

Cabinet Approves Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

The **ELI Scheme** was announced in the **Union Budget 2024-25** as part of PM's package of five schemes to facilitate employment, skilling and other opportunities.

About Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

- » **Ministry:** Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- » **Total Outlay:** ₹99,446 Crore over 2 years (2025 – 2027).
- » **Target:** Support the generation of 3.5 crore jobs, including 1.92 crore first-time employees.
- » **Objective:** Promote job creation, enhance employability, and expand social security across sectors, specifically manufacturing.

Scheme Structure: The ELI Scheme comprises two parts:



Part A: Incentive to First Time Employees

- » **Eligibility:** First-time employees registered with EPFO & and earning up to ₹1 lakh/month.
- » **Incentive Amount:** One-month EPF wage (up to ₹15,000), disbursed in two instalments:
 - **1st:** After 6 months of continuous employment.
 - **2nd:** After 12 months, and successful completion of a financial literacy programme.
- » **Savings Provision:** Part of the incentive to be deposited in a **savings instrument** with a lock-in period to promote saving habits.
- » **Beneficiaries:** **1.92 crore** first time employees
- » **Payment Mechanism:** Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) using **Aadhar Bridge Payment System (ABPS)**.



Part B: Incentives for Employers

- » **Focus:** Encourage additional job creation in all sectors, especially in the manufacturing sector.
- » **Eligibility:** EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation)-registered establishments hiring:
 - **At least 2 additional employees** (workforce < 50).
 - **At least 5 additional employees** (workforce ≥ 50).
- » **Incentive to Employers:** Up to ₹3,000/month for 2 years; extended to 4 years for manufacturing sector.
- » **Minimum Employment Period:** Six months of sustained employment per new hire.
- » **Salary Cap:** Employees earning up to ₹1 lakh/month.
- » **Job Creation:** ~2.6 crore additional jobs.
- » **Payment:** Directly into their PAN-linked Accounts.

National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025 approved by the Union Cabinet

Superseding the existing **NSP, 2001** the current policy aims at **Harnessing the Power of Sports for Nation's Holistic Development**.

- » India's first **National Sports Policy (NSP)** was unveiled in **1984**.

Pillars of the NSP or the Khelo Bharat Niti, 2025

- » **Excellence on Global Stage:** Strengthen sports programs from **grassroots to elite levels**, enhance capacity and governance of **National Sports Federation**, etc.
- » **Economic Development:** Promoting the **economic potential** of sports through **sports tourism**, promoting **Start up and entrepreneurship**, etc.
- » **Social Development:** Ensuring **social inclusion** through the participation of women, weaker sections, etc.
- » **Sports as a People's Movement:** Driving **mass participation**, promoting a **culture of fitness**, universal access to sports facilities, etc.
- » **Integration with National Education Policy 2020:** By **integrating sports into school curricula**, specialised training for teachers, etc.

Strategic Framework

- » **Governance:** Through a **robust regulatory** framework including legal framework.
- » **Private Sector Funding & support:** Innovative financing mechanisms like **Public Private Partnerships** and **Corporate Social Responsibility**.
- » **Others:** Leverage **emerging technologies**, including AI and data analytics, **National Level Monitoring Framework**, etc.

Significance of NSP 2025



Assert **India's Soft Power** and regional aspirations.



Establish India as a **global sporting powerhouse**, and a strong contender for **2036 Olympic Games**.



Reap **Countries' favourable demographic dividend**, aligning with the principles of **Viksit Bharat**.

India and Sports

- » **Constitution:** Sports is a '**State**' subject under **Seventh Schedule**.
- » **Ministry:** Dedicated **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** with two separate Departments, i.e., **Youth Affairs** and **Sports**.
- » **Key Bodies:** **Sports Authority of India** set up in 1984 under the **Societies Act, 1860** under **Department of Sports**.
- » **Government Schemes:** TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme 2014), Khelo India (2017), Fit India Movement (2019), etc.

Union Cabinet approves the Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme

With an outlay of ₹1 lakh crore, the scheme encourages private sector participation in research and innovation, particularly in sunrise and other relevant sectors, including economic security, strategic purpose, self-reliance, etc.

Key Highlights of the Scheme

- **Aim:** Provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenors at low/nil interest rates to spur private investments.
- **Key Objectives**
 - ⊕ Finance transformative projects at higher levels of Technology Readiness Levels (TRL).
 - ⊕ Support acquisition of critical and strategic technologies.
 - ⊕ Facilitate setting up of a Deep-Tech Fund of Funds.
- **Two-Tiered Funding Mechanism**
 - ⊕ **Special Purpose Fund (SPF):** Established within the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), acting as the custodian of funds.
 - ◆ Established under the ANRF 2023 Act, ANRF aims to seed, grow and promote research and development (R&D).
 - ◆ **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)** has been subsumed into ANRF.
 - ⊕ **Second Level Fund Managers:** Funds from SPF are allocated here, in the form of long-term concessional loans or equity funding (for startups).
- **Strategic Direction:** Provided by the Governing Board of the ANRF, chaired by the Prime Minister.
- **Nodal Department:** Department of Science and Technology.

Impact of the Scheme

 Address Funding Constraints Addressing financial barriers in private sector research	 Technological Adoption Promoting adoption and global competitiveness	 Growth Capital Providing capital for critical and emerging technologies
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About Sunrise Sectors

- Term frequently used for a sector that is developing and poised for a rapid growth.
- **Examples:** Electronics & Semiconductors, Electric Vehicles (EV), Renewable Energy, Agro & Food Processing, Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, etc.

One Year of New Criminal Laws which Came into Force on 1st July 2024

The three new criminal laws introduced with aim to make the justice system not only affordable, accessible, and approachable, but also simple, consistent, and transparent.

New Laws Replacing Colonial-Era Framework

- ⊕ **Indian Penal Code (IPC, 1860):** Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, 2023 (BNS).
- ⊕ **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC, 1973):** Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS).
- ⊕ **Indian Evidence Act (1872):** Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (BSA).

Key Reforms in the Past One Year

Technology-Driven Justice System

- ⊕ **e-Sakshya (e-evidence) and e-Summons** notified in 11 States/UTs.
- ⊕ **Nyaya Shruti** (enables courts to hear witness testimonies via video conferencing) implemented in 6 States/UTs.
- ⊕ **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) network:** Covers over 14,000 police stations, 22,000 courts are online.

Capacity Building and Training: 23 States/UTs have completed 100% capacity-building.

Community service introduced as a penalty in 12 States/UTs.

Challenges in Implementing the New Criminal Laws (BNS, BNSS, BSA)

- **lack of adequate infrastructural support:** E.g., Several police stations, courts and prisons lack basic access to the internet and tools enabling digital access.
- **BNSS sets justice timelines but lacks enforcement:** E.g., 22% vacancies in police and district judiciary make deadlines hard to meet.
- **BNSS and BSA emphasize forensics, but implementation suffers:** Due to 47% administrative and 49% scientific vacancies.

Key Changes in New Laws

Major Provisions Overview



FIR Registration at Any Police Station

A person can file an FIR at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction. This provision enhances accessibility and ensures victims can report crimes without jurisdictional barriers.



Death Sentence for Certain Offences Against Women and Children

Specific crimes now attract the death penalty, reflecting the severity with which the law views offences against vulnerable populations, particularly women and children.



New Offences

Addressing terrorist acts, endangering sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India. These provisions strengthen national security and address emerging threats to the nation.



Mob Lynching and Snatching

Made specific offences under the new legal framework. This addresses growing concerns about mob violence and ensures such acts are treated with appropriate legal severity.

Key Supreme Court Judgments on BNS, BNSS

- **Case: Re-Inhuman Conditions In 1382 Prisons v. Director General of Prisons:** Retrospective application of BNSS Section 479 (Undertrial Detention).
- **Case: Badshah Majid Malik v. Directorate of Enforcement:** Granted bail under PMLA as the accused had served one-third of the maximum sentence under BNSS.
- **Case: Re-Inhuman Conditions In 1382 Prisons:** Jail authorities must identify eligible women prisoners for release under Section 479 BNSS.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) marks 50 years

Originally conceived in **1963** at the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** meeting, it entered into force in **1975**, as a first of its kind global agreement.

About CITES

- **Aim:** Voluntary international agreement between governments ensuring international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
 - ⊕ It subjects international trade to **certain controls** covering **all import, export, re-export**, through a **licensing system**.
- **Secretariat:** Administered by the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** at **Geneva, Switzerland**.
 - ⊕ IUCN provides **scientific and technical services** to the **CITES Secretariat**.
- **Parties:** **185 parties** (States or regional economic organizations). **India** ratified in **1976**.
 - ⊕ Although CITES is **legally binding** on the Parties, it does not take the place of national laws, rather each party implements it through its own **domestic legislation**.
- **Conference of Parties (CoP):** Highest Decision making body. **CoP3** was held in **New Delhi** in **1981**.
- **CITES Trade Database:** Managed by the **UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)** on behalf of the **CITES Secretariat**.

Key Initiatives

- **Protects over 40,900 species** (6,610 species of animals and 34,310 species of plants).
- **MIKE Programme**, established by Resolution adopted at the **10th CoP** (1997, Harare).
 - ⊕ **Site-based system** to monitor trends in levels of **illegal killing of elephants** across the range of African and Asian elephants.
- **Others:** International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC), 2010; CITES Tree Species Project, 2024, etc.

CITES Appendices

(Lists Species in 3 Appendices based on their degree of protection)



Appendix I:
Species
threatened with extinction, trade permitted in only exceptional cases.



Appendix II:
Species **not necessarily** threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled.



Appendix III:
Species **protected** in at **least one country**, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Also in News



Terbium

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Scientists have developed a glowing paper sensor to help detect liver cancer.

- It uses the green glow of **Terbium** to sense the presence of an enzyme called **β-glucuronidase**, a critical biomarker for liver cancer.

About Terbium

- It is a **rare-earth metal** of the **lanthanide** series of the **periodic table**.
- **Appearance:** Soft, silvery metal.
- **Occurrence:** Can be recovered from minerals, **monazite** and **bastnaesite**.
 - ⊕ Also obtained from **euxenite**, a complex oxide containing **1%** or more of terbium.
- **Applications:** Solid-state devices, low-energy lightbulbs and mercury lamps, safety of medical x-rays, laser devices etc.



Project 17A

INS Udaygiri, the second ship of Project 17A's stealth frigates, was delivered to the Indian Navy.

Project 17A

- The Project is a follow-on of the Shivalik class (Project 17) frigates active in service.
 - ⊕ **Frigate is a multi-role vessel** utilized for fleet surface ship protection against surface combatants or incoming aerial threats.
- **P-17A ships** have enhanced **stealth features** and fitted with **'State of the Art' weapons and sensors, a significant upgrade from the P17 class**.
- These multi-mission frigates are **capable of operating in a 'Blue Water' environment** dealing with both **conventional and non-conventional threats** in the area of India's Maritime Interests.



Mud Volcano

Recently, a **mud volcano** erupted in Taiwan.

About Mud Volcano

- **Formation:** Occurs in **subduction zones**, when one of earth's tectonic plate moves under another, causing it to **sink due to gravity** at their **convergent points**.
 - ⊕ Can be **man-made** (triggered by mining or drilling for gas) or **naturally** occurring.
- **Appearance:** Hill or mound shaped.
- **Eruption:** Caused by the **Earth's tectonic forces** or by the **squeezing of sediments at the deltas of large rivers**.
 - ⊕ Usually **release gases**, especially methane.
- **Differs from traditional igneous volcanoes:** As no lava or ashes are produced.



Operation Melon

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted a massive international drug racket operating through the darknet, in the operation code-named 'Operation MELON.'

About Operation Melon

- **Recovery:** LSD blots, Ketamine, and cryptocurrency.
 - ⊕ LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and Ketamine are drugs which are extremely potent hallucinogens.
 - ◆ **Hallucinogens** are psychedelic drugs that can potentially change the way people see, hear, taste, smell or feel, and also affect mood and thought.
 - ⊕ Ketamine is **not an opioid (narcotic)**; it is an NMDA receptor antagonist, which means it blocks the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) neurotransmitter in the brain.
- Officials also discovered **TAILS OS**, the operating system designed for accessing darknet markets.



Captive Non-Public Networks (CNPNS)

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued guidelines for the establishment of **Captive Non-Public Networks (CNPNS)** and launched a module on **Saral Sanchar portal** for identification of CNPNs bands.

About CNPNs

- **Meaning:** Terrestrial wireless telecommunication network established for **captive use** within a **specified geographical area**.
 - ⊕ Unlike a **public mobile network** operated by **telecom providers** and **accessible by anyone**, CNPNs are operated by a **private entity** and are **not accessible** by the general public, hence not used for **providing commercial telecommunication services**.
- **Significance:** Fulfils customized tailormade requirements of enterprises with **complete control over data, security and networks**.



Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting

Quad foreign ministers' meeting **concluded in Washington (USA)**.

Key Highlights

- Reaffirmed strong support for a **free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, rejecting any coercive or forceful changes to the regional status quo**.
- **Launched a renewed agenda focusing on:** Maritime/transnational security, Economic prosperity and secure supply chains, Emerging technologies, Humanitarian and emergency response.
- **Condemned all terrorism**, including the April 2025 Pahalgam attack.
- **Support for Regional Frameworks:** Continued support for ASEAN centrality and unity; Pacific Islands Forum and other Pacific-led efforts; Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

What is Quad?

- Known as the '**Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**' (QSD), the Quad is an **informal strategic forum**.
- **It comprises four nations:** United States of America (USA), India, Australia and Japan.



Certificate of Deposits (CD)

Public sector banks stepped up issuance of CDs **from 6% (2022) to 69 % (2024)**.

About CD

- **Meaning:** Negotiable **money market instrument** issued in **dematerialised form** against funds deposited at a bank/eligible financial institution for a **specified time period**.
 - ⊕ Issued at a **discount on face value**.
- **Issued by:** **Scheduled commercial banks** (excluding Regional Rural Banks and Local Area Banks); select All-India Financial Institutions (FIs) permitted by RBI to raise **short-term resources**.
- **Issued to:** Individuals, corporations, companies (including banks) trusts, funds, associations, Non-Resident Indians (only on non-repatriable basis), etc.
- **Guidelines for issuance:** Presently governed by **Reserve Bank of India**.



Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)

SECI executed over 60 Gigawatts of Power Sale Agreements (PSAs) of renewable energy capacity.

About SECI

- **Genesis:** Established in 2011 for the implementation of the National Solar Mission.
- It is a **Navratna** Central Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- **Designated Renewable Energy Implementing Agency (REIA)** for MNRE schemes.
- It functions as a **Category-I (highest) power trading licensee** under the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC).
- **Implementation of Special Programmes and Regional Models:** Greening of Islands (e.g., Lakshadweep, A&N Islands), High-altitude grid-linked capacity (e.g., 5 GW proposed in Ladakh).

Places in News



Thailand (Capital: Bangkok)

- Thailand's Constitutional Court has **suspended the Prime Minister in an ethics violation case**.

Political Features

- ⊕ **Land border:** Myanmar(north), Laos (north and east), Cambodia (east) and Malaysia (south).
- ⊕ **Maritime borders:** The Gulf of Thailand (Vietnam) and Andaman Sea (Indonesia and India).

Geographical Features

- **Central Thailand** is often termed "**the rice bowl of Asia**."
- India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) **highway connects Moreh (Manipur) in India to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar**.
- **Mekong River:**
 - ⊕ Forms part of the international border between **Laos and Thailand**.
 - ⊕ **The Infamous "Narcotic drugs production area called as 'Golden Triangle' (India renamed it as the 'Death Triangle'):** Confluence of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar along the Mekong River.
- Thailand is the **world's largest producer of natural rubber**.
- **The Kra Isthmus (Southern Thailand):** Potentially an alternative to the Malacca strait.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR