

NEWS TODAY

Role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for children explored by UNICEF Report

UNICEF's 'Global Outlook 2025: Prospects for Children' deals with the transformative role that DPI can play in delivery of digital public services for children.

What is meant by DPI?

- It is a **set of shared digital systems** that deliver and provide **equitable access to public and/or private services at societal scale**.
- Its ecosystem comprises technology, markets and governance.

Role of DPI in children's well-being

- **Equitable access to essential services:** E.g. **Digital IDs** connected to **civil registration systems** enable lifelong access to essential services.
 - ⊕ **Education:** E.g. India's national digital education platform, **DIKSHA**, bridges **educational gaps**.
 - ⊕ **Health:** Facilitates electronic health records. E.g. **Electronic Immunization Registry in Jamaica improved childhood vaccination rate**.
- **Foster financial literacy and inclusion** by enabling children to participate in the digital economy
- **Enhances social protection systems** by enabling targeted delivery of benefits and improved **data sharing for better child services**.

Recommendations

- **Digitize CRVS systems** to serve as a basis for digital IDs.
- **Enable seamless, safe and secure data exchange** between health, education and social services
- **Empower children, youth and their families through digital financial inclusion and literacy**,
- **Children's input** must be included when designing digital infrastructure that affects them.

Challenges associated with use of DPI

- **Poor connectivity and digital inequality:** E.g.- Only 43.6% of Indian rural youth aged 15-24 can send emails.
- **Poor integration of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems into national ID:** It restricts universal coverage.
- **Others:** Lack of **data interoperability and harmonization** across systems, data protection, security and surveillance issues, etc.

Election Commission of India (ECI) issues advisory regarding use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) content

The advisories issued are expected to inform electors of dissemination of AI generated /synthetic content by political parties. Advisories include:-

- **Labeling AI/Synthetically Generated Content:** Clearly label any image, video, audio or other materials generated or significantly altered by AI technologies
- **Disclosure in Campaign Materials:** by Including disclaimers wherever synthetic content is utilized

Additionally, in another development **Delhi police** has appointed a **nodal officer to monitor social media for potential misuse of AI** in Delhi's assembly election.

Impact of AI in Elections

Positive Impacts	Negative Consequences
Better voter & civic engagement: E.g. AI powered Chatbots can provide personalized citizen engagements	Deep Fakes: E.g. AI-generated highly realistic deepfakes audio & video can be used to mislead voters and undermine electoral process.
Enhanced electoral security: E.g. Fortifying cyber security through detection of anomalies and fraudulent activities.	Algorithmic bias: E.g. Biased training data can lead to unfair or discriminatory campaign practices, reinforcing existing inequalities.
Data analysis and predictions: AI can help in predictive analysis from a region for strategic resource allocation by parties and Fundraising Optimization .	Manipulation of electoral behaviour: E.g. AI algorithms can be manipulated to favour certain candidates or parties
Voter Profiling and Microtargeting: E.g. Detailed voter profiles based on AI can help in real-time adaptability, efficiency in outreach, and accuracy in targeting and messaging .	Dependency on Technology: Over-reliance on AI tools raises privacy concerns and makes campaigns vulnerable to technical glitches, cyberattacks, or system failures .

Steps to be Taken

- **Assess and research the impact of AI in social media on freedom of speech** and elections
- **Independently verify claims made by platforms** under their accountability and transparency obligations.
- **Create regulated algorithmic filters** to detect harmful content and ensure accountability.
- **Establish global AI standards** to safeguard democracy

RBI announces steps to boost cross-border transactions in rupee

A review of existing regulations issued under FEMA, 1999 has been undertaken by RBI for promoting cross border transactions in Indian Rupee (Internationalization of Rupee).

Recent Changes made in FEMA regulations by RBI:

People residing outside of India will be able to

- Open INR accounts in overseas branches of Authorized Dealer banks for settling all permissible **current and capital account transactions** with a person resident in India.
- Settle transactions with other persons resident outside India using balances in their repatriable INR accounts such as **SNRR account and SVRAs**.
- Use their balances held in **repatriable INR accounts for foreign investment**.

Indian exporters will be able to open accounts in any foreign currency overseas for settlement of trade transactions, including receiving export proceeds and using these proceeds to pay for imports.

Internationalization of Rupee

- Internationalization is a process that involves **increasing the use of the rupee in cross-border transactions**.
- It involves **promoting rupee for import and export trade** and then other current account transactions, followed by its use in capital account transactions.

Benefits of the Internationalization of Rupee

- Greater Financial independence** and protection from external shock as well.
- Efficient crossborder trade**, Reduces dollar demand and strengthens INR.
- Reduced requirement of foreign reserves** to cope up with the external shocks.

Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs):

- SVRA is an account that domestic banks hold for **foreign banks in Indian rupee**.
- SVRA helps **keep the foreign entity's holding in the Indian bank**, in the Indian Rupee.
- When an Indian importer wants to make a payment to a foreign trader in rupees, the amount will be credited to **this Vostro account and vice versa**.

Special Non-resident Rupee account (SNRR):

- Current account opened by **any person resident outside India** (Individual or Corporate) having some sort of business interest in India.
- SNRR account has been allowed to be used for specified transactions in **trade, foreign investments, External Commercial Borrowings**, etc.

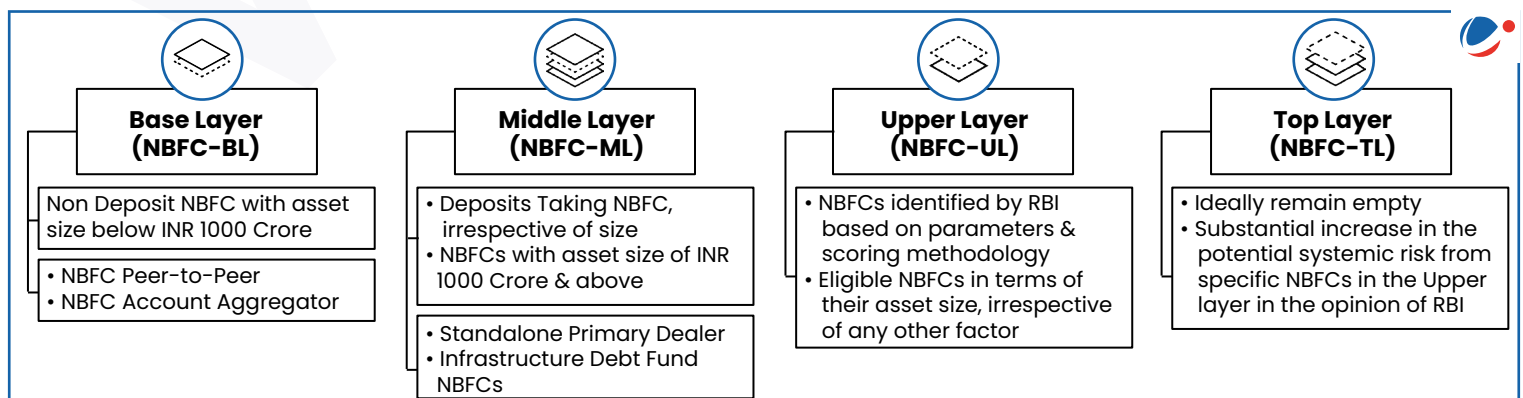
RBI releases list of Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFCs) in the Upper Layer (NBFC-UL) for 2024-25

The list includes LIC Housing Finance Limited, PNB Housing Finance Limited, Shriram Finance Limited etc and is in accordance with **Scale Based Regulation (SBR)**, a regulatory framework for NBFCs.

- Once an NBFC is classified as NBFC-UL, it is subjected to **enhanced regulatory requirement, at least for a period of 5 years**.
- The framework has been introduced to **mitigate contagion or systemic risks**, apply the **principle of proportionality in regulation** and strengthen quality and improve risk management of NBFCs.

Non-Banking Financial Company

- Registration:** under Companies Act, 1956.
- Objective:** engaged in lending activities, but **excludes institutions mainly involved in agriculture, industrial activity, trading goods** (except securities), and providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.
- Different from banks**, as they **cannot accept demand deposits (accepts only term deposits)**, are **not part of payment & settlement system**, and cannot issue cheques drawn on themselves.
- Deposit insurance facility is not available to depositors of NBFCs.**



Union cabinet approved the establishment of 'Third Launch Pad' (TLP) project

The project will be established at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre of ISRO at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.**

About TLP

- **Key features:** Configured to support Launch of **NGLV and Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)** vehicles with **Semi cryogenic stage.**
 - ⊕ Supports **horizontal & tilted integration** of New **NGLVs.**
- **Significance:** Enables **higher launch frequencies** and **enhances the launch capacity** for future **human spaceflight & space exploration** missions etc.

Existing launch pads in India

- Currently, **ISRO relies on 2 launch pads** located at Sriharikota - **First Launch Pad (FLP) & Second Launch Pad (SLP).**
 - ⊕ **FLP** was realized for **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** and continues to provide launch support for **PSLV & SSLV.**
 - ⊕ **SLP** was established **primarily for GSLV & LVM3** and also functions as **standby for PSLV.**
 - ◆ Launched the **Chandrayaan-3 mission** & set to launch the **Gaganyaan missions.**

Reasons for Selecting Sriharikota for TLP:

- **Located on eastern coast:** Facilitates the launching in an easterly direction, taking advantage of earth's rotation.
- **Proximity to equator:** Provides launch vehicles with an **additional push** (Earth's rotation from west to east is fastest at equator) leading to **substantial increase in pay loads & cutting down the operational costs.**
- **Safety Purpose:** Does not have major international maritime or airline routes crisscrossing testing.
- **Others:** Largely uninhabited area & closer to the sea ensuring flight path of launch vehicles is entirely over the sea etc.

New Generation Launch Vehicles (NGLV) Programme

- **About:** Programme by ISRO to develop a new rocket (also known as **Soorya Rocket**) to launch satellites, spacecraft and other payloads.
- **Features:**
 - ⊕ **3 stage vehicle with reusable first stage.** **Reusability** results in low-cost access to space and modular green propulsion systems.
 - ⊕ The booster stages will use **semi-cryogenic propulsion**, using refined kerosene as fuel and liquid oxygen (LOX) as oxidizer.
 - ⊕ It will **have 3 times the present payload capability** with 1.5 times the cost **compared to LVM3.**

India becomes 4th country to achieve space docking

Space docking (joining of two fast-moving satellites in space) was performed by using two small spacecraft i.e. **SDX01 (Chaser), and SDX02(Target)** of the **Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX)** mission.

- The US, Russia, and China are the other three countries to perform space docking.

About SpaDex mission

- **Background:** SpaDeX and 24 PS4-Orbital Experiment Module (POEM-4) payloads were launched by ISRO via PSLV-C60 from the Sriharikota space centre in December 2024.
- **Mission Goal:**
 - ⊕ **Develop and demonstrate technology** for rendezvous and Autonomous docking using two small spacecraft (**SDX01 and SDX02**).
 - ⊕ Once docked, the mission will evaluate the **combined system's controllability.** This includes maintaining stability, **maneuvering the docked spacecraft as a single entity.**
 - ⊕ Demonstrate the potential for **extending the life of the target spacecraft.**
 - ⊕ Test **power transfer between docked spacecraft.**
- **Mission Life:** Up to two years post-docking operations.
- **Use of Indigenous technologies:**
 - ⊕ **Inter-satellite communication link (ISL)** for autonomous communication between spacecraft.
 - ⊕ **GNSS Based Novel Relative Orbit Determination and Propagation (RODP) processor:** To determine relative position and velocity of other spacecraft.
 - ⊕ **Other indigenous technologies developed for enabling this mission:** Docking mechanism, Sensor Suite, autonomous rendezvous and docking strategy etc.

Significance of SpaDex mission

- **Essential for India's space ambitions:** Such as sample return from the Moon, Building Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), etc.
- **Satellite Servicing and Maintenance:** Docking allows for the servicing and refuelling of satellites, extending their operational life.
- **Support for Future space Missions:** It is helpful when **multiple rocket launches** are required to **achieve common mission objectives.**
- **Other Significance:** Use in **future applications such as in-space robotics, Help in natural resource monitoring, vegetation studies, etc.**

Also In News



Musi River

Musi River historic buildings have been kept on World Monuments Watch 2025

- **World Monuments Watch** is a biennial program which aims to raise awareness and mobilize action for the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.

About Musi River

- **Origin :** **Ananthagiri hills , Rangareddy district (Telangana).**
- It is one of the major tributaries of **Krishna river** and flows into the **Osmansagar and Himayatsagar reservoirs.**
- It consists of 2 rivulets **Esi (8 kms) and Musa (13 kms)** which then converge into Musi River.
- **Importance:** major water sources for **Hyderabad.**



Pay Commission

The Union government approved the establishment of the Eighth Pay Commission.

About Pay Commission

- **Constitution:** by central government
- Since **1947**, seven Pay Commissions have been constituted
- The 7th pay commission was implemented in 2016 and is set to complete its term in 2026.
- **Chairman** of 7th Pay Commission was: **Justice Ashok Kumar Mathur.**
- **Importance:** It plays a vital role in determining salary structures, allowances, and other benefits for government employees.



Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

Recently, the **Karnataka cabinet sub-committee** has given approval to declare four forest areas as eco-sensitive zones.

- It includes **Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Bankapura Wolf Sanctuary, Uttargudda Wildlife Sanctuary and Arsikere Bear Sanctuary.**

Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ)

- These are areas with unique environmental resources requiring special conservation, as defined by **National Environment Policy (2006).**
- States can propose ESZs as per Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change 2011 guidelines**
- ESZs **regulate but do not prohibit local activities like agriculture and construction** unless specifically mentioned.
- Importance:**
 - acts as **"Shock Absorber"** for specialized ecosystems, such as Protected Areas or other natural sites and is
 - act as a transition zone** from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection



Glenn Rocket

Blue Origin's giant **New Glenn rocket** blasted off from Florida on its first mission(NG-1) to space.

- Blue origin is a private company founded by Jeff Benzos in 2000.

About NG-1 Mission:

- Mission aimed to **place the Blue Ring Pathfinder test satellite into orbit** and land rocket's booster onto a drone ship in Atlantic Ocean.
- It will also **demonstrate reusability**, a key feature that **helps reduce launch costs** and enhance mission efficiency.

Other Prominent commercial Space ventures and their rockets

- SpaceX:** Falcon9, Starship
- United Launch Vehicle (ULA):** Atlas V, Delta IV, and Vulcan Centaur
- AgniKul Cosmos:** Agnibaan SORTeD



Fast Track Immigration – Trusted Traveller Program (FTI-TTP)

Recently, home minister **launched Fast Track Immigration – Trusted Traveller Program (FTI-TTP)** at seven major airports across India.

- These include **Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Ahmedabad.**

About FTI-TTP

- It is a part of the government's **Viksit Bharat@2047 vision.**
- Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Nodal Agency:** Bureau of Immigration.
- Objective:** **speed up the Immigration clearance** process through electronic gates.
- Two phases:**
 - In the **first phase**, Indian citizens and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders are covered
 - In the **second phase**, foreign travellers will be covered.
- Airports to be covered:** 21 major airports.



Olive Ridley Turtle

A high-level review meeting to be held by Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary amid increase in deaths of Olive Ridley Turtles.

About Olive Ridley Turtles

- Gets its name from **olive green color of its heart-shaped shell.**
- Among **smallest & most abundant sea turtles** and is found primarily in the **tropical regions of Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans.**
- Best known for their **unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together to lay eggs on the same beach.
- Dietary Features:** Carnivores, and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp, snails, crabs, molluscs and a variety of fish and their eggs.
- Threats:** Turtle unfriendly fishing practices, development and exploitation of nesting beaches for ports, and tourist centers.
- Conservation status:**
 - IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable.
 - WPA, 1972:** Schedule 1.
 - CITES:** Appendix 1.



Global Risk report

The report released by the **World Economic Forum** classified global risks **across economic, environmental, geopolitical and technological domains.**

Key Findings of Report:

- These risks are assessed over both **short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (10 years) horizons** to guide policymakers in balancing immediate concerns with future challenges.
- Short term risks:** top 3 risks include, **misinformation and disinformation, extreme weather events and state based armed conflict.**
- Long term risks:** top 3 risks include, **extreme weather events, biodiversity loss & ecosystem collapse and critical change to earth systems.**



Conjugal Rights

SC recently ruled that proceedings on **restitution of conjugal rights and those on maintenance** are entirely independent of each other.

About conjugal rights

- Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage**, i.e. right to live together, right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.
- Law recognises these rights**, both in personal laws dealing with marriage, divorce etc, and in criminal law requiring payment of maintenance and alimony to a spouse.
- Hindu marriage act, 1955:** Deals with **conjugal rights, which says if either husband or wife without reasonable excuses withdraws from society of other, aggrieved party may approach court for restitution of conjugal rights.**
- Similar provisions exist in **Muslim personal law** as well as the **Divorce Act, 1869**, which governs Christian family law.

Place in News



Cabo Verde (Capital: Praia)

World Bank in its **Country Climate and Development Report** estimates that **Cabo Verde** needs to invest \$140 million annually to address its climate & development challenges.

Physical features:

- Location:** off the coast of **West Africa in the Atlantic ocean.**
- Divided into the Barlavento (Windward)** group to the north and the **Sotavento (Leeward)** group to the south.
- Largest port:** Mindelo, on São Vicente.

Geographical features:

- It is a small **archipelago (volcanic origin)**
- Terrain:** Varies from the geologically older, flatter islands in the east and the newer, more mountainous islands in the west.
- Climate:** Hot temperatures throughout the year, with very little rainfall and sea breezes from the Atlantic



Errata:

- In 'News Today' dated **December 24, 2024**, in the News titled '**Maharashtra passes Maharashtra Prisons and Correctional Services Bill 2024**', it was incorrectly mentioned that Model Prisons Act 2023 replaced Prison Act 1894.
 - The correct information is - Union Ministry of Home Affairs has prepared '**Model Prisons Act 2023**' which may serve as a **guiding document for the States to reform the British-era laws.**
 - Relevant provisions of '**The Prisons Act, 1894**', '**The Prisoners Act, 1900**' and '**The Transfer of Prisoners Act, 1950**' have been reviewed and assimilated in the '**Model Prisons Act, 2023.**