

February - 02

## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh made Aadhaar-based authentication mandatory for property registration from 1 February 2026.
- ❖ Uttarakhand has won the national award for Best State for Promotion of Aviation and Ecosystem at WINGS INDIA 2026.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Critical Mineral Status - Coking Coal



*Coking Coal Declared*  
**A CRITICAL MINERAL**  
A Major reform for India's Coal Sector

**Key outcomes:**

-  Faster approvals & smoother clearances
-  Accelerated exploration and mining
-  Greater private sector participation

**Impact:**

- Reduced import dependence
- Stronger steel supply chains
- Support to National Steel Policy

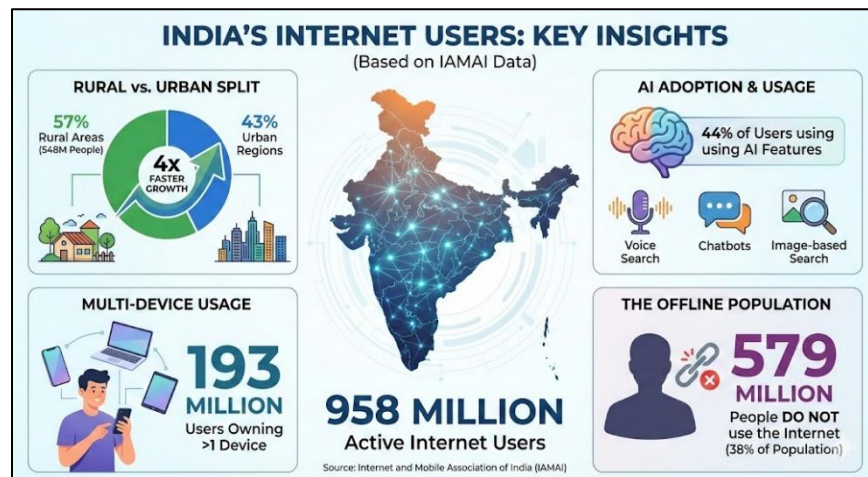
*Enabling Growth, Strengthening Nation.*

- ❖ The Government of India has notified Coking Coal as a Critical and Strategic Mineral under the MMDR Act, 1957 (Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act).
- ❖ The notification places coking coal in Part D of the First Schedule, giving it high priority for mining and development.
- ❖ This move aims to reduce India's 95% import dependence on coking coal used in steel production.

- ❖ Coking coal, also called Metallurgical Coal, is essential for making steel and cannot be replaced by thermal coal.
- ❖ The decision supports the National Steel Policy target of 300 million tonnes of steel production by 2030.
- ❖ India has large coking coal reserves mainly in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh, but it depends on imports due to quality issues.

### India's Internet Users

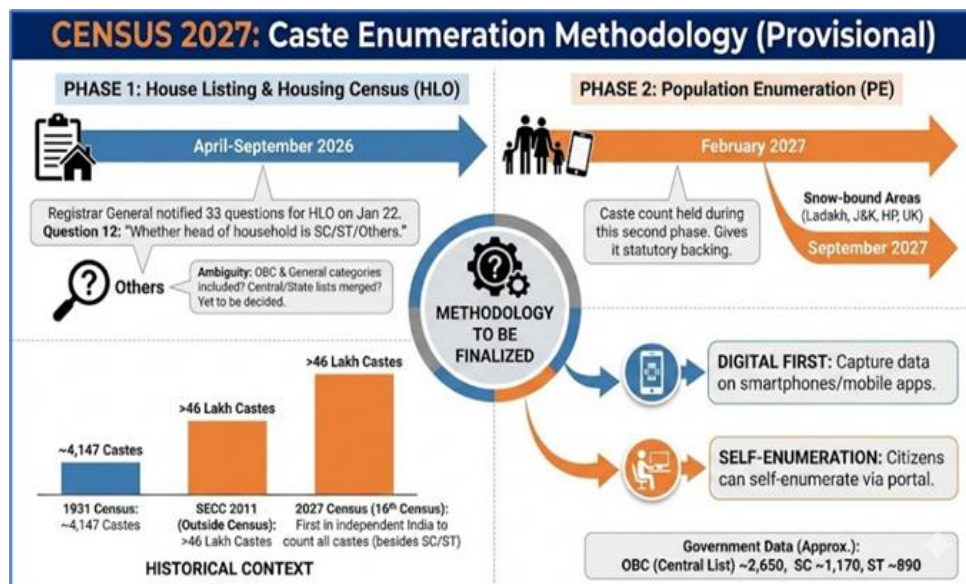
- ❖ India now has 958 million active internet users, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).
- ❖ Rural areas account for 57% of users, about 548 million people, growing almost four times faster than urban regions.
- ❖ Artificial Intelligence (AI) is widely used, with 44% of users using AI features like voice search, chatbots, and image-based search.
- ❖ Multi-device usage is rising, with 193 million users owning more than one device.
- ❖ Still, 38% of India's population (around 579 million people) do not use the internet.



### Census 2027 - Caste methodology

- ❖ The Census will be done in two phases, with the House listing and Housing Census (HLO) to be held from April to September 2026 and the PE in February 2027.
- ❖ The methodology to be followed for caste enumeration in the forthcoming Census is yet to be finalised.

- ❖ The Caste count will be held during the Population Enumeration (PE) phase, the second phase of the Census, in February 2027.
- ❖ Only in September 2027, the Population Enumeration phase kicks off in Ladakh and snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- ❖ This will be the 16<sup>th</sup> Census and the first in independent India to count all castes, other than the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- ❖ The 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) was done outside the purview of the Census.
- ❖ The caste will be enumerated this time in the second and final phase, giving it statutory backing.
- ❖ The SECC enumerated more than 46 lakh castes, while the total number of castes during the pre-Independence 1931 Census was 4,147.
- ❖ This will also be the first time that Census data is captured digitally, on smartphones and mobile apps.



- ❖ And it will be the first time when citizens will be able to self-enumerate through the portal.
- ❖ The Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India notified 33 questions for the HLO phase on January 22.
- ❖ Question number 12 in the questionnaire was: "Whether the head of the household is Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/Others.
- ❖ Question 12 does not explicitly involve Other Backward Classes (OBC) and General categories.

- ❖ The 2011 schedule or the questionnaire for the HLO phase also had the same question at serial number 15.
- ❖ The details of the SC/ST column were filled in the second phase through the Centrally approved list.
- ❖ While the OBC list can be maintained both by the State and the Centre, SC/ST names are only maintained by the Central government.
- ❖ According to the latest government data, there are about 2,650 Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the Central list, 1,170 in the Scheduled Caste category and 890 communities in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list.
- ❖ Whether the “Other” column will have a merged Central and State OBC list or a list of unreserved categories of caste is yet to be decided.

## **ECONOMY NEWS**

### **India-EU FTA**



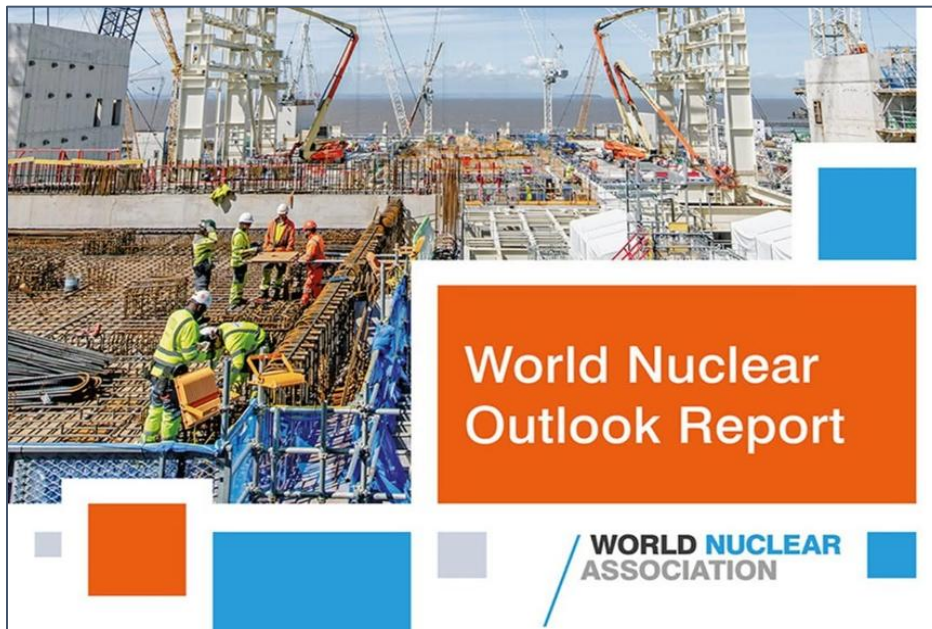
- ❖ The India-European Union free trade agreement (FTA) is widely termed as the "mother of all deals".
- ❖ India allowed European Union (EU) banks to open 15 branches in the country over a four-year period under the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA).



- ❖ This agreement provides limited market access to EU banks while ensuring domestic financial stability.
- ❖ India allows 100 % foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector and 74 % FDI in banking services.
- ❖ The agreement includes safeguards for national security and measures to protect domestic industries from sudden import surges.
- ❖ India's intellectual property (IP) rights will remain unchanged under this agreement.
- ❖ A joint review of the agreement will be conducted every five years to monitor progress and make adjustments if needed.

## REPORTS AND INDICES

### World Nuclear Outlook Report 2026



- ❖ The World Nuclear Association released the World Nuclear Outlook Report 2026.
- ❖ Global nuclear power capacity could reach 1,446-gigawatt electric (GWe) by 2050, exceeding the 1,200 GWe target under the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy.
- ❖ Five countries, China, France, India, Russia, and the United States, could produce 980 GWe, making up most of the global nuclear capacity.
- ❖ Nuclear energy is recommended for long-term decarbonization, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and improving energy security worldwide.

- ❖ The report suggests reforms in electricity markets for equitable growth and emphasizes nuclear energy as a low-carbon complement to renewable energy sources.

## STATE NEWS

### Free Education Policy 2026 - Kerala

- ❖ The Kerala Government has announced free education up to the graduate level for Arts and Science students in the State Budget 2026–27.
- ❖ Free education will now be provided for undergraduate (Bachelor's degree) courses in government and aided colleges.
- ❖ Earlier, free education in Kerala was available only up to Class 12.
- ❖ This is the first time that Kerala has extended free education beyond the higher secondary level.
- ❖ The policy aims to improve access to higher education and reduce the financial burden on students.

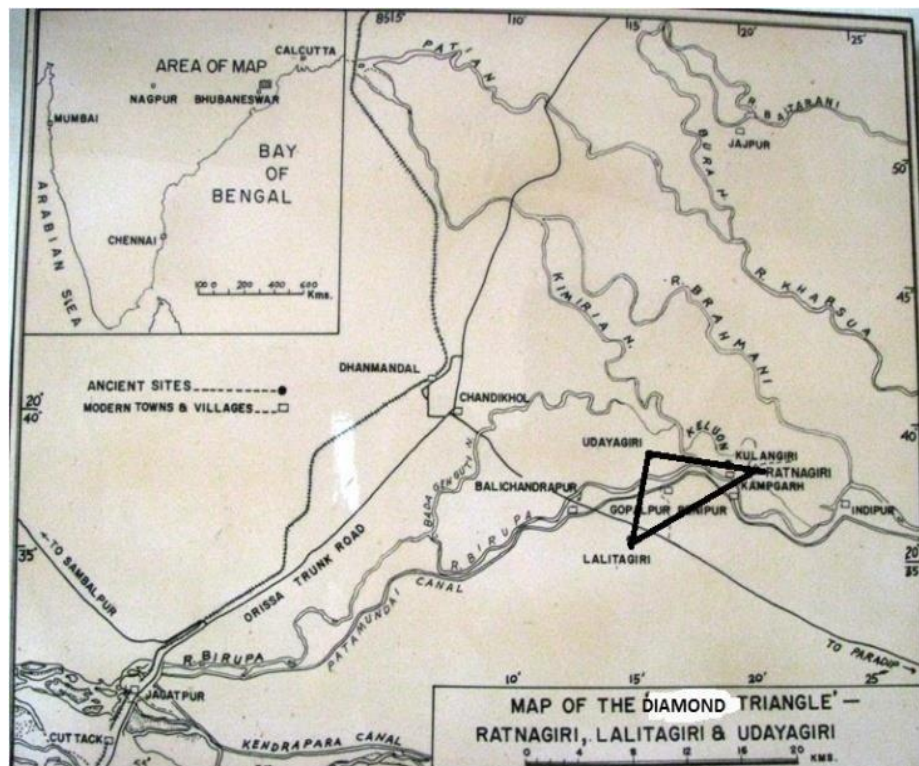
**கேரளாவில் உயர்கல்வியும் இலவசம்!**

கேரள அரசு மற்றும் அரசு உதவிபெறும் கலை மற்றும் அறிவியல் கல்லூரிகளில் பயிலும் இளங்கலை மாணவர்களுக்கு கல்விக் கட்டணம் முழுமையாக ரத்து செய்யப்படுவதாக அம்மாநில பட்ஜெட்டில் அறிவிப்பு. நாட்டிலேயே உயர்கல்வியை அனைவருக்கும் இலவசமாக வழங்கும் முதல் மாநிலம் கேரளா என அம்மாநில அரசு பெருமிதம்.

### Buddhist Diamond Triangle

- ❖ Odisha's Buddhist Diamond Triangle has been added to India's UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

- ❖ The Buddhist Diamond Triangle consists of Lalitgiri, Udayagiri, and Ratnagiri, located in Odisha.
- ❖ These sites show 1,500 years of continuous Buddhist history, covering Theravada (Hinayana), Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism.
- ❖ Lalitgiri is the oldest site, dating back to the 2nd–3rd century BCE, and has a stupa with sacred relic caskets.
- ❖ Udayagiri flourished between the 1st and 13th century CE and contains large monasteries and Buddhist sculptures.
- ❖ Ratnagiri was a major centre of Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism and is often compared to Nalanda.



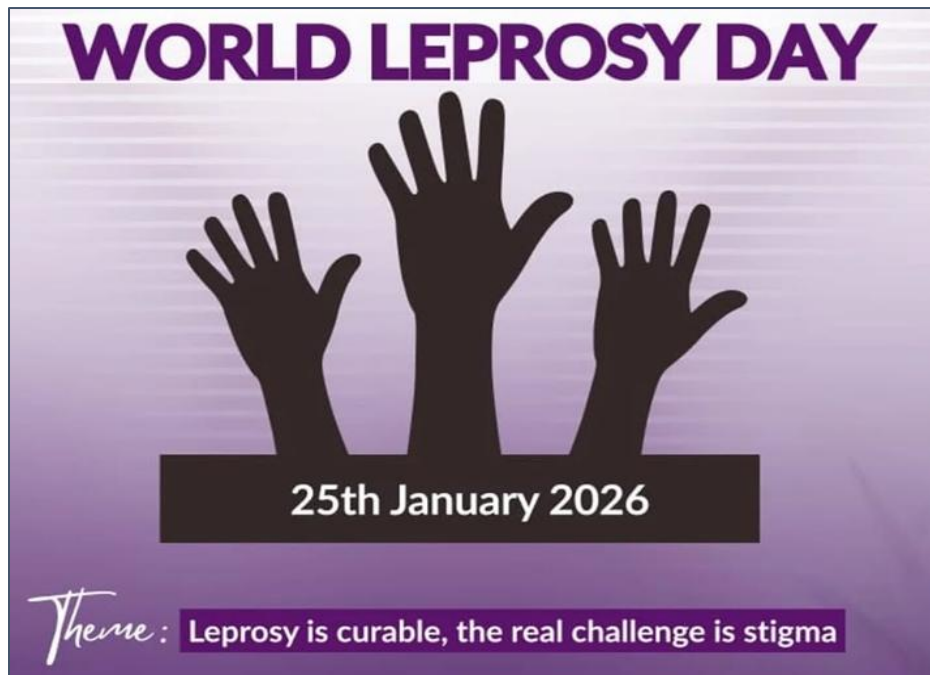
## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Leprosy Day 2026 - January 25

- ❖ The day aims to promote early diagnosis and complete treatment of leprosy and to eliminate discrimination against affected persons.
- ❖ World Leprosy Day is observed every year on the last Sunday of January.
- ❖ In India, it is observed on 30 January every year, coinciding with the death anniversary of MK Gandhi.



- ❖ Leprosy is a bacterial disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae* that mainly affects the skin and nerves.
- ❖ The theme for 2026 is "Leprosy is curable, the real challenge is stigma".



**International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust 2026 – January 27**



- ❖ It is observed to mark the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi concentration and death camp in 1945.



- ❖ The Holocaust during the Second World War led to the killing of 6 million Jews and millions of other victims.
- ❖ The theme for 2026 is “Holocaust Remembrance for Dignity and Human Rights”.

### Indian Coast Guard Day 2026 - February 01



- ❖ The day is observed to honour the bravery, dedication, and service of the Indian Coast Guard.
- ❖ The aim is to recognise the role of the Indian Coast Guard in protecting India's coastline, maritime security, and marine environment.
- ❖ The day marks the formation of the Indian Coast Guard on 1 February 1977.
- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard protects India's territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and conducts search and rescue operations.

