TNPSC BITS
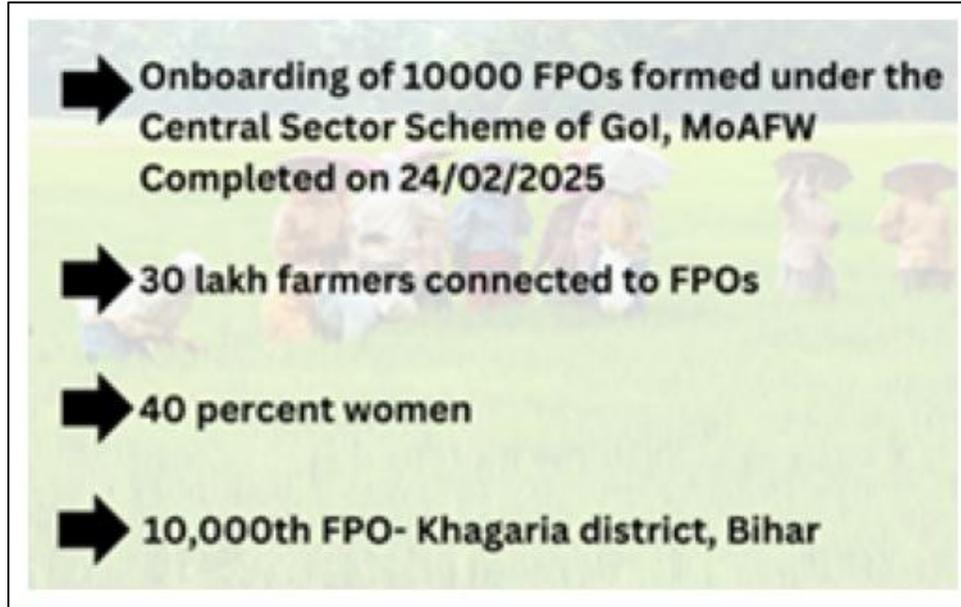
- The First Women-Led Industrial Park was inaugurated at Gowribidanur, Karnataka, by FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Bangalore.

- Arun Ice-creams made a Guinness World Records in Hyderabad by organising the world's largest ice cream social party.

- Kotak Mahindra Bank became the first bank in India to issue a fully digital Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) licence.

- Airbus inaugurated a Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) in Vadodara, Gujarat, to promote sustainable aviation research, innovation, and skill development in the aerospace sector.

- China commissioned the world's largest compressed-air energy storage (CAES) power plant in Jiangsu province, with a storage capacity of 2,400 megawatt hours (MWh) and a power generation capacity of 600 megawatts.

- The Chief Minister of Odisha inaugurated India's first Flat Rolled Products (FRP) aluminium manufacturing unit at the Aditya Aluminium complex in Sambalpur district.

- Indian mountaineer Kabak Yano from Arunachal Pradesh successfully summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina.

- Uttar Pradesh received the "Most Proactive State" award under RCS–UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) in the Non-Priority Area category.
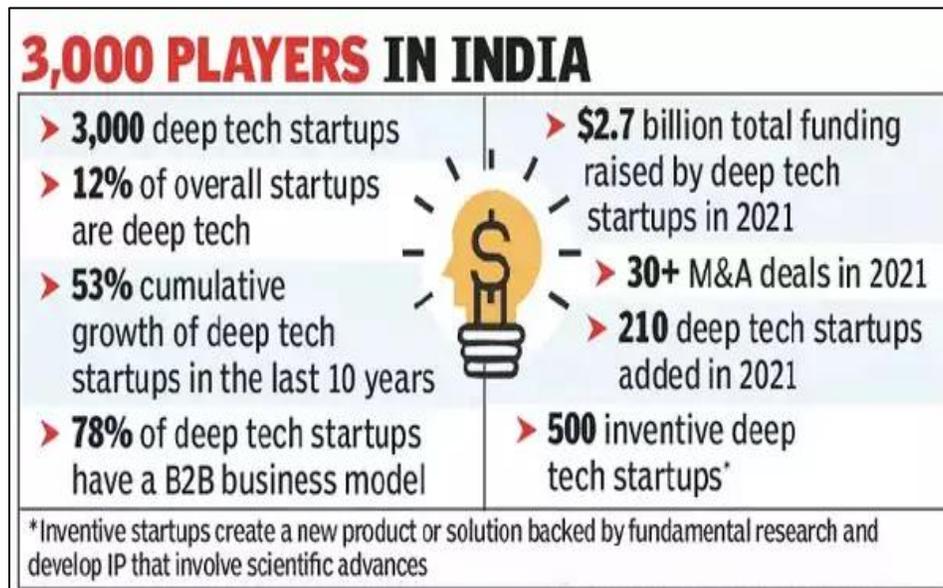
NATIONAL NEWS

Farmer Groups in India

- The Government of India has completed the formation of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) under a central sector scheme.

- The scheme was launched on 29 February 2020 to support small and marginal farmers in collective production, marketing, and processing.

- A total of 21.96 lakh women farmers are included in these FPOs.

- Implementing agencies include Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED).

❖ FPOs receive financial support, credit guarantees, market linkages, and structured training for better incomes.

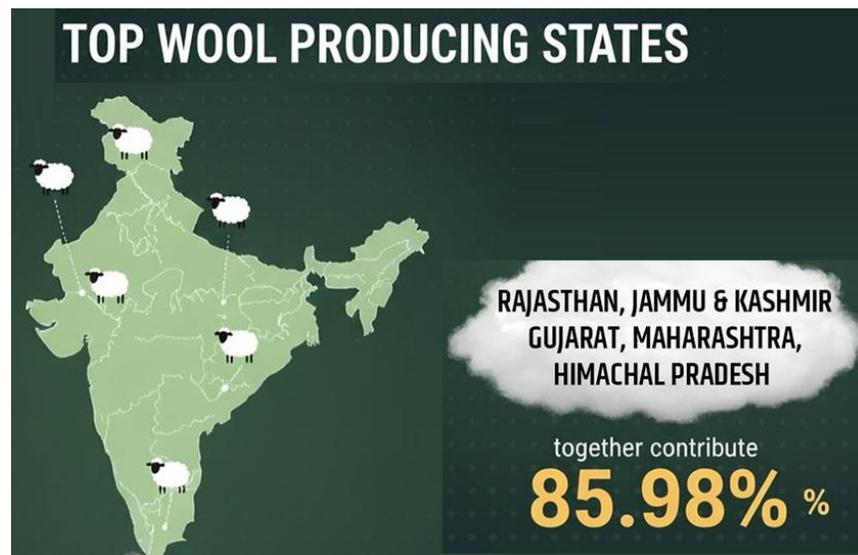❖ Evidence shows FPOs help farmers earn ~22% higher prices and reduce marketing costs by ~31%.

Onboarding of 10000 FPOs formed under the Central Sector Scheme of GoI, MoAFW Completed on 24/02/2025

30 lakh farmers connected to FPOs

40 percent women

10,000th FPO- Khagaria district, Bihar

Deep Tech Startups in India

3,000 PLAYERS IN INDIA

- **3,000** deep tech startups
- **12%** of overall startups are deep tech
- **53%** cumulative growth of deep tech startups in the last 10 years
- **78%** of deep tech startups have a B2B business model

- **$2.7** billion total funding raised by deep tech startups in 2021
- **30+** M&A deals in 2021
- **210** deep tech startups added in 2021
- **500** inventive deep tech startups*

*Inventive startups create a new product or solution backed by fundamental research and develop IP that involve scientific advances

❖ The Government of India has issued an official definition of 'deep tech' startups.

❖ According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), a deep tech start-up develops solutions based on new knowledge or advancements in science or engineering.

❖ Such startups spend most of their funds on research and development (R&D), create significant intellectual property (IP), and take steps to commercialise it.

❖ Deep tech startups often face long development timelines, high capital requirements, and technical uncertainty.

❖ A company can qualify as a deep tech start-up for up to 20 years and with a turnover of up to ₹300 crore.

❖ Companies must apply to DPIIT for certification, which is reviewed by an Inter-Ministerial Board including representatives from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Department of Biotechnology.

❖ This initiative supports the Government's focus on technology-driven startups and is linked to the ₹1 lakh crore Research and Development Innovation (RDI) Fund to finance emerging technologies.

India's Wool Production 2026

TOP WOOL PRODUCING STATES

RAJASTHAN, JAMMU & KASHMIR
GUJARAT, MAHARASHTRA,
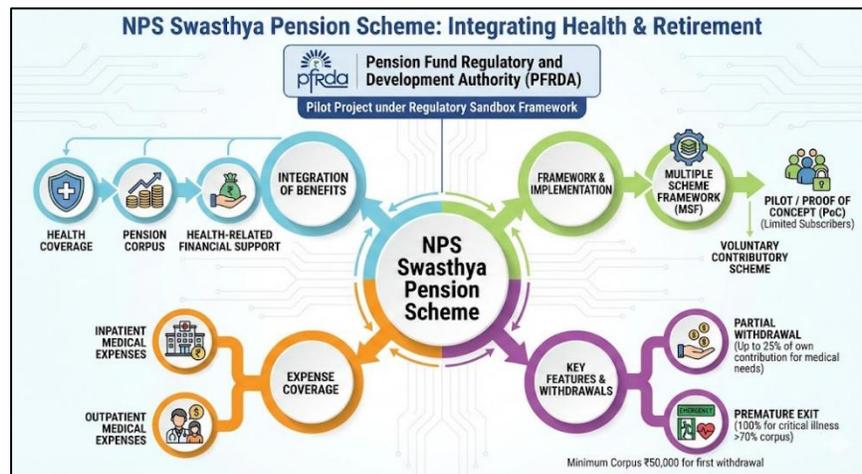HIMACHAL PRADESH

together contribute
85.98% %

❖ Rajasthan is the largest wool-producing state in India, contributing 16,013.50 thousand kg (47.53% of total production).

❖ Rajasthan's wool comes from Marwari and Chokla breeds, mainly used in carpets, rugs, and blankets.

❖ Jammu & Kashmir is second with 7,770 thousand kg, known for fine wool like Changthangi and Merino, used for shawls and apparel.

- ❖ Karnataka and Telangana are the third and fourth largest producers, mainly producing medium to coarse wool.
- ❖ India has a sheep population of 77.4 million, making it the second-largest globally.
- ❖ Types of wool in India include Carpet Grade (85%), Apparel Grade (5%), and Coarser Grade (10%).
- ❖ Punjab recorded the highest annual growth rate in wool production at 22.04%.

NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme

- ❖ The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) launched the National Pension System Swasthya Pension Scheme as a pilot project.
- ❖ It aims to integrate health-related financial benefits with the National Pension System (NPS).
- ❖ The scheme provides financial support for outpatient and inpatient medical expenses.
- ❖ It is a voluntary contributory scheme implemented under the Multiple Scheme Framework (MSF) of NPS.

NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme: Integrating Health & Retirement

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UN 'Honour Roll' for 2026 - India

- ❖ India has paid $35.18 million to the United Nations (UN) Regular Budget for 2026.
- ❖ This makes India part of the 'honour roll' of 51 UN Member States who paid their dues in full and on time.
- ❖ The UN General Assembly approved a $3.45 billion regular budget for 2026.

- The UN Regular Budget covers core administrative costs, including the General Assembly, Security Council, Secretariat, and International Court of Justice.

- Member States' contributions are based on a formula considering economy size, income per capita, external debt, and development level.

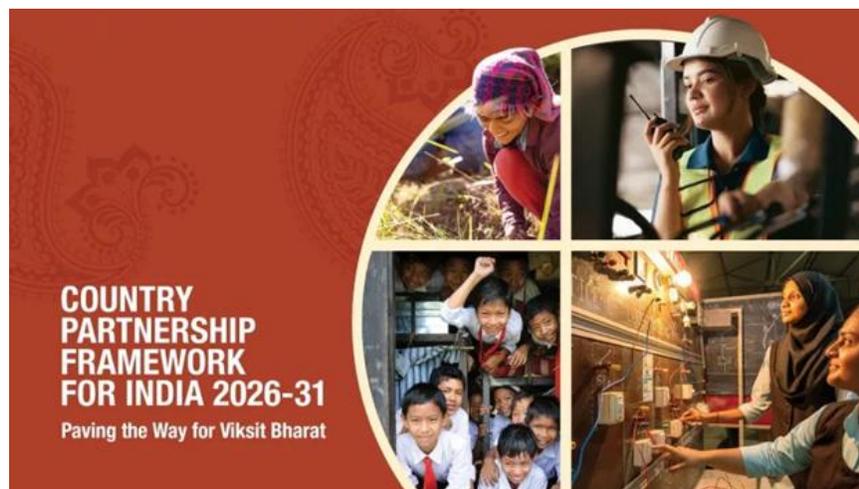- Countries owing two years of dues lose their vote in the UN General Assembly until payments are made.

India Pays $35.18 Million to UN Regular Budget for 2026, Joins Honour Roll

Project Vault

Project Vault
— $12B Critical Minerals Stockpile —
Trump Administration Initiative

★ **What It Is**
- Strategic stockpile of **critical minerals** to reduce reliance on China

💰 **Funding & Structure**
- **$12B** Total Investment
- **$10B** Ex-Im Bank Loans
- **$1.67B** Private Investment

★ **Purpose & Goals**
- Reduce Dependence
- Supply Security
- Key Metals: Lithium, Cobalt, Rare Earths & More

- US President Donald Trump announced Project Vault, a $12-billion initiative to build a strategic stockpile of critical minerals.

- ❖ Project Vault is a public–private partnership to purchase and store critical minerals and rare earth elements.
- ❖ The programme includes $1.67 billion in private funding and up to $10 billion in support from the US Export-Import Bank.
- ❖ Minerals targeted include cobalt, lithium, gallium, and rare earth elements, used in batteries, semiconductors, defence electronics, and jet engines.
- ❖ The initiative aims to reduce US dependence on China for mineral supply chains.

New Country Partnership Framework

- ❖ India and the World Bank Group announced the New Country Partnership Framework (NCPF) for 2026–2031 to support India's development aligned with the Viksit Bharat vision.
- ❖ The framework provides annual financing support of about $8–10 billion for five years.
- ❖ It focuses on sectors like infrastructure, energy, agribusiness, healthcare, tourism, and value-added manufacturing.
- ❖ It aims to create jobs, strengthen rural prosperity, urban development, and climate resilience.
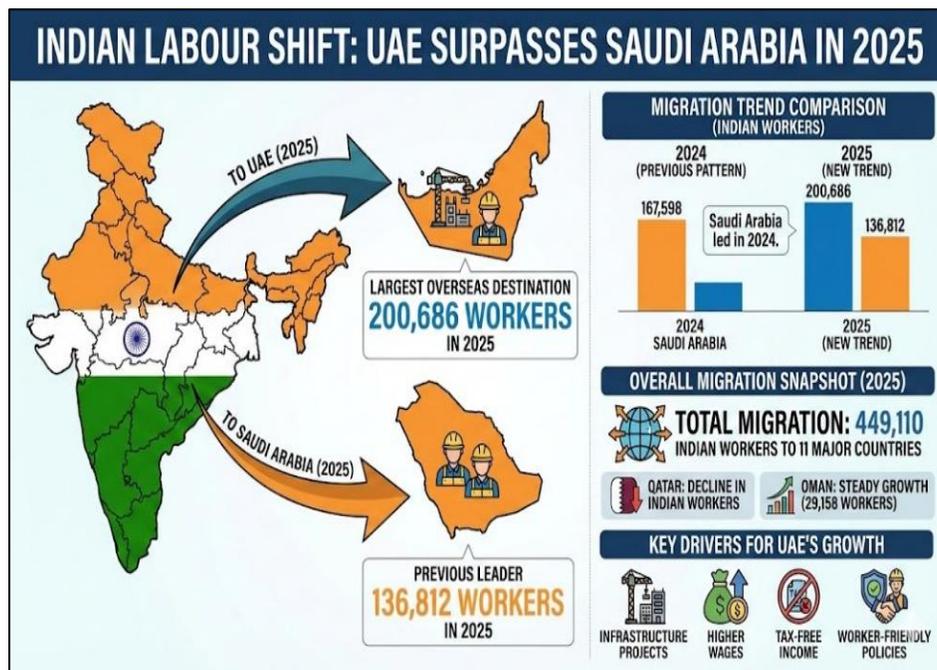- ❖ The partnership supports private-sector-led growth and skill development.

COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR INDIA 2026-31
Paving the Way for Viksit Bharat

ECONOMY NEWS

Indian Labour Shift

- ❖ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) became the largest overseas destination for Indian blue-collar workers in 2025, surpassing Saudi Arabia.

- In 2025, 200,686 Indian workers migrated to the UAE, compared with 136,812 to Saudi Arabia.

- This reverses the earlier pattern when Saudi Arabia led with 167,598 workers in 2024.

- Overall, 449,110 Indian workers moved to 11 major labour-importing countries in 2025.

- Qatar saw a decline in Indian workers, while Oman recorded steady growth to 29,158 in 2025.

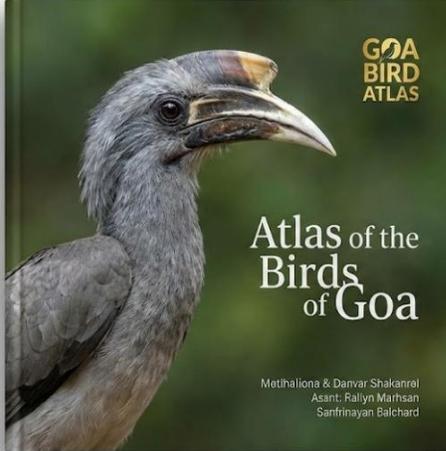- The UAE's growth is driven by infrastructure projects, higher wages, tax-free income, and worker-friendly policies.

INDIAN LABOUR SHIFT: UAE SURPASSES SAUDI ARABIA IN 2025

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

India's Second Comprehensive Bird Atlas

- Goa became the second Indian state, after Kerala, to publish a state-level Bird Atlas.

- The atlas was released during the 9th Bird Festival of Goa at Valpoi.

- It maps bird distribution using grid-based surveys and helps track changes in bird populations over time.

- The initiative supports biodiversity conservation, citizen science, and evidence-based policymaking.

❖ A companion publication, Birds of Goa: Konkani Nomenclature – Olakh Suknayanchi, documents bird names in the local Konkani language.

STATE NEWS

Amaravati Quantum Valley Project
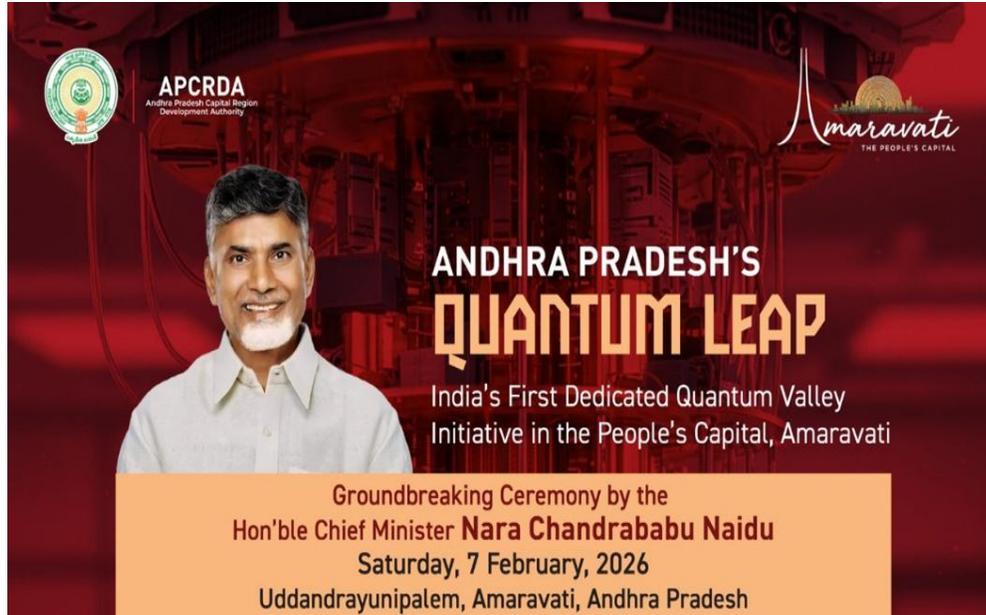

❖ Andhra Pradesh will formally launch the Amaravati Quantum Valley (AQV) project.

❖ AQV aims to make Andhra Pradesh a global hub for quantum research, innovation, and talent development.

❖ The project will integrate academic research with industry applications, including computing, secure communications, and advanced materials.

❖ Key initiatives include an IBM–TCS Quantum Innovation Centre, a Quantum Talent Hub, and a Quantum Reference Facility by SRM University.
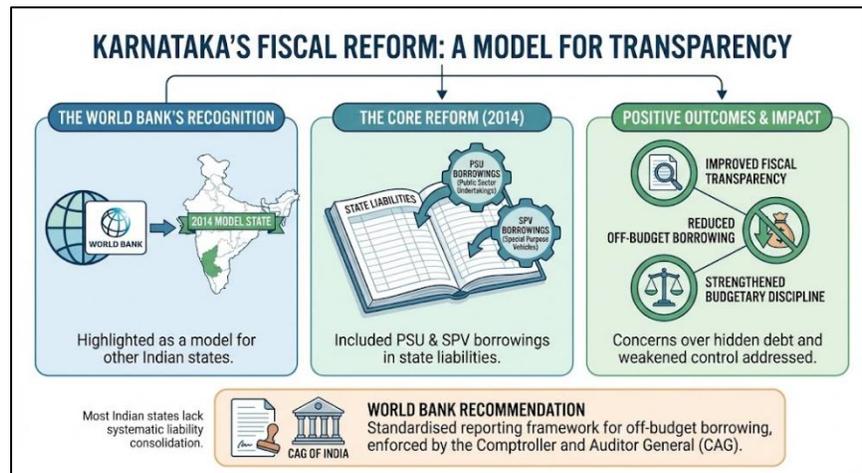
Black Swan Summit 2026

❖ The Black Swan Summit India 2026 was held in Bhubaneswar Odisha under the Bharat Netra initiative.

❖ The summit is organised in collaboration with the Global Finance & Technology Network (GFTN).

❖ It aims to build a future-ready workforce in FinTech, Insur Tech, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

❖ A five-month hybrid training programme has been developed with the National University of Singapore's Asian Institute of Digital Finance (NUS-AIDF).
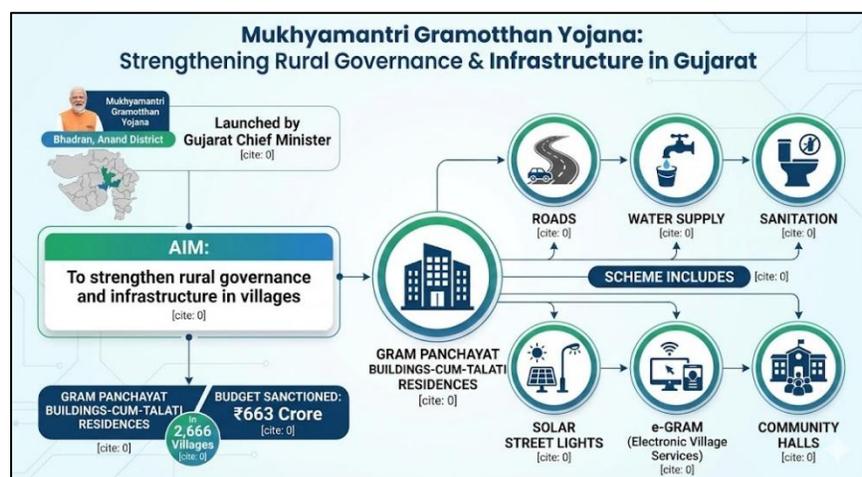
Karnataka's Fiscal Reform

❖ The World Bank highlighted Karnataka's 2014 fiscal reform as a model for other Indian states.

❖ Karnataka included borrowings of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in state liabilities.

❖ The move improved fiscal transparency, reduced off-budget borrowing, and strengthened budgetary discipline.

❖ Off-budget borrowing is a concern as it hides true debt and weakens fiscal control in many states.

❖ It recommended a standardised reporting framework for off-budget borrowing, to be enforced by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

KARNATAKA'S FISCAL REFORM: A MODEL FOR TRANSPARENCY

Mukhyamantri Gramotthan Yojana

❖ Gujarat Chief Minister launched the Mukhyamantri Gramotthan Yojana at Bhadran village in Anand district, Gujarat.

❖ It will provide Gram Panchayat buildings-cum-Talati residences in 2,666 villages.

❖ The scheme includes roads, water supply, sanitation, solar street lights, e-Gram (electronic village services), and community halls.

❖ The aim is to strengthen rural governance and infrastructure in villages.

Mukhyamantri Gramotthan Yojana: Strengthening Rural Governance & Infrastructure in Gujarat

India's Drone Testing Corridor

❖ Odisha announced the development of the National UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) Test and Innovation Corridor at Rangeilunda during Wings India 2026.

- ❖ The corridor will be developed at Rangeilunda Airport in Odisha.
- ❖ It will be India's first operational commercial airport converted into a live drone-testing facility.
- ❖ The project is aligned with the B-MAAN (Building Mobility and Advanced Air Mobility Network) scheme.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Great Place to Work Certification - SAIL

- ❖ Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) received the "Great Place to Work" certification for February 2026–February 2027.
- ❖ It is the third consecutive year SAIL has earned this certification.

- ❖ The certification is awarded by the Great Place to Work Institute based on employee feedback and the Trust Index survey.
- ❖ SAIL is a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).

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