear capabilities should be assessed relative to China and Pakistan, both of which have advanced arsenals.
- The commissioning of INS Arighaat is **crucial for maintaining a credible second-strike capability** amid growing nuclear threats from China and Pakistan.
- To ensure continuous at-sea deterrence, India should aim to expand its SSBN fleet, with a suggested goal of at least six SSBNs.
- Source:TH

The **focus is on new marriages** falling under the new legislation.

- The government seeks to maintain respect for Islamic rituals while ensuring legal clarity.

Conditions for Registration Under the New Legislation

- The couple must have been living together as husband and wife since the solemnization of their marriage.
- They should reside within the district of the marriage and divorce registrar for at least 30 days preceding the marriage.
- Both parties must be of legal age (at least 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys) at the time of solemnization.
- Consent must be freely given.
- Both parties should be of sound mind and not incompetent or insane.
- The marriage should not violate the prohibited degree of relationship according to Shariat or Muslim law.
- The application for marriage registration must include relevant identity and residence documents.

Source: TH

SHE-BOX

Context

- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched SHe-Box, a centralised portal for registering and monitoring complaints of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

About

- It serves as a centralized repository of information related to **Internal Committees (ICs)** and **Local Committees (LCs)** formed, encompassing both the government and private sectors.
- It offers a **common platform to file complaints, track their status**, and ensure a time-bound processing of complaints by ICs.
- It also provides **assured redressal of complaints** and a streamlined process for all stakeholders.
- The portal through a designated nodal officer will enable **real-time monitoring** of complaints.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

BILL TO MAKE COMPULSORY MUSLIM MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Context

- Recently, Assam has passed the 'Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024' to make the registration of Muslim marriages and divorces with the government compulsory.

About the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024

- It **replaced** the British-era Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Act of 1935, which allowed child marriages and did not adequately address polygamy, and introduced several crucial reforms.
- It aims **to prevent child marriages, ensure consent, protect women's rights, and curb polygamy within the Muslim community**.
- It recognises the importance of formalising marriages and divorces through government registration.

Validating Existing Registrations

- Previous marriage registrations conducted by Qazis (Islamic legal authorities) will remain valid.

SCO MEET IN ISLAMABAD

In News

- Pakistan has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting, scheduled for October 2024 in Islamabad.

Previous SCO Engagements:

- India hosted the SCO Summit virtually last year, with Pakistan's then Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif participating via video link.
- In May 2023, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited India to attend the in-person SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Goa, marking the first such visit in nearly 12 years.
- Pakistan currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) and will host the two-day in-person meeting.

Do you know ?

- Relations between Pakistan and India remain strained, mainly due to the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism.
- India has maintained that it desires normal relations with Pakistan, provided that Pakistan creates an environment free of terrorism and hostility.
 - ♦ Pakistan downgraded its ties with India following the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Parliament on August 5, 2019.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization established on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai (PRC).
- **Founding Members:** Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- **Current Member States:**



- **Official Languages:** Russian and Chinese
- **Decision-Making Bodies:** Council of Heads of States (CHS): Meets annually to decide major issues
 - ♦ Council of Heads of Government (CHG): Meets annually to discuss multilateral cooperation, economic priorities, and approve the budget
- **Goals:** Strengthen mutual trust and good-neighborliness among member states

- ♦ Encourage cooperation in politics, trade, economy, science, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, and environmental protection
- ♦ Ensure and maintain regional peace, security, and stability
- ♦ Promote a fair and rational international political and economic order.

Source:TH

QUASAR

In News

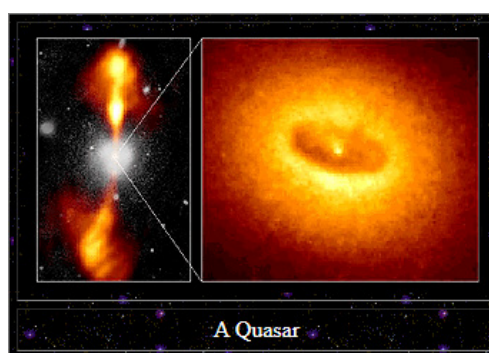
- Astronomers using the **European Southern Observatory's (ESO) Very Large Telescope (VLT)** have discovered the brightest known black hole, identified as a quasar.

About

- The quasar, named **J0529-4351**, has a mass of 17 billion Suns and consumes about one Sun's worth of matter per day.
- It is described as the most luminous object ever observed, emitting over 500 trillion times more light than the Sun.
- The light from J0529-4351 took over 12 billion years to reach Earth, indicating it is located very far from us.

Quasars

- They are a **subclass of active galactic nuclei (AGNs)** known for their **extreme luminosity**.



- They are highly luminous galactic cores where gas and dust fall into a supermassive black hole, emitting radiation across the entire electromagnetic spectrum.
- They are among the most luminous objects in the universe, **emitting thousands of times more light than the entire Milky Way**.
- They are typically observed at great distances from Earth, meaning we see them as they were billions of years ago.

- **Hubble Space Telescope Discoveries:** In 1996 Hubble captured an image of a quasar located 9 billion light-years away, marking its 100,000th exposure.
- **Insights from Quasars:** The study of quasars helps understand the birth of galaxies and the rate of expansion of the universe.

Source: TH

NORTHERN BALD IBIS

Context

- The northern bald ibis, also known as the Waldrapp, hunted to extinction by the 17th century, was revived by breeding and rewilding efforts over the last two decades.

About

- **Characteristics:** The Northern Bald Ibis has a long, **under-curved beak**. They are characterized by their **black plumage, iridescent green**, and **bald red head**, with individual black markings.
- **Distribution:** The bird used to be common across **North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and much of Europe**. However, it became extinct in central Europe for over 300 years due to hunting and habitat destruction.
- **Northern Bald Ibises hunt** with the help of their **sense of touch** to poke in the ground for insect larvae, earthworms, and other invertebrates.
- **Conservation Status:** The **IUCN Status** of the species is **“Endangered”**. (Earlier it was “critically endangered”).
- **Conservation efforts:** It is making a comeback as scientists guide 36 of these birds on their ancient migration route from Austria to Spain using an ultralight aircraft.



Source: TH

CHANDIPURA VIRUS

Context

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently identified the current **Chandipura virus outbreak in India as the largest in 20 years**.

Chandipura Virus

- Chandipura virus, aka **Chandipura vesiculovirus (CHPV)**, is an **RNA virus** belonging to the **Rhabdoviridae family**, which also includes the rabies virus.
- It was first identified in **1965 in Chandipura**, a village in **Maharashtra**.
- **Spread:** It occurs by the sting of a vector-infected species of sandflies like Phlebotomine sandflies and Phlebotomus papatasi, and some mosquito species such as Aedes aegypti (which is also the vector for dengue).
 - ♦ The virus resides in the salivary gland of these insects, and can be transmitted to humans or other vertebrates like domestic animals through bites.
- **Symptoms:** It mainly affects children aged 9 months-14 years. Fever, vomiting, loose motion and headache are the main symptoms.
 - ♦ The infection can reach the central nervous system which can lead to encephalitis — inflammation of the active tissues of the brain.
- **Treatment:** There is no specific antiviral treatment or vaccine for Chandipura virus infection.

Source: TH

BONDA TRIBE

Context

- An Odisha tribal boy from the Bonda tribe becomes the first from the community to clear NEET exam set to pursue MBBS programme.

About the Bonda tribe (aka Remo people)

- It inhabits the wild and secluded **Malkangiri district in Odisha**, near the **river Machkund**. Their distinctiveness lies not only in their geographical isolation but also in their unwavering spirit and ancient cultural practices.
- Their **self-identification as ‘Remo’** reflects this spirit of Independence and Freedom.
- Bonda men are known for their bravery and boldness. They carry traditional weapons like bows and arrows.

- The Bonda **language** belongs to the **Austro-Asiatic language group**.

Dormitory Organisation

- The Bonda tribe practises a dormitory system. Men and women have separate living spaces.
- These dormitories serve as communal areas for socialising, rituals, and discussions.

Source: TH

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIF)

Context

- The annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) has begun in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga.

About

- The event is being attended by more than 1,500 delegates from around 40 countries.
- In this year's annual meeting, **climate change** is high on the agenda — several PIF members are among the world's worst-affected countries, especially due to rising sea levels.

Pacific Islands Forum

- PIF is an intergovernmental organisation formed in **1971**.
- It consists of **18 member states** located in the Pacific region.
 - ♦ Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- The PIF aims to push for economic growth, enhance political governance and security for the region, and strengthen regional cooperation.
- The annual Forum meetings are **chaired by the Head of Government of the Host Country**, who remains as the Forum Chair until the next meeting.
 - ♦ The organisation discusses priority issues at its annual meeting, where decisions made by the member states are reached by **consensus**.
- The decisions are implemented by the **Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat**.

Source: IE

