

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 6-11-2024

Table of Content

India Hosts Maiden Asian Buddhist Summit

Every Private Property Not a Community Resource: SC

Uttar Pradesh Brings New Rules for DGP Appointment

Rising STEM Research Demands Revitalised Education

World Solar Report Series

NEWS IN SHORT

Maha Kumbh Mela

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das

T.N. Declares Heatwaves a State-specific Disaster

Chalo India Campaign

SC Upholds validity of U.P. Madrasa Act

India-Kazakhstan Form Joint Venture For Titanium Slag Production

LignoSat: World's First Wooden Satellite

River City Alliance

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

INDIA HOSTS MAIDEN ASIAN BUDDHIST SUMMIT

Context

- The Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) organized the **First Asian Buddhist Summit (ABS)**.

About

- The theme of the summit is on **'Role of Buddha Dhamma in Strengthening Asia'**.
- The summit brought Sangha leaders, scholars, experts and practitioners from various Buddhist traditions across Asia.
- Asian Buddhist Summit covered the following themes:**
 - Buddhist Art, Architecture and Heritage;
 - Buddha Crik and Dissemination of Buddha Dhamma;
 - Role of Holy Buddhist Relics and its Relevance in Society;
 - Significance of Buddha Dhamma in Scientific Research and Well-Being;
 - Role of Buddhist Literature and Philosophy in the 21st Century.
- The Summit is also a manifestation of **India's Act East Policy**, which is principled on collective, inclusive and spiritual development of Asia with Dhamma as the guiding light.

Buddhism

Timeline of The Spread of Buddha Dhamma	
6th Century BCE	Siddhartha Gautama attains enlightenment.
Emperor Ashoka promotes Buddha Dhamma across his empire.	268-232 BCE
1st Century BCE	Emergence of Mahayana and Nikaya traditions within Buddhism.
Ashoka's dhammaduta establish communities in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and beyond.	3rd Century BCE
1st Century BCE	Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna spread Buddhism along the Silk Route to Central and East Asia.
Masters like Atisha Dipankara and Bodhidharma contribute to the dissemination of Buddha Dhamma in Tibet and East Asia.	11th Century BCCL

- Buddhism is a spiritual and philosophical tradition based on the teachings of **Siddhartha Gautama**, known as the **Buddha**, who lived around the **5th to 4th century BCE** in what is now Nepal and India.
- The core of Buddhism** is the understanding of human suffering, its causes, and the path to overcome it.
- Buddhism offers a path to enlightenment, which is seen as liberation from suffering and the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara).
- The ultimate goal in Buddhism is **to attain Nirvana**—a state of liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

Relevance of Buddhist Teachings in Today's World

- Mindfulness and Meditation:** In recent decades, mindfulness meditation, a central Buddhist practice, has become widely embraced for its mental health benefits.
- Emotional Resilience:** Buddhism teaches the importance of accepting suffering as a part of life (dukkha), this can help people build resilience in the face of adversity.
- Peace and Nonviolence:** Buddhism advocates for nonviolence (ahimsa) and peaceful resolution of conflicts, offering a model for dialogue and reconciliation.
- Forgiveness:** Buddhist principles also emphasize the importance of forgiveness, his teaching is particularly relevant in post-conflict societies or communities dealing with historical trauma.
- Transcending Materialism:** In a world often fixated on material wealth, Buddhism provides an alternative perspective on happiness—rooted in inner peace, wisdom, and compassion.

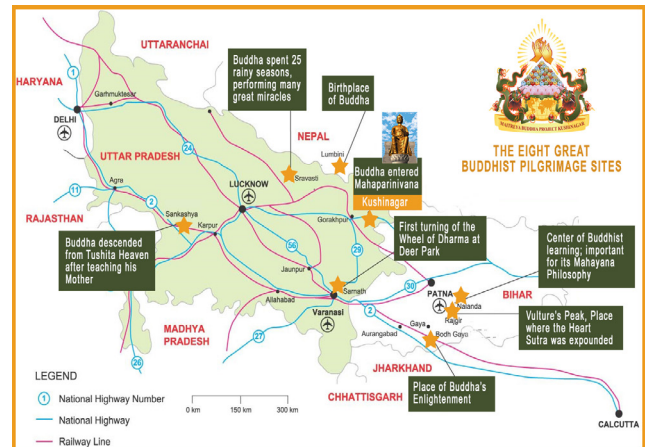
Soft Power Diplomacy

- Soft Power:** The concept of soft power has emerged as a potent tool for countries to wield influence and shape perceptions without resorting to coercive tactics.
 - This is often referred to as **soft hegemony**, a concept used by western countries, especially the United States.
 - It is used to influence other cultures by subtly promoting their ideas and values through popular trends, particularly targeting the younger generation.
 - Joseph Nye** was the first to coin the term "soft power".

Buddhism as India's Cultural Soft Power Diplomacy

- To Strengthen Ties with South Asian Countries:** Many Southeast Asian nations, such as Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka, have deeply rooted Buddhist traditions.
 - India has been strategically leveraging its rich Buddhist heritage to strengthen ties and counter China's growing influence.
- Positioning Itself as a Peaceful Nation:** By emphasising shared values and diversity, India aims to not only deepen diplomatic and economic relations but also position itself as a beacon of peace and stability in the region.
- Origin of Buddhism:** India's promotion of Buddhist diplomacy is bolstered by historical roots, with Buddhism originating there, and the presence of significant sites like Bodh Gaya.
- The Dalai Lama and India's Global Influence:** Living in exile in India since 1959, the Dalai Lama serves as an ambassador of Buddhist philosophy.
 - India's support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism has increased its influence among Buddhist communities worldwide.
- The Revival of Nalanda University:** The original Nalanda University, established in the 5th century CE, was a major center for Buddhist studies, attracting students and scholars from all over Asia.
 - The new Nalanda University aims to be a global hub for education and research in Buddhist studies.
- Buddhist Art and Monuments:** Indian Buddhist art and architecture, such as the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, the Sanchi Stupa, and the Great Stupa at Sarnath, are UNESCO World Heritage sites that serve as symbols of India's cultural heritage.
- Foreign Policy:** The country's foreign policy emphasises a non-military approach, including the Panchsheel Initiative and the Panchamrit Principles.
 - One crucial aspect is Sanskriti evam Sabhyata, highlighting India's cultural connections with other nations to bolster its soft power strategy.
- Tourism:** India is currently **home to seven of the eight most significant Buddhist sites in the world.**
 - The **Ministry of Tourism** is promoting a **number of tourist circuits** that transgress national borders.
 - The holy places of Buddhism, where Lord Buddha was born and He taught, preached,

and attained 'Enlightenment' and 'Nirvana', are termed as Buddhist Circuit.



Conclusion

- The historical intertwining of **Indian and Asian cultures through Buddhism** provides a strong foundation for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.
- By **leveraging historical, cultural, and religious ties**, India seeks to foster mutual understanding, cooperation, and goodwill among nations.
- Through initiatives such as the promotion of Buddhist tourism and the revival of Nalanda University, India endeavours to assert its leadership in the realm of academia while simultaneously strengthening its cultural and diplomatic foothold.

Source: PIB

EVERY PRIVATE PROPERTY NOT A COMMUNITY RESOURCE: SC

Context

- Recently, a **nine-judge Constitution Bench** of the Supreme Court of India ruled that the State cannot take over private property solely under the pretext of serving the **'common good'**.

Background of the Case

- The case was **initiated by the Mumbai-based Property Owners Association**, challenging the constitutionality of Chapter VIII-A of the **Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act 1976**, which allowed the State to acquire private property with compensation set at one hundred times the monthly rent.
- The **petitions, initially filed in 1992**, were referred to a nine-judge bench in 2002 and finally **heard in 2024** after more than two decades.

Nature of Private Property

- The concept of private property has been a cornerstone of legal and economic systems worldwide.
- Private property rights in India have evolved through various constitutional amendments and judicial interpretations.
- **Initially**, the 'right to property' was a **fundamental right under Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31** of the Constitution.
- However, the **44th Amendment in 1978** relegated it to a **constitutional right under Article 300A**, allowing the state to acquire private property only through due process and with adequate compensation.

Supreme Court's Ruling

- The majority opinion, led by the Chief Justice of India, found that **Justice Krishna Iyer's 1978 ruling**, which suggested that *all private properties could be considered community resources*, is '**unsustainable**'.
- The court ruled that not all privately owned property could be considered '**material resources of the community**' under **Article 39(b) of the Directive Principles of State Policy**, and this should be assessed on a **case-by-case basis** rather than through a blanket application.
- It **overturned the 1978 judgement** by Justice Krishna Iyer, which had a broader interpretation of **Article 39(b)**.

Revisiting Article 39(b)

- The Supreme Court, in its recent ruling, clarifies that **private property cannot be classified as 'material resources of the community'** merely because it meets a certain social or economic criterion.
- The majority opinion asserts that taking private assets in the name of the common good **requires a more rigorous justification**.

Article 39(b)

- It comes under the **Directive Principle of State Policy**. It directs the State to work towards **redistributing resources to best serve the public interest**.
- It imposes a positive obligation on the State to frame policy to ensure that the '**ownership and control of material resources of the community**' are distributed in such a way that they '**subserve the common good**'.

Article 31C

- It was introduced by the **25th Amendment in 1971 to protect laws formulated under Articles 39(b) and 39(c)**, allowing the State to acquire resources essential to the community's welfare.

Dissenting Opinions: Justice Nagarathna's Views

- '**Material resources**' can in the first instance be divided into **two basic categories**, namely:
 1. State owned resources which belong to the State which are essentially material resources of the community, held in public trust by the State; and
 2. Privately owned resources.
- However, the expression 'material resources' does not include 'personal effects' or 'personal belonging' of individuals, which are intimate and personal in nature and use.
- Justice B.V. Nagarathna partially dissented, emphasising the need for a balanced approach that considers both individual property rights and the community's needs.

Private and Material Resources

- There may exist private ownership of forests, ponds, fragile areas, wetlands and resource-bearing lands. Such resources fall within the **ambit of Article 39(b)**.
- Similarly, resources like spectrum, airwaves, natural gas, mines and minerals, which are scarce and finite, may sometimes be within private control.
- **Private resources** can be **turned into material resources** of the community by means such as **Nationalisation; Acquisition; Operation of law; By purchase by state; and Owner's donation**.

Criteria for 'Material Resources of the Community'

- The ruling clarifies that, a resource should be assessed through multiple lenses to qualify as a 'material resource of the community':
 - ♦ Nature and characteristics of the resource;
 - ♦ Impact on public welfare;
 - ♦ If the resource is State-controlled versus privately held;
 - ♦ Scarcity and availability of the resource; and
 - ♦ Implications of concentrated ownership among private entities.

Implications of the Supreme Court Ruling

- It underlines the importance of protecting individual property rights while ensuring that resource redistribution serves the public interest in a balanced and justified manner.
- **Protection of Private Property Against Arbitrary State Acquisition:** Supreme Court reinforces the **protection of private property against arbitrary State acquisition** and underscores the need for a more nuanced approach to resource redistribution.
- **Economic Shift:** The decision reflects a **shift towards a more market-oriented economic policy, moving away from the socialist ideologies** that influenced earlier rulings.
 - ♦ The Supreme Court noted, *'India's dynamic economic policies over the past three decades have contributed to the country's rapid growth, positioning it among the world's fastest-growing economies'*.
- It is expected to have a significant impact on future cases involving property rights and State powers in India.

Conclusion

- The Supreme Court's ruling marks a critical juncture in the legal landscape of property rights in India.
- It reaffirms the importance of due process and adequate compensation in the acquisition of private property by the state.
- As India continues to evolve economically, this judgement provides a nuanced understanding of the nature of private property, balancing individual rights with the common good.

Source: TH

UTTAR PRADESH BRINGS NEW RULES FOR DGP APPOINTMENT

Context

- The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet cleared the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh Selection and Appointment Rules, 2024.

About

- The new rules are in compliance with the Supreme Court verdict in **Prakash Singh judgment on police reforms** in the case of **2006**.

- According to new guidelines, a committee will decide the state's new police chief.
- Earlier, the state government had to send the list of eligible officers to the UPSC, which shortlisted three names and sent them to the state, after which it could choose one of them.

The selection committee

- **Head:** The selection committee headed by a **Retired High Court Judge**.
- **Members:** It will consist of the chief secretary, a person nominated by the UPSC, the UP Public Service Commission chairman or their nominee, an additional chief secretary or principal secretary (Home) and a retired DGP.

Issues with Police System in India

- **Colonial Legacy and Structure:** The Police Act of 1861 still governs the police system, which was designed for colonial control rather than for modern-day democratic governance.
- **Political Interference:** Frequent interference from politicians hampers impartiality in law enforcement.
- **Custodial Death:** There are many cases on custodial death means Death by torture/pressure in police/judicial custody.
 - ♦ During **1996-1997 in D.K.Basu judgment**, the Supreme Court (SC) issued a guideline against custodial death in India.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Training programs are outdated and lack emphasis on soft skills, ethics, and community engagement.
- **Delays in Implementing Reforms:** Various reform recommendations, including those by the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh v. Union of India case (2006), have seen limited implementation.

Way Forward

- **Implementing Reforms:** Adopting the Model Police Act of 2006 and the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission.
- **Community Policing Programs:** Encouraging initiatives like Mahila Suraksha Samitis and Community Liaison Groups for better relations with communities.
- **Independent Oversight Mechanisms:** Establishing state and central level oversight bodies to ensure accountability.

Prakash Singh judgment on police reforms

- In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court in **2006** had directed all states and Union Territories to bring in police reforms.
- The ruling issued a series of measures that were to be undertaken by the governments to ensure the police could do their work without worrying about any political interference.

What were the rulings?

- **Fixing the tenure and selection** of the DGP to avoid situations where officers about to retire in a few months are given the post.
 - ♦ In order to ensure no political interference, a minimum tenure was sought for the Inspector General of Police so that they are not transferred mid-term by politicians.
- **Police Establishment Boards (PEB):** The postings of officers being done by Police Establishment Boards comprising police officers and senior bureaucrats to insulate powers of postings and transfers from political leaders.
- **State Police Complaints Authority (SPCA):** There was a recommendation of setting up the State Police Complaints Authority (SPCA) to give a platform where common people aggrieved by police action could approach.
- **State Security Commissions (SSC):** Separation of investigation and law and order functions to better improve policing, setting up of SSC that would have members from civil society and forming a National Security Commission.

Source: IE

RISING STEM RESEARCH DEMANDS REVITALISED EDUCATION

Context

- The majority graduates from Higher educational institutions in India, lack essential industry-ready skills, highlighting a critical skill gap.

About

- **STEM research** refers to the study and development of advancements in four core areas: **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**.
- It focuses on solving complex problems, driving innovation, and contributing to scientific knowledge across a range of high-impact fields.

Challenges in STEM Research in India

- **Skill Gap:** Graduates from many Indian higher education institutions lack essential industry-ready skills. This gap makes it challenging for industries to find skilled professionals, impacting economic growth.
- **Faculty Shortages:** Teaching institutions are already facing faculty shortages, which will worsen if enrollment issues persist.
- **Focus on Rankings over Quality:** Emphasis on research output for rankings pushes faculty toward producing papers and patents, often prioritizing quantity over quality. This focus diverts resources from improving teaching quality.
- **Predatory Research Outlets:** The presence of predatory conferences and publications diverts attention from genuine research, undermining the credibility and quality of research output.

Step required for improvement

- **Separate Ranking Systems:** Teaching institutions should be ranked based on their teaching quality, while research output should not heavily influence rankings for institutions primarily focused on teaching.
- **Enhanced Focus on Pedagogy:** Faculty in teaching institutions should prioritize pedagogy over research initially, allowing the education quality to improve and later benefiting research outcomes.
- **Faculty Development Programs:** Greater emphasis on faculty development, mentorship, and updated courses, both online and offline, to improve teaching quality.
- **Collaboration with Research Institutions:** Joint efforts between teaching and research institutions to share best practices in pedagogy can strengthen the quality of teaching.
- **Dedicated Teaching Track:** Creating a dedicated teaching track within academic hierarchies can incentivize teachers to focus on pedagogy. Faculty can progress based on teaching skills rather than research output alone.

Steps taken by Indian Government

- **National Education Policy (NEP):** NEP promotes quality education and aims to bridge the skill gap in the country. It encourages a balance between research and teaching quality.
- **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF):** ANRF supports research and aims to foster collaborations between institutions,

supporting the development of quality research and teaching standards.

- **Impacting Research Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT):** This initiative aims at providing solutions to the most relevant engineering challenges and translating knowledge into viable technology in 10 selected technology domains.
- **Research parks** at IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur, IIT Chennai, have been established which provide an interface between entrepreneurship and Industry to establish their R&D units in collaboration with students & faculty members of the IITs.

Concluding remarks

- Revitalizing the country's teaching institutions is critical to producing a larger, higher-quality talent pool, capable of driving innovative research and scientific discoveries.
- By prioritizing pedagogical excellence, creating dedicated teaching tracks, and fostering collaboration between teaching and research institutions, India can cultivate an educational ecosystem where quality teaching and impactful research reinforce each other.

Source: TH

WORLD SOLAR REPORT SERIES

Context

- The 3rd edition of the World Solar Report series was released at the **7th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance**.

About

- **The newly launched 4 reports namely** World Solar Market Report, World Investment Report, World Technology Report, and Green Hydrogen Readiness Assessment for African Countries each highlight a **crucial area in the global shift towards sustainable energy**.
- **First introduced in 2022**, this series provides a comprehensive overview of global progress in solar technology, key challenges, and investment trends in the sector.

Key Highlights

- **World Solar Market Report**
 - ♦ **Rise in Solar Capacity:** Global solar capacity has increased from 1.22 GW in 2000 to 1,418.97 GW in 2023—a 40% annual growth rate.

- ♦ **Solar Industry Employment Boom:** It provides 16.2 million jobs, with solar leading with 7.1 million—up 44%, and 86%.
- **World Investment Report**
 - ♦ **Exponential Growth in Energy Investments:** Global energy investments are set to soar from \$2.4 trillion in 2018 to \$3.1 trillion in 2024—a steady climb at nearly 5% annually.
 - ♦ **APAC leads global solar investments:** APAC is at the forefront of solar investments pouring USD 223 billion into solar in 2023.
- **World Technology Report**
 - ♦ It include record-setting 24.9% efficiency in solar PV modules, an 88% reduction in silicon usage since 2004, and a 90% drop in utility-scale solar PV costs, fostering resilient, cost-effective energy solutions.
- **Readiness Assessment of Green Hydrogen in African Countries' report**
 - ♦ Green hydrogen offers a viable alternative to coal, oil, and gas, supporting Africa's transition to cleaner energy.

About the International Solar Alliance

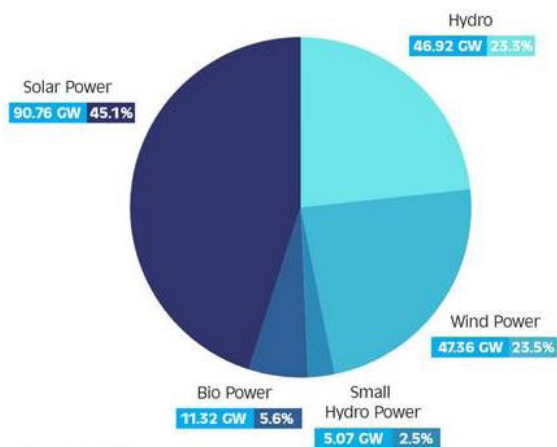
- It is an international organisation with **120 Member and Signatory countries**.
- **Established:** By Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of France Francois Hollande in 2015.
- **Headquarter:** First international intergovernmental organisation to be headquartered in India.
- **Mission:** To unlock US\$1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030.
 - ♦ Reducing the cost of the technology and its financing.

India's Renewable Energy Capacity

- **India's total electricity generation capacity** has reached **452.69 GW**.
- Having the **8,180 MW (megawatt) of nuclear capacity**, the **total non-fossil fuel-based power** now accounts for **almost half** of the country's installed electricity generation capacity.
- As of 2024, **renewable energy-based electricity generation capacity** stands at **201.45 GW**, accounting for **46.3 percent** of the country's total installed capacity.
 - ♦ **Solar power** contributes towards **90.76 GW**, **wind power** follows closely with 47.36 GW, **hydroelectric power** generating 46.92 GW

and small hydro power adding 5.07 GW, and **biopower**, including biomass and biogas energy, adds another **11.32 GW**.

Renewable Energy Capacity in India



India's Targets

- India has a vision to achieve **Net Zero Emissions by 2070**, in addition to attaining the short-term targets which include:
 - Increasing renewables capacity to **500 GW by 2030**,
 - Meeting **50% of energy requirements** from renewables,
 - Reducing cumulative emissions by **one billion tonnes by 2030**, and
 - Reducing emissions intensity of India's gross domestic product (GDP) by **45% by 2030 from 2005 levels**.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

MAHA KUMBH MELA

In News

- The upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela will be in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

About Maha Kumbh Mela

- The Maha Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years.
- It is the world's largest peaceful pilgrimage, drawing millions to bathe in sacred rivers for spiritual cleansing and liberation.
- Historical Background:** The Kumbh Mela dates back to the Maurya and Gupta periods.

- During medieval times, it received royal patronage and was even attended by Mughal Emperor Akbar.
- Colonial records by British administrators like James Prinsep offer detailed documentation of the festival.
- Post-Independence:** Since India's independence, the Maha Kumbh Mela symbolizes national unity and cultural heritage. UNESCO recognized it as an intangible cultural heritage in 2017, highlighting its enduring cultural significance.
- Religious Significance:** The festival is deeply rooted in Hindu mythology and rotates among four sacred sites: Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik, and Prayagraj.
 - Each is situated by a holy river, from the Ganges to the Shipra, the Godavari, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati in Prayagraj.
 - The timing of each Kumbh Mela is determined by the astrological positions of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter, believed to signal an auspicious period for spiritual cleansing and self-enlightenment
- Core Ritual:** Central to the Kumbh Mela is the ritual of bathing at Triveni Sangam (confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Sarasvati), believed to purify the soul, free one from rebirth, and guide toward spiritual liberation.
- Special Ceremonies:** The grand Shahi Snan (royal bath) marks the festival's start, with auspicious bathing dates like Paush Purnima. The Peshwai procession, where ascetics parade on elephants and chariots, is another iconic feature.
- Cultural Celebration:** The Mela showcases Indian arts, music, dance, and crafts, allowing pilgrims to experience a cultural celebration alongside their spiritual journey.
- Global Participation:** The Kumbh attracts international pilgrims drawn by its message of unity, tolerance, and universal spirituality, illustrating humanity's shared pursuit of inner peace.

Source: PIB

DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS

Context

- Parliamentarians paid tribute to **Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das** on his **Birth Anniversary**.

About Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das (1870 - 1925)

- He was a freedom fighter, leader, and social reformer, regarded as one of the key figures in the early 20th-century nationalist movement.
- He became an **active member of the Indian National Congress (INC)** and aligned himself with the more **radical wing of the party**.
- His early political ideas were influenced by **Bankim Chandra** and **'Rashtraguru' Surendernath Banerjee** who was twice the President of INC, in **1895 and 1902**.
- He was a key figure in the **Swadeshi Movement (1905–1908)**, which aimed at boycotting British goods in protest against the partition of Bengal by the British.
- He established the **Swarajya Party** within the Congress in collaboration with Pt. Motilal Nehru, the Ali brothers, Ajmal Khan, Vittihalbhai Patel and others.

Source: PIB

T.N. DECLARES HEATWAVES A STATE-SPECIFIC DISASTER**Context**

- The Tamil Nadu government has notified the **heatwave as a State-specific disaster**.

About

- The World Meteorological Organization declared that **2023 was the hottest year on record**.
- **In the summer of 2024**, a severe and long heatwave impacted India, blistering plains and hills, causing deaths and heat strokes.
- **State Specific Disaster:** It would entail providing relief to people affected by heatwaves and launch interim measures to help manage the heat.
 - ♦ Expenditure for this will be incurred from the **State Disaster Response Fund**.

Heatwave

- A heatwave is defined as a **prolonged period** of unusually and excessively hot weather, accompanied by **high humidity**.
- **The India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has specified the following criteria:
 - ♦ a heatwave need not be considered till the **maximum temperature** of a station reaches at least **40°C for plains and at least 30°C for hilly regions**.

Source: TH

CHALO INDIA CAMPAIGN**Context**

- The Ministry of Tourism is going to launch the Chalo India campaign on the sidelines of the ongoing World Travel Mart in London.

About

- Chalo India is a first-of-its-kind initiative to bring more foreign tourists to India, wherein the government will allow “friends” of diaspora members to get free visas.
- Five foreign nationals nominated by each **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)** cardholder on a special portal will be eligible for a gratis e-visa (visa granted without fees).

Overseas Citizen of India

- OCI was introduced by the Indian government in **2005**.
- A registered OCI is **granted multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visa** for visiting India.
- **They are exempted** from registration with Foreign Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreign Registration Officer (FRO) for any length of stay in India.
- OCI cardholders can open special bank accounts in India, they can buy non-farm property and exercise ownership rights and can also apply for a driver's licence and PAN card.
 - ♦ However they are **required to seek permission** or a permit to visit protected areas in India.

Eligibility Criteria

- It provides for registration as an OCI of all Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) who were citizens of India on **26th January, 1950**, or thereafter, or were eligible to become citizens of India on the said date.
- A foreign national who;
 - ♦ Belonged to a territory that became part of India after **15th August, 1947**; or
 - ♦ A child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen; or
 - ♦ A minor child of such persons mentioned above; or
 - ♦ A minor child whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India is eligible for registration as OCI cardholder.

Who cannot be an OCI?

- An applicant is not eligible to get an OCI card if his/her parents or grandparents have ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh.
- Foreign military personnel either in service or retired are also not entitled for grant of OCI.

What are OCIs not allowed to do?

- The OCI card holder is not entitled to vote; to be a member of a Legislative Assembly or of a Legislative Council or of Parliament; to hold Indian constitutional posts such as that of the President, Vice President, Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court.
- He or she cannot normally hold employment in the government.

Source: IE

SC UPHOLDS VALIDITY OF U.P. MADRASA ACT

Context

- The Supreme Court held that the validity of a law cannot be challenged for violating the Basic Structure of the Constitution.

Supreme Court ruling

- The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the '**Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act 2004**' and set aside the Allahabad High Court's judgment which had struck it down earlier.
- The reason is that concepts such as democracy, federalism, and secularism are undefined concepts.
 - ♦ Allowing courts to strike down legislation for violation of such concepts will introduce an element of uncertainty in our constitutional adjudication.
- The court referred to the observation made by the Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain case.

Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain case

- The basic structure doctrine, established in **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)**, held that certain foundational aspects of the Constitution cannot be amended even by Parliament.
- However, in **Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975)**, a majority of the Bench ruled that the **doctrine does not apply to ordinary legislation**, as statutes are subordinate to constitutional amendments and remain within the bounds of legislative competence.

Source: TH

INDIA-KAZAKHSTAN FORM JOINT VENTURE FOR TITANIUM SLAG PRODUCTION

In News

- India and Kazakhstan have signed an agreement to establish a joint venture company, IREUK Titanium Limited, for the production of titanium slag in India.

About Titanium

- Titanium is a **strong, lightweight, and corrosion-resistant metal** and it is the 9th most abundant element on Earth.
- **Primary Ores:** Rutile (TiO) and Ilmenite (FeTiO)
 - ♦ Titanium slag is a byproduct of the ilmenite smelting process, where ilmenite ore is processed to produce high-purity titanium dioxide (TiO) feedstock for further refining.
- **Applications:** Used in industries requiring durability and lightweight materials. This includes aerospace components (aircraft engines, frames), medical implants (due to its biocompatibility), automotive parts, electronics, and even sports equipment.

Source: ET

LIGNOSAT: WORLD'S FIRST WOODEN SATELLITE

Context

- Japan has launched **LignoSat**, the world's first wooden satellite into space to prove that wood is a space-grade material.

About: LignoSat

- Named after the **Latin word** for "wood", LignoSat is made of **honoki**, using a traditional Japanese crafts technique without screws or glue.
 - ♦ Honoki, a kind of **magnolia tree native to Japan** and traditionally used to make sword sheaths.
- Developed by **Kyoto University** and **Sumitomo Forestry Co.** is scheduled to orbit the Earth for six months.
- The satellite will measure how wood endures the **extreme environment of space**, where temperatures fluctuate from **-100 to 100 degrees Celsius** every 45 minutes as objects orbit through darkness and sunlight.
- It will also gauge timber's ability to reduce the impact of **space radiation** on semiconductors,

making it useful for applications such as **data centre construction**.

Do you know?

- Wood is **more durable** in space than on Earth because there's no water or oxygen that would rot or inflame it.
- Conventional metal satellites create **aluminium oxide** particles during re-entry, but wooden ones would just burn up with less pollution.

Source: AIR

RIVER CITY ALLIANCE

Context

- Union Minister for Jal Shakti Shri inaugurated **Ganga Utsav 2024** in Haridwar **under the River City Alliance**.

River City Alliance

- It is an organization that now includes 145 river cities nationwide.
- The alliance's main objective is to **promote healthy urban rivers** through an integrated approach to river-sensitive urban planning.
- The Alliance is open to all **river cities of India**. Any river city can join the Alliance at any time.

Source: PIB

PM E-DRIVE SCHEME

In News

- The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme was approved by the Cabinet with an outlay of Rs. 10,900 crore till March 2026.

PM E-DRIVE Scheme

About:

- It promotes mass mobility through the support of public transportation systems.

- Its primary aim is to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), establish charging infrastructure, and build a robust EV manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

Objectives:

- Promote mass mobility via EVs.
- Offer upfront incentives for EV purchases to boost adoption.
- Establish a competitive EV manufacturing ecosystem aligned with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- Improve air quality and reduce transportation-related environmental impacts.

Key Components:

- **Subsidies:** Incentives for various EV types, including e-2Ws, e-3Ws, e-ambulances, e-trucks, and other emerging EV categories.
- **Grants for Capital Assets:** Funding for electric buses, charging stations, and upgrades to testing facilities.
- **Administrative Costs:** Includes funding for IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and a project management agency.

Eligible EV Categories:

- **Two-Wheelers:** 24.79 lakh electric two-wheelers, both private and commercial, with advanced batteries.
- **Three-Wheelers:** 3.2 lakh electric three-wheelers for commercial use with advanced batteries.
- **e-Ambulances:** Rs. 500 crore allocated, with performance and safety standards under development.
- **e-Trucks:** Rs. 500 crore allocated for e-trucks with scrapping certificate verification.
- **e-Buses:** Rs. 4,391 crore allocated for 14,028 electric buses, with demand aggregation for major cities, especially replacing older buses.

Source: PIB

