

# NEWS TODAY

## Role of Space Technology in Governance highlighted by Union Minister for Science and Technology

Union Minister highlighted India's space sector's role in transforming governance practices at 'Space-Tech for Good Governance' Conclave hosted by Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership.

### Role of Space Technology in Governance

#### ► Resource Management:

- ⊕ **Mapping:** Satellites like **RESOURCESAT, CARTOSAT** offer geospatial data for mapping land, water, and minerals.
- ⊕ **Agriculture:** Provide farmers with critical data for crop management and productivity enhancement. **E.g. Krishi-Decision Support System.**
- ⊕ **Forest:** **IRS satellites** assist Forest Survey of India in **mapping forest cover, forest fires etc.**

► **Infrastructure:** **PM Gati Shakti leverages spatial planning tools** and ISRO imagery to integrate infrastructure projects from various Ministries including Bharatmala, Sagarmala, etc.

#### ► Social Sector:

- ⊕ Enhance healthcare quality using space tech **e.g. ISRO's Health-QUEST.**
- ⊕ Boost **tele-education** with live lectures and interactive training in remote areas **e.g. EDUSAT.**

► **Disaster Management:** ISRO's **National Database for Emergency Management portal** serves as national repository of GIS based data to **support disaster management.**

► **Security:** **GSAT-7 and RISAT** secure communications and border surveillance. Also, **Mission Shakti (2019)** showcases space defence capabilities.

► **Transparency & Accountability:** Use space technology for **geo-tagging of MGNREGA assets** launched in FY 2016-17.

India's space sector faces **criticism for allocating limited national resources to high-end space exploration**, but its technology significantly enhances governance and drives socio-economic progress.

## Centre Urges Platform Workers to Register on e-Shram Portal for Formal Recognition

Union Budget 2025-26 announced for **registration on e-Shram portal, ID cards**, and healthcare coverage under **AB-PMJAY** (Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana).

► **Ministry of Labour and Employment** will launch schemes to fulfill these mandates, and **registration will help workers access benefits.**

### About Gig and Platform Workers

- **Definition:** **Gig workers** are those engaged in **livelihoods outside the traditional employer-employee arrangement.** They include:
  - **Platform workers** are those whose work is based on **online software apps or digital platforms.**
  - **Non-platform gig workers** are generally **casual wage workers and own-account workers** in the conventional sectors.
- **Economic Impact:** India's gig workforce is expected to reach **1 crore in 2024-25** and **2.35 crores by 2029-30** (NITI Aayog).

### Challenges Faced by Gig and Platform Workers

- **Lack of Social Security:** Not covered under EPFO or other welfare schemes.
- **Unstable and Low Income:** Unfair high commissions by platforms, Arbitrary deactivation of ID by platforms, availability of opportunities based on rating, etc.
- **Physical & Mental Strain:** Long hours, financial stress, and pressure to meet targets affect well-being.

As Budget recognizes the rising contribution of the gig and platform workers in the economy, it is essential to **provide them a social safety net**, including **minimum wages, regulated work hours, and access to healthcare.**

### Initiatives For Gig and Platform Workers

- **Code on Social Security, 2020:** Provides for **framing of suitable social security schemes for gig workers and platform workers.**
- **e-Shram portal:** For a Comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers.
- **Survey:** All India Survey on Domestic Workers to estimate the number and proportion of **domestic workers.**

## Role Of AI In Women Empowerment Highlighted by The Prime Minister

The prime minister highlighted how AI helps create new opportunities for women while having the potential to ease their lives.

### AI for Women Empowerment

- **Delivering personalised skill development at scale:** Platforms like **Coursera** offer AI-tailored courses (e.g., coding, data analysis), helping women bridge skill gaps.
- **Economic Empowerment:** When used responsibly, AI expands talent pools, reduces hiring bias, improves inclusive communication, and enhances workplace collaboration.
- **Healthcare & Well-Being:** AI tools like **Babylon Health's symptom checker** aid early detection of diseases (e.g., breast cancer), improving access to healthcare in remote areas.
- **Safety & Security:** Apps like **Safetipin** use AI to map safe urban routes, reducing harassment risks.





### Challenges for Women in AI

- **Gender Gap:** Women hold only **30% of AI roles** globally (Global Gender Gap Report, 2023).
- **Bias in Design:** With women in **less than one-third of tech jobs**, AI may not fully address their needs (PwC).
- **Perception Gap:** **24% of women** don't see AI impacting their jobs, compared to **20% of men** (PwC).

➤ **Privacy Risks:** AI's data use raises concerns (e.g., a **2021 UK study** found women's health apps leaking sensitive data).

As a transformative technology, AI has the power to improve women's lives in countless ways. However, its full potential can only be realized if it represents everyone.

### Ways to Increase Gender Diversity in AI

 <b>Support STEM Education</b> Highlight female AI leaders to inspire women and challenge stereotypes.	 <b>Mentorship</b> Guide and support women in AI careers.	 <b>Equal Opportunities</b> Hire and promote women in at least 50% of AI roles.	 <b>Fair Pay</b> Ensure equal pay for equal work to attract and retain women.
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## International Women's Day: From women's development to women-led development

Women-led development (WLD) focuses on **empowering women to take the leadership, set agenda for development, drive innovation, and shape policies** from the forefront.

### Significance of WLD

- **Inclusive Governance:** It channelizes potential of women for actively shaping and **driving economic, social, and political progress at all levels** of governance.
- **Gender Equality:** Tackles generational inequality (Global Gender Gap Index 2024: India ranked 129th out of 146 countries) by **breaking gender stereotypes and rejecting norms that sustain gender disparity**.
- **Economic Development:** Underscores women role to **achieve Government of India's vision of 'Developed India' by 2047**.
  - ⊕ As per National Family Health Survey study, advancing gender equality could potentially lead to 30% increase in India's GDP.

➤ **Entrepreneurship Development:** Promotion of entrepreneurship among women including Tribals, Scheduled castes etc.

### Challenges associated with WLD

- **Climate change:** Affects WLD by compromising work participation, health, food security, family etc.
- **Gender digital divide:** Only 15% of women in India have access to internet (Mobile Gender Gap 2021 Report).
- **Education:** Average female literacy rate throughout world is 79.9%, while India lags behind at 62.3%
- **Others:** Low Female Labour Force Participation Rate, mental health, reproductive health, domestic violence etc.

### Initiatives taken for Women-led Development

- **G20 Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER) Summit, Gandhinagar, Gujarat:** To accelerate women's leadership and **empowerment** in private sector.
- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023:** To reserve one-third of total number of seats for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and Delhi Assembly.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission:** Providing clean tap water supply, with women at core of planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:** Provides clean cooking fuel resulting in improving environment and women health.

## Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh (M.P) becomes India's 58<sup>th</sup> Tiger Reserve (TR)

It becomes **ninth TR** from M.P to get the recognition. Other TRs from M.P includes **Ratapani**, Veerangana Durgavati, Sanjay Dhubri, Satpura, Panna, Bandhavgarh, Pench etc.

### About Madhav National Park

- **Location:** Shivpuri district in **Chambal region** and on northern fringe of **Central Highlands of India** forming a part of **Upper Vindhyan Hills**.
  - ⊕ It was **notified as a National Park in 1958**.
- **Lakes:** **Sakhya Sagar** and **Madhav Sagar** in southern part of park.
- **Fauna:** Nilgai, Chinkara, Chowsinga, Chital, Barking Deer, Marsh Crocodile, Leopard, Jackal, Python etc.
- **Flora:** Northern **Tropical dry deciduous mixed forest** and **dry thorn forest**. **Kardhai** is **dominant tree** species.

### Process of declaring TRs in India

- TRs are notified by **State Governments** as per provisions of **Section 38V of Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972** on advice of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- **Following steps are involved in notification:**
  - ⊕ Proposal is **obtained from State**.
  - ⊕ In-principle approval is communicated from **NTCA**, soliciting detailed proposals under **section 38V of WPA, 1972**.
  - ⊕ **NTCA** recommends proposal to State after due diligence.
  - ⊕ **State Government** notifies area as a TR.

### Tiger (Panthera tigris)

- **Habitat:** Tropical forests, evergreen forests, woodlands, mangrove swamps, grasslands, savannah.
- **Characteristics:** Largest of all Asian big cats, tigers **rely primarily on sight and sound rather than smell** for hunting.
  - ⊕ **Live solitary**, apart from associations between mother and offspring.
  - ⊕ **Nocturnal and ambush predators**.
  - ⊕ **Good swimmers** and have been known to drown their prey.
- **Conservation status:** Endangered (IUCN); Appendix I (CITES); Schedule 1 (WPA, 1972).

## India's and Global Efforts to Protect Tigers



### Project Tiger

Centrally Sponsored Scheme of MoEFCC to provide assistance to tiger States



### Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA/TS) accreditation of TRs

23 TRs in India have received CAITS accreditation



### International Big Cat Alliance

Launched by India to secure future of big cats and their landscapes



### Global Tiger Recovery Program

Evolved in 2010, under aegis of Global Tiger Initiative, launched by World Bank to enhance tiger habitats



### Tigers Alive Initiative

WWF's effort to double number of tigers in wild

## Also In News



### Giant Goliath Beetle

New research has found that the **West African cocoa industry and the international trade in dried insects** have wiped out one species of a Goliath beetle species.

### About Goliath beetles

- **Features :**
  - ⊕ Among the **world's largest insects** (up to 110mm long).
  - ⊕ **Five species** exist; **males have Y-shaped horns**, females do not.
  - ⊕ They **can fly and are nocturnal** (primarily active during the night).
  - ⊕ **Adults** feed on tree sap in mature rainforests.
- **Habitat:** primarily found in the tropical rainforests of Africa,
- **Significance:** They are **decomposers** and scavenge meat and plant debris, recycling nutrients. Their abundance indicates good forest **health**.



### e-Toycathon 2025

For the first time, "e-Toycathon 2025" was organized by C-DAC under MeitY's research initiatives to boost electronic toy sector.

### About e-Toycathon 2025

- Announced under MeitY-funded project "Development of Electronics and IT-based Control and Automation Solutions for Consumer Electronic - Toys Industry".

### About India's Toys Industry

- **Status:** Expected to reach **US\$ 3 billion by 2028**.
- **Initiatives taken:**

- ⊕ **DPIIT issued toys Quality Control Order, 2020** under Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016.
- ⊕ **National Action Plan for Toys** to promote trade; design and quality; and indigenous toys.
- ⊕ **Directorate General of Foreign Trade** mandated **sample testing to curb import** of sub-standards toys.







**Hantavirus**

As per U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hantavirus severity has drawn attention.

**About Hantavirus**

- Hantaviruses are a **family of viruses carried by certain rodents**, such as deer mice, white-footed mice, rice rats, and cotton rats.
- **Impact:** Causes potentially fatal illnesses, including **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome** (severe respiratory illness) and **Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome** (condition characterised by internal bleeding and kidney failure).
- **People at risk:** who live or work in areas where rodent populations are more prominent including farmers, construction workers.
- **Treatment:** No specific antiviral treatment or cure.



**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

IPCC has begun work on its seventh cycle of assessment reports.

- IPCC assessments provide **scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate related policies.**

**IPCC**

- **About:** International body for **assessing science related to climate change.**
- **Genesis:** Set up in 1988 by World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Members:** 195 countries including India.
- **Objective:** To provide policymakers with regular assessments of scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.



**Insider Trading**

EBI has issued warning to Nestle India for **violating insider trading regulations.**

**About Insider Trading**

- **Definition:** Insider refers to any person (usually senior management and officials) in a company who has **access to unpublished price-sensitive information (UPSI).**
- **Regulation:** Under **Prohibition of Insider Trading (PIT) Regulations 2015** (as amended in 2024) enables insiders to trade in securities in a **compliant manner.** Under it:
  - ⊕ insiders have a **narrow window to carry out trades to avoid insider trading.**
  - ⊕ Insiders have to give a **'trading plan'** specifying the **share price, amount, and transaction date in advance.**



**Sahitya Akademi Award**

Recently, **Sahitya Akademi honoured 23 authors** with its prestigious '**Sahitya Akademi Award**' for 2024.

**About Sahitya Akademi**

- **Genesis:** Formally inaugurated in 1954 and Registered under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
- **Ministry:** An autonomous body under **Ministry of Culture.**
- **Role:** Undertakes **literary activities in 24 languages** (22 scheduled languages, **English and Rajasthani**).
- **Its major awards:** Sahitya Akademi Award, **Bhasha Samman**
  - ⊕ Sahitya Akademi Award is given annually, to the **Indian national** and the award is given to the author only once in a **lifetime in one language in one particular category.**



**Kinship and Community-Based Care Programme (KCBCP)**

UNICEF, in collaboration with district authorities and NGOs, is working to address family-based childcare through its KCBCP in places like drought-prone Jalna in Maharashtra.

**About KCBCP**

- It is **part of broader shift in India's child protection system** that move away from institutional care toward family-based solutions such as strengthening family to prevent separation of children, foster care, and kinship care.
- It aims to keep children in their villages under the **care of relatives or community members** for better brain development.
- **Other initiatives like Mission Vatsalya** also emphasize non-institutional support, enhancing family roles and ensuring no child is left behind.



**Exercise Khanjar**

KHANJAR-XII edition of 2025 is set to take place in Kyrgyzstan.

**About Khanjar:**

- It is an **India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise.**
- It is **held annually and conducted alternatively** in both the countries.
- **Aim:** To exchange experiences and best practices in **Counter Terrorism and Special Forces Operations.**



**Personality in News**



**Ammu Swaminathan (1894 - 1978)**

Smt. Ammu Swaminathan is among **15 women** featured in 'The Life and Contributions of the Women Members of the Constituent Assembly'.

- It is a tribute by the **Ministry of Law & Justice to their role in drafting India's Constitution.**

**Ammu Swaminathan (1894 - 1978)**

- **Early Life:** Born in Palakkad, Kerala, and fondly called Ammukutty.
- **Political Career:**
  - ⊕ Arrested in **Quit India Movement (1942).**
  - ⊕ Elected to the **Constituent Assembly from Madras in 1946.**
- **Key Contributions:**
  - ⊕ **Defied Caste Norms:** she called herself Shudrachi to challenge upper-caste pride.
  - ⊕ **Women's Rights:** She was believed to have Co-founded the **Women's India Association (WIA)** in 1917 with Annie Besant to fight for economic rights and voting for women.



**Values:** Equality, Justice, Courage, Empathy, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI