

NEWS TODAY

Curated Insights from "The Hindu" newspaper

Staying updated with current affairs is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the world around us, especially for competitive exams like UPSC and BPSC.

- 1. Relevance Across Exam Stages:** Current affairs are integral to all stages of the exam—Prelims, Mains, and the Interview. Familiarity with recent developments aids in answering questions effectively at each stage and demonstrates your up-to-date knowledge.
- 2. Informed Decision-Making:** Knowledge of current events enhances your ability to make informed decisions, develop well-rounded opinions, and understand the implications of various policies and issues.
- 3. Holistic Preparation:** A thorough grasp of current affairs ensures a more integrated approach to exam preparation, blending real-world context with theoretical knowledge.
- 4. Analytical Skills:** Engaging with current affairs sharpens your analytical abilities by encouraging you to evaluate and interpret complex information and its impacts from multiple perspectives.
- 5. Dynamic Knowledge Base:** The ever-changing landscape of current events helps maintain a dynamic and relevant knowledge base, crucial for adapting to evolving exam questions.
- 6. Interview Readiness:** In the interview stage, being well-versed in current affairs showcases not only your academic knowledge but also your awareness of recent developments and your ability to discuss them critically.

At **BPSC POINT**, we emphasize the importance of current affairs in all stages of the exam. We provide concise, accurate, and insightful summaries to help you stay ahead in your preparation journey and excel in every stage of the exam.

Team BPSC POINT

Dedicated to your exam success.

Disclaimer: While we strive to provide accurate and relevant summaries of the major news from 'The Hindu', we encourage readers to verify important details independently. If you notice any discrepancies, please notify us.

GST Council to Review Insurance Tax, Approves Rate Changes for Drugs and Snacks

To address concerns over the **18% GST on health and life insurance premiums**, the GST Council has mandated a **new Group of Ministers (GoM)** to review the tax rate within 50 days. The review will consider whether to reduce or eliminate the tax and how to handle group insurance policies. The council also plans to re-evaluate the **GST Compensation Cess** and has approved a reduction in GST rates for certain cancer drugs and snacks, as well as an increase for car seat covers. Additionally, the council will review how land costs are factored into real estate transactions and has decided to exempt research funds received by universities from GST.

Defence Ministry Signs ₹26,000-Crore Contract with HAL for 240 AL-31FP Aero-Engines

The Defence Ministry has signed a ₹26,000-crore contract with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** for **240 AL-31FP aero-engines**, to support the operational capability of the Indian Air Force's **Su-30MKI aircraft**.

The engines, assembled under license from Russia, will be produced by HAL's Koraput Division, with deliveries scheduled over the next eight years.

The deal aims to increase the indigenisation of engine parts and bolster the domestic defense manufacturing sector.

Chief of Defence Staff Releases Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations

The new doctrine, released by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, offers guidance for conducting **amphibious operations** in complex environments. It emphasizes the importance of amphibious capabilities for multi-domain operations in the Indian Ocean Region and highlights the **integration and cohesion of the armed forces**. This is the second joint doctrine released this year, focusing on enhancing jointness and operational integration.

India and UAE Sign Landmark MoU for Civil Nuclear Cooperation

India and the **UAE** have signed their first memorandum of understanding (MoU) for civil nuclear cooperation, marking a significant step in their bilateral relations. The agreement between Nuclear Power Cooperation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) and the Emirates Nuclear Energy Company (ENEC)-led Barakah Nuclear Power Plant was formalized during the visit of Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to India.

This deal is part of the UAE's strategy to invest in nuclear energy and follows previous agreements on peaceful nuclear cooperation.

Additionally, the visit resulted in agreements on long-term **LNG supply, oil exploration, and food park development**, reflecting deepening ties between the two nations.

Two New Anti-Submarine Warfare Vessels Launched by Indian Navy

The Indian Navy launched two anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft vessels at Cochin Shipyard on Monday. The vessels, **INS Malpe** and **INS Mulki**, are the fourth and fifth in a series of eight. Each vessel is 78 meters long, 11.36 meters wide, and can reach speeds of 25 knots with an endurance of 1,800 nautical miles. They are equipped with *indigenously developed* sonar and various weapons systems, designed for anti-submarine operations, mine-laying, and search and rescue. The ships will replace the older Abhay-class ASW corvettes and are part of a 2019 contract with Cochin Shipyard Ltd.

India Reports Isolated Case of Mpox Clade 2; No Widespread Risk

The Union Health Ministry confirmed a case of Mpox caused by the **clade 2 strain** in India, identifying it as a travel-related infection from a country experiencing Mpox transmission. This isolated case, involving a young male patient who is clinically stable, is not linked to the current global public health emergency related to **clade 1** of Mpox. Public health measures, including contact tracing and monitoring, are in place, with no widespread risk to the public. The Ministry is enhancing surveillance, awareness, and testing through healthcare networks and at points of entry to manage and contain potential cases.

Breakthroughs in Photoelectric Effect Studies: Unlocking New Insights for Solar Cells, Electronics, and Biochemical Imaging

The article explores recent advancements in the study of the **photoelectric effect**, a phenomenon first explained by **Albert Einstein in 1905**, which plays a critical role in *solar cell technology*.

Modern research, driven by **ultrashort light pulses** and **attosecond physics**, is uncovering new details about the behavior of electrons at extremely short timescales. This deeper understanding is *enhancing imaging techniques* for **proteins** and **viruses**, and *guiding the design* of **next-generation electronics**.

Ultrashort Light Pulses

Ultrashort light pulses are extremely brief bursts of light, lasting from femtoseconds (10^{-15} seconds) to attoseconds (10^{-18} seconds). These pulses are generated using advanced laser technology and are crucial for observing rapid processes in physics and chemistry.

Attosecond Physics

Attosecond physics focuses on processes occurring on attosecond timescales. It involves generating and applying attosecond pulses to investigate electron dynamics in atoms, molecules, and solids.

Key findings include the discovery of **photoionisation delays**, where electrons take longer to escape from atoms or molecules due to interactions with their environment. Recent studies in the **X-ray regime** have shown unexpectedly *large* delays in electron emissions from oxygen and nitrogen atoms, linked to complex effects like **shape resonance** and **multi-electron scattering**. These insights could revolutionise our understanding of **electron correlations** in materials, leading to new technologies in electronics and biochemical research.



Helium Leaks Impact Space Missions: Challenges and Solutions

Helium leaks have impacted several space missions, including NASA's **Boeing Starliner**, ISRO's **Chandrayaan 2**, and ESA's **Ariane 5**.

Importance of Helium in Rockets

Helium, used to *pressurise fuel tanks* and *cool systems* in rockets, is essential due to its *low boiling point* and *inert properties*.

Challenges with Helium Leaks

Helium's **low density** makes it **prone to leaks** through small gaps. These leaks were recently identified in Starliner's thrusters before launch, and additional leaks in space led to its return without crew.

Industry Response and Alternatives

The frequent helium leaks have underscored the **need for improved valve and fitting designs** in the industry. **Alternatives** like **argon** and **nitrogen** have been experimented with, but helium remains widely used.

New Developments and Failures

Europe's Ariane 6 attempted a **new pressurisation system** using converted propellant gases, but this system **failed during its debut launch**.

Researchers Develop Robotic Leg with Artificial Muscles for More Human-like Movement

Researchers have developed the first robotic leg equipped with "artificial muscles" — **oil-filled bags that allow for more human-like movement**. This leg, demonstrated hopping over various surfaces like grass, sand, and rocks, is part of a study published in **Nature Communications**. The technology aims to create more agile and flexible humanoid robots for household tasks. Unlike conventional robots with rigid metal joints and motors, these artificial muscles, inspired by human muscles, enable smoother, more fluid movements. However, the current prototype can only jump in circles, indicating that practical applications are still in the future.

Early Adoption of New Treatment Regimen for Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis

Taking TB seriously

Early adoption of the new treatment regimen is welcome

Time is of the essence in adopting advanced technology in medical care. When medical technology arrives dragging its feet, then its transformative effects are not that dramatic. The Union Health Ministry's decision to introduce the new treatment regimen for drug-resistant tuberculosis hardly a couple of years after it was recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a step in the right direction. Last week, the government approved the BPaLM regimen comprising four drugs – Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid and Moxifloxacin. This regimen has been proven to offer better outcomes, remarkably shortening the duration of treatment, and resulting in improvements in quality of life for persons living with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), which resists treatment by isoniazid and rifampicin, the two pillars of frontline drugs in TB treatment. The move makes tremendous sense for a country that voluntarily set itself an earlier target for TB elimination by 2025, five years ahead of the global target under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. TB elimination means there should be no new cases of TB in a population of 10 lakh. Traditional treatments can last up to 20 months, and entail severe side effects for the patient. The BPaLM regimen is reported to cure drug-resistant TB in just six months, with a high success rate. It is particularly significant in this country, because an estimated 75,000 people living with drug-resistant TB can now switch to this shorter, cheaper treatment regimen. This move, experts expect, will undoubtedly improve treatment outcomes and help thousands of patients.

The government has, admirably, shown a commitment and political will to see the back of TB, and has, over the years, implemented several measures in aid of this. Shifting from conventional culture and drug sensitivity testing to rapid molecular tests for diagnosing MDR-TB has resulted in improved case detection, higher treatment coverage, better treatment success rates, and falling death rates. Extra support financially, nutritionally and socially in the form of the Ni-kshay Mitra scheme has also yielded results. India's reduction of TB incidence by 50% from 2005 to 2022 is almost double the pace at which global TB incidence is declining, as per WHO's Global TB Report 2023. Mortality has also reduced by 80% during the same period in India. It was India which led the way earlier with its Directly Observed Therapy Short-course programme, revolutionising TB care back in the day with supervised administration of drugs. Continuing its patient-centric approach should not merely follow, but be a pioneer in diagnosing and treating TB.

The Union Health Ministry's decision to adopt the **BPaLM regimen** for drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB) marks a significant advancement in medical care. The BPaLM regimen, which includes **Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, Linezolid, and Moxifloxacin**, offers improved outcomes by **shortening the treatment duration to six months**, compared to the traditional 20-month regimen. This is crucial for India, which aims to **eliminate TB by 2025**, five years ahead of the global target. The new regimen will benefit an estimated 75,000 patients with drug-resistant TB, enhancing treatment efficacy and quality of life.

India has shown commendable progress in TB management, including shifting to rapid molecular testing and implementing supportive schemes like **Ni-kshay Mitra**. The country has reduced TB incidence and mortality significantly, outperforming the global average. With a history of pioneering TB care approaches, India is encouraged to continue leading in diagnosing and treating TB.

Ni-kshay Mitra Scheme

Overview

The Ni-kshay Mitra scheme is an Indian government initiative designed to enhance tuberculosis (TB) care by involving community-based support. The scheme aims to provide additional assistance to TB patients to improve treatment outcomes.

Key Aspects

- Support Mechanism:** Involves individuals, organizations, or institutions (known as "Mitra") who offer financial aid, nutritional support, or other assistance to TB patients.
- Objectives:** To reduce TB burden by improving patient adherence to treatment, enhancing care, and providing a comprehensive support system.
- Implementation:** Support can include direct financial contributions, provision of nutritious food, or other resources necessary for patient recovery.

The Ni-kshay Mitra scheme complements medical treatment and supports the broader goal of TB elimination in India.

Stalled Drug Reforms: A Call for Urgent Intervention in India's Health Regulations

The article highlights the lack of effective reforms in India's drug regulation, specifically concerning **recall guidelines, good distribution practices, and confusing brand names**.

Despite being flagged by courts, committees, and regulatory bodies for decades, these issues remain unresolved due to non-binding guidelines and bureaucratic delays. The Ministry of Health has failed to enforce legally binding regulations, often stalling reforms with repeated consultations influenced by the pharmaceutical industry.

The article calls for direct intervention from the Prime Minister's Office to break this cycle and prioritize public health.



Towards a Dynamic Census: India's Shift from Traditional Enumeration to Real-Time Data

The Census in India, delayed since 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is expected to be completed by 2026 or 2027, resulting in a 16-year gap since the last Census of 2011. Meanwhile, India has surpassed China in population and witnessed significant demographic changes.

Challenges with Decennial Censuses

Many are concerned about the outdated data from the 2011 Census. As censuses are conducted every ten years, there is often a **discrepancy** between **real-time data and recorded statistics**. The decennial approach, while a global norm, is **costly and unable to keep pace with rapidly changing demographics and policy needs**.

The Case for Register-Based and Dynamic Censuses

The article advocates for **register-based censuses** that continuously update data from various administrative sources like population registers, tax, and employment data. Countries like Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland have already adopted this model, making their census exercises more **cost-effective** and up-to-date. For example, Austria reduced the cost of its census from €72 million in 2001 to €10 million in 2011 with this approach.

India's Digital Census and Future Prospects

India is planning its **first digital census**, but there are also discussions about creating a **dynamic database** that integrates Aadhaar, voter ID, and other registers to offer real-time updates. However, database integration remains a complex task.

Global Trends Towards Dynamic Data Collection

Countries like the U.K. are shifting from traditional censuses to **dynamic register-based censuses**, where data from everyday activities like shopping and transportation is collected in real time. The article suggests India could similarly leverage its existing Aadhaar system for such a transformation.

Potential Benefits for India

A register-based dynamic census would save thousands of crores, provide real-time data for socio-economic planning, and improve policy execution. While traditional censuses capture wide-ranging data on employment, education, health, and migration, this new method could offer more frequent updates through smaller, regular surveys.

Conclusion

The article calls for the 2027 Census to be India's last **complete enumeration-based** census, paving the way for a dynamic, continuously updated system that could be India's greatest contribution to the digital age.

Next Census should be the last enumeration-based one

According to media reports, India is likely to begin conducting the long-delayed Census exercise and complete the survey within 18 months. So, realistically, the final Census report might be available sometime in late 2026 or 2027, with a roughly 16-year gap since the last Census of 2011. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is cited as the primary reason for the delay in the census. In the interim, India surpassed China in population. There have been significant changes in the demographic (see: Haas Khan, a post on the author's LinkedIn profile). While many people are worried that India has been operating without proper data for a long time, in reality, there remains a significant discrepancy between reality and the data available, even for decennial censuses. This discrepancy is especially noticeable as the decade-long gap grows as a crisis. In fact, the decennial format of most censuses was merely a compromise because conducting a census is a mammoth and prohibitively expensive undertaking. It certainly makes sense that if census exercises were conducted more frequently, a number of policies and their execution as well as socio-economic and health-related matters, might be dynamically adjusted by observing the findings. **An idea to pursue** For the past few years, this writer has personally supported 'register-based' and 'dynamic' censuses, which could far surpass up-to-date census data whenever needed. The database would be updated continuously in real-time during a 'dynamic' census. Recently, in the past year, the use of digital health ID (Aadhaar) and the date of a child will come into the back end of the database of the Census Registrar, and data regarding the age of 18 years, this system would be registered as a voter in the voter list from the Office of the Census Registrar. The name would be removed from the voter list upon death. **Global trends** This could be a significant leap in the direction of a 'dynamic' Census. However, India's next Census, which will be the nation's first 'digital' census, may be a complete enumeration. On the other hand, a number of countries, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, and Switzerland, are currently moving towards register-based censuses, which produce timely statistics primarily from government sources using data from various administrative registers, which include population, tax, employment, school, hospital records, and data from municipalities. They may be complemented by some well-planned small-scale sample surveys such as those conducted in Switzerland with 75% of the population. From the United States and the United Kingdom are moving towards register-based censuses. Unsurprisingly, such a census exercise will be cost-effective too. For instance, the cost of the 2008 Census in Austria was €7 million. However, when the register-based approach was implemented in 2014, the cost fell to €10 million. The United Kingdom government declared in 2014 that statistics derived from more frequent and timely administrative data will take the place of the decennial census after 2021. In place of the customary questionnaire-based approach, the UK will leverage the data people have shared in their everyday lives. At the time, the Royal Statistical Society's executive director said the UK government had 'made the right call'. It is actually a dynamic register-based census, not a complete enumeration. It is worth noting that the every person's social, economic, and demographic activity and events in people's lives is constantly added to the census database. Further, thanks to online ID, official registers

Promoting Linguistic Diversity: Balancing Sanskrit with India's Rich Language Heritage

The article emphasizes the importance of promoting all Indian languages while commemorating **Sanskrit Day**. While Sanskrit has played a crucial role in India's cultural, religious, and intellectual history, focusing exclusively on it may overlook the rich literary traditions of other languages such as **Tamil, Pali, Prakrit, Kannada, Telugu, and Malayalam**. Despite their historical and cultural significance, these languages receive less funding and attention from the government compared to Sanskrit and Hindi, which creates an imbalance in linguistic promotion.

The article argues that this bias stems from cultural hegemony, as described by **Antonio Gramsci**, where certain languages are privileged, marginalising others. To address this, comprehensive **policy reforms, educational initiatives,** and community involvement are needed to preserve and promote linguistic diversity. The **National Education Policy's** emphasis on mother tongues is a positive step, but further efforts are required to ensure **equitable support** for all languages, recognizing them as integral to cultural identity and unity.

Looking beyond Sanskrit

John J. Kimball, professor and dean, Ohio Wesleyan University, Brantford, Ohio

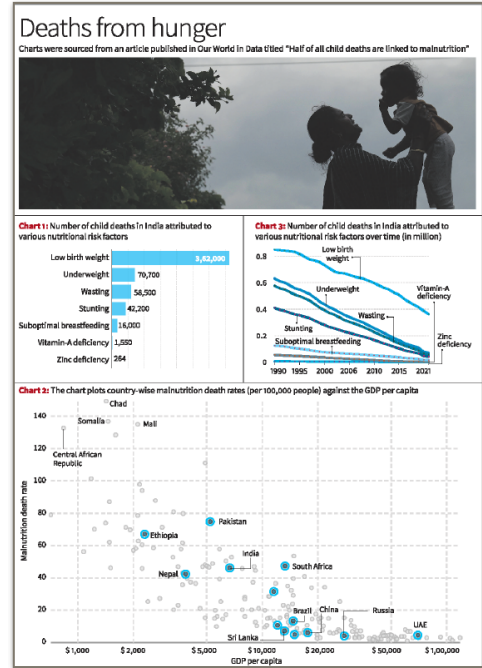
One of the oldest living languages with an unbroken history, Sanskrit is a treasure trove of wisdom and knowledge. Despite its rich literary heritage, it is often overshadowed by other Indian languages. The Indian government's decision to celebrate Sanskrit Day is a commendable step, but it is essential to ensure that the celebration does not come at the expense of other languages. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of mother tongues, provides a framework for promoting linguistic diversity. However, the implementation of this policy requires a shift in the government's approach to language education. Cultural events and programs should be organized to celebrate the rich literary traditions of all Indian languages. The government should also invest in research and development to improve the teaching and learning of these languages. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of mother tongues, provides a framework for promoting linguistic diversity. However, the implementation of this policy requires a shift in the government's approach to language education. Cultural events and programs should be organized to celebrate the rich literary traditions of all Indian languages. The government should also invest in research and development to improve the teaching and learning of these languages. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of mother tongues, provides a framework for promoting linguistic diversity. However, the implementation of this policy requires a shift in the government's approach to language education. Cultural events and programs should be organized to celebrate the rich literary traditions of all Indian languages. The government should also invest in research and development to improve the teaching and learning of these languages.

Progress and Challenges in Reducing Child Mortality from Malnutrition: Insights from the IHME Report

In 2021, India experienced high child mortality rates, with **70% of deaths under the age of five** attributed to malnutrition, compared to 50% globally. Malnutrition *often exacerbates other conditions* leading to premature death, primarily through low birth weight and developmental issues such as wasting and stunting.

Deaths from malnutrition are significantly higher in low-income countries and correlate with lower GDP per capita, with Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia being the most affected regions. Despite these challenges, there has been **substantial progress**: global child deaths from malnutrition fell by 63% from 1990 to 2021, with India achieving an 80% reduction.

This decline is detailed in the **Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) report**. Improvements in nutrition, reduced prevalence of infectious diseases through better sanitation, vaccinations, and healthcare support for mothers and infants have driven this progress. Continued focus on both enhancing nutrition and managing diseases is crucial for further reducing malnutrition-related child deaths.



Key Insights from the “India Status Report on Road Safety 2024”

The “**India Status Report on Road Safety 2024**,” prepared by the **TRIP Centre** at IIT Delhi, underscores India’s slow progress in reducing road traffic fatalities and highlights the need for a differentiated approach to improve road safety.

On the challenges to road safety in India

What does the India Status Report on Road Safety 2024 say with respect to meeting International goal of reducing road accident deaths? What is a crash surveillance system?

SAFETY FIRST

Country	2021	2022	2023	2024
India	18.2	17.8	17.5	17.1
USA	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9
UK	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5
China	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2
Japan	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2
Germany	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1
France	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1
Italy	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Spain	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Canada	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Australia	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Percentage of road traffic deaths by type of road users in India

Year	Motorcyclists	Truck drivers	Truck passengers	Other road users
2021	45%	25%	15%	15%
2022	44%	24%	14%	16%
2023	43%	23%	13%	17%
2024	42%	22%	12%	18%

What are the challenges to road safety in India?

India has a high road traffic death toll, with approximately 1.8 lakh deaths in 2021. The report identifies several key challenges:

- Fragmented data systems:** Lack of a comprehensive national crash-level database.
- Insufficient policy-making:** Existing data systems are insufficient for effective policy-making and often contain inaccuracies.
- Motorcyclists and truck-related crashes:** These are notably high-risk areas.

Current Situation:

- Road traffic injuries remain a major public health challenge in India, with limited progress in reducing fatalities despite advancements in other sectors.
- In 2021, road traffic injuries were the **13th leading cause of death** and the **12th leading cause of health loss** in India.
- The report reveals significant disparities in road traffic death rates across States, with **motorcyclists and truck-related crashes** being notably high-risk areas.

Challenges in Crash Surveillance:

- India **lacks** a comprehensive **national crash-level database**, relying instead on fragmented FIRs and state audits.
- Existing data systems are **insufficient for effective policy-making** and often contain **inaccuracies**.

State-wise Road Safety Performance:

- Death rates vary widely across States, with Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh reporting the highest rates.
- The majority of road fatalities involve pedestrians, cyclists, and motorised two-wheeler riders.
- Helmet usage and basic traffic safety measures are inadequately implemented in many States.

Global Comparison:

- Compared to developed countries like **Sweden**, road fatalities in India have worsened, with Indians being 600% more likely to die in a road accident than their counterparts in these countries.

Recommendations:

- There is an urgent need for scaling up road safety interventions and **establishing a national database** for fatal crashes.
- Central and State governments must improve **public access to crash data** to better understand risks and evaluate intervention effectiveness.

The report highlights the critical need for **targeted road safety strategies** and **better data management** to address India's road safety challenges effectively.

Reviving District Agro-Meteorology Units (DAMUs): Key Insights

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) plans to revive **District Agro-Meteorology Units (DAMUs)** under the **Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) scheme**, which were initially established in 2018 to provide localized agricultural advisories based on weather data. DAMUs were recently shut down due to claims of misrepresentation and a push for privatisation by the NITI Aayog.



Importance of Agro-Met Units:

- DAMUs are crucial for small and marginal farmers who practice rain-fed agriculture and face challenges due to climate change and weather variability.
 - Located** within **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**, DAMUs provided weather-related advisories (sowing, harvesting, irrigation, etc.) to farmers **twice a week**. These advisories were sent through multiple channels, including text messages and WhatsApp groups, helping farmers plan their agricultural activities and providing early warnings for extreme weather events.

Overview of GKMS Scheme	
Aspect	Details
Objective	To provide weather-based agricultural advisories to farmers to improve crop yields and resilience.
Implementing Agency	India Meteorological Department (IMD)
Key Components	District Agro-Meteorology Units (DAMUs), weather data analysis, advisory dissemination
Coverage	Nationwide, with advisories tailored to local conditions
Communication Methods	Text messages, WhatsApp, newspapers, in-person communication
Recent Developments	Plan to revive DAMUs to enhance agricultural advisories and support to farmers

Reasons for Shutdown:

- NITI Aayog's push for privatisation and misrepresentation of the role of DAMUs** led to their closure. The NITI Aayog **falsely claimed** that agro-met data was fully automated and **sought to monetise** these services, which were previously offered free of cost.
- There was significant opposition from agricultural experts and associations, who highlighted the role of DAMUs in building climate resilience and supporting farmers.

Concerns with Privatization:

- Private weather advisory services, driven by profit motives, are often unaffordable for small farmers. Subscription costs can be prohibitively high, and there are concerns about bias in recommendations.

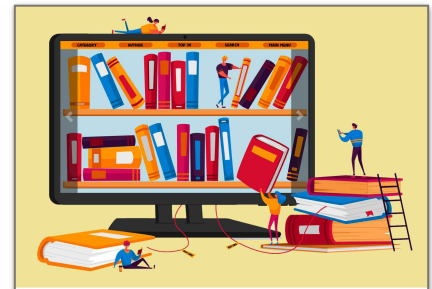
The revival of DAMUs is seen as essential for maintaining the accessibility and effectiveness of agricultural advisories for the majority of India's farmers.

The Legal Battle Over Internet Archive's Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) and Its Implications

The **Internet Archive (IA)**, a non-profit organization, has digitally archived billions of web pages and millions of books, offering access to a wide range of digital materials. Two key experiments by IA, namely Controlled Digital Lending (CDL) and the 'National Emergency Library,' led to legal challenges by publishers, citing copyright infringement. CDL allows libraries to lend digitized copies of books on a 1:1 owned-to-loaned basis, while the National Emergency Library temporarily liberalised this policy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The legal debate centered around whether CDL qualifies as 'fair use' under U.S. copyright law. U.S. courts analyze fair use based on four factors: purpose and character of use, nature of the work, amount used, and the effect on the market. In this case, the courts ruled against IA, finding that CDL was not transformative and that it had the potential to harm the market for publishers.

The decision raised concerns about the future of CDL, which has been beneficial in enhancing digital access to books without significantly harming authors or publishers. The ruling could have broader implications, as it may restrict even physical book lending by libraries, despite the fact that library lending has traditionally coexisted with book sales.



What the Internet Archive case in the U.S. means for digital book-lending

The case, which offers the most detailed analysis to date of CDL, has implications for anyone with an internet connection. Two of its technological experiments proposed a range of copyright tests for book publishers.

What the Internet Archive case in the U.S. means for digital book-lending

The case, which offers the most detailed analysis to date of CDL, has implications for anyone with an internet connection. Two of its technological experiments proposed a range of copyright tests for book publishers.

New Machinery and Electrical Equipment Safety Norms Pose Challenge to MSMEs

India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are expected to face significant challenges due to the **Machinery and Electrical Equipment Safety (Omnibus Technical Regulation) Order, 2024**, introduced by the **Ministry of Heavy Industry**. The order, which sets **strict safety standards** for machinery and electrical equipment, will be enforced starting in **2025**.

While export-oriented equipment is exempt, most MSMEs, which supply both domestic and export markets, will be affected. Approximately **90% of machinery producers** in the domestic market are MSMEs, many of which currently follow **ISO 9001** standards that don't cover these new safety norms. The **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)** warned that the lack of implementation guidelines from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) will make compliance difficult and increase costs.

Without adequate time and support, many smaller firms may face closures due to the inability to meet these new technical standards. GTRI suggests the government should delay implementation and assist the industry in preparing for the transition.

P2P Lending Platforms Face Uncertainty Due to New RBI Norms

After the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced amended **Master Directions** on August 16, **peer-to-peer (P2P) lending platforms** have stopped onboarding new customers, raising concerns about the future of their business. Many large P2P players are considering winding down operations due to the stringent new regulations, which **limit tenure-linked returns** and **introduce a T+1 settlement cycle**. Industry leaders have expressed concerns about the lack of clarity regarding whether the norms apply retrospectively or prospectively, as well as the practicality of the T+1 cycle.

P2P companies are **pushing for a T+10 cycle** instead and are seeking discussions with RBI and Finance Ministry officials to address these issues. The new rules, if enforced as they stand, could drastically shrink the P2P lending portfolio over the next year, impacting the market and limiting growth opportunities for these platforms.

"News Highlights: Key Updates in Brief"

National

- A six-member Central team led by **Anil Subramaniam**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, arrived in **Andhra Pradesh** to assess the damage caused by recent heavy rain and floods.
- The Union Cabinet approved the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-IV (PMGSY-IV)**, set to be implemented from **2024-25 to 2028-29**. The programme aims to construct **62,500 km of all-weather roads**, providing new connectivity to 25,000 unconnected habitations. It also includes construction and upgrading of **bridges**. The road alignment planning will be managed via the **PM Gati Shakti portal**.
- The Union Cabinet approved **Mission Mausam** with an allocation of ₹2,000 crore for **two years**. Implemented by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, the mission **aims to enhance research, development, and capacity in atmospheric sciences**, including weather surveillance, modelling, forecasting, and management. Key components of the mission involve the **deployment of next-generation radars and satellite systems**.
- To support India's goal of installing **500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity** by 2030, the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** is engaging with financial institutions and banks to secure loans for renewable energy projects. At the upcoming **Re-Invest summit** in Gandhinagar, banks and financial institutions will present "**shapath patra**" (promissory notes) outlining their funding plans. This initiative aims to attract necessary finance for the renewable energy sector, with Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** set to inaugurate the conference.

International

- Bangladesh's war crimes tribunal seeks extradition of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India, accusing her of mass atrocities.
- Macron's appointment of a conservative Prime Minister despite a leftist electoral win has sparked protests over undermining democracy and empowering the far-right in France.
- Iraq and the U.S. have agreed on a phased withdrawal of U.S.-led coalition forces from Iraq and Kurdistan, with a potential final agreement expected soon.

End of Summary

This marks the end of today's summary from *The Hindu*. We trust this has added value to your exam preparation. Keep engaging with current affairs to sharpen your insights and strengthen your knowledge. We'll be back tomorrow with more updates to guide you on your path to success.

Thank you for reading. Stay focused and dedicated!

Understanding current affairs is crucial for **UPSC/State PSC preparation**, as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, ensuring that candidates are well-informed, relevant, and capable of making insightful analyses on contemporary issues.

Stay Updated

Revisit Earlier Current Affairs for Background Information

[Explore Previous Updates](#)