

# NEWS TODAY

## RBI study titled "Priority Sector Lending (PSL): The Indian Experience" released

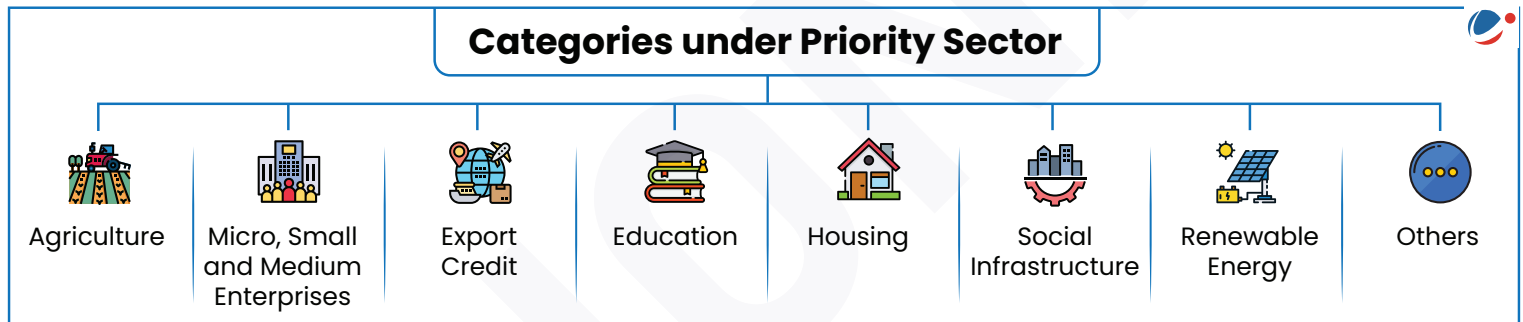
PSL was formalized in 1972 to facilitate flow of credit to such sectors, which though creditworthy, are unable to access credit from formal financial institutions.

### Key findings of the study:

- **Improved asset quality:** PSL is responsive to asset quality, with higher PSL growth enhancing overall bank asset quality.
- **Developing niche in specific PSL segments:** Since introduction of Priority Sector Lending Certificates (PSLCs), share of PSL in total bank credit has increased, enabling certain banks to specialize in specific PSL segments.
- **Achieving PSL Targets:** Lending to the priority sector has consistently exceeded 40% across various periods and bank categories, influenced by individual banks' strategies.
  - ⊕ PSBs have frequently met their **18% agricultural lending target**.

### About PSL

- **Objective:** To ensure that vulnerable sections of society and underdeveloped areas get access to credit.
- **PSL Targets:** Banks have to mandatorily allocate a portion of their **Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or Credit Equivalent of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure (CEOBE)**, whichever is higher, towards PSL.
  - ⊕ **Mandated target differs for different banks** and is 40% for Scheduled commercial banks and foreign banks (with 20 or more branches) while it is 75% for Regional Rural Banks and Small Finance Banks.
  - ⊕ **Urban Cooperative banks** have to allocate **65% to PSL** in FY 2024-25 but will have to increase to 75% in FY 2025-26.



## Six Years of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is one of the components of **Ayushman Bharat**, other component is **health and wellness centres (renamed in 2023 as Ayushman Arogya Mandir)**.

- **Ayushman Bharat** was launched as recommended by the **National Health Policy 2017**, to achieve the vision of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.

### Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY

- **About:** It is the largest health assurance scheme in the world.
- **Ministry:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- **Benefit:** Provides **cashless hospital cover of Rs. 5 lakhs/ family/ year** for **secondary and tertiary care** across public and private empanelled hospitals.
  - ⊕ Covers up to **3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days post-hospitalization** expenses such as diagnostics and medicine.
- **Target:** 12 crore families (approximately 55 crore beneficiaries).
- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved an **expansion of it to all senior citizens aged 70 and above**.

### Achievement of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY

- **Coverage:** **Over 35.4 crore Ayushman cards** have been issued, and the scheme is operational in **33 States and Union Territories**.
- **Gender Equity:** 49% of the Ayushman cards have been issued to women.
- **Wide network:** It has been successfully empanelled 30,529 hospitals across the country, with 17,063 public and 13,466 private hospitals.

## 100 years of the discovery of the Harappan Civilisation

**John Marshall**, the then-Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), announced the discovery of “**Civilisation of the Indus Valley**” on **September 20, 1924**.

- **Two ASI archaeologists were instrumental in the discovery: Daya Ram Sahni** (ASI’s first Indian Director-General) and **Rakhal Das Banerji**, who excavated Harappa and Mohenjodaro respectively.

### About Harappan Civilization

- It spans across **2,000 sites in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan**. Most of the sites are found located between **the Indus and the Saraswati River basins**.

- ⊕ **Five major cities:** Rakhigarhi, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Dholavira and Ganweriwala.

- **Extent of Civilization:** Daimabad in Maharashtra (Southernmost), Alamgirpur in UP (Easternmost), Sutgokend in Pakistan (Westernmost), and Manda in Jammu (Northernmost).

- **Classification:** Early phase (6000 BCE-2600 BCE), the mature period (2600 BCE to 1900 BCE), and the late phase (1900 BCE-1300 BCE).

### New Evidences for Harappan Civilization

- New Archaeological excavation reveals **5,200-year-old Harappan settlement at Padta Bet in Kachchh, Gujarat**.

- **DNA analysis of skeletons from Rakhigarhi** revealed that **DNA of the Harappans has continued** till today and a majority of South Asian population appear to be their descendants.

- ⊕ Due to trade and cultural contacts of the Harappans with distant regions, there is a **mixture of genes in small quantities**.

### Characteristic features of Harappan Civilization:

- **Town Planning and Structures:** **Citadels and Great Baths** in Mohenjodaro and large-scale use of burnt bricks, and carefully **planned drainage system**.

- **Technology and Crafts:** Highly developed **micro-drilling**, bead-making, shell-cutting, metal-working, **Seal-making**, **Pottery making**, standardised weights and terracotta toys. E.g. Chanhudaro site.

- **Art of Writing:** Fully developed **Indus script**, but not deciphered yet.

- **Trade:** Port city of Lothal, Commercial link with Afghanistan, Iran, Tigris and Euphrates. Mesopotamians used to call the Indus region as **Meluha**.

## Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) launched Minerals Security Partnership Finance Network

MSP Finance Network was launched by **India and 14 other members of MSP** including USA, Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan and European Union.

- Network will **strengthen cooperation and promote information exchange and co-financing** among participating institutions to advance diverse, secure, and sustainable supply chains for critical minerals.

- Network will drive **sustainable investment in global critical mineral supply chains**, including by mobilizing private sector capital, in production, extraction, processing, recycling, and recovery projects.

### About Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)

- MSP is a **collaboration of 14 countries and European Union** to catalyze public and private investment in responsible **critical minerals supply chains** globally.

- ⊕ **India joined MSP** in 2023.

- MSP focuses on the minerals and metals supply chains **most relevant for clean energy technologies**.

- ⊕ These include – but are not limited to – lithium, cobalt, nickel, manganese, graphite, rare earth elements, and copper.

### Significance of Critical Minerals

- **Economic growth:** Cobalt, nickel, and lithium are important for the telecommunication industry, manufacturing of electric vehicle batteries etc.

- **Clean energy:** Critical for green technologies like semiconductors, solar panels and wind turbines etc.

- **National Security and Defence:** Key minerals such as bauxite, alumina, silica, etc. are strategic assets to produce armour, weaponry, and other critical military infrastructures.

### Measures taken by India

- **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023:** For enabling mining concessions for 24 critical and strategic minerals.

- **Identification of 30 critical minerals** crucial for self-reliance.

- Partnership with **Australia** for lithium and cobalt and with **Argentina** for lithium.

- **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)**, mandated to identify and acquire overseas mineral assets of critical and strategic nature like lithium, cobalt etc.

## The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry approved SPICED Scheme

'Sustainability in spice sector through progressive, innovative and collaborative interventions for export development' (SPICED) is a Spices board scheme.

- **Aim:** To expand the area under cardamom and increase productivity of small and large cardamom, export promotion, capacity building & skill development of stakeholders, etc.
- **Major components of the scheme:** Improving productivity, post-harvest quality upgradation, market expansion efforts, trade promotion, technology interventions, research and capacity building, and skill development.
- **Implementation** during the remaining term of the 15th Finance Commission (from 2023-24 to 2025-26).

### About Cardamom

- Cardamom is commercially cultivated for its dried fruits (capsules).
- **Small Cardamom:**
  - ⊕ **Native:** Indigenous to the evergreen forests of Western Ghats of South India.
  - ⊕ **Major producers of small cardamom:** Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
  - ⊕ **Favorable conditions for Small Cardamom**
    - ◆ **Thick shady areas with loamy soil** which are usually acidic are ideal.
    - ◆ **Elevation:** 600 to 1500 m.
    - ◆ **Adequate drainage** must be provided.
- **Large Cardamom**
  - ⊕ **Distribution:** Sub-Himalayan region of North Eastern India, Nepal and Bhutan.
  - ⊕ **Favorable conditions for Large Cardamom:** average precipitation of 3000-3500 mm spread over about 200 days.
    - ◆ Temperature ranging from 6-30 degree C.

### About Spice Board India

- **Genesis:** Constituted in 1987 under the Spices Board act 1986.
- **Role:** It is an **autonomous body** responsible for the export promotion of the 52 scheduled spices and development of Cardamom (Small & Large).
- **Headquarter:** Cochin, Kerala.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry

## "Going digital for noncommunicable diseases: the case for action" published

The report, launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

- It serves as a blueprint for action, complementing the **WHO Global Initiative on Digital Health and Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025**.

### Key findings of the Report

- **Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs)**, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases, are **responsible for over 74% of global deaths** annually.
  - ⊕ **Impact of NCDs:** Substantial economic burden, hindering SDGs, straining social security systems, productivity losses etc.
- **Digital Health Interventions (DHIs)** include online programmes, mobile applications, virtual reality, telehealth and telemedicine, wearable devices, online counselling, and AI-based, big data-enabled applications to improve health.
- **Benefits of DHIs:** An additional **US\$0.24 per patient per year in digital health interventions**, including telemedicine, mobile messaging, and chatbots, could:
  - ⊕ **Save over 2 million lives** from NCDs over next decade.
  - ⊕ **Avert approximately 7 million acute events** and hospitalizations.
  - ⊕ Help realize an **additional US\$ 199 Billion in economic benefits**.
  - ⊕ Provide a **Return on Investment of US\$ 19** for every US\$ 1 invested.
- To realize DHIs' benefits, governments would have to **invest US\$ 1.6 per patient over 10 years** on average.

### India's Digital Health Interventions

- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission:** Establishing a national digital health ecosystem with the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) Number.
- **e-Sanjeevani:** World's largest documented telemedicine implementation in primary health care.
- **e-Hospital:** Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) for internal workflows and processes of hospitals.
- **e-RAKTKOSH:** Centralized blood bank management system.

## Also in News



### Guidelines on School Safety and Security

The Supreme Court mandates States, UTs to implement **Guidelines on School Safety and Security**.

- **The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is tasked with overseeing the implementation.

### About Guidelines on School Safety and Security:

- Guidelines was prepared by the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD)** in consultation with the **NCPCR**.
- **Aim:** to hold school management accountable for ensuring the safety of children in **government, government-aided, and private schools**.
- The Guidelines are **advisory in nature**.



### Mankidia Tribes

The habitat rights are formally provided to Mankidia of Odisha under the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**.

### About Mankidia Tribes

- They are one of the **seventy-five Particularly Vulnerable Tribes**
- They are a semi-nomadic **section of the Birhor tribe**.
- The community is famed for its **skill in catching monkeys and trapping small birds and animals**.
- They live in dome shaped leaf huts, known as **Kumbha**.
- Speak a language of their own that belongs to the **Munda branch of Austro-Asiatic language group**.

**G4 Nations**

The Minister of External Affairs meets foreign ministers of G4 nations in New York.

- The group reaffirmed its **commitment to urgent reform of the United Nations Security Council** through text-based negotiations.

**About G4 Nations**

- It includes **Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan.**
- The G4 nations **support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.**
- **Group has proposed that Council's membership shall be increased from 15 to 25-26,** by adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members.

**Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI)**

The President of India attended the opening ceremony of the 16<sup>th</sup> ASOSAI Assembly organised by the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India** in New Delhi.

**About ASOSAI**

- It is one of the Regional Groups of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.
- It was **established in 1979** with 11 members, now the membership has grown to 48.
- The **first Assembly and Governing Board meeting was held in New Delhi, India.**
  - ⌚ At the Assembly, the Rules and Regulations of ASOSAI were approved.

**WAVES Anime & Manga Contest**

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoI&B) in collaboration with Media & Entertainment Association of India (MEAI), has launched the **WAVES Anime & Manga Contest (WAM!).**

- **WAM!** is part of the **"Create in India Challenge"**, aiming to **nurture local talent and tap into the growing interest in Japanese manga and anime** among Indian audiences.

**About Create in India Challenge**

- MoI&B has launched **25 Challenges** as part of the 'Create in India Challenge - Season 1' for **World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES)**, scheduled for 2025 in New Delhi.
- These challenges cover a **wide range of disciplines** including animation, filmmaking, gaming, music, and visual arts.

**India-Nepal Trade**

According to Nepal Trade Statistics, **India continues to be Nepal's largest trading partner.**

**About India-Nepal Trade**

- **Nepal's Trade deficit** with India stood at INR 149.17 billion till mid-September 2024-25.
- **Nepal's exports** include Hydroelectric power, resin, agricultural produce, yarn, handicrafts, silver and gold jewellery.
- **Nepal's imports** include petroleum products, chemical fertilizers, salt, sugar, rice, vehicles, copper, cotton, etc. from India.
- India is **Nepal's largest export destination** while Nepal is **India's 17th largest export destination.**

**IndiaAI**

**IndiaAI-Independent Business Division (IBD)** is inviting nominations of **B.Tech & M.Tech** students for **IndiaAI fellowship.**

**IndiaAI fellowship**

- It is a fellowship for **full time PhD scholars** researching in the areas of Artificial Intelligence in top 50 NIRF ranked Research Institutes.

**About IndiaAI**

- IndiaAI, an Independent Business Division under the Digital India Corporation (DIC) of the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)**, is the **implementation agency of IndiaAI Mission.**
- It aims to **democratize AI's benefits** across all strata of society, **bolster India's global leadership** in AI, foster **technological self-reliance**, and ensure **ethical and responsible** use of AI.

**Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) 2024**

Recently, The **fifth edition of Goa Maritime Symposium 2024** was hosted by the Indian Navy.

- **Theme:** 'Common Maritime Security Challenges in the IOR – Progressing Lines of Effort to Mitigate Dynamic Threats such as IUU Fishing and Other Illegal Maritime Activities'.

**About Goa Maritime Symposium**

- It is a forum for fostering **collaborative thinking, cooperation, and mutual understanding** between India and key maritime nations of the Indian Ocean Region.
- It was conceptualised and instituted by the **Indian Navy in 2016.**

**Place in News** **Thailand (Capital: Bangkok)**

Thailand became the first Southeast Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage.

**Political features:**

- Located in the centre of **mainland Southeast Asia** and a **founding member of ASEAN.**
- **Bordering countries:** Myanmar (West), Laos (North and East), Cambodia (Southeast), and Malaysia (South).
- **Bordering water bodies:** Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea.

**Geographical features**

- **Highest peak:** Doi Inthanon.
- **Major rivers:** Chao Phraya and Mekong
- **Kra Isthmus** connects Malay Peninsula with Asian mainland.
- World's **largest producer of natural rubber.**

