

NEWS TODAY

CABINET COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS APPROVE NEW CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEME 'PM VISHWAKARMA'

- Scheme aims to **strengthen and nurture the family-based practice of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople** working with their hands and tools.
- **Key features**
 - Financial outlay of Rs.13,000 crore for a **period of five years (FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28)**.
 - In first year, **five lakh families will be covered and a total of 30 lakh craftsmen families will be covered over five years.**
 - Provision of **credit support of up to Rs. 1 lakh** (first tranche) and **Rs. 2 lakh** (second tranche) with a **concessional interest rate of 5%**.
 - Under the scheme, there will be **two types of skilling programmes i.e. Basic and Advanced**.
 - **Participants** will get a **stipend of Rs. 500 per day** while undergoing training.
 - **Beneficiaries** will receive **up to Rs. 15,000 to buy modern tools**.
 - **Eighteen traditional traders will be covered initially** including carpenter, blacksmith, locksmith, among others.
 - Artisans and craftspeople across India will be provided **recognition through PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card**.
- **Significance of scheme**
 - **Improves quality, and reach of products and services** of artisans and craftspeople.
 - **Ensures Vishwakarmas are integrated with domestic and global value chains**.
 - Provide **skill upgradation, incentive for toolkit and digital transactions**, and marketing support.

GOVERNMENT PLANNING SKILL TRAINING FOR 2 CRORE WOMEN UNDER 'LAKHPATI DIDI' SCHEME: PRIME MINISTER

- Lakhpati Didi Scheme aims to encourage **women to start micro-enterprises** to help them earn **at least Rs 1 lakh annually from the Self Help Groups (SHGs)**.
 - The scheme is **already in place in some states**.
- These women would be trained in skills like **plumbing, LED bulb making and operating and repairing drones**, etc.
- **About SHG**
 - SHG is an **informal group** of usually 10-20 members who **face similar problems** and come together **voluntarily** to work for their **personal, social and economic development**.
 - All the members **agree for common savings, generate a common fund** and utilize the same for their **credit needs** through a management.
 - **Significance:**
 - SHGs provide **small loans** to members to facilitate microfinance **entrepreneurship** (crucial for **poverty elimination**).
 - Facilitate **women's empowerment** by making them financially and intellectually independent.
 - India has **some 12 million SHGs**, of which **88 % are all-women-member ones** (Economic Survey 2022-23).
 - Improvement in **health, nutrition status** and educational status of children and family.
 - **Issues with SHGs:** Borrowing primarily for **consumption purposes**, confusion due to entry of **private micro finance institutions** into the rural areas, etc.

Key Initiatives for promoting SHGs



SHG Bank Linkage Project (SHG-BLP) launched by NABARD in 1992 is the world's largest microfinance project.



Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) for organizing the rural poor women into SHGs.



Self-Employment Programme (SEP) for interest subvention to all SHGs accessing bank loans.



Kudumbashree, a community organization of Neighborhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala.

SIX YEARS OF MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

- Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted in 2013 at Geneva, is **first global legally binding treaty to protect human health and environment** from adverse effects of mercury.
 - It is named after the **city in Japan that became the epicentre of Minamata disease**, a neurological disease caused by severe mercury poisoning, in 1950s.
 - It came **into force in 2017**. Presently, there are 144 Parties and 128 Signatories to it.
 - **India ratified it in 2018 with flexibility for continued use of mercury-based products** and processes involving mercury compounds up to 2025.
- **Minamata Convention requires that party nations**
 - **Reduce and where feasible eliminate use and release of mercury** from Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining.
 - **Control mercury air emissions** from coal fired power plants, coal-fired industrial boilers etc.
 - **Phase-out or reduce mercury use** in products like **batteries, switches, lights, cosmetics, pesticides, dental amalgam**.
 - **Addresses supply and trade of mercury**; safer storage and disposal, and strategies to address contaminated sites.



Mercury is a **naturally occurring element** that is **found in air, water and soil**.

- It may have toxic effects on **nervous system, thyroid, kidneys, lungs, immune system, eyes, gums and skin**.
- It is considered by WHO as **one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern**.

UNION CABINET APPROVES RS 14,903 CRORE FOR EXPANSION OF DIGITAL INDIA PROGRAMME

- Cabinet approves expansion of Digital India Scheme **for five years (FY2021-22 to FY2025-26)**. Under the expansion,
 - **6.25 lakh IT professionals will undergo upskilling and re-skilling training**.
 - **9 more supercomputers will be added** under National Super Computer Mission. This is in addition to 18 supercomputers already deployed.
 - **540 additional services to be available under Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG)** platform (presently offers 1,700 services).
 - **Bhashini**, AI-enabled multi-language translation tool (currently available in 10 languages) **will be rolled out in all of 22 languages included in Schedule 8 of Constitution**.
- Digital India (launched in 2015) is a flagship programme of Government of India with a **vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy**.
 - Its **vision is centred on three key areas i.e., Digital infrastructure as Utility to Every Citizen; Governance & Services on Demand; and Digital Empowerment of Citizens**.
 - **Overall coordination** is being done by **Department of Electronics and Information Technology**.
- **Achievements of Digital India Programme**
 - Over **82 billion digital transactions** already done in 2023 alone.
 - Presently, nearly **1.94 lakh villages have been connected under BharatNet project**.

9 Pillars of Digital India



13.5 CRORE PEOPLE HAVE COME OUT OF POVERTY: PRIME MINISTER

- The PM reiterated findings of the **National Multidimensional Poverty Index (NMPI)** that shows that poverty **in India fell from 25% to under 15%** from 2015-16 to 2019-21.
 - NMPI is released **by the NITI Aayog and measures** deprivations across the **three dimensions** (health & nutrition, education, and standard of living) and **12 variables**.
- **Estimates of poverty in India**
 - The Official Poverty line is based on **consumption expenditure** (stated in rupees).
 - Committees led by **D T Lakdawala (1993), Suresh Tendulkar (2009), and C Rangarajan (2014)** drew subsequent "poverty lines" for India.
 - Rangarajan Committee has set **an income of Rs 32 for rural India, Rs 47 for urban India as the Poverty line limit**.
 - **Consumption Expenditure Surveys (CES)** was conducted **every five years by the National Sample Survey Office**.
 - **Issues:** India's last official poverty statistics are from **2011** (the CES data of 2017-18 was withheld due to ambiguity in data).
- **Importance of reliable poverty estimates**
 - **Critical** for designing, implementing and monitoring of **anti-poverty programmes**.
 - **Serve as a barometer of the extent of the success of strategies** for inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

CABINET APPROVES MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT (MRA) OF AUTHORISED ECONOMIC OPERATORS (AEO) BETWEEN INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

- MRA of AEO aims to provide **reciprocal benefits to Exporters** of both countries in the **clearance of goods** by the Customs authorities.
- AEO programme is a **voluntary compliance programme** under the aegis of the **World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework** of Standards to secure and facilitate Global Trade.
 - **India's AEO Programme** is also **in sync with the commitments under Article 7.7** (related to additional trade facilitation measures related to import, export or transit formalities) of **WTO TFA**.
 - Indian Customs has signed **two MRAs** with the Customs Administrations of **South Korea and Hong Kong** and MRAs with USA and Taiwan are in the final stages of conclusion.
- **WCO's SAFE Framework**
 - It was adopted by the WCO council in 2005 to **enhance international supply chain security and facilitate movement of legitimate goods**.
 - An entity engaged in **international trade is approved by Customs as compliant** with supply chain security standards and **granted AEO status & certain benefits**.
 - **Significance**
 - Heralded the beginning of a new approach to the **end-to-end management of goods moving across borders**.
 - Recognises the significance of a **closer partnership between Customs and business**.



World Customs Organization



Brussels, Belgium



Genesis: Established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC).



About: It is an **independent intergovernmental body**.



Membership: 185 members



Objective: To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

ALSO IN NEWS



PM e Bus Sewa Scheme

- Cabinet has approved the **"PM-eBus Sewa" scheme**.
- **Two components:**
 - **Augmenting the City bus services:** 10,000 e-buses to be introduced on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
 - **Green Urban Mobility Initiatives:** Envisages green initiatives like bus priority, infrastructure, multimodal interchange facilities, etc.
- **Coverage:**
 - Cities with a **population of Three lakh and above as per census 2011**.
 - **Priority will be given to cities having no organised bus service**.
- **Duration:** It will support bus operations for **10 years**.



PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan

- Cabinet **approved 7 multi tracking railway projects** under PM Gati Sakti.
- **PM Gati Sakti** is a national **master plan for multi modal connectivity**.
 - It aims to **provide integrated and seamless connectivity** for movement of people and goods improve logistics efficiency and to **address critical infrastructure gaps**.
 - It facilitates **integrated and holistic planning** across concerned Ministries/Departments.



Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)

- Government has fallen short of its target for employment generation in formal sector under ABRY.
- ABRY has been launched in 2020 by **Ministry of Labour & Employment** as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0.
 - It aims to **incentivize employers for creation of new employment and restoration of loss of employment during Covid-19 pandemic**.
 - **It intends to reduce the financial burden of employers and encourages them to hire more workers**.
 - It was being implemented through **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**.

 <p>Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MoU between India and Suriname in the field of Medical Products Regulation includes recognition of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP). ● IP prescribes standards for identity, purity and strength of drugs essentially required from health care perspective. ● It is published and updated by IPC, an Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IPC sets standards of drugs in the country. ➤ It also provides IP Reference Substances (IPRS) which act as a fingerprint for identification of an article under test.
 <p>Pong Dam (aka Maharana Pratap Sagar or Pong reservoir)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pong Dam is a manmade reservoir. It was constructed in 1975 on river Beas in wetland of Shivalik hills of Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In 1983, entire reservoir was declared as Wildlife Sanctuary. ➤ It is the highest earth fill dam in India. ➤ Pong Dam Lake has been declared as Ramsar Site in 2002. ➤ There is a Vulture café in Pong wherein cattle carcass is dumped inviting the Vultures to scavenge upon them.
 <p>Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) Portal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CPGRAMS is an online platform available to citizens 24x7 to lodge their grievances to public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a single portal connected to all Ministries/Departments of Government of India and States. ➤ It is developed by National Informatics Centre, and owned by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). ➤ Available in 22 scheduled languages along with English. ➤ Issues which are not taken up: RTI matters, religious matters, subjudice cases etc.
 <p>Navroz (Parsis New Year)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Navroz- translated to 'a new day' - is the first day of first month (Farvardin) in Zoroastrian Calendar. ● Though celebrated on 21st March (Spring Equinox) globally, Navroz arrives 200 days later in India and is celebrated in month of August as Parsis here follow Shahenshahi calendar that doesn't account for leap years. ● It is also known as Jamshed-i-Navroz after Persian King Jamshed who started Shahenshahi Calendar. ● It is mainly celebrated in states of Gujarat and Maharashtra.
 <p>Personality in news</p>	<p>Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (1904-1948)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● She is a well-known Indian poet and freedom fighter. ● In 1921, she joined Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. ● She was the first woman satyagrahi to court arrest in Nagpur and was jailed twice for her involvement in protests against British rule in 1923 and 1942. ● Famous Work: Jhansi Ki Rani, Veeron Ka Kaisa Ho Basant, Rakhi Ki Chunauti, and Vida etc. ● She wrote in Khariboli dialect of Hindi. ● Her writing focused on hardships faced by Indian women during freedom movement of India. ● Values: Compassion, Courage etc.
 <p>Places in News</p>	<p>Lake Titicaca</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water levels in Lake Titicaca falls to historic lows due to climate change. ● Political Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Situated between Peru (west) and Bolivia (east). ● Geographical features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Located in Andes Mountains of South America. ➤ At 3,800 meters above sea level, it is the world's highest navigable body of water. ➤ Largest freshwater lake in South America. ➤ It has been on UNESCO's World Heritage tentative list since 2005. 