

NEWS TODAY

Rajasthan High Court issued directives to State Government to prevent child marriages

- Directives were issued ahead of the Akshay Tritiya festival which sees a significant number of child marriages in the State.
- The court said that village heads and panchayat members will be held accountable if child marriages are solemnised.
 - ⊕ Under Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Rules 1996, sarpanch is duty bound to restrict child marriages.
- **About child marriages**
 - ⊕ Child marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under 18 and an adult or another child (UNICEF).
 - ⊕ Girls are disproportionately affected by the practice.
 - ⊕ In India, under Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006 minimum age for marriage is 18 years for women and 21 years for Men.
 - ◆ Section 16 empowers the State Government to appoint Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) either for the entire state or specific regions.
 - ◆ CMPOs are mandated to create awareness about the detrimental effects of child marriages
- **Reasons for Child Marriages:** Gender inequality, social and religious norms, poverty, lack of education, control over sexuality of women, etc.
- **Current status:** Percentage of women aged 20–24 years married before 18 years of age reduced from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 23.3% in 2019-21 (NFHS).

Initiatives to deter Child marriages

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme is working to ensure the education of girls and reduce dropouts, thus delaying their marriage.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana scheme can also deter child marriages as it allows partial withdrawal from the account only when the girl child turns 18.

Centre introduced **CHILDLINE (1098)**, a 24X7 telephone emergency outreach for suitable interventions to calls for any form of assistance including for the prevention of child marriages

Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to increase the minimum age of marriage of females to 21 years.

South Africa celebrates 30 years of the end of Apartheid, a system of racial discrimination

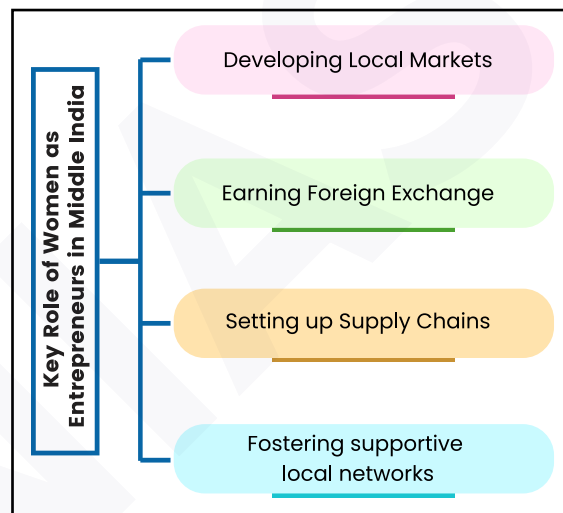
- **Apartheid System** was legal system for racial segregation against non-whites, enforced through political, social, and economic discrimination.
 - ⊕ Though apartheid policies existed earlier, it was institutionalized by National Party in 1948 and Population Registration Act, 1950 formed its basic framework.
 - ◆ It classified South Africans by race into Blacks, Coloured, Whites, and Indians.
 - ⊕ Other apartheid laws include Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949, Group Areas Act 1950 (separate residency areas), Bantu Education Act 1953 (segregation of education).
- **Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM):** AAM is characterized by three phases including
 - ⊕ **Non-violent Resistance movement** with African National Congress (ANC) as main organization.
 - ⊕ **Internationalisation** with support from Organization of African Unity (now African Union) and
 - ◆ **UN:** Adopted International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.
 - ◆ **India:** First country to sever trade relations with apartheid Government (1946) and subsequently imposed a complete embargo on South Africa.
 - ⊕ **Massive Resistance** with boycotts, demonstrations including Defiance Campaign (1952) by ANC.
- **Role of Mahatma Gandhi:** Seeds of AAM in South Africa were sown by Mahatma Gandhi as he established first anti-colonial and anti-racial discrimination movement and founded Natal Indian Congress in 1894.
 - ⊕ He experimented Satyagraha technique against the 1906 legislation requiring registration of Asians.
 - ⊕ At Satyagraha's climax in 1913, 5000 indentured workers marched in Natal, which was the beginning of marches to freedom and mass strikes which became characteristic feature of AAM in later years.

Nelson Mandela (1918 -2013)

- Mandela was a symbol of AAM and South Africa's first democratically elected President in 1994.
- He joined the ANC in 1944 and helped form ANC Youth League.
- He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 (Rivonia Trial) and was released in 1990 after 27 years.
- He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.
- UN celebrates the Nelson Mandela International Day on 18 July every year.

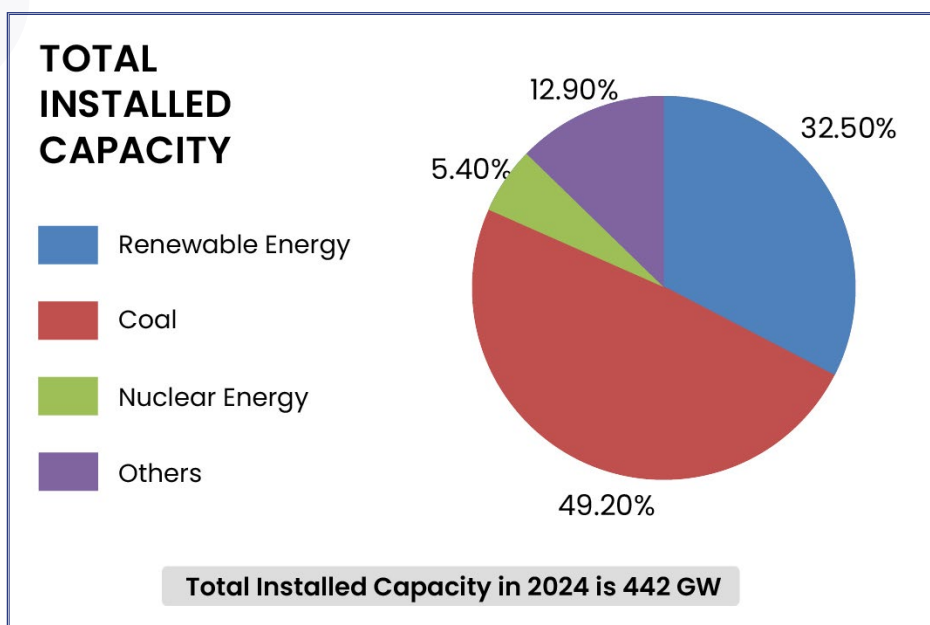
A white paper titled 'At the Helm: Women Entrepreneurs Transforming Middle India' released by Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)

- It is based on a survey that highlights the complex **socio-economic dynamics affecting women's entrepreneurship in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, referred to as Middle India** and role of women in their transformation.
- **Key Highlights of survey:**
 - ⊕ Path to entrepreneurial success for women tends to **extend longer** due to various challenges.
 - ⊕ About 35% respondents reported **pausing their entrepreneurial efforts** due to caregiving responsibilities.
 - ⊕ 90.2% of women are **primary decision-makers** in their ventures, highlighting their **autonomy and leadership**.
- **Key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs:**
 - ⊕ **Capital Gap:** Only 3% of surveyed women accessed external funding.
 - ⊕ **Network Gap:** Marriage drives 87% of women's migration, posing challenges in rebuilding social networks and slowing career progression.
 - ⊕ **Care Gap:** Caregiving responsibilities, including maternity leave, delays entrepreneurial success.
 - ⊕ **Data Gap:** Absence of gender-disaggregated data hampers policy interventions.
 - ⊕ **Visibility Gap:** Societal undervaluation leads to low visibility and limited recognition.
- **Policy Recommendations:**
 - ⊕ Utilize **gender-disaggregated data** for effective policy interventions.
 - ⊕ **Breaking capital barriers** through State-sponsored grants, female-focused incubators, and strengthening women's support networks.
 - ⊕ **Fiscal incentives for childcare leave and expenses.**
 - ⊕ Creation of **safe public and digital spaces** with enhancement of physical mobility.



For the first time, coal's share in India's total electricity capacity fell below 50%: CEEW Study

- **Key highlights:** In 2024:
 - ⊕ **Installed capacity:** India achieved a total installed capacity of **442 gigawatts or GW** (refer to the infographics)
 - ⊕ **Generation capacity:** Net power generation capacity of **25.9 GW** was added of which **71.3% was contributed by RE** (this capacity addition dominated by solar energy).
 - ⊕ **Coal capacity addition:** Despite declines in share, the net coal capacity addition **increased four times** as compared to FY23.
 - ⊕ **Reduction in Disoms dues:** Legacy dues of discoms to generating companies reduced to **Rs 49,451 crore** (Rs 91,061 crore in FY23).
 - ⊕ **EV adoption:** EV sales **grew by around 45%** (compared to FY23).
- **Policy initiatives for pushing RE adoption**
 - ⊕ **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (2024):** A target of installing rooftop solar systems on one crore households has been set.
 - ⊕ **Competitive bidding:** Guidelines for the tariff-based competitive bidding process for power procurement of wind-solar, solar and wind projects were revised.
 - ⊕ **Incentive scheme for green ammonia production:** Launched by MNRE to boost the production of Green Ammonia in India.
 - ⊕ **Hydrogen hub:** Budgetary outlay for the scheme is INR 200 crore for the development of core infrastructure.



Aging well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report released by Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- Report identifies **four key dimensions** of older persons' well-being - health, productive work, economic security, and social engagement.
- **Key Findings of the report:**
 - ⊕ Developing **Asia is aging rapidly** with risk of not having adequate resources to support ageing populations.
 - ⊕ Older people (aged 60 and above) accounted for **13.5% of the regional population** in 2022, it is **expected to nearly double to 25.2%** (1.2 billion) by 2050.
 - ⊕ **India related findings:**
 - ◆ **Lowest health insurance coverage** among older people at 21%
 - ◆ **80%–90% of financial resources for retirement come from private income and assets**, not public pensions or social assistance.
- **Challenges to Healthy Aging:**
 - ⊕ Persistent burden of **lifestyle disease** and heightened incidence of **loneliness and social isolation**.
 - ⊕ **Limited access to essential services** such as health and long-term care.
 - ⊕ **Economic insecurity** with 40% older people in Asia and Pacific lacking **access to any form of pension**.
 - ⊕ Up to **94% of workers aged 65+** in the region are employed in **informal sector**.

Recommendations:

- **Achieving universal health coverage**, government led health insurance reforms, and strengthening of primary healthcare.
- **Labour protection coverage** for informal workers, extended and flexible retirement age and lifelong learning.
- **Broader social pension coverage**, use of digital technology (like India's Atal Pension Yojana), and financial literacy.
- **Transition to market based long term care systems**, community based social activities (like Ibasho project in Japan) and digital skills training.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) released 'Draft Explosives Bill (2024)', for public Consultation

- The Bill will **replace the colonial era 'Explosives Act, 1884'** which was aimed to regulate the manufacture, possession, use, sale, transport, import and export of explosives.
 - ⊕ **Rash Behari Bose** who was a key member of the **Ghadar Party** was charged under this Act.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊕ **Defines explosive:** Explosive means **gunpowder, nitroglycerine, nitroglycol, guncotton**, or any other substance (solid/ liquid/ gaseous) used or manufactured to **produce a practical effect by explosion or pyrotechnic effect**.
 - ⊕ **Licensing authority:** It means **Chief Controller of Explosives** or such other authority as may be prescribed.
 - ◆ **Central Government shall prescribe the authority** competent to grant, suspend or revoke a licence.
 - ◆ Currently, the **PESO** (refer to the box) is responsible for such things.
 - ⊕ **Punishment for contravention:** Manufacturing, import or export in contravention of the Act will attract **imprisonment for up to three years, a fine of Rs 1,00,000, or both**.
 - ⊕ **Power of Central Government:** It can make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)

- **Genesis:** Formerly known as the Department of Explosives, PESO was established in 1898.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- **Mandate:**
 - ⊕ The nodal agency for **regulating safety of hazardous substances** such as explosives, compressed gas and petroleum.
 - ⊕ Its major work is to administer the **responsibilities** delegated under the **Explosives Act 1884 and Petroleum Act 1934** and the Rules made thereunder

Also in News



Cocoa

- **Price of cocoa beans**, a raw material in chocolates, has **skyrocketed**.
- **About Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*)**
 - ⊕ **Commercial plantation crop**, grown as a mixed crop.
 - ⊕ **Humid Tropical Crop** native of **Amazon region of South America**.
 - ⊕ **Varieties:** Criollo, Forastero and Trinitario.
 - ⊕ **Suitable conditions:**
 - ◆ **Perennial crop** and predominantly grown on **red laterite soils**.
 - ◆ **Altitudes:** Cultivated upto 1200 meters above Mean Sea Level.
 - ◆ **Annual Rainfall:** 1000 mm to 2000 mm.
 - ◆ **Temperature:** 15°C-35°C
 - ⊕ **Cultivation in India:** Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
 - ⊕ **India exports** to the U.S.A, Indonesia, Nepal etc.



Shaksgam Valley

- India protests **Chinese road construction at Shaksgam Valley** in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **About Shaksgam valley**
 - ⊕ It is a **part of territory of India**, strategically located in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ◆ Through **China-Pakistan boundary agreement of 1963**, Pakistan unlawfully ceded the area to China.
 - ⊕ Also known as the **Trans-Karakoram tract**, an area along both sides of the **Shaksgam River**.
 - ⊕ It is bounded by **Kun Lun Mountains** and by **Karakoram peaks** and is **adjacent to the Siachen Glacier**.





Right to Contest Election and Right to Vote of prisoners

- **Contesting:** A convicted person, sentenced to imprisonment for 2 years, cannot contest election (Section 8 (3) of Representation of People Act or RPA, 1951).
 - ⊕ Even if such convicted person is on bail, they cannot contest election.
- **Voting**
 - ⊕ A person confined in a prison cannot vote (Section 62(5) of the RPA, 1951).
 - ◆ It is applicable to persons under a sentence of imprisonment or transportation or is in the lawful custody of the police.
 - ⊕ A person under preventive detention is entitled to vote in an election (Section 62(5) of the RPA, 1951 and Rule 18 of Conduct of Elections Rules 1961).



National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)

- **NADA India** concluded #PlayTrue Campaign which commemorated WADA's Play True Day.
 - ⊕ Since 2014 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) celebrates Play True Day for fostering awareness about the importance of clean sport and anti-doping practices.
- **About NADA**
 - ⊕ **Genesis:** Set up in 2005 as an autonomous body under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.
 - ◆ It is provided statutory backing by National Anti-Doping Act, 2022.
 - ⊕ **Ministry:** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
 - ⊕ **Mandate:** Implements the anti-doping programme in India, in line with the World Anti-doping Code 2021.



Mount Ruang

- Indonesia's Mount Ruang volcano recently erupted, triggering the highest level of alert.
- **About Mount Ruang**
 - ⊕ It is a stratovolcano located in Indonesia's Sulawesi Islands.
 - ◆ Stratovolcano, a volcanic landform characterised by a conical shape formed by layers of volcanic material deposited during successive volcanic eruptions.
 - ⊕ It is one of around 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia, lying in the Ring of Fire, a string of volcanoes around the edges of Pacific Ocean.
- Other volcanoes in Indonesia include Krakatau, Merapi and Semeru.



KAVACH

- RailTel Corporation of India signed an MOU with a tech firm for exploring and delivering KAVACH (train collision avoidance system) implementation projects in India and other countries.
- **About KAVACH:**
 - ⊕ It is indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection System.
 - ⊕ Developed by Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) in collaboration with Indian industry.
 - ⊕ It is an electronic system of Safety Integrity Level - 4 standards with probability of error being 1 in 10,000 years.
 - ⊕ Key features include Centralised live monitoring of train movements, automatic braking for prevention of overspeeding, and relaying SoS messages.



The University of Tokyo Atacama Observatory (TAO) Project

- TAO telescope site completion ceremony held in Santiago, Chile.
- **About TAO Project**
 - ⊕ Project aims to construct the 6.5 meter optical-infrared telescope at summit of Cerro Chajnantor, an altitude of 5,640 m in Atacama Desert of Chile.
 - ◆ It is the world's highest astronomical site.
 - ◆ Region's high altitude, thin atmosphere, and perennially arid climate make it possible for observing almost entire range of near-infrared wavelength.
 - ⊕ It is equipped with two infrared observation instruments:
 - ◆ SWIMS, which will help understand evolution of galaxies.
 - ◆ MIMIZUKU, which will help study planet formation and origin of materials.



Domestic Violence Act (DVA), 2005

- Supreme Court is considering whether compensation in cases of DV should be determined by the degree of violence suffered by the victim or the ability of the perpetrator to pay.
- **Domestic Violence Act (DVA), 2005**
 - ⊕ It is aimed at providing protection to wife or female live-in partner from violence at the hands of the husband or male live-in partner or his relatives.
 - ⊕ Domestic violence under the Act includes actual abuse or threat of abuse, whether physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or economic.

Personality in news



Lala Hansraj (1864-1938)

- Recently, birth anniversary of Lala Hansraj was celebrated.
- **Early life**
 - ⊕ **Birth place:** Hoshiarpur district, Punjab
 - ⊕ **Parent:** Lala Chunnilal and mother Hardevi
 - ⊕ **Influenced by:** Swami Dayanand Saraswati's ideologies.
 - ⊕ Popularly known as Mahatma Hansraj.
- **Contributions:**
 - ⊕ One of the greatest educationists who chose English-oriented Science-based education with a blend of Vedic ideals
 - ⊕ Co-established the first Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Schools System (DAV) in Lahore in 1886 with Guru Datta Vidyarthi and served as its first Headmaster.
 - ⊕ Proposed the inclusion of the Ashok Dharma Chakra at the Centre of the National Flag.
- **Values:** Leadership, Patriotism and Selflessness.

