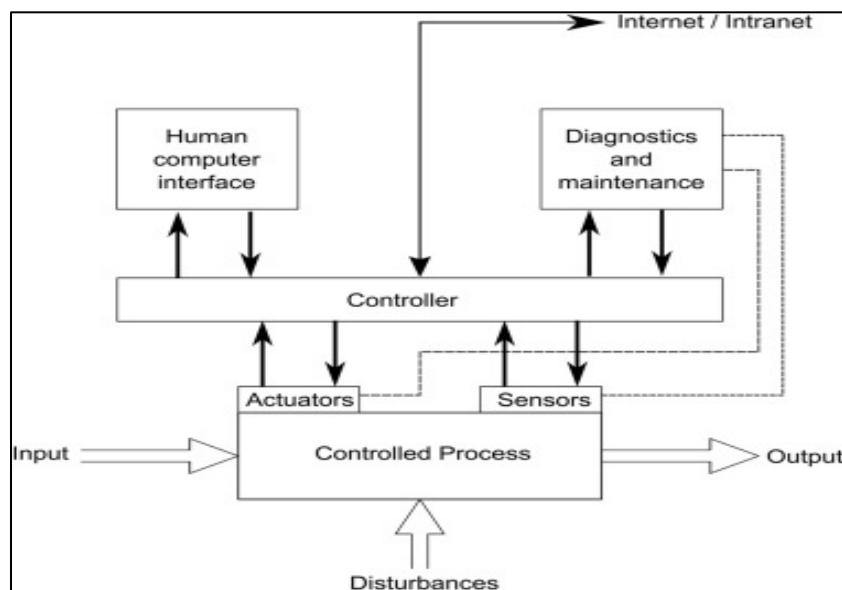


January - 09

## TAMIL NADU NEWS

### SCADA-Based Reservoir Management

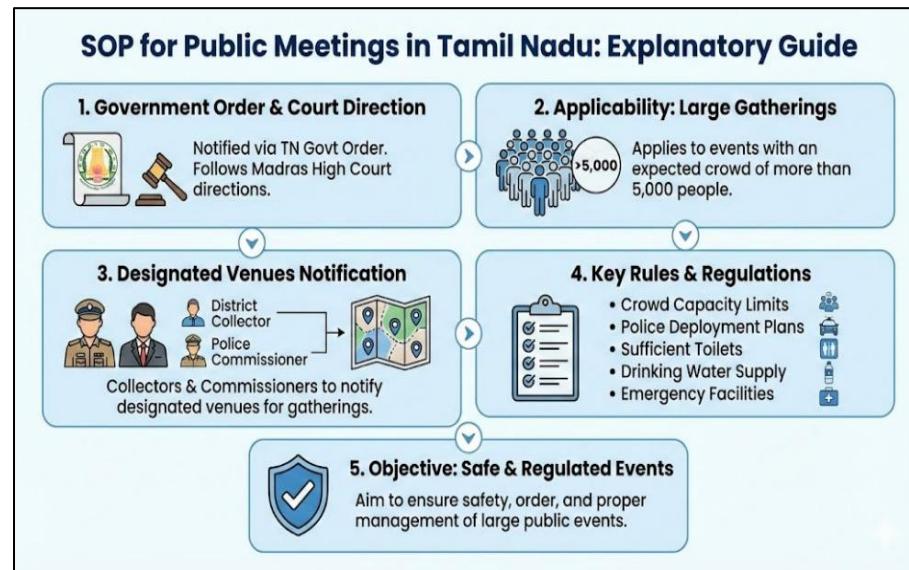
- ❖ A SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition)-based reservoir management system for Chennai reservoirs is ready for commissioning.
- ❖ The ₹32-crore project is implemented by the Water Resources Department (WRD) with World Bank support.
- ❖ The system allows the remote operation of reservoir shutters from a centralised monitoring centre in Chennai.
- ❖ Reservoirs at Chembarambakkam, Red Hills, and Poondi are fitted with sensors and automated rain gauges.
- ❖ The reservoirs together store about 11,175 million cubic feet (mcft), which is around 95% of their capacity.
- ❖ The system supports real-time monitoring of water inflow and outflow to manage floods and water supply.



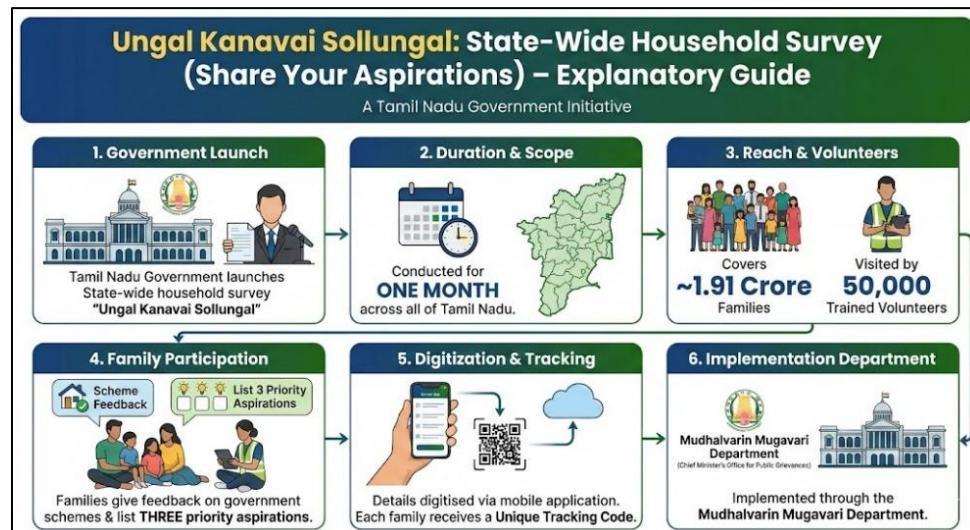
### SOP on Public Meetings

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has notified a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for regulating large public gatherings in the State.
- ❖ The SOP applies to public events where the expected crowd is more than 5,000 people.

- ❖ It was issued through a Government Order, following directions from the Madras High Court.
- ❖ District Collectors and Commissioners of Police will notify designated venues for public gatherings.
- ❖ The SOP sets rules for crowd capacity, police deployment, toilets, drinking water and emergency facilities.



## Ungal Kanavai Sollungal Household Survey



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government is launching a State-wide household survey called Ungal Kanavai Sollungal (Share Your Aspirations).
- ❖ The survey will be conducted for one month across Tamil Nadu.

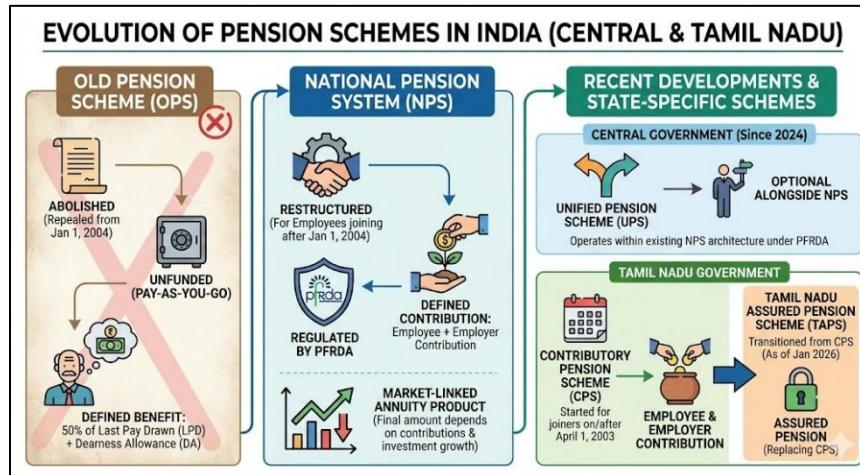
- ❖ It will cover about 1.91 crore families through visits by 50,000 trained volunteers.
- ❖ The Families will give feedback on government schemes and list three priority aspirations.
- ❖ The details will be digitised using a mobile application, and each family will receive a unique tracking code.
- ❖ The survey will be implemented through the Mudhalvarin Mugavari department.

## NATIONAL NEWS

### **Pension schemes in India**

- ❖ The Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in India was abolished as part of pension reforms by the Union Government.
- ❖ Repealed from 1 January 2004, it had a defined-benefit (DB) pension of half the Last Pay Drawn (LPD) at the time of retirement, along with components like Dearness Allowances (DA), etc.
- ❖ OPS was an unfunded pension scheme financed on a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) basis in which current revenues of the government funded the pension benefit for its retired employees.
- ❖ The Old Pension Scheme was replaced by a restructured defined-contribution (DC) pension scheme called the National Pension System.
- ❖ The National Pension System (NPS) is a defined-contribution pension system in India, regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)
- ❖ The NPS started with the decision of the Government of India to stop defined benefit pensions for all its employees who joined after 1 January 2004.
- ❖ NPS is a market-linked annuity product.
- ❖ The Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) was started in Tamil Nadu for those who joined service on or after April 1, 2003
- ❖ The contributory pension scheme is a retirement savings plan where both the employee and employer (or government/scheme provider) contribute funds regularly, often as a percentage of salary, into an individual account, with the final pension amount depending on total contributions and investment growth.
- ❖ As of January 2026, the Tamil Nadu government has transitioned from the standard Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) to the newly announced Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS).

- ❖ The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), introduced by the Government of India in 2024 as an optional pension scheme along with the National Pension System (NPS) for the Central government employees.
- ❖ UPS operates within the existing NPS architecture regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and applies to both serving and retired employees under specific conditions.



## Networking Year for the Indian Army

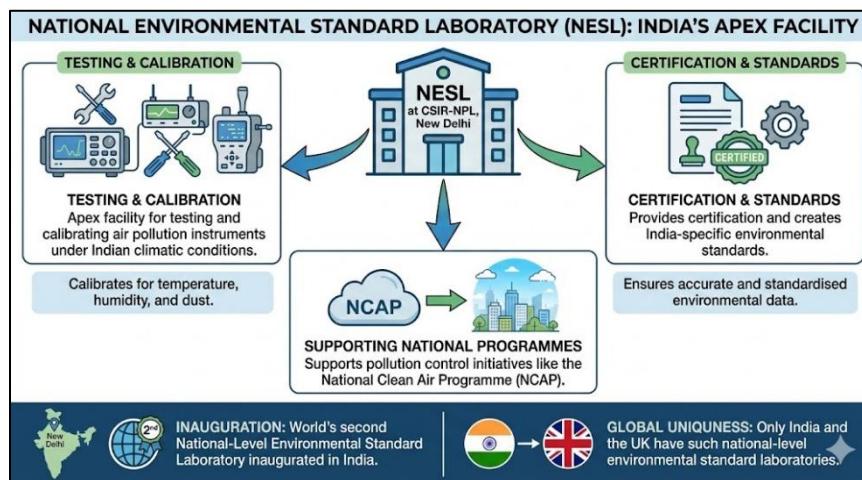


- ❖ The Indian Army has declared the year 2026 as the Year of Networking & Data Centricity.

- ❖ The initiative aims to improve digital integration and real-time data sharing in military operations.
- ❖ It focuses on treating data as an important operational asset for decision-making.
- ❖ The programme supports better coordination among soldiers, command centres, and defence systems.
- ❖ It builds on the earlier theme of 2024–25, which was observed as the Year of Technology Absorption.

### National Environmental Standard Laboratory

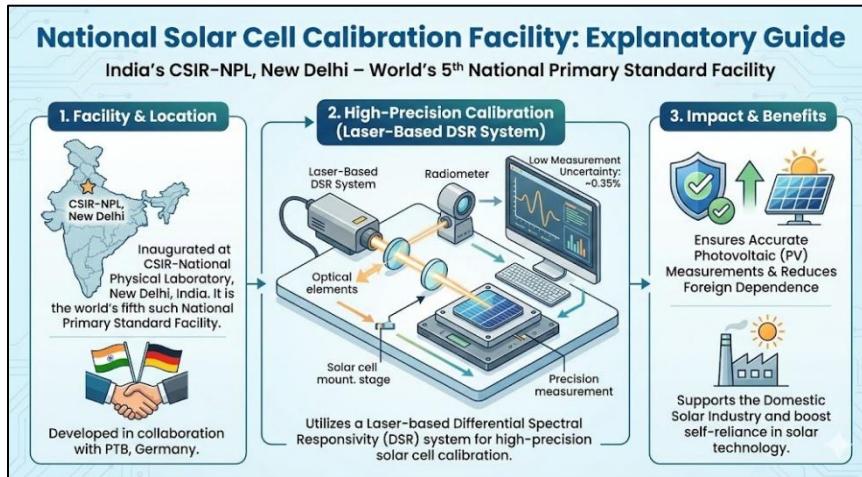
- ❖ India has inaugurated the world's second National Environmental Standard Laboratory (NESL) at CSIR – National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi.
- ❖ NESL is an apex national facility for testing, calibration, and certification of air pollution monitoring instruments under Indian climatic conditions.
- ❖ The laboratory aims to create India-specific standards and support pollution control programmes such as the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- ❖ NESL provides accurate and standardised environmental data by calibrating instruments for temperature, humidity, and dust conditions found in India.
- ❖ Only two countries, India and the United Kingdom (UK), have national-level environmental standard laboratories.



### National Solar Cell Calibration Facility

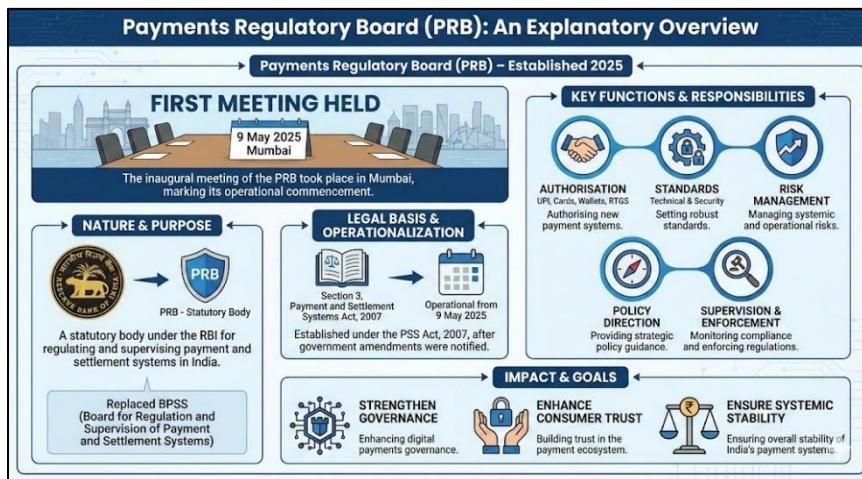
- ❖ India inaugurated the world's fifth National Primary Standard Facility for Solar Cell Calibration at CSIR – National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi.
- ❖ The facility provides high-precision calibration of solar cells to ensure accurate photovoltaic (PV) measurements.

- ❖ It uses a laser-based Differential Spectral Responsivity (DSR) system for calibration.
- ❖ The facility achieves a low measurement uncertainty of about 0.35%, meeting global standards.
- ❖ It was developed in collaboration with PTB (Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt), Germany.
- ❖ The facility reduces India's dependence on foreign solar calibration and supports the domestic solar industry.



## ECONOMY NEWS

### Payments Regulatory Board



- ❖ The first meeting of the Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) was held in Mumbai.
- ❖ The PRB is a statutory body through which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulates and supervises payment and settlement systems in India.

- ❖ It was established under Section 3 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- ❖ It replacing the earlier Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).
- ❖ The PRB became operational from 9 May 2025, after amendments were notified by the Government of India.
- ❖ Key functions include authorisation of payment systems (UPI, cards, wallets, RTGS), setting technical and security standards, risk management, policy direction, and supervision and enforcement.
- ❖ The PRB strengthens digital payments governance, enhances consumer trust, and ensures systemic stability in India's payment ecosystem.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### Portable Desalination System



- ❖ The DRDO has developed a portable desalination system to provide drinking water to soldiers in remote and water-scarce areas.
- ❖ The system is called SWaDeS (Sea Water Desalination System).

- ❖ It has been developed by the Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur, under DRDO.
- ❖ The system can be operated in manual mode as well as engine-driven mode.
- ❖ It can purify seawater and saline inland water into potable drinking water.
- ❖ The system is designed for use in coastal regions, high-altitude areas, and isolated military posts.

## ENVIRONMENT NEWS

### India's First Urban Night Safari



**Lucknow is set to make history with India's first urban night safari coming up in the Kukrail Forest Area.**

**The project aims to offer a unique after-dark wildlife experience within the city, combining eco-tourism, nature trails, and conservation-focused attractions.**

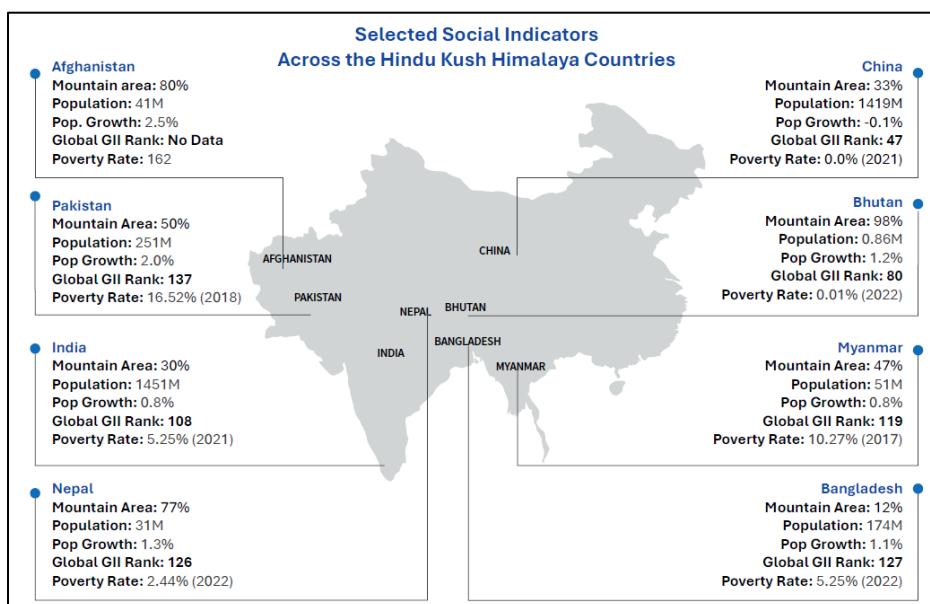
**The night safari will turn Kukrail into a major green destination & put Lucknow on India's wildlife tourism map.**

- ❖ Lucknow is set to get India's first urban night safari at the Kukrail Forest Area on the northern outskirts of the city.
- ❖ The night safari will be a controlled nocturnal wildlife viewing experience within the city limits of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ It is inspired by the Singapore night safari model and aims to offer after-dark observation of wildlife.
- ❖ The project will include nocturnal safari routes with restricted movement and low-impact lighting to minimise disturbance to animals.

- ❖ The development will also enhance facilities at existing crocodile, gharial, and turtle conservation hubs within Kukrail Forest.
- ❖ Infrastructure will include eco-friendly trails, bamboo huts, nature walks, and guided educational programs to promote eco-tourism and conservation awareness.

## REPORTS AND INDICES

### Himalayan Climate Action



- ❖ The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has released a report on climate funding for the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region.
- ❖ The HKH region includes India, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan.
- ❖ India requires about USD 102 billion per year for climate change adaptation and mitigation in this region.
- ❖ Total funding needed for all HKH countries is USD 768.68 billion per year, based on the First Determination Report of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2020.
- ❖ China needs around USD 605 billion per year, Pakistan USD 40.12 billion, and Bangladesh and Nepal USD 8.95 billion each.
- ❖ The region faces risks like glacial melting, biodiversity loss, and extreme weather events, which threaten ecosystems, livelihoods, and water resources for billions.

- ❖ The HKH region is crucial for freshwater supply, biodiversity, natural resources, and sustaining downstream populations and industries.
- ❖ Uneven funding distribution highlights that smaller HKH countries face critical financial gaps relative to their GDPs, making them highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

## STATES' NEWS

### Musi Riverfront Development Project

- ❖ The Musi Riverfront Development project is planned to rejuvenate the Musi River in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ The project focuses on ecological restoration, urban renewal, and the creation of public spaces along the river.
- ❖ The development spans a wide stretch of the river, with master planning for multiple phases, including detailed project reports (DPRs) in progress.
- ❖ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has given an in-principal approval for a ₹4,100 crore loan to support parts of the project.



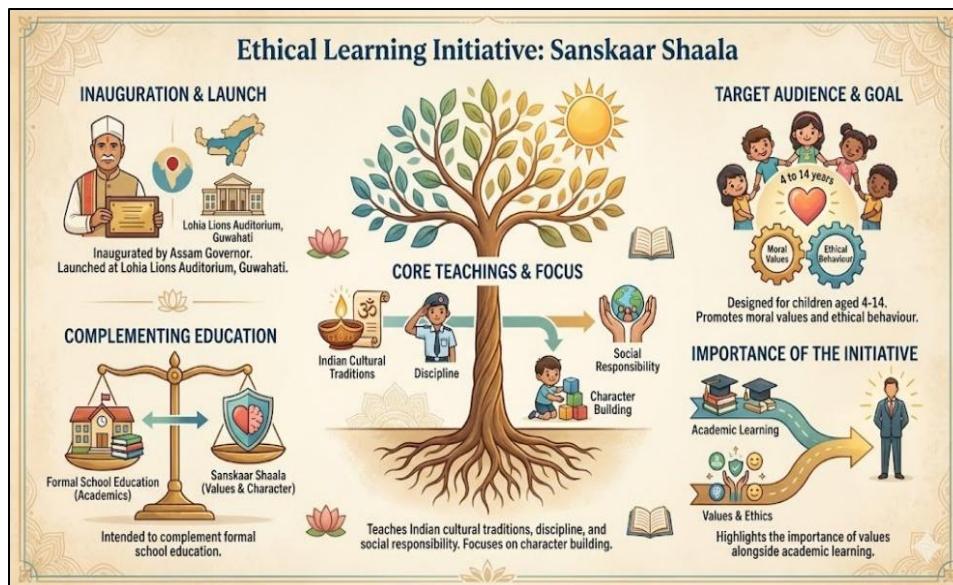
### TELANGANA ALLOCATES 734 ACRES FOR MUSI RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The Telangana govt has sanctioned 734 acres in Rangareddy district for the Musi Riverfront Development Project (MRDP), to be executed by the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL). Alternative lands in HMDA layouts and Future City will be provided for affected institutions. This move is a big step toward revitalising the Musi River and creating a world-class riverfront, boosting Hyderabad's urban landscape and livability.

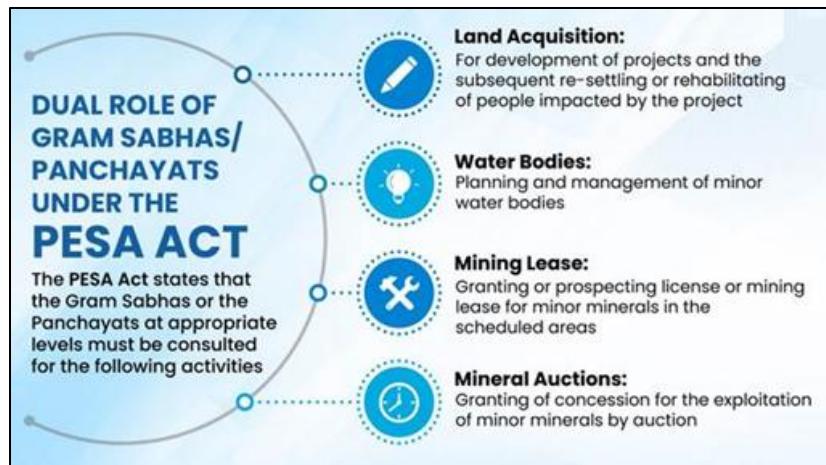
### Ethical Learning Initiative

- ❖ The Assam Governor has inaugurated a value-based education programme called Sanskaar Shaala.

- ❖ It is designed for children aged 4 to 14 years to promote moral values and ethical behaviour.
- ❖ The programme aims to teach Indian cultural traditions, discipline, and social responsibility at an early age.
- ❖ It is intended to complement formal school education by focusing on character building.
- ❖ The programme was launched at the Lohia Lions Auditorium in Guwahati.
- ❖ The initiative highlights the importance of values alongside academic learning.



## PESA Rules for Gram Sabhas



- ❖ The Jharkhand Cabinet approved rules under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, to empower Gram Sabhas in the State.

- ❖ The rules give Gram Sabhas authority over minor forest produce, local area development plans, and water resource management in rural areas.
- ❖ The rules apply to Fifth Schedule areas, which have a high tribal population.
- ❖ Gram Sabhas will be notified and delimited by the district administration.
- ❖ The rules do not affect Panchayati Raj elections under the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2001.
- ❖ 13 districts are fully under Fifth Schedule areas, while some blocks in two other districts are partially notified as scheduled areas.
- ❖ The rules were approved after extensive consultations with departments and stakeholders and will come into effect after formal notification.

## Okra Production

NEW OFFERING: ANAND KRANTI

- Yield pegged at 16.5 tonnes per hectare
- Dark green, smooth, thin and tender fruits
- Highly resistant to YVMV
- Medium-long fruits with 5 ridges, easy to harvest
- Early fruiting cycle of 46-50 days
- Suitable for kharif season
- Rich in mucilage (2.85%)
- Rich in chlorophylla (0.400 mg/g)
- Rich in Vitamin C and A, calcium and magnesium



INDIA'S 'BHINDI' BAZAAR

- India ranks first in the world for okra with 66% global share
- India produces **more than 6.4 million metric tonnes** of okra
- **Gujarat tops** okra production in the country with **1,09,802 tonnes**
- Okra cultivation in **91,180 hectares** in Gujarat
- Yield in Gujarat stands at **120.4 quintal/ha**

- ❖ Gujarat is the leading okra producer in India, with cultivation spread across 93,955 hectares in 2023–24, producing 11.68 lakh tonnes.
- ❖ The Saurashtra–Kutch region contributed 15% of the area and 13% of total okra production.
- ❖ In 2024–25, okra was grown on 14,000 hectares in 12 districts of Saurashtra and Kutch, yielding 1.5 lakh tonnes.
- ❖ Gujarat contributed 7.66% to India's total vegetable production in 2024–25.
- ❖ Horticulture in Gujarat is growing due to better productivity, improved farming practices, and supportive government policies.

