

NEWS TODAY

Action Taken Report on 'India's Neighbourhood First Policy' presented to Lok Sabha

➤ **Neighbourhood First Policy (NFP):** Aims to forge strong neighbourhood relations based on a **consultative, non-reciprocal, and outcome-oriented approach.**

⊕ Focus on delivering benefits like **greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger development cooperation in various sectors, security and broader people-to-people contacts.**

⊕ **5S Principle of neighbourhood engagement: Samman (Respect), Samvad (Dialogue), Shanti (Peace), Samridhi (Prosperity), and Sanskriti (Culture).**

➤ **Significance of NFP**

⊕ **For India:** Regional **stability** and improved **security, economic growth** through improved trade and connectivity, **countering external influence** in the region such as China, enhanced **Soft Power**, etc.

⊕ **For Region:** **Shared prosperity, peaceful resolution of outstanding disputes, strengthened multilateralism** through regional/ sub-regional organizations such as SAARC, BIMSTEC, etc.

➤ **Key recommendations**

⊕ **Ministry of External Affairs should establish a cell to bring convergence** with different ministries on NFP.

⊕ **Periodic review** of bilateral and multilateral/regional relationship framework.

⊕ **Strengthen Joint Project Monitoring Committees and Oversight Mechanisms.**

⊕ **Terrorism and illegal migration:** Monitor demographic changes caused by illegal migration in border areas in coordination with Union Home Ministry.

⊕ **Synergy between NFP and Act East Policy** to improve connectivity, development, and security in India's North East.

Priority Countries under India's NFP



Union Government Announces Inaugural Edition of National Creators Award

➤ Award aims to celebrate diverse voices and talents shaping India's growth and cultural narrative, driving positive social change, etc., in India's Digital Creator Economy.

➤ **Digital Creator Economy** refers to a segment of the economy driven by individuals who create content, products, or services and monetize them through various digital platforms.

➤ **About Awards**

⊕ Features wide **array of categories** recognizing **excellence and impact across various domains**, including **storytelling, social change advocacy, environmental sustainability, education**, etc.

⊕ **Selection Process:** Combination of jury and public votes.

⊕ **Spearheaded by:** MyGov India.

➤ **Current state of Indian creator Economy**

⊕ **~80 million Creators and Knowledge Professionals** in India.

⊕ **~150000 Professional content creators** in India who are able to monetize their services effectively.

➤ **Opportunities of Creator economy**

⊕ **For individuals:** Diversification of income streams, creative expression, flexible work model, reach to global audience, etc.

⊕ **For businesses:** Cost-effective and organic marketing, community building, etc.

⊕ **For society and economy:** Cultural expression, social mobilization, skill development and entrepreneurial mindset, etc.

➤ **Challenges:** Authenticity and integrity concerns, mental health and burnout due to excessive competition, gatekeeping and algorithmic biases of platforms, etc.

Reasons for growth of Creator Economy in India

➤ **Accessibility:** Improved access to smartphones, rise in internet usage, and globalization of content consumption.

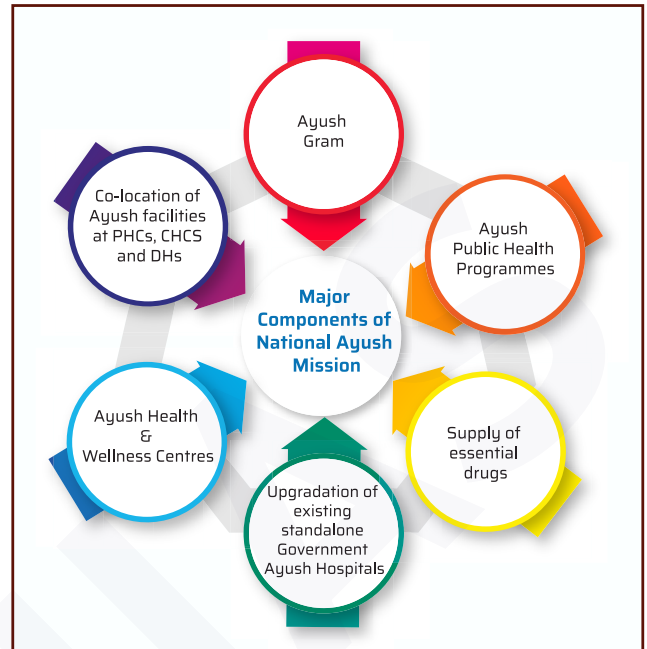
➤ **Platform and monetization:** Booming social media landscape providing monetization opportunities.

➤ **Disruption in formal employment:** Adoption of remote and hybrid work gave time and resources to creators.

➤ **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Creativity experienced unrestrained and widespread revival particularly in vernaculars across different verticals

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare released report on Review of National Ayush Mission (NAM)

- **NAM**, launched in 2014, aims to provide **Ayush health care services** throughout the country by **strengthening and improving** Ayush health care services.
 - ⊕ **Nature:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
 - ⊕ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Ayush
 - ⊕ It includes Traditional **AYUSH services** namely **Ayurveda, Yoga and naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy.**
- Report highlighted that **number of beneficiaries** availing Ayush services through **Ayush Health & Wellness Centres (AHWCs)** increased from 1.50 Crores (2020-21) to 8.42 Crores (2022-23).
 - ⊕ AHWCs are part of Ayushman Bharat.
- **Challenges faced**
 - ⊕ **Implementation:** 69% of the **integrated Ayush hospitals approved are yet to be completed.**
 - ◆ Separate Department of Ayush are not opened in some states & UTs.
 - ⊕ **Delays in approvals:** Finalising the State Annual Action Plan (SAAP) and its approval process takes longer
 - ⊕ **Multiple roles of an organisation:** Same entity (NAM Directorate) performs various roles of policy formulation, regulation, financing, purchasing, and provisioning.
- **Key Recommendations**
 - ⊕ Implementing stricter **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)** and **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** for Ayush products.
 - ⊕ Persuade **Private insurance companies to include AYUSH treatments** like Panchkarma in their list of approved treatments.
 - ⊕ **Extend the period of the scheme beyond FY24 for at least 5 more years.**



Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development released report on Development and Promotion of Jute Industry

- **Jute Industry in India** accounts for **70% of the world's jute production**
 - ⊕ **Employs around 3.7 lakh workers** directly.
 - ⊕ Around **90% of the production is consumed locally.**
 - ⊕ About 73% of country's jute industries are concentrated in West Bengal.
- **Challenges faced by Jute Industries**
 - ⊕ **Lack of Modernization:** Dependent over obsolete machinery and less integration of advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.
 - ⊕ **Raw Material:** Area under jute cultivation declined (1.7 Lakh ha between 2013-14 to 2021-22)
 - ⊕ **Low value addition:** Less emphasis on products such as **Jute Geo Textiles.**
 - ⊕ **Non-Compliance:** **Mandatory jute packaging guidelines** are not followed by many industries.
 - ◆ Also, lack of impetus from states to procure jute products in feasible areas like **geo-textiles.**
 - ⊕ **Other:** **Shortage of skilled labour force, closure of existing factories, low export, etc.**
- **Key Recommendations**
 - ⊕ Promoting **modernization**, equipping industries with **digital moisture metres** to improve the quality.
 - ⊕ Prepare **comprehensive policy** for reviving the closed mills and setting up new mills.
 - ⊕ **Devise suitable Scheme** in consultation with the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** to minimize the shortage of skilled workers

Key Government Initiatives

- **National Jute Development Programme-** An Umbrella Scheme for development of Jute Industry.
- **National Jute Board (NJB)** has been constituted as per National Jute Board Act, 2008.
- **Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packaging Commodities) Act, 1987** enacted for the compulsory use of jute packaging material.
- **Jute Mark Logo** was launched (2022) for branding and positioning of Indian Jute globally.

PM addresses Programme on 200th Birth Anniversary of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati (1824 - 1883)

About Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati

- Born at Morvi in Kathiawar (Gujarat) was a philosopher and a social reformer.
- **Original name:** Mula Shankar.
- Was a disciple of **Swami Virajananda**.
- Founder of **Arya Samaj**.

Key Contributions

- **Religious reforms:** Denounced idolatry and ritualistic worship, preached respect and reverence for other human beings.
 - ◆ Believed in **infallible authority of Vedas** and gave slogan of '**Back to Vedas**'.
 - **Social reforms:** Claimed caste is not supposed to be hereditary but rather on the basis of individual's talents and disposition.
 - ◆ Was **against practice of untouchability** and advocated **Vedic education for all castes**.
 - ◆ Opposed **child marriage and forced widowhood** and campaigned for **women's education**.
 - **Political:** Gave call for '**Swarajya**' as '**India for Indians**' in 1876 and favoured political system based on **enlightened monarchy**.
 - **Literary works:** Satyarth Prakash, Veda Bhasya Bhumika, Veda Bhasya, etc.
- ### Contemporary relevance of Dayananda Saraswati
- **Value-based education:** Emphasis on universal truths, humanism, work for common welfare, etc.
 - **Scientific temper and rational thinking:** He led crusade against superstitions and orthodoxy.
 - **Social justice:** Eradication of discrimination based on caste, creed, sect, etc.

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal husbandry and Food processing presented 'Promotion of Climate Resilient Farming' Report

- Report highlighted that **Climate Resilient Farming** is imperative given the susceptibility of Indian Agriculture to climate change.
- **Climate-resilient farming or agriculture** is an approach which includes the **sustainable use of existing natural resources** through crop and **livestock production systems** to achieve long term and higher productivity along with farm incomes under climate variabilities.
- **Need of Climate-resilient farming**
 - **Crops and Horticulture:** **Yield** is expected to decrease.
 - ◆ For instance, rainfed rice yields in India will decline by 20% in 2050 and 47% in 2080.
 - ◆ Also, Hailstorms occurring during the flowering and fruit set stage result in lesser mango production.
 - **Livestock:** Rising temperatures may affect livestock physiology and energy expenditure of livestock, **reducing milk, meat, wool, and draught power output**.
 - **Fisheries sector:** 1°C temperature rise can **disrupt fish survival, migrations, and habitats**, altering stocks with potential permanent displacement to new areas.
- **Key Recommendations**
 - **National Agriculture Disaster Management Authority (NADMA):** Creation of Single Nodal Agency at National Level to deal with issues of Climate Change.
 - **KVK2.0 (Krishi Vigyan Kendras):** Transform KVKs with technology such as Artificial Intelligence for better farmer support.
 - **Others:** Technology such as Big data analytics will optimize irrigation schedules, promotion of **Carbon market in Agriculture**.

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Also in News



Tokenization of Assets

- RBI is planning for **tokenization of assets and Government bonds** under its wholesale Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) pilot project.
 - **CBDC** is a digital form of currency notes issued by a central bank.
- Tokenization is process of issuing a **digital representation of an asset using Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) or Blockchain**.
- These assets can include **tangible assets** like real estate, financial assets like equities or bonds, and **intangible assets** like intellectual property, identity, etc.
- **Benefits:** Increased liquidity, enhanced settlement processes, etc.



Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- **GIB has not been spotted at Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh for years.**
- **About GIB**
 - **Range:** Endemic to Indian Sub-continent, found in central India, western India and eastern Pakistan.
 - ◆ Major population is confined **mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat**.
 - **Habitat:** Arid and semi-arid grasslands, open country with thorn scrub, tall grass interspersed with cultivation.
 - **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered.
 - Listed in **Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and in **Appendix I of CITES**.
 - Included in **Species Recovery Programme**.



High Altitude Pseudo Satellites (HAPS)

- National Aerospace Laboratories in Bengaluru successfully completed first test of a solar-powered “pseudo satellite”.
- Pseudo satellites or HAPS are **unmanned air vehicles** that can fly at **altitudes of 18-20 km** from the ground and can hold fixed positions.
 - ⊖ These could be airplanes, airships, balloons, etc.
- **Two types of HAPS**
 - ⊖ **Lighter-than-air (LTA) HAPS** that rely on buoyancy to lift off and stay afloat.
 - ⊖ **Heavier than air (HTA) HAPS** with a more conventional take-off method
- **Applications:** Search and rescue missions, disaster relief, surveillance of border areas, etc.



Open Radio Access Network (ORAN)

- A new niche technological solution for **Open Radio Access Network (ORAN)** base stations has been developed by IITB COMET Foundation (COMET).
 - ⊖ COMET is a hub under the **National Mission for Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)**.
- **About ORAN:**
 - ⊖ Key part of a **mobile network system** that uses cellular radio connections to link individual devices to other parts of a network.
 - ⊖ It comprises antennae, which transmits and receives signals to and from our smartphones or other compatible devices.
 - ⊖ It uses **radio waves**.
 - ⊖ **Enable operators to mix and match components** from different vendors.
 - ◆ Also, it is cost-effective, secure, and energy efficient.



Bandipur National Park

- A new proposed railway line passing through Bandipur National Park has evoked protests over its ecological impact.
- **About Bandipur National Park**
 - ⊖ Located in **Karnataka**.
 - ⊖ Part of **Western Ghats Mountains Biogeography Zone and Nilgiri Biosphere reserve**.
 - ⊖ Shares boundary with 3 other National park namely **Nagarahole National Park, Wayanad National Park and Mudumalai National park**.
 - ⊖ **Forest Type:** Scrub type to moist deciduous
 - ⊖ **Fauna:** Tigers, Indian Elephants, Leopard, Dhole, Sambar, etc.
 - ⊖ **Major Rivers:** Kabini River, Moyar, and Nugu River etc.



SWATI Portal

- **Principal Scientific Advisor** to the Government of India launched “**Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)**” Portal.
 - ⊖ It aims to create a **single online portal representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine).
- **Objectives:** Scale up efforts to exponentially include every Indian woman in science and enable reliable long-term research on equality, diversity, and inclusivity.
- Developed, hosted and maintained by **National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi**.



Brumation

- During the winter months, American alligators go into a state of brumation, a type of hibernation.
 - ⊖ Hibernation is a period of inactivity that allows animals to survive when food is scarce and the weather is harsh.
- **About Brumation:**
 - ⊖ Period of dormancy exhibited by **reptiles and amphibians** in colder months.
 - ◆ **Reptiles** are **ectothermic** (their body temperature is dependent on their environment), hence require brumation.
 - ⊖ In it, reptiles may **retreat to underground burrows or other sheltered areas**.
 - ⊖ **Other types of hibernation:**
 - ◆ **Diapause:** Dormancy of insects
 - ◆ **Aestivation:** Summer dormancy in invertebrates and fish
 - ◆ **Torpor:** Short-term physiological state of decreased activity.



Lymphatic Filariasis (Elephantiasis)

- **Ministry of Health and family welfare** has launched first phase of the Bi-annual Nationwide Mass drug Administration (MDA) campaign to eliminate the **Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)**.
 - ⊖ MDA is part of India’s commitment to end LF by 2027.
- **About Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)**
 - ⊖ One of the **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD)**.
 - ⊖ Impairs the **lymphatic system** and can lead to the **abnormal enlargement of body parts**.
 - ⊖ **Caused by:** Microscopic parasite **nematodes (roundworms)** of the family Filarioidea
 - ⊖ **Transmission:** Person-to-Person through Mosquitoes
 - ⊖ **Symptoms:** **Mostly asymptomatic**, showing no signs of infection.

Personality in news



Dr. M S Swaminathan (1925 - 2023)

- Dr. Swaminathan has been **conferred with Bharat Ratna**.
- **Key contributions**
 - ⊖ Architect of **India’s Green Revolution** during 1960s.
 - ⊖ Along with Norman Borlaug, developed **high-yielding varieties of wheat**.
 - ⊖ Promoted knowledge, skill, and technological **empowerment of women in agriculture**.
 - ⊖ As head of **National Commission on Farmers (2004-06)**, recommended **Minimum Support Price for farmers based on Comprehensive cost of Production**.
- **Rewards and recognitions:** **First World Food Prize Laureate (1987), S.S. Bhatnagar Award (1961), etc.**
- **Values:** Leadership, Scientism, Compassion, Dedication to Public Service, etc.

