

NEWS TODAY

Modified cashless treatment scheme unveiled by MoRTH

Scheme aims to provide cashless treatment for road accident victims nationwide.

- Previously, pilot project on the Cashless Treatment scheme has been launched by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in 2024.
- Legal mandate for cashless treatment has been provided under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (amended by the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019).

Key Features of Scheme

- **Treatment costs:** Support will be provided up to ₹1.5 lakh for a maximum period of 7 days, provided the police are informed about the accident within 24 hours.
 - ⊕ Additionally, for hit-and-run cases, ₹2 lakh will be given to the families of the deceased.
- **Implementing agency:** National Health Authority (NHA) in coordination with police, hospitals and State Health Agencies etc.
 - ⊕ e-Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) application will help NHA in implementation of Scheme.

Coverage: Applicable to all road accidents

Need/Relevance of the scheme

- **Reducing Fatalities:** 1.8 lakh fatalities occurred due to road accidents last year, and 66% of these accidents involved individuals aged between 18 and 34.
- **Encouraging good Samaritans:** Good Samaritan is a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical care or assistance.
 - ⊕ Also it will help in treatment in the golden hour (first hour after a traffic accident).



External Affairs Minister highlighted the crucial role of India's Diaspora ahead of 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention.

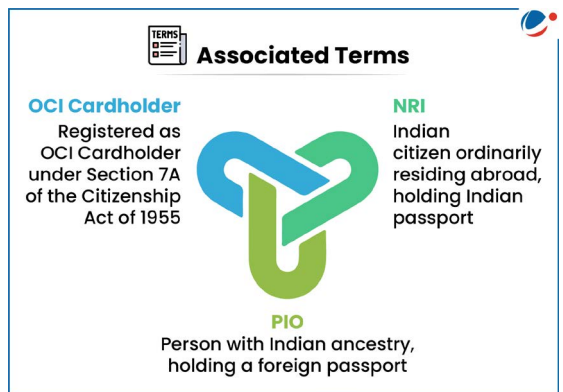
PBD is a biennale event, held on January 9th, commemorating the day in 1915 when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa.

Indian Diaspora

- **About:** It is a generic term for addressing people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India.
- **Includes:** Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).
 - ⊕ PIO and OCI card holders were merged under one category – OCI – in 2015.
- **Status of Indian Diaspora:** Approximately 35.42 million, which includes about 15.85 million non-resident Indians (NRIs) (May 2024)
 - ⊕ The USA is home to the largest number totalling 5.4 million people.

Major Contribution of Indian Diaspora

- **Economic:** Foreign remittances from the Indian Diaspora are significant for socio-economic development especially in rural areas.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Technical knowledge transfers and finances from diaspora boost India's domestic entrepreneurial ecosystem.
 - ⊕ Help create trust with foreign investors attracting FDI.
- **Diplomacy:** Their sizeable presence in South Asia, West Asia present an opportunity to nurture a growing, mutual relationship and positively shape India's global image.
- **Promoting Indian Culture:** Fostering culture exchanges, building India's soft power, through popularising Indian music, cuisine, spirituality, etc.



Some Initiatives taken for Enhancing Diaspora Engagements

- **Overseas Citizenship of India scheme:** Introduced through Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2005.
- **Know India Programme (KIP):** By Ministry of External Affairs to foster closer connection with Indian Diaspora youth.
- **Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF):** For assisting Overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency.

Supreme Court Highlighted issues in Implementation of the Dam Safety Act of 2021

In a case, SC observed that the **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)**, as mandated under Section 5 of the Act, had not been constituted since its enactment.

- **Committee is a part of four tiered institutional structures** under the Act.
 - ⊖ It aims to prevent **dam failure related disasters** and to maintain standards of dam safety.
 - ⊖ It would be chaired by the Central Water Commission (CWC) Chairperson and have representatives from the Centre and States and include three specialists.

About Dam Safety Act 2021

- **Purpose:** Provide for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of the specified dam for prevention of dam failure related disasters.
- **Four tiers of institutional mechanism**
 - ⊖ **Centre level:** National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) and NCDS
 - ⊖ **State Level:** State Committee on Dam Safety and the State Dam Safety Organization

Other Dam Safety Measures Taken in India

- **National Register of Large Dams (NRLD)**, compiled and maintained by CWC.
- **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**, Supported by the World Bank (WB), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- **Other:** National Centre for Earthquake Safety of Dams, Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA), etc.

Dams in India and Associated safety Concerns

- India is **3rd largest dam-owning nation** in the world after China and USA.
- About **5000 large dams** are in India.

Key Dam safety Concerns



Ageing Dams:
Over 80% of large dams are already over 25 years old.



Sedimentation:
Sediment accumulation reduces storage capacity



Seismic Risks:
Face earthquake-induced vulnerabilities. E.g. Chang Dam during the 2001 Bhuj earthquake

First Bilateral meeting between Foreign Secretary of India and Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister

This was the **highest level of engagement** with Taliban since the latter took control of Kabul in 2021.

- The two sides evaluated the **ongoing Indian humanitarian assistance programmes** and agreed to use **Chabahar port** for trade and commercial activities

India-Afghanistan Relations

- **Background:** The two countries shared a **close and friendly relationship** with signing of "**Friendship Treaty**" (1950).
- **Return of Taliban:** India **did not officially recognize Taliban**. However, instances of engagements continued.
 - ⊖ **Deployment of a technical team in Indian Embassy:** For the delivery of **humanitarian assistance** and continuing **engagements** with the Afghan people.
 - ⊖ **Official Joint Secretary Meeting (Nov, 2024):** In Kabul, marked the **first official meeting** between an Indian diplomat and the Taliban's defence leadership.

Importance of Afghanistan for India

- **Location:** Afghanistan's location at the '**Heart of Asia**' is significant as it has served as a **route** to India since the ancient times through the selected passage of **Khyber and Bolan**.
- **Stability and Security:** Afghanistan has been used as **haven by the terror groups**, constructive engagement would ensure solution to problems of terrorism, extremism and separatism.
- **Engaging with Central Asia:** As Afghanistan is strategically located at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia.
- **Strengthening India's soft power:** In the form of **humanitarian assistance** like providing wheat supplies to drought-affected Afghanistan in late 2021 would enhance India's stature.
 - ⊖ Indian has a numerous projects in Afghanistan like **Afghan-India Friendship Dam** (formerly known as Salma Dam); **Zaranj-Delaram Highway, etc.**
- **Rising Role of China:** China is believed to be taking up urban development projects in Kabul along with exchanging visits of Ambassadors.



Marathi Language has officially been granted the status of a Classical Language

The status acknowledges Marathi's **deep historical roots** and its role in shaping **nation's cultural identity**.

Classical Language in India

- **Background:** Created for the first time in **2004**.
- **Criteria for declaring a Classical language:** Revised in 2024 to include:
 - ⊕ **High antiquity** of its early texts/recorded history over a period of **1500- 2000 years**.
 - ⊕ A body of **ancient literature/texts**, considered a heritage by generations of speakers.
 - ⊕ **Knowledge texts**, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence.
 - ⊕ The Classical Languages and literature could be **distinct from its current form** or could be discontinuous with later forms of its offshoots.
- **Other Languages with Classical Status:** 6 Indian languages namely **Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Telugu & Kannada (2008), Malayalam (2013) and Odia (2014)**
 - ⊕ Classical Language Status was recently approved for **Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali languages** apart from **Marathi**.

Benefits to Classical Language

- **Preservation and Documentation:** Along with digitization of their ancient texts **generating jobs** in archiving, translation, publishing, and digital media.
- **Academic Benefits:** Education Ministry provides for two **major annual international awards** for scholars of eminence in the said languages.
- **Funding:** Provided for research and for betterment of these language.

About Marathi Language

- **About:** Indo-Aryan language evolved from the **Maharastri Prakrta**, a dialect of the **Prakrit** languages spoken during the **Satavahana era**.
 - ⊕ **Gathasaptasati**, is a collection of poetry attributed to the **Satavahana King Hala**, is one of the earliest known literary works in Marathi.

A new study reveals 24% of the world's Freshwater Species are at risk of extinction

It is the first-ever multi-taxon global freshwater fauna assessment for **The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species** led by **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.

Key-findings

- **Major Hotspots:** **Lake Victoria** (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), **Lake Titicaca** (Bolivia and Peru), **Sri Lanka's Wet Zone**, and the **Western Ghats (India)**.
- **Key threatened species:** **Crabs, crayfishes and shrimps** are at the highest risk of extinction followed by freshwater fishes
 - ⊕ At least **4,294 species** out of **23,496 freshwater animals** are at high risk of extinction.
- **Other:** Areas with **high water stress** (where there is high demand and low supply) and areas with more **eutrophication** are not home to **higher numbers of threatened species** than areas with **lower water stress** and less eutrophication.
 - ⊕ **Eutrophication** refer to an excess of nutrients in the water leading to overgrowth of algae and plants

About Freshwater Landscapes

- **Status:** These are home to **10% of all known species** on Earth.
- **Significance:** Provides safe drinking water, livelihoods, flood control and climate change mitigation.
- **Threats Faced:**
 - ⊕ **Pollution:** Mainly from agriculture and forestry.
 - ⊕ **Degradation:** E.g. land conversion for agricultural use, water extraction and the construction of dams.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Overfishing and the introduction of invasive alien species.

About IUCN (1948)

- **Objective:** provides **public, private and non-governmental organisations** with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.
- **Membership:** It is a **membership Union** composed of both government and civil society organisations.
- **HQ:** Gland, Switzerland

Also In News



Miyawaki Technique

Around **56,000 sq. meters** of Dense Forests were created in Prayagraj in the last two years using Miyawaki Technique in the preparation of Mahakumbh 2025.

About Miyawaki Technique

- A **reforestation technique** developed by Japanese botanist **Akira Miyawaki**.
- Designed to **create dense and native mini forests in urban areas**.
 - ⊕ It involves planting native trees, shrubs and groundcover plants within every square metre.
 - ⊕ It is ideal for small parcels of land.
- Based on the concept of **potential natural vegetation (PNV)**,
 - ⊕ PNV means that vegetation that would flourish without human interventions.



National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM)

Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of **India's first Green Hydrogen Hub** under NGHM in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

About NGHM

- **Announced:** In January 2023
- **Ministry:** Ministry of **New and Renewable Energy**
- **Objective:** Make India a **Global Hub** for production, usage and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives
- **Target:** Production of **5 MMT per annum of Green Hydrogen by 2030**.
- **Key Components:** Among the various components, it includes:
 - ⊕ **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT)** programme, which includes **incentives** for manufacturing of **electrolysers and production** of green hydrogen.
 - ⊕ Development of **Green Hydrogen Hubs**.



Artesian Condition

Artesian condition was recently observed in a village in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

Artesian Condition

- The word “artesian” is specifically used when water is “**confined under pressure below layers of relatively impermeable rock.**”
 - ⊕ It is **located deeper below** the earth’s surface surrounded by **poorly permeable rocks** that result in high pressure underground.
- **Artesian Conditions** occur due to the **movement of groundwater** from a recharge area to a **point of discharge** at a lower elevation. E.g., natural spring, drilling industry, etc.
 - ⊕ It is different from water flowing normally through tube wells or wells as the artesian water can **sprout from underground on its own.**



Sonobouys

India and U.S. will coproduce interoperable sonobouys for the Indian Navy

- Initiative is aligned with the objective of the **U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET).**

About Sonobouys

- An **Air-launched expendable electro-mechanical** acoustic sensor.
- Provides crucial water temperature data to **enhance the accuracy of other sonar systems.**
 - ⊕ **Sonar**, short for **Sound Navigation and Ranging**, is helpful for exploring and mapping the ocean using sound waves.
- Crucial for **anti-submarine warfare and oceanographic research.**



Future of Jobs Report 2025

Future of Jobs Report 2025 has been released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**

Key-findings of the report

- About **170 million** new jobs will be created by global macro trends by 2030.
- **Technology-related roles** are the fastest growing jobs in percentage terms, which includes Big Data Specialists, Fintech Engineers, etc.
- **Clerical and Secretarial Workers** are expected to see the largest decline in absolute numbers.
- Workers can expect that **two-fifths (39%)** of their existing skill sets will be transformed or become outdated over the **2025-2030 period.**

About WEF

- WEF is the **International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.**
- It provides platform for meaningful connection between stakeholders for cooperation and progress.



Soapstone

Recently, **Uttarakhand High Court** pulled up authorities for **unregulated soapstone mining** in Bageshwar, Uttarakhand.

About Soapstone

- **About:** Also known as **Steatite**, it is a **metamorphic rock** made of **talca**, a **naturally occurring mineral**, used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and other industries.
 - ⊕ Depending on the source quarry, it contains **varying amounts** of other minerals like **mica, chlorite, amphiboles, quartz, etc.**
- **Appearance:** Gray, bluish, green, or brown in color.
- **Properties:** Relatively soft, very dense, and highly heat-resistant.
- **Applications:** Construction and design of countertops, sinks, hearths, and sculptures, etc.
- **Reserves:** **Rajasthan (57%) and Uttarakhand (25%)** (Indian Bureau of Mines)



Radio Access Network (RAN)

AI Touch LLP has received funding under the **Department of Telecommunications' TDF scheme of USOF** (now “**Digital Bharat Nidhi**”) to develop components for 5G RAN.

About RAN

- **About:** It is a **key component of wireless telecommunication systems**, enabling devices like cellphones and computers to connect to a network via a **radio link.**
 - ⊕ It **facilitates communication between user equipment and the core network**, which manages subscriber data and location information.
- **Components:** **Antennas** (convert electrical signals into radio waves), **Radios** (transform digital information into signals), **Baseband Units (BBUs)** (Processes signals).



Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has highlighted that number of LPG connections in India has more than **doubled from 14.52 crore in 2014 to 32.83 crore in 2024.**

- **10.33 crore** of these LPG connections were provided under PMUY.

About PMUY, 2016

- **Objective:** To make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the **rural and deprived households** which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes etc.
- **Beneficiary:** Adult woman belonging to any of the following categories – SC, ST, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gamin), etc.
- **Ministry:** MoPNG

Place in News



Malaysia (Capital: Kuala Lumpur)

India, Malaysia held their first security dialogue to deepen counter-terrorism ties.

Political features

- **Location:** Lies in **Southeast Asia**, just **north of the Equator.**
 - ⊕ Separated by **South China Sea** into **Peninsular Malaysia** (West Malaysia) and **East Malaysia** (on Borneo Island).
- **Bordering nations:** **Land** (Thailand, Brunei, and Indonesia), **Maritime** (Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam),
- **Bordering Water Bodies:** Strait of Malacca, South China Sea

Geographical features:

- **Major Mountain:** Main Range
- **Highest Peak:** Mount Kinabalu (4,095 metres)
- **Major Rivers:** Pahang, Rajang, and Kinabatangan.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI