

NEWS TODAY

President approves the constitution of the 23rd Law Commission

It is being constituted for a **three-year term**, that is, from **1st September, 2024 to 31st August, 2027**.

23rd Law Commission

- **Mandate:** To review and recommend legal reforms to enhance the Indian legal system.
- **Composition:** It will include a full-time chairperson, four members, and additional ex-officio and part-time members.

Terms of Reference (ToR)

- **Review/Repeal of obsolete laws:**
 - ⊕ Create a **Standard Operating procedure for periodic review** of existing laws for **simplification**.
 - ⊕ Based on the relevance, current economic needs, **suggest repealing and amendments to the laws**.
- **Law and Poverty:** Examine laws affecting the **poor** and conduct **post-enactment audits of socio-economic legislation**.
- **Review of Judicial Administration:**
 - ⊕ Ensure **economic disposal of cases** by elimination of delays and **speedy clearance of arrears**.
 - ⊕ **Simplification of processes**, harmonizing rules of various **high courts**.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs):** Examine existing laws and suggest reforms to ensure effective implementation of DPSPs and to attain the objectives set out in the Preamble.
- **Gender Equality:** Strengthen laws through examination and suggesting amendments.
- **Revision of Central Acts** to remove anomalies and inequities.
- Examine the **impact of globalization on food security, unemployment** and recommend measures for the protection of the **marginalized**.

Law Commission of India (LCI)

- It is a **non-statutory body** constituted by a notification of the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Aim:** To **Reform the laws for maximizing justice** in society and promoting **good governance under the rule of law**.
- It conducts **research and provides recommendations** based on the defined ToRs.
- **History:**
 - ⊕ The Law Commission was first constituted in **1834 by the Governor-General (empowered by the Charter Act, 1833)** under the Chairmanship of **Lord Macaulay**.

Successful maiden flight of India's First Indigenous Combat Unmanned Aircraft

Bengaluru-based firm **Flying Wedge Defence and Aerospace (FWDA)** recently announced successful launch of country's **first indigenously built Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV), FWD 200B**.

- The development represents India's **increasing self-reliance in defence technology and defence indigenization**.

Key Features of FWD 200B

- It is a **Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UCAV**.
- It has a **maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 102 kg** and can carry a **payload of 30 kg**.
- **Combat Capabilities:** **Optical payloads for surveillance and missile-like weapons for air strikes and bombing**.
- It operates at a **cruise altitude of 12,000 feet** and can reach up to **15,000 feet**.
- It has a **cruise speed of 152 kmph** and a **maximum speed of 250 kmph**.
- It has an **endurance of 7 hours and a range of 800 km** to ensure extended mission capabilities.
- **Ideal for short airstrips:** The drone requires a **runway of just 300 metres**.

Initiatives for Defence Indigenization

- **Policy and Schemes:** Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy, 'Make in India', notification of 'Positive Indigenization List', Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), etc.
- **Partnership and Global Cooperation:** **Strategic Partnership Model** between India's private sector and global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), **enhanced FDI limits** (74% - Automatic Route; 100% - Government Route), etc.
- **Others:** Corporatization of Ordnance Factory Board, Defence Industrial Corridors, SRIJAN Portal, etc.

Related News

- Recently, **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for 10 capital acquisition proposals.
 - ⊕ **DAC is the highest decision-making body** on issues related to policy and capital procurement and is **chaired by the Union Defence Minister**.
- 99% of the procurement is from indigenous sources under **Buy (Indian) and Buy (Indian- Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) categories**.
- **AoNs** have been accorded for procurement of **Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs), Air Defence Fire Control Radars, Dornier-228 aircraft**, among others.
 - ⊕ **FRCV will be a futuristic Main Battle Tank** with superior mobility, all terrain ability, multilayered protections, precision & lethal fires over and **real-time situational awareness**.

Highest Corruption complaints against Railway Employees, Delhi Local Bodies, and PSBs: CVC Report

Recently, **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** in its **Annual Report 2023** highlighted Ministry/ Department/ Sector-wise corruption complaints received and disposed against public officials.

Key Highlights of the Report

- In 2023, CVC received **74203 complaints of corruption** out of which **66373 cases have been disposed** and **7830 were pending**.
- Commission also issued guidelines on various **verticals of vigilance administration** viz., **Punitive, Preventive, and Participative Vigilance**.

Punitive, Preventive, and Participative Vigilance

- **Punitive: Time-bound effective punitive action** against those found guilty of misconduct to act as deterrent for others.
- **Preventive:** Seeks to **achieve corruption free governance proactively**, by proposing **structural remedies** to minimize possibility of corrupt practices.
 - ⊕ Measures under this include **simplification/ updation of rules, rotational transfer of officers, process re-engineering**, etc.
- **Participative:** To ensure **active engagement of all stakeholders** – government functionaries, civil society, educational institutions, etc. – to educate about ill effects of corruption.
 - ⊕ It includes measures such as **Vigilance Awareness Week** for capacity building of individuals and organizations, etc.

About Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)

- It is a **statutory body** under the **CVC Act, 2003**.
 - ⊕ It was **established in 1964** through a **Resolution of the Government of India** on recommendations of the **K. Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption**.
 - ⊕ In **1998**, it was **conferred statutory status** through an ordinance promulgated by the Union Government.
- **Members: 3-member body**, with the Central Vigilance Commissioner and 2 Vigilance Commissioners.
- **Appointment: By the President** on recommendations of a High-Powered Committee consisting of the **PM, Union Minister of Home Affairs, and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha**.
- **Role and functions**
 - ⊕ **Supervises vigilance administrations** across Central Ministries, Departments, and Organizations.
 - ⊕ **Conducts preliminary inquiries into complaints referred by Lokpal** for officials across various grades.
 - ⊕ **Oversees functioning of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (CBI)** in investigating corruption-related offenses, etc.

Union Agriculture Minister launched AgriSURE Fund and Krishi Nivesh Portal

“**AgriSURE – Agri Fund for Start Ups & Rural Enterprises**” fund is aimed at boosting farm-sector startups.

- **Krishi Nivesh Portal** is an Integrated, centralized **one stop Portal for all Agri- investors** to avail benefits from various Government schemes.

About AgriSURE Fund

- It was announced in the **2022-23 Budget**.
- It will be established as a **Rs 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**, offering both equity and debt support.
 - ⊕ **AIF is any Indian-incorporated privately pooled investment vehicle** that collects funds from sophisticated investors to invest according to a defined investment policy for its investors.
 - ⊕ Contributions include ₹250 Crores each from **NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture**, and ₹250 Crores from other institutions, including private investors.
- **NABVENTURES Ltd.**, a **wholly owned subsidiary of NABARD** is the Investment Manager to the Fund.
- **The Fund has two schemes:**
 - ⊕ **AgriSURE – FoF Scheme:** provide funding support to Category I and Category II Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) that make onward investments in Start-ups.
 - ⊕ **AgriSURE – Direct Scheme:** direct equity investment in early-stage Start-ups.
- **Significance:** foster innovation in agriculture, enhance the value chain of farm produce, create and improve rural infrastructure, generate employment opportunities and support and develop IT-based solutions.

Challenges of Rural startups

- **Lack of Financial Accessibility** due to reluctance of lending by financial institutions, limited availability of banking services in rural areas.
- Entrepreneurs find it difficult to buy raw materials and other necessary resources due to **connectivity and logistical constraints**.
- **Lack of Technological awareness, training Programmes and comprehensive services** makes it difficult for rural startups to grow.

President Calls Out 'Black Coat Syndrome', Urges Supreme Court to Lead with Justice for All

Highlighting the delay in Justice, The President used this term to describe **anxiety experienced by ordinary citizens in court settings**.

➤ Term is analogous to the **"White Coat Hypertension"** i.e. increase in people's blood pressure in the hospital.

Reasons for such perception

- **High pendency:** As of August 31, 82,887 cases are pending in SC (National Judicial Data Grid).
 - ⊕ Additionally, delays in deciding serious crimes like rape leads to public perception of insensitivity in the judicial system.
- **Frequent adjournments:** It causes great mental and financial pressure specially for people traveling from villages to courts.
- **Issues with district judiciary:** For instance, only 6.7% of court infrastructure at the district level is female friendly.
 - ⊕ District-level courts significantly shape the public's perception of the judiciary.

Steps taken to address these issues

- **Speed up efforts to modernise judiciary:** through initiatives like **e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project, Tele-Law** programme, etc.
- **Alternate modes of resolution:** like pre-litigation dispute resolution such as **Lok Adalat**.
- **Addressing infrastructure gaps:** through scheme like Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Judicial Infrastructure.
- **Reforming laws to reduce pendency:** For Instance, SC recently applied Section 479 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita retrospectively to first-time offenders, making bail accessible to undertrials.
- **Institutionalisation of pro bono culture (i.e. free services):** through initiatives like Nyaya Bandhu programme.

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Also in News



SCOMET List (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies)

DGFT (Ministry of Commerce & Industry) authorized the **Department of Defence Production (MoD)**, to be the **licensing authority for export of all items falling under Category 6 of SCOMET** for military end use.

About SCOMET

- **National Export Control List of dual use items** munitions and nuclear related items, including software and technology
- **Aligned to all the multilateral export control regimes** such as Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group etc.
- Has 9 categories (0 to 8).
- **Notified by DGFT** under Schedule 2 of ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items.
- **Regulated under** of Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992.
- Policy and procedures under SCOMET are outlined **Foreign Trade Policy 2023**.



IndOBIS

Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), an attached office of the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, has developed **Ocean Eyes** mobile application.

- It is a **community-engagement approach to data collection in marine biodiversity monitoring**.
- It is aligned with the objective of **IndOBIS** (Indian Ocean Biodiversity Information System).

About IndOBIS

- IndOBIS is the Indian regional node of the **global Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS)**.
- It is being run by **CMLRE, Kochi**.
- **OBIS** emanated from the **Census of Marine Life (2000-2010)**.
 - ⊕ Adopted as a project under **IOC-UNESCO's International Oceanographic Data and Information (IODE)** programme in 2009.
 - ⊕ Provides **free and open access to, and application of, biodiversity and biogeographic data and information on marine life**.

Exercise Varuna

Indian Navy's P8I Poseidon Aircraft is on 1st-ever deployment in Europe to participate in 2024 edition of 'Exercise Varuna'.

- P8I Poseidon is a maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft developed and produced by the US' Boeing Defense.
- P8I is a variant of the P-8 Poseidon specially designed for the Indian Navy.

About Exercise Varuna

- It is bilateral naval exercise between India and France.
- 2024 edition will be conducted in Mediterranean Sea.

National Test House (NTH)

NTH signed MoU with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency to promote energy efficiency in India.

- A premier institution under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- Established as the Government Test House in 1912.
- India's largest multi-location multidisciplinary testing laboratory under the Central Government.
- Deals with testing, calibration and quality evaluation related to industry, commerce, trade etc. as per international and national standards.
- Provides assistance to the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).
- First Government Body to Certify Drones in India.

Gross Fixed Capital Formation

Recently, World Bank projected a decline in Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) in Indian Economy for FY25.

About GFCF

- Also called 'investment', it is defined as acquisition of produced assets (including purchases of second-hand assets), including production of such assets by producers for their own use, minus disposals. (OECD)
- ⊕ "Produced assets" means only those assets that come into existence as a result of a production process. It therefore does not include, for example, the purchase of land and natural resources.
- It includes assets intended for use in production of other goods and services for a period of more than a year.
- E.g., Land improvements (fences, ditches, drains, and so on); plant, machinery, and equipment purchases; construction of roads, railways, etc.

Vishanu Yuddh Abhyas

VISHANU YUDDH ABHYAS, a mock drill on Pandemic Preparedness conducted under National One Health Mission (NOHM).

- NOHM emphasizes on the "One Health" approach, aims to achieve integrated disease control and pandemic preparedness

Vishanu Yuddh Abhyas (Virus War Exercise)

- Purpose: To assess the readiness and response of the National Joint Outbreak Response Team (NJORT) involving experts from human health, animal husbandry, and wildlife sectors.
- A mock zoonotic disease outbreak scenario was created to simulate a real-world outbreak.
- Stakeholders: Involved multiple national and state agencies including ICMR, AIIMS Jodhpur BSL-3 Lab, state administrations etc.

Oceanic Nino Index (ONI)

Recently, the impact of El Nino and La Nina on the Indian monsoon is being studied.

- ONI is a vital index to study the dynamics of El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

About ONI

- It is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (US agency) primary indicator for monitoring ENSO.
- The ONI is the rolling 3-month average temperature difference in the surface waters of the east-central tropical Pacific, near the International Dateline.
- Index values of +0.5 or higher indicate El Niño. Values of -0.5 or lower indicate La Niña.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

Ministry of Labour and Employment initiated move to expand PMAY benefits to marginalised workers

- The Ministry has urged all State Governments to include migrant workers, building workers, beedi workers, non-coal mine workers, contract labourers, and other unorganised workers.
- The Ministry has also announced that the Management Information System (MIS) Portal for Building, Construction and Migrant workers is now fully operational.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

- Aims to Provide Pucca house to All.
- PMAY extended for an additional five years, from the financial year 2024-25 to 2028-29, with the aim of providing two crore additional houses to eligible beneficiaries.

Places in News



Kenya (Capital: Nairobi)

Recently, 3rd edition of Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting between India and Kenya was held in New Delhi.

Political Features

- Located in Eastern Africa.
- Neighboring Countries: Somalia (Northeast), Ethiopia (North), South Sudan (Northwest), Uganda (East), Tanzania (South).
- Maritime border: Indian Ocean to the East.
- UNEP and UN-HABITAT are headquartered in Nairobi.

Geographical Features

- Almost bisected horizontally by the Equator.
- Major Lakes: Lake Turkana, Lake Victoria (shared by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda), etc.
- Major Rivers: Athi/Galana, Tana, Mara, etc.
- Mountain ranges: Aberdare Range, Mau Escarpment, etc.
- Highest point: Mount Kenya (second highest in Africa).

