## Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024 approved

The bill has been approved by Karnataka Cabinet, mandates 50% reservation for locals in management jobs and 75% in non-management positions in industries, factories and other establishments.

➤ Earlier, several states such as Haryana, Andhra Pradesh etc. have enacted similar legislation to ensure reservation for locals in private sector.

⊕ The Act enacted by Haryana was declared **unconstitutional** by the **Punjab and Haryana High Court** as it **violated Part III (Fundamental rights)** and **constitutional morality principle.**

**Why states are pushing for local Reservation in the Private Sector?**

➤ **Private sector** is the **biggest job creator,** thus reservation can fulfil the commitment to social justice.

⊕ It is also argued that Jobs created in a state should be offered first to those who belong to that State.

➤ The private sector, benefits from the government ie. tax concessions, cheaper loans etc. thus, can be asked to implement **affirmative policy.**

**Concerns raised**

➤ **Affects ease of doing business,** may push businesses to migrate due to a lack of **skilled workforce.**

➤ Fuels **sons-of-the-soil syndrome (preferring locals)** in other states as well.

➤ **Violates Right to equality** under Articles 14, 15, and 16 and Right to freedom to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business Article 19(1) (g).

## 14 Bihar Bridge Collapses in Four Weeks

Collapse of 14 bridges in Bihar showcases poor state of public infrastructure in the country.

➤ Also, recently, several people died in different parts of the country due to collapse of public infrastructure. E.g. Canopy collapse incident at Delhi Airport.

**Factors contributing to Poor State of Public Infrastructure**

➤ **L1 method of contract bidding:** Lowest bidder gets project, **ignoring quality** or **expertise** of construction and other parameters. E.g. Collapse of Morbi dam suspension bridge

➤ **Administrative inefficiency:** Usage of **sub-standard materials,** failure to follow design protocols, poor quality control, and inadequate supervision due to rampant **corruption**.

➤ **Lack of adequate funding:** There is requirement of 7-8% of GDP per annum and actual infrastructure investment is only 4.6% per annum (CRISIL).

➤ **Poor Safety Audit:** It has been noticed that infrastructure project declared safe after safety audits have collapsed after some time.

➤ **Other:**

⊕ **Widening gap** between the **demand and supply** of infrastructure.

⊕ **Geographical reasons** such as flood due to heavy rainfall.

**Measures Required**

➤ There is a need to benchmark capacity and utilisation of infrastructure services both in terms of physical quantity and quality.

➤ Mandatory implementation of the **Quality cum Cost Based Selection (QCBS)** for awarding contracts.

➤ Conducting **Safety Audits** on a regular basis by independent Auditors.

> **Key Initiatives taken by Government to Promote Public Infrastructure**
>
> ➤ National Infrastructure Investment Fund
>
> ➤ **National Infrastructure Pipeline,** envisages an investment of INR 111 Lakh Cr over 2020 to 2025.
>
> ➤ Establishing **India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL),** a wholly-owned Government of India company to provide long term finance to viable infrastructure projects.
>
> ➤ Providing **Viability Gap Funding** (e.g. UDAN Scheme)
>
> ➤ Promoting new models of **Public-Private Partnership such as** Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)

# Government of India reconstituted NITI Aayog

Since the **term of the Aayog, barring Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is co-terminus with the term of the Union Government,** reconstitution was due since the formation of new government in June, earlier this year.

**About National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog**

- It is a **government think-tank** formed in **2015** via a **resolution of the Union Cabinet,** replacing the **erstwhile Planning Commission.**
- **Composition:**
  - ⊙ **Chairperson:** Prime Minister of India
  - ⊙ **Governing Council:** Prime Minister; CMs of all the States and UTs with legislature; Lt. Governors of other UTs, Ex-Officio Members; Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog; Full-Time Members, NITI Aayog; and Special Invitees.
    - ◆ **Ex-officio Members** include maximum 4 members of Union Council of Ministers nominated by the PM
    - ◆ **Special Invitees** include experts, specialists and practitioners with relevant domain knowledge nominated by the PM
  - ⊙ **Regional Councils:** To address specific issues and contingencies impacting more than one state or a region
  - ⊙ **CEO:** Appointed by the PM for a fixed tenure, in the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- **Twin mandate:**
  - ⊙ To oversee the **adoption and monitoring of the SDGs** in the country, and
  - ⊙ Promote c**ompetitive and cooperative federalism** among States and UTs.

> **Role of NITI Aayog in India's Development Agenda**
> - **Cooperative federalism:** 'Team India' involving all states to work towards a national development agenda.
> - **Competitive federalism:** Promotes healthy competition among states through transparent rankings. e.g., Aspirational District Programme, Sustainable Development Goals India Index.
> - **Regional and sector-wise interventions:** e.g., NITI Forum for North East, Project SATH-E (Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital-Education), etc.

# 15 years of Common Service Centres Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV)

CSC SPV, which oversees implementation of CSC scheme, celebrated 15 years of its establishment.

**About CSC SPV**

- Set up by the **Ministry of Electronics & IT** under the **Companies Act, 1956.**
- Provides a **centralized collaborative framework** for delivery of services to citizens through CSCs.
- **Vision:** To develop CSCs as a reliable and ubiquitous IT-enabled network of citizen service points.

**About Common Service Centres (CSCs)**

- It is **one of the three pillars** of the **National e-Governance Plan** (NeGP) approved in 2006.
  - ⊙ Other two pillars of NeGP include **Connectivity** and **National Data Bank/ State Data Centres.**
- CSCs are f**ront-end delivery points** for **Government, private and social sector services** to rural citizens of India, in an **integrated manner.**
- It is a **pan-India network** catering to regional, geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of the country.
- **Services offered by CSCs** include **G2C** (Aadhar Seervices, ITR filing, etc.), **B2C** (Bharat Bill Pay System, Mobile and DTH recharge, etc.), **Financial services** (banking, insurance, pension, etc.), among others.

**Significance of CSCs**

- **Digital inclusion:** CSCs bridge the digital divide by providing access to online services in remote areas.
- **Employment generation:** CSCs provide training programs to enhance digital literacy, employability and promotes entrepreneurship.
- **Others:** Financial inclusion, rural business support, e-Commerce integration, etc.

> **CSC 2.0 Scheme**
> - **Launched in:** 2015
> - **Objective:** To set up at least 1 CSC in each of the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country.
> - It aims to **consolidate service delivery** through a **universal technology platform.**
> - **Key features:** Standardization of services, encouraging more women as Village-level Entrepreneurs,

# India successfully concludes 4th periodic review by Human Rights Committee (HRC) under ICCPR

The **HRC** concluded its consideration on how India implements **the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).**

- The HRC, comprising 18 independent experts, monitors implementation of ICCPR.
  - HRC is a human rights treaty body of United Nation.
- Committee experts commended India's Women's Reservation Act 2023 (also known as Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023) seeks to reserve one-third of the total number of seats for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and Delhi Assembly.

**About ICCPR**

- A multilateral treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966 and in force from 1976.
- Deals with freedom of movement; equality before the law; the right to a fair trial; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; peaceful assembly; etc.
- Part of the **International Bill of Human Rights** along with **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),** 1948 and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ICESCR), 1966.
- **State Parties:** 174
- India became a State Party to the ICCPR in 1979.

**Other Important Human Rights Covenants**

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (or Genocide Convention), 1948
- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 1965
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979

# 'e-Mobility R&D roadmap for India' Report to achieve net-zero targets

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India launched the report identifying future cutting-edge technological requirements into 4-important areas: **Energy Storage Cells, EV Aggregates, Materials and Recycling, and, Charging and Refueling.**

**Current Scenario in India**

- India's growing electric vehicle sector **heavily depends on lithium imports,** sourced from other countries.
- **Unavailability of a hardware manufacturing base** is pushing Original Equipment Manufacturers and suppliers for imports.
- **~90% of used batteries** are either **processed by unorganized industry or end up in landfills and garbage dumps.**
- Currently, there are **2000 charging stations exist in India.** (NITI Aayog Report, 2021)

**Proposed R&D Roadmap**

- **Energy Storage Cell:** Accelerate the process of finding more Lithium reserves, implement globally available, established extraction technologies for lithium, utilize existing supply-chain strategies in Li-battery/ cell production, etc.
- **EV Aggregates:** Emphasis on Hybrid Energy Storage Systems (HESS), combining different energy storage technologies such as batteries and supercapacitors, etc.
- **Material and Recycling:** Economic analysis of recycling value-chain, implement methods for monitoring and reporting the environmental impact, etc.
- **Charging and Refueling:** Proper road infrastructure for installation of a transmitting pad underneath the road, design scalable systems for dynamic wireless charging technology, design and development of adaptive charging techniques for different power ranges of EVs, battery chemistries, etc.

# Also in News

### Money Bill

Supreme Court has agreed to list petitions challenging the Money Bill route taken by the Union Government to pass certain bill in the Parliament.

**About Money Bill**

- Defined under **Article 110** of the Indian Constitution. A bill shall be deemed to be a Money Bill if it contains only provisions dealing with:
  - the imposition, abolition, remission, alteration or regulation of any tax.
  - the regulation of the borrowing of money or the giving of any guarantee by the Government of India, etc.
- Decision of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is **final** on the **question** whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not.
- As per **Article 109,** a Money Bill shall be introduced **only** in **Lok Sabha.**

### Asmita Project

Ministry of Education launched Asmita Project along with two other initiatives to promote multilingualism in education.

- These initiatives are aligned with **New Education Policy,** 2020.

**About Three Initiatives:**

- **Asmita (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian languages through Translation and Academic writing) Project:** Ensuring that students have access to high-quality study materials in their native languages.
  - Under it, 22,000 books will be produced in 22 scheduled languages in 5 years.
  - **Implementing Agencies:** University Grants Commission (UGC) and Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS)
- **Bahubhasha Shabdkosh:** A comprehensive multilingual dictionary repository.
- **Real-time Translation Architecture:** Enhancing translation with cutting edge technology

## CEPI

Asia's first health research-related **Pre-clinical Network Facility** has been inaugurated in Faridabad (Haryana) under the **Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).**

➤ **Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic)** Facility has been also inaugurated.

**About CEPI**

➤ **Genesis:** Launched in **2017** by Norway and India, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **World Economic Forum (WEF),** etc.

➤ **Aim:** To accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and enable equitable access to these vaccines.

➤ **Headquarters:** Oslo, Norway

## Indian Council of Agricultural Research

Recently, 96th Foundation and Technology Day of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was celebrated.

**About ICAR**

➤ **Genesis: 1929 as a registered society** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
  ⊙ Formed based on the **report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture**

➤ **Objective:** Coordinate, guide, and manage research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries, and animal sciences in the entire country.

➤ It is an **autonomous organisation** under **Department of Agricultural Research and Education,** Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

➤ **Headquarters:** New Delhi.

➤ **Union Minister of Agriculture is the ex-officio President** of the ICAR Society.

## Inverse ETF

SEBI proposed to introduce a **new asset class for investors** which can offer investment strategies including long-short equity funds and **inverse ETFs.**

**About Inverse ETF ('Short ETF' or 'Bear ETF')**

➤ It is an **Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)** constructed by using various derivatives to **profit from a decline in the value** of an underlying benchmark.
  ⊙ ETFs are **marketable securities** that track **an index, a commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets** like an Index Fund.

➤ It **gains from a drop in the value of an underlying benchmark.**

➤ Only intended for short **holding periods.**

## Role of Climate Change on Length of Earth Day

A recent research published in a journal indicates that melting of polar ice caps is slowing the rotation of Earth, thereby lengthening our days at an unprecedented rate.

**Impact of Climate Change on Length of Earth Day**

➤ Accelerated melting of glaciers and polar ice sheets, led to a rise in sea level and **pole-to-equator mass transport.**

➤ This mass transport has significantly **increased the Earth's oblateness** and **length of day since 1900.**

➤ These findings signify **implications of climate change** for **precise timekeeping and space navigation,** among others.

## Chagos Islands

India assured Mauritius of continued support in Chagos islands territorial dispute with United Kingdom (UK).

**About Chagos islands**

➤ Comprises around 58 small, very low-lying islands in the middle of the **Indian Ocean.**
  ⊙ Key Islands include **Salomon Islands, Diego Garcia, Nelsons Island,** etc.
  ⊙ **Diego Garcia** is home to a US naval support facility.

➤ **Strategic located** at about 1,600 km south of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent.

➤ Currently controlled by UK as **British Indian Ocean Territory.**
  ⊙ In 2019, International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its advisory opinion directed United Kingdom to unconditionally withdraw from Island.

## R21/Matrix-M

West African country **Ivory Coast** became the first country to roll out the new R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine to children below 2 years.

➤ **Malaria** is a life-threatening disease caused by a **single-cell parasite of genus Plasmodium spread to humans by some types of mosquitoes.**

**About R21/Matrix-M vaccine:**

➤ **Second malaria vaccine recommended by WHO** in 2023, after RTS,S/AS01 vaccine.

➤ Developed by the **University of Oxford,** leveraging an **adjuvant technology from Novavax.**

➤ Manufactured and scaled by the **Serum Institute of India.**

➤ Targets the **plasmodium 'sporozoite',** which is the first form of the malaria parasite entering the human body.

## Places in News — 📰 Rwanda (Capital: Kigali)

Rwanda's incumbent President wins fourth term.

**Political Boundaries**

➤ **Landlocked country** lying **south of Equator** in east-central Africa.

➤ Bounded by **Uganda** (north), **Tanzania** (east), **Burundi** (south), and **Democratic Republic of Congo** (west).

**Geographical features**

➤ Known as 'The Land of a Thousand Hills'

➤ **Highest point:** Mount Karisimbi in Virunga Range

➤ **Major Lakes:** Lake Kivu, Muhazi Lake etc.

➤ **Mjaor Rivers:** Akagera, Akanyaru, Mukungwa (in Nile Basin) and Rubyiro, Ruhwa, Rusizi (in Congo Basin).