



December - 20

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The first Indian organization C-DOT received the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) SA Corporate Award 2025 for contributions to wireless broadband, rural 5G, and telecom education.
- ❖ Exercise Ekatha 2025 is the 8th annual bilateral maritime exercise held in the Maldives between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force.
- ❖ The 2025 International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) Prize was awarded to Titas Chanda and Sthitadhi Roy for their contributions to the theory of quantum many-body systems and quantum information science.
- ❖ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) launched India's first wildlife-safe road on NH-45 in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Retired IAS officer Raj Kumar Goyal has been appointed as the Chief Information Commissioner of the Central Information Commission (CIC).
- ❖ The University of Patanjali has been designated as India's first Yoga and Ayurveda-based Cluster Centre under the Gyan Bharatam Mission of the Ministry of Culture.
- ❖ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first world leader to receive The Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia, the country's highest civilian award.
- ❖ Indian Railways has completed over 99 percent electrification of its broad-gauge network across 25 states and union territories.
 - Between 2019 and 2025, more than 33,000 route kilometres were electrified.
- ❖ Bannerghatta Biological Park of Bengaluru has imported eight black-capped capuchin monkeys from South Africa under an animal exchange program.
 - The monkeys, scientifically known as *Sapajus apella*, will enhance genetic diversity, breeding programmes, and behavioural enrichment at the park.
- ❖ International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers 2025 is observed on 17 December 2025 to raise awareness about violence and human rights violations faced by sex workers.

NATIONAL NEWS

Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025

- ❖ The Bill replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), which had been in force for about twenty years.

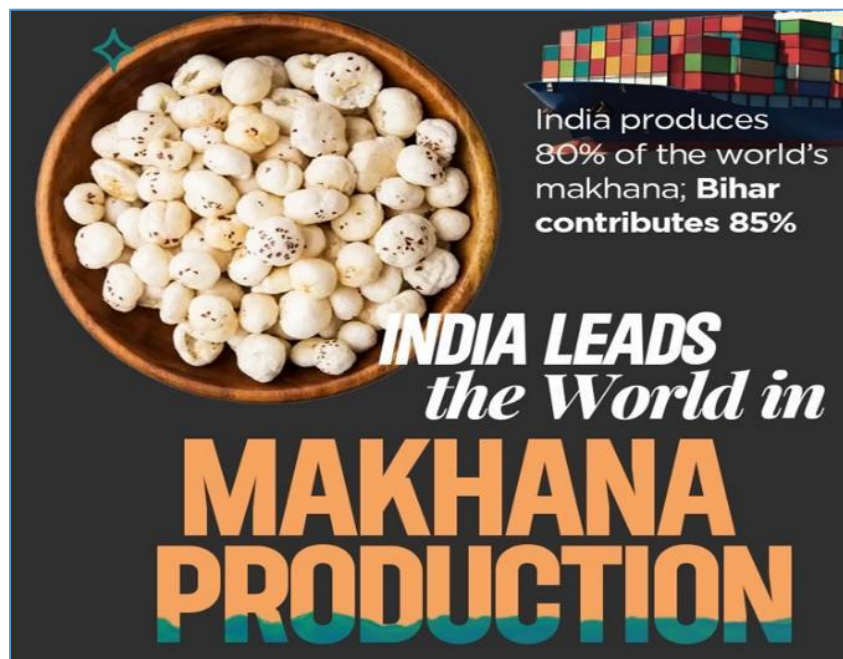
- ❖ It was introduced by the Union Agriculture Minister to create a modern law aligned with the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.
- ❖ Guaranteed wage employment is increased from 100 days to 125 days per rural household for adults doing unskilled manual work.
- ❖ Under MGNREGA, the law guaranteed not less than 100 days, and extra days were allowed only during droughts or for some tribal areas.
- ❖ The Bill introduces a 60-day agricultural pause during peak sowing and harvesting seasons.



- ❖ The purpose of the agricultural pause is to ensure availability of labour for farming activities.
- ❖ Under MGNREGA, the Central Government paid 100 percent of unskilled wages and 75 percent of material costs, resulting in a 90:10 Centre - State funding pattern.
- ❖ The new scheme works as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with 90:10 funding for North-Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 for other States, and 100 percent Central funding for Union Territories without legislatures.
- ❖ MGNREGA was demand-based, universal, and allowed the budget to increase based on need.
- ❖ The new Bill allows the Union Government to notify specific rural areas in a State for implementation.
- ❖ The Bill mandates the creation of the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack.

- ❖ All works under the scheme will be brought together under this single national infrastructure framework.
- ❖ The framework integrates Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans with the Pradhan Mantri (PM) Gati Shakti National Master Plan.
- ❖ Works are grouped into four areas: water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood-related infrastructure, and disaster mitigation.
- ❖ The Bill makes biometric attendance compulsory for workers.
- ❖ It also mandates Artificial Intelligence (AI) based fraud detection, Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking of worksites, and weekly public disclosure of scheme data by law.

Makhana production



- ❖ India produces nearly 80% of the world's makhana, also known as fox nut or gorgon nut.
- ❖ Makhana is the edible seed of *Euryale ferox*, an aquatic plant grown in ponds and wetlands.
- ❖ Bihar contributes around 85% of India's output, with Darbhanga as a key cultivation and processing hub.
- ❖ It is a labour-intensive aquatic crop, providing employment to farmers and fisher communities.
- ❖ Makhana is nutritious, rich in protein, fibre, antioxidants, and is low glycaemic and heart-friendly.

- ❖ The government has set up the National Makhana Board and approved a ₹476.03 crore scheme (2025–31) to boost value addition, exports, and global market access.

National Digital Livestock Mission

- ❖ The National Digital Livestock Mission (NDLM) was launched by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India.
- ❖ The mission aims to create a nationwide digital database of livestock and related services across the country.
- ❖ It provides a Pashu Aadhaar, a 12-digit unique identification number, to livestock animals across all States.
- ❖ The mission also improves breed quality, strengthen disease monitoring, and ensure traceability of livestock products.
- ❖ As of December 2025, 35.96 crore Pashu Aadhaar numbers and 9.5 crore livestock owners are registered under NDLM.
- ❖ NDLM works through the Bharat Pashudhan system and the 1962 Livestock Owner App to deliver services and information to farmers.



Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Bill 2025

- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill, 2025.

- ❖ The Bill amends the Insurance Act, 1938, Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.
- ❖ It aims to promote the growth of the insurance sector and improve protection for policyholders.
- ❖ The Bill seeks to improve ease of doing business, transparency, and regulatory oversight in insurance.
- ❖ The government has infused over ₹17,000 crore into public sector insurance companies and increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limits.
- ❖ The Bill supports wider insurance coverage through schemes like Pradhan Mantri (PM) Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and PM Suraksha Bima Yojana.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Tianjin Declaration (2025)

- ❖ The Declaration was adopted at the 2025 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China.
- ❖ It sets common positions of SCO members on security, development, technology, and institutional reforms.

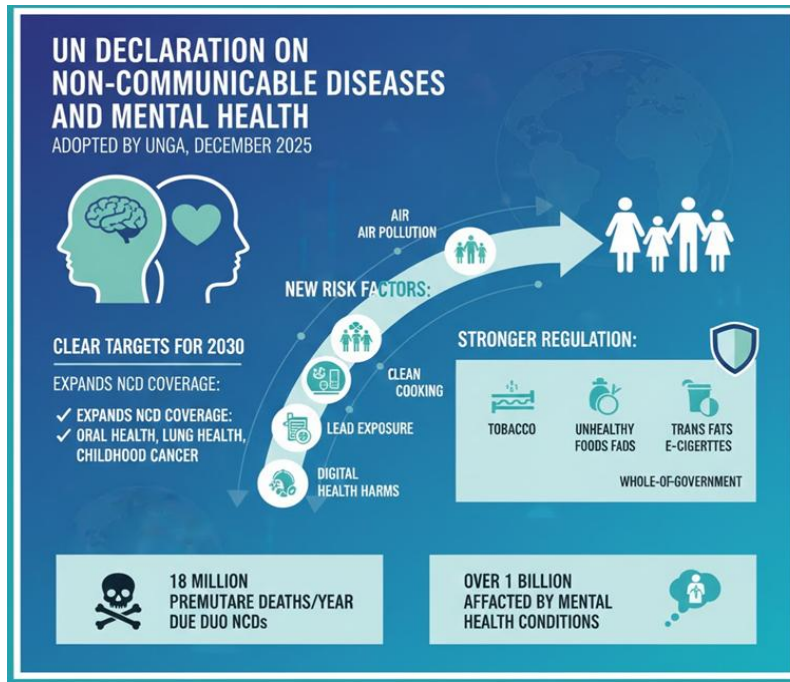
- ❖ The declaration supports equal rights of all countries to develop and use Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- ❖ The SCO members have agreed to ensure safety, transparency, fairness, and accountability in AI systems.
- ❖ It supports the SCO AI Cooperation Roadmap and a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proposal for a Regional AI Centre in Dushanbe.



UN Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly adopted the first global declaration jointly covering Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health.
- ❖ The declaration sets clear targets for 2030 and expands NCD coverage to areas like oral health, lung health, and childhood cancer.
- ❖ It includes new risk factors such as air pollution, clean cooking, lead exposure, hazardous chemicals, and digital health harms.
- ❖ It calls for stronger regulation of tobacco, unhealthy foods, trans fats, and e-cigarettes, with whole-of-government participation.

- ❖ The declaration highlights that NCDs cause about 18 million premature deaths annually and mental health conditions affect over one billion people worldwide.



ECONOMY NEWS

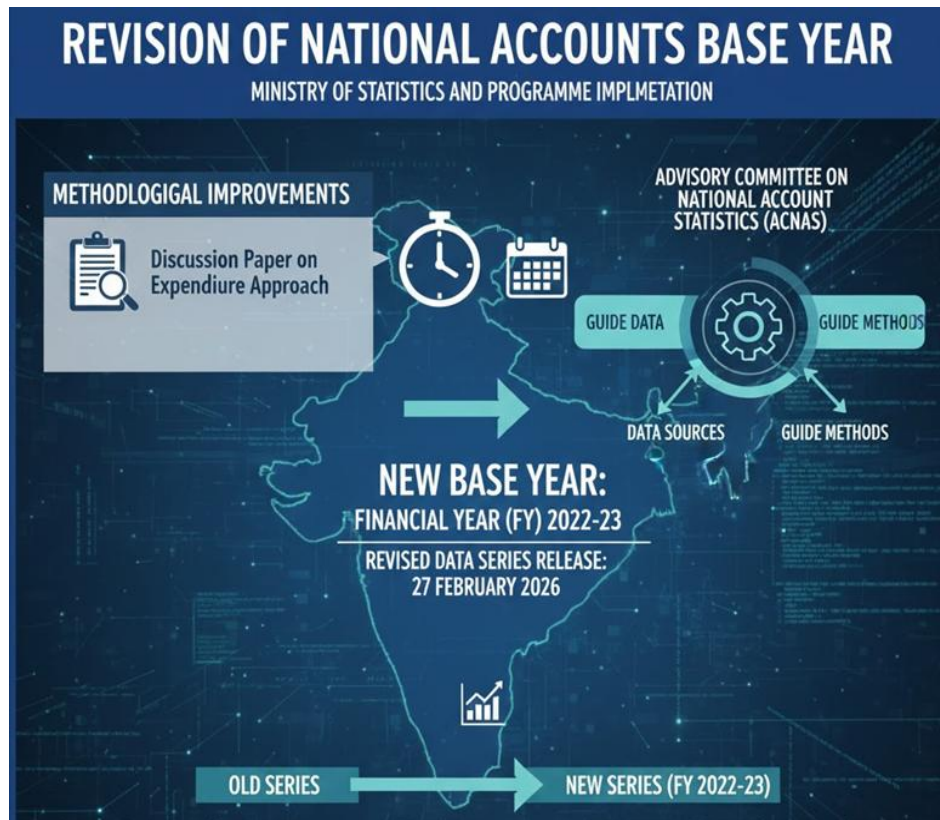
Sahakar Sarathi



- ❖ The Government of India launched Sahakar Sarathi, a Shared Service Entity, to modernise Rural Cooperative Banks (RCBs) with technology-driven services.

- ❖ Sahakar Sarathi was registered on 21 July 2025 after approval from the RBI.
- ❖ It has an authorised capital of ₹1,000 crore with equal shareholding among NABARD, National Cooperative Development Corporation, and participating RCBs.
- ❖ The entity provides Core Banking Solutions (CBS), digital payment platforms like Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS), cybersecurity support, and IT governance.
- ❖ Sahakar Sarathi aims to improve customer access, operational efficiency, and adoption of modern banking technology in Rural Cooperative Banks.

Revision of National Accounts Base Year



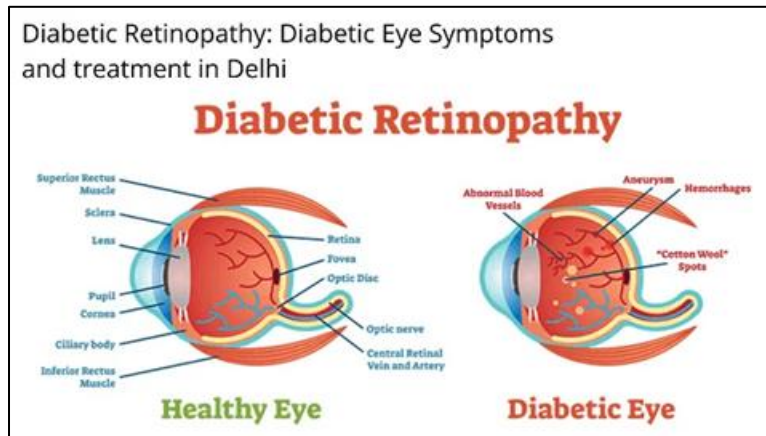
- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released a discussion paper on “Methodological improvements in the compilation of national accounts aggregates using the expenditure approach”.
- ❖ A new series of National Accounts Statistics will use Financial Year (FY) 2022–23 as the base year.
- ❖ The revised data series is scheduled to be released on 27 February 2026.

- ❖ An Advisory Committee on National Account Statistics (ACNAS) has been formed to guide improvements in data sources and methods.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

AI-Based Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme

- ❖ India started its first Artificial Intelligence (AI) community screening programme for Diabetic Retinopathy in New Delhi.
- ❖ The programme uses MadhuNetrAI, a web-based AI system made by RPC, AIIMS, to check, classify, and sort retinal images automatically.
- ❖ The pilot is being run at seven locations: Pune, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Dharamshala, Gaya, Jorhat, and Kochi, covering cities, villages, hills, coastal, and remote areas.
- ❖ Patients with Diabetic Retinopathy are sent for proper diabetes care, and serious cases are referred to eye specialists at district hospitals.
- ❖ The programme is planned to grow and serve as a model to use AI in managing diseases across India.



RESPOND Basket 2025

- ❖ It was released by the ISRO under the Department of Space (DoS).
- ❖ It is a list of mission-based research problems linked to ISRO's present and future space missions.
- ❖ The programme invites research proposals from universities and recognised academic and research institutions in India.
- ❖ Its aim is to connect academic research with national space technology needs.

- ❖ Proposals must be submitted online through the I-GRASP (ISRO–Grants for Research and Sponsored Projects) portal.

ISRO Launches Respond Basket 2024

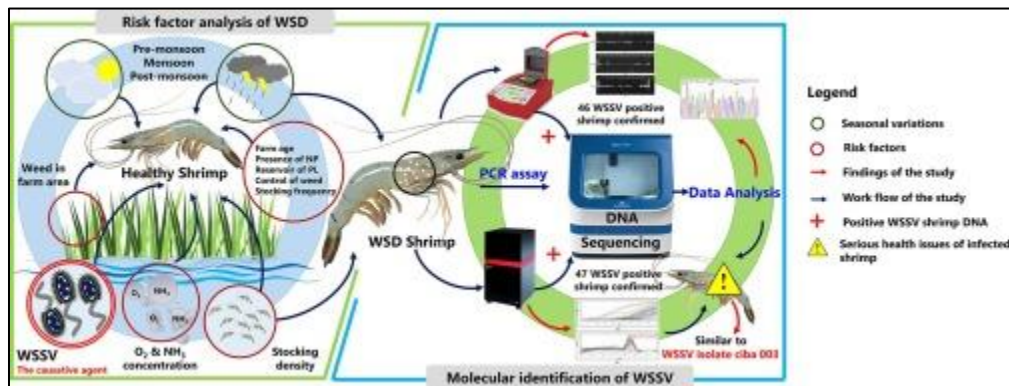
Key Highlights

- ➔ Focussed & Urgent R&D Problems of ISRO Soliciting Project Proposals from Academia
- ➔ Submission of Proposals through online mode in I-GRASP Portal (ISRO Grant in AID for Space Research Programme)
- ➔ R&D Problems Identified by ISRO/DOS Centres

STATES' NEWS

White Spot Disease - Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ White Spot Disease has been detected in shrimp farms in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ It is a highly deadly viral infection in farmed shrimp.
- ❖ It is caused by a virus called White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV).
- ❖ This virus can also affect other crustaceans like crabs and lobsters.
- ❖ It was 1st reported in Taiwan (1992), and later spread across Asia, Latin America, and other shrimp-producing regions.



Battlefield Tourism in Sikkim

- ❖ Cho-La and Dok-La in Sikkim were opened for tourists under the Bharat Rann bhoomi Darshan initiative.
- ❖ Dok-La (Doklam) is located at 13,780 feet in the Chumbi Valley near the India–China–Bhutan tri-junction and saw a military stand-off in 2017.



- ❖ Cho-La is located at 17,780 feet and was a conflict site between India and China in 1967.
- ❖ The sites are developed under the Vibrant Village Program to promote border tourism and local livelihoods.
- ❖ Nathu-La, already a tourist spot, is another site included under the Rannbhoomi Darshan initiative in Sikkim.

**INDIA-CHINA BORDER
SITES OPENED FOR TOURISM!**

Sikkim has opened the **Cho La** and **Dok La** areas near the **India-China border** for battlefield tourism.

These high-altitude regions, known for their strategic importance and **extreme conditions**, will now **allow civilians to witness** firsthand the terrain where **Indian soldiers stand guard** in some of the toughest environments in the world.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Petra and Ellora Caves Twinning Agreement

**CONNECTING
CIVILIZATIONS**

**Twinning Agreement
between Petra and Ellora**

Opening new avenues for
heritage conservation

Boost **tourism &
academic exchanges**

- ❖ India and Jordan signed a twinning agreement between UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Petra and Ellora Caves.



- ❖ Ellora Caves are located in the Charanandri Hills of Maharashtra near the Elaganga River.
- ❖ Ellora Caves were carved between 600 and 1000 Common Era (CE) by the Rashtrakuta and Yadava dynasties.
- ❖ It includes Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain monuments with mural paintings.
- ❖ Petra is also called the Rose City because it is carved in pink sandstone cliffs.
- ❖ Petra was the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom from around the 4th century Before Common Era (BCE).
- ❖ Petra is partly built and partly carved into rock and is surrounded by mountains, narrow passages, and gorges.

