

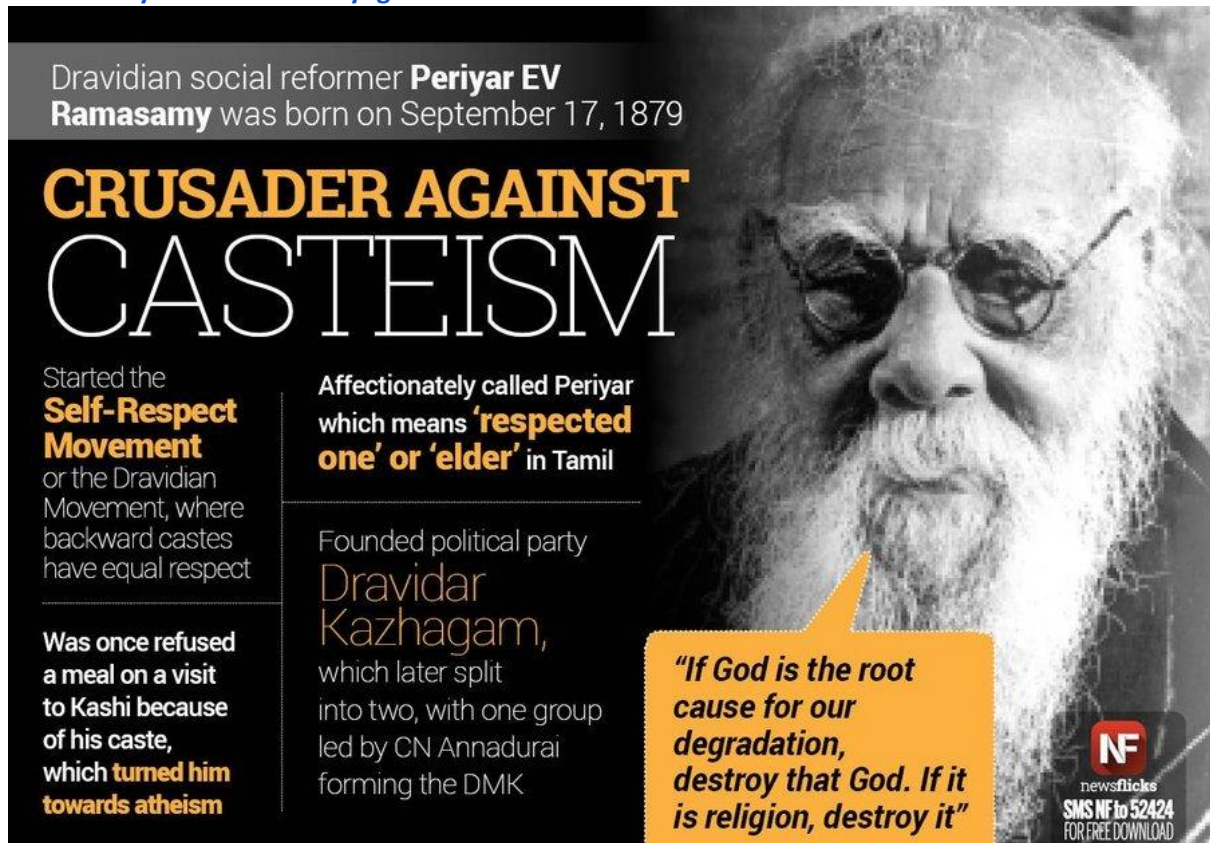
Today's Prelims Topics

Periyar Memorial

Context

The Chief ministers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu will inaugurate the Periyar memorial in Viacom, Kerala.

About Periyar & Vaikom Satyagraha



Dravidian social reformer **Periyar EV Ramasamy** was born on September 17, 1879

CRUSADER AGAINST CASTEISM

Started the **Self-Respect Movement** or the Dravidian Movement, where backward castes have equal respect

Was once refused a meal on a visit to Kashi because of his caste, which **turned him towards atheism**

Affectionately called Periyar which means '**respected one**' or '**elder**' in Tamil

Founded political party **Dravidar Kazhagam**, which later split into two, with one group led by CN Annadurai forming the DMK

"If God is the root cause for our degradation, destroy that God. If it is religion, destroy it"

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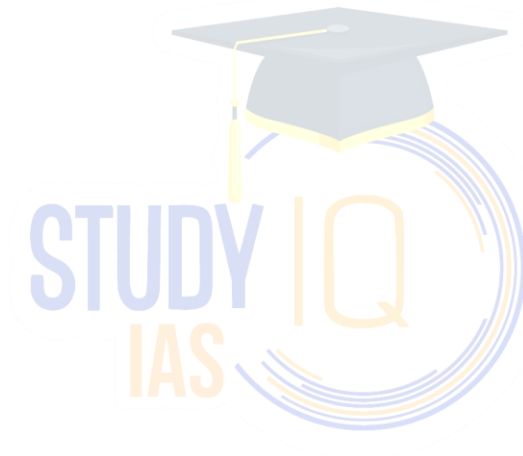
- It was a nonviolent protest that took place in the **Kingdom of Travancore (present-day Kerala) from 1924 to 1925.**
- **Aim of Satyagraha:** To end caste discrimination and untouchability that prevented lower-caste Hindus from accessing the **Vaikom Mahadeva Temple** and the public roads around it.
- **Leaders:** The movement was led by **K. Kelappan (also known as Kerala Gandhi)**, **K. P. Kesava Menon** and **T. K. Madhavan** with support from **Mahatma Gandhi** and **E. V. Ramasamy "Periyar"**.
- **Events:** The movement began on March 30, 1924, when a group of volunteers in khadi and caps attempted to enter the temple. They were stopped and arrested by the police.

Year	Movement	Leaders	About Movement
1873	Satyashodhak Movement	Jyotirao Phule	Emancipation of low castes, untouchables and widows; against Brahminic dominion.

1916	Justice Party Movement	Dr. T.M Nair, P. Tyagaraja Chetti, C.N Mudalair	Opposed Brahminic control in government, education and politics.
1924	Depressed Classes Movement	B.R. Ambedkar	Focused on the upliftment of depressed classes; opposed untouchability; published a Marathi newspaper titled Bhiskrit Bharat (1927) .
1925	Self-Respect Movement	E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar)	Opposed the caste system and Brahmin bias; established the Kudi Arasu journal (1910) .

Source:

- [The Hindu - Pinarayi, Stalin to come together for launch of Periyar memorial in Vaikom tomorrow](#)



International Fund for Agricultural Development

Context

The Odisha government is planning to take a loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development to implement the **Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement Programme (OPELIP-II) for PVTG's**.

About International fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

- IFAD is a **United Nations agency** that works to improve agricultural development and reduce poverty in developing countries. (**HQ - Rome, Italy**)
- It was established in **1977** in response to a global food crisis.
- **Goal:** To help rural people improve their food and nutrition security, increase their incomes and strengthen their resilience.

About Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)

- PM-JANMAN was launched in November, 2023, to improve the lives of **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA).
- The mission focuses on 11 key interventions across **9 ministries and departments**, covering sectors such as safe housing, clean drinking water, healthcare, education, nutrition and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

About PVTGs

- The **Dhebar Commission (1960-61)**: It identified disparities among Scheduled Tribes, leading to the creation of the Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) category.
- In 2006, the PTG category was renamed to PVTGs, (**Criteria for PVTG**)
 - Pre-agricultural lifestyles
 - Low literacy rates
 - Small or stagnant populations
 - Subsistence economies.
- 75 communities in 18 States and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are categorised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- **Odisha has the highest number of PVTGs (15).**

UPSC PYQ

Q. Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India: (2019)

1. PVTGs reside in 18 States and one Union Territory.
2. A stagnant or declining population is one of the criteria for determining PVTG status.
3. There are 95 PVTGs officially notified in the country so far.
4. Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs.

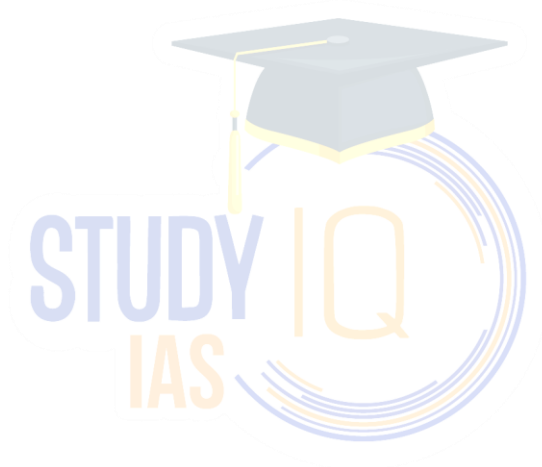
Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

Answer: C

Source:

- [The Hindu - Mindless splurge': Odisha govt.'s decision to seek external loan for PVTG development](#)



Difference between Cess & Surcharge

Context

The Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, addressed the contentious issue of the Centre's increasing reliance on cesses and surcharges.

About Cess & Surcharge

Aspect	Cess	Surcharge
Definition	A tax levied for a specific purpose or objective, such as education or health.	An additional tax on taxpayers whose income exceeds a certain threshold.
Objective	Collected to fund specific government programs or projects.	Collected to generate extra revenue from high-income individuals or entities.
Applicability	Imposed on all taxpayers within the category for which it is levied.	Imposed only on taxpayers whose income or profits exceed a certain limit.
Scope of Usage	Can only be used for the specific purpose for which it is collected.	Can be used for general purposes by the government.
Examples	Education Cess (2%), Health Cess (1%).	Surcharge on individuals earning above ₹50 lakh or corporations with high profits.
Mention in Constitution	Article 270	Article 271
A common feature of both surcharge and cess is that the centre need not share it with states.		

Source:

- [The Hindu - Arvind Panagariya says issue of surcharges is complicated](#)

India Skills Report, 2025

Context

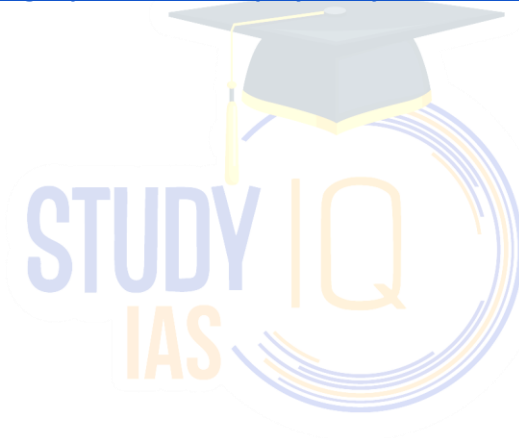
India skills Report 2025 was launched recently.

About India Skills Report, 2025

- **Prepared by:** The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in collaboration with Wheebox and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- Nearly 55% of Indian graduates are projected to be globally employable by 2025, an increase from 51.2% in 2024.
- Management graduates lead in employability at 78%, followed by engineering (71.5%), MCA (71%) and science graduates (58%).
- Key states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi are emerging as talent hubs, with cities such as Pune, Bengaluru, and Mumbai providing a skilled workforce.
- The report also reveals a gender disparity in employability rates, with men's employability expected to rise to 53.5% in 2025 from 51.8% in 2024, while women's employability is projected to decline from 50.9% to 47.5%.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Kerala among top States for employability in India: report](#)



Champions of Earth Award

Context

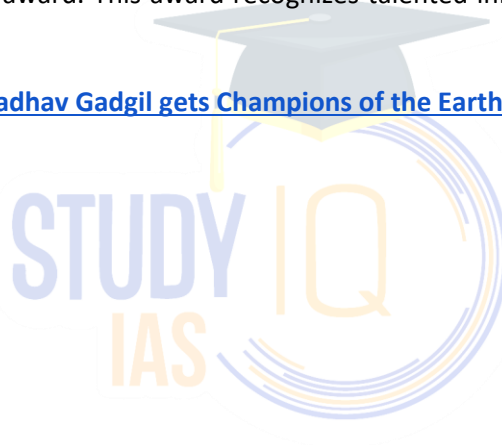
The United Nations has honored ecologist **Madhav Gadgil** with the Champions of the Earth award for his work in the Western Ghats. He led the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, recommending the region's classification as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.

About Champions of Earth Award

- It is the United Nations' **Highest Environmental Honour**.
- It was started in **2005**.
- The award is presented annually by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- The award aims to inspire global action for a sustainable future by spotlighting exceptional environmental achievements
- **Categories:** The award recognizes leaders in 4 categories:
 - Policy leadership
 - Inspiration and action
 - Entrepreneurial vision
 - Science and innovation
- **Young Champions of the Earth:** In 2017, the program was expanded to include the Young Champions of the Earth award. This award recognizes talented innovators between the ages of 18 and 30.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Ecologist Madhav Gadgil gets Champions of the Earth award](#)



National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap

Context

National Mission on cultural mapping was launched to preserve India's rich cultural heritage and promoting rural traditions to revitalize rural economies.

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NCCM)

- It was launched in **2017** by the **Ministry of Culture** to preserve, promote, and document India's diverse cultural heritage, particularly in rural areas.
- It is executed by the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)**.
- **Objectives of the Scheme:**
 - Cultural mapping of 6.5 lakh villages along with their geographical, demographic profiles, and creative capitals.
 - To create awareness about the strengths of cultural heritage and its interface with development and cultural identity.
 - Creation of National Registers of Artists and Art practices.
 - Development of a web portal and mobile app to function as a **National Cultural Work Place (NCWP)**.
- The mission operates through **3 interconnected programmes:**
 - **Sanskritik Pratibha Khoj:** Campaign for cultural awareness, talent hunts, and revitalization of folk and tribal heritage.
 - **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD):** Cultural mapping to identify and promote local art practices, artists, and craftspeople.
 - **National Cultural Workplace (NCWP):** Interactive web portal for artists and craftspeople. Online platform serving as a cultural service provider.

Case Study

- **Thongjao Village, Manipur:**
 - Known as the "**Land of Pottery.**"
 - Legacy of Padma Shri awardee Neelamani Devi, a master craftswoman, has kept the traditional pottery art alive.
 - Villagers create both functional pots and intricate masterpieces, passing the craft to the next generation.
 - **Global Stage:** Through the Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) platform, Thongjao's pottery and artisans' stories are promoted globally.

Source:

- [PIB - National Mission on Cultural Mapping and Roadmap \(NCCMR\)](#)

Researchers develop AI-based platform to rapidly find age-defying molecules

Context

Researchers at IIIT-Delhi have developed AgeXtend, an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered platform designed to discover molecules that could slow down ageing and promote healthier lives.

About AgeXtend

- It is an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered platform designed to discover molecules that could slow down ageing and promote healthier lives.
- It was developed by researchers at the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIIT-Delhi).
- It utilises bioactivity data from existing geroprotectors-substances that slow ageing-to predict new molecules with similar properties.
- Its AI modules evaluate geroprotective potential, assess toxicity and identify target proteins and mechanisms of action, ensuring both accuracy and safety in the discovery process.
- The researchers tested AgeXtend by excluding well-known compounds like **metformin and taurine, molecules already known to extend lifespan**, and found that the platform could still predict their benefits.
- AgeXtend also screened more than 1.1 billion compounds and identified promising candidates validated through experiments on yeast, *Caenorhabditis elegans* (a nematode), and human cell models.
- The research also explored AgeXtend's ability to analyze natural compounds found in the human microbiome, tiny organisms living in our bodies, and their role in controlling cell ageing.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Researchers develop AI-based platform to rapidly find age-defying molecules](#)

C. Subramania Bharati

Context

A complete and annotated version of the works of C. Subramania Bharati will be released by Prime Minister in New Delhi.

About C. Subramania Bharati



- He was a poet, freedom fighter, and social reformer from Tamil Nadu.
- He was known as **Mahakavi Bharathiyar**.
- He was born in Ettayapuram, South India, in 1882, and died in Madras in 1921.
- He is considered one of India's greatest poets. His songs on nationalism and freedom of India helped to rally the masses to support the Indian Independence Movement in Tamil Nadu.
- Bharathi joined as **Assistant Editor of the Swadesamitran**, a Tamil daily, in 1904.
- In 1907, he started editing the Tamil weekly India and the English newspaper Bala Bharatham with M.P.T. Acharya.
- He assisted Aurobindo in the Arya journal and later Karma Yogi in Pondicherry.
- He was exiled from British India in 1908 and went to live in Pondicherry, a French colony in South India.
- He spent ten years in exile there and eventually returned to Madras, where he died.
- **Best Known works of Bharati:** Kannan pattu (1917; Songs to Krishna), Panchali satham (1912; Panchali's Vow) and Kuyil pattu (1912; Kuyil's Song).
 - He also translated Vedic hymns, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavat Gita into Tamil.

Source:

- [The Hindu - PM Modi to release collected works of Subramania Bharati](#)

Centre wants states to make snakebites notifiable disease

Context

The Union Health Ministry has urged states to classify snakebites as a notifiable disease, requiring both private and public hospitals to report cases.

About Snake bite

- Snakebites can lead to acute medical emergencies that require immediate care.
- They can cause severe paralysis that can prevent breathing, can lead to a fatal hemorrhage, and damage different tissues.
- Snakebites need to be treated with antivenom to prevent death and severe symptoms.
- **Data on Snakebites in India:**
 - India is home to **310 snake species**, of which:
 - 66 are venomous.
 - 42 are mildly venomous.
 - 23 species are medically significant due to their fatal venom.
 - **'Big Four' snakes** cause 90% of bites: Indian cobra, Common krait, Russell's viper & Saw-scaled viper.
 - Commercial **polyvalent antivenom** is effective for 80% of snakebites caused by the Big Four.
- **National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE):**
 - It was launched by the government in 2024 to halve snakebite deaths by 2030.
 - It recommends making snakebites a notifiable disease.
 - Major focus on high-risk states like: Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Gujarat.

What Are Notifiable Diseases?

- Diseases which are legally required to be reported to the government for public health action.
- **Examples:** Tuberculosis, HIV, cholera, malaria, dengue, and hepatitis.
- Criteria:
 - Likely to cause outbreaks.
 - Lead to significant deaths.
 - Require rapid public health interventions.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Why centre wants states to make snakebites notifiable disease](#)

The code of conduct judges need to follow

Context

- Comments made by Allahabad High Court Judge Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad event have sparked significant public outrage.
- His remarks, perceived as derogatory towards the Muslim community, have led to calls for an in-house inquiry into his conduct.

Judicial Ethics

- Judiciary derives its power from two key sources:
 - **Public acceptance** of its authority.
 - **Integrity** of the judiciary.
- The judiciary has established codes of conduct to uphold these principles.
 - **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997):**
 - Adopted by the **Supreme Court on May 7, 1997.**
 - Emphasizes the need for judicial behavior to **maintain public faith** in the judiciary's impartiality.
 - Judges must avoid any act that could **undermine the credibility** of the judiciary.
 - Judges should remember that they are always under **public scrutiny.**
 - **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2002):**
 - Provides a framework for judicial behavior.
 - Judges must ensure their conduct **upholds public confidence** in judicial impartiality.
 - Judges have the right to freedom of expression but must act in a way that maintains the **dignity and independence** of their office.
 - Judges should be **aware of societal diversity** and ensure **equal treatment** for all.

Judge Removal Process

By the Parliament

- A judge can be removed from office through a motion passed by Parliament on the grounds of **"proved misbehaviour or incapacity."**
- Although the Constitution does not mention the term **"impeachment,"** it is commonly used to describe the removal process under **Article 124** (for Supreme Court judges) and **Article 218** (for High Court judges).

Procedure for Removal of Judges (as per the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968):

- **Initiation of Impeachment Motion:**
 - The impeachment motion can originate in either House of Parliament:
 - **Lok Sabha:** Requires a signed notice by at least **100 members.**
 - **Rajya Sabha:** Requires a signed notice by at least **50 members.**
 - The **Speaker** (for Lok Sabha) or **Chairman** (for Rajya Sabha) may consult individuals and examine relevant materials before deciding whether to admit or reject the motion.
- **Investigation Committee Formation:**
 - If the motion is admitted, the Speaker or Chairman will form a **three-member committee** to investigate the charges. The committee consists of:
 - A **Supreme Court judge**
 - The **Chief Justice of a High Court**
 - A **distinguished jurist**
- **Framing of Charges:** The committee frames charges and provides a copy to the judge, who can submit a **written defence.**
- **Committee Report Submission:** After completing the investigation, the committee submits its report to the Speaker or Chairman.

- The report is then presented before the concerned House of Parliament.
- **Consideration of Motion:** If the report finds evidence of **misbehaviour or incapacity**, the motion for removal is considered and debated in the House.
- **Adoption of Motion:** The motion must be passed in each House by:
 - A **majority of the total membership** of that House.
 - A **two-thirds majority** of the members present and voting.
 - If the motion passes in one House, it is sent to the other House for approval.
- **Presidential Order:** Once both Houses adopt the motion, it is sent to the **President**, who issues an order for the judge's removal.

Note:

- Except for a **removal motion**, the legislature cannot discuss a judge's misconduct.

In-House Procedure

- Established in 1999 and made public in 2014, this procedure allows judges facing serious allegations to opt for voluntary retirement to avoid public embarrassment.
- The procedure allows a complaint against a High Court judge to:
 - President.
 - Chief Justice of India (CJI).
 - Chief Justice of the High Court.
- **Procedure for Investigating Complaints:**
 - **Step 1:** High Court Chief Justice receives the complaint and may seek a response from the judge.
 - **Step 2:** If further investigation is needed, the complaint and response are forwarded to the CJI.
 - **Step 3:** The CJI can appoint a **fact-finding committee** consisting of:
 - Two Chief Justices from other High Courts.
 - One High Court judge.
- **Outcome of Investigation:** If sufficient grounds are found, the CJI may ask the judge to retire voluntarily.
 - If the judge refuses, the CJI can inform the President and Prime Minister, leading to impeachment proceedings.

Source: [The Hindu: The code of conduct judges need to follow](#)

Editorial Summary

India's Ambitious Space Programme Goals

Context

India's space program is poised for significant advancements over the next two decades.

More in News

- India's space programme aims to secure strategic autonomy in space access by developing powerful and reusable rockets like ISRO's **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)**.

ISRO's Road Map for the Next Two Decades

- **Gaganyaan Mission:** First Indian human-spaceflight mission, demonstrating India's human-spaceflight capability.
- **Space Station by 2030s:** India aims to establish its own space station in Earth's orbit.
- **Human-Spaceflight to the Moon:** Long-term goal to expand human-spaceflight capabilities to lunar missions.
- **Development Of NGLV:**
 - **Features and Capabilities:**
 - **Heavy Lift Capability:** NGLV will **triple the payload capacity** of the current **LVM3** (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III).
 - **Reusability:** Unlike current expendable rockets, parts of the NGLV will be **reusable**, offering significant **cost savings**.
 - **Benefits:**
 - Reduces the need for **miniaturization** or weight restrictions.
 - Expands possibilities for space missions.
 - **Comparison with Current Rockets:**
 - **LVM3:** India's most powerful rocket but expendable and limited to **4,000 kg** payload to Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO).
 - **SpaceX's Falcon 9:**
 - Reusable version carries **5,500 kg** to GTO.
 - Expendable version carries **8,300 kg** to GTO.
 - **SpaceX's Starship:** Reusable rocket capable of lifting **21,000 kg to GTO** and **100,000 kg to Low Earth Orbit**.

Why is there an Urgent Need of Heavy Lift Capability Rockets?

- **Upcoming Space Missions Require Larger Payloads:** Missions like **Chandrayaan-3** and future human lunar missions require rockets that can carry heavier modules and equipment.
 - **E.g.,** India's next uncrewed lunar mission will need **two LVM3 rockets** to launch modules that are then assembled in space. A single heavy-lift rocket could simplify this process.
- **Global Competition and Technological Advancement:** Competitors like **SpaceX** have developed rockets capable of lifting significantly heavier payloads (e.g., **21,000 kg** to Geostationary Transfer Orbit by Starship).
 - To remain competitive and achieve **strategic autonomy**, India needs comparable heavy-lift capabilities.
- **Dependence on Foreign Launch Providers:** The **LVM3** can lift a maximum of **4,000 kg** to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO), which restricts mission capabilities.
 - **E.g.,** Recent launches of ISRO satellites like **GSAT-N2** had to rely on **SpaceX's Falcon 9** due to payload limitations.

Where India Lags in Space Programs

- **Heavy Lift and Reusable Rocket Technology:** ISRO's most powerful rocket, the LVM3, can lift only 4,000 kg to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO).
 - **Reusability** is still in the **developmental phase**, whereas global competitors like SpaceX have already operationalized reusable rockets such as Falcon 9 and Starship.
- **Private Sector Involvement:** India's private space sector is in its **nascent stages** compared to the U.S., where companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin lead innovation.
 - Limited opportunities for Indian startups to develop and launch heavy-lift rockets.
- **Space Infrastructure and Investment:** Insufficient investment in spaceports and ground infrastructure for frequent and diverse launches.
 - Limited testing facilities for advanced propulsion systems and human-spaceflight technologies.

What Can Be Done to Improve India's Space Programs

- **Accelerate Development of Reusable Rockets:** Prioritize the development of ISRO's **Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)**.
 - Fund private-sector initiatives to develop **reusable heavy-lift rockets**.
 - Collaborate with **foreign partners** to fast-track the development of reusability technologies.
- **Boost Private Sector Participation:** Implement a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model to incentivize private space companies.
 - Provide **milestone-based funding** for private firms to develop launch vehicles, satellites, and space technologies.
 - Facilitate collaboration between Indian startups and **global space firms** for technology transfer.
- **Increase Global Market Share:** Develop cost-competitive, reusable rockets to attract commercial launches.

Sources: [The Hindu: Deepening India's steps as a key space-faring nation](#)

What does the World Solar Report 2024 by the International Solar Alliance state?

Context

The World Solar Report 2024 by the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was released.

What were the Findings?

- From 1.22 GW in 2000, the world's solar capacity has surged to 1,419 GW in 2023, charting a CAGR of about 36%.
- Today, solar capacity represents three-quarters of all renewable capacity additions worldwide.
- The report indicates that average auction prices for utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) projects have decreased significantly, with costs averaging \$40/MWh in 2024.
 - India secured a notable auction price of **\$34/MWh**, topping the global charts for solar PV capacity granted through auctions.
- Investment in solar PV technology is expected to surpass **\$500 billion** in 2024, exceeding investments in all other generation technologies combined.
- **Employment Growth:** Solar PV sector jobs increased to **7.1 million** in 2023 (up from **4.9 million** in 2022).

Global Solar Market Overview

- **Dominant Countries in Solar PV Capacity (2023):**
 - **China:** 43% (609 GW) of global capacity.
 - **United States:** 10% (137.73 GW).
 - **Japan, Germany, and India:** Each hold a **5-6% share**.
 - **Emerging Markets:** Brazil, Australia, Italy, and Spain contribute around **2% each**.
- **Manufacturing Growth:**
 - **2023:** Global solar PV manufacturing capacity nearly doubled for wafers, cells, and modules.
 - **China's Share in Component Manufacturing:**
 - **Wafers:** 97%
 - **Cells:** 89%
 - **Modules:** 83%

Usage of Solar in Other Industries

- **Agricultural Transformation:**
 - **Solar-Powered Irrigation:** Reduces dependence on diesel-powered pumps.
 - The global solar pump market is projected to grow at a **CAGR of 5.8% (2021-2027)**.
- **Agrivoltaics Systems:**
 - Used for livestock management.
 - Panels provide shade for animals while generating electricity.

- **Pay-As-You-Go Business Models:** This model played a driving force in the adoption of solar systems.
 - This enables affordability by allowing users to pay in small, regular instalments.

Source: [The Hindu: What is the extent of the global share of solar energy?](#)

India Bangladesh Must Grapple With New Realities

Context

India-Bangladesh relations, once considered a model bilateral relationship, have deteriorated significantly due to recent political events and tensions.

Key Issues Leading to the Rift

- **Sheikh Hasina's Situation:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India amidst political turmoil.
 - Bangladesh demands her return to stand trial on charges of **police crackdowns and corruption**.
- **Attacks on Minorities:** India is concerned about the increasing attacks on minorities, particularly **Hindus** in Bangladesh.
- **Perception of Indian Interference:** Bangladesh is angered by what it perceives as **"unwanted Indian interference"** in its internal affairs.
- **Protests and Retaliations:** Indian protests against Bangladesh's arrest of a **Hindu monk for sedition** led to attacks on the Bangladeshi mission in Tripura.
 - In retaliation, protests were held in **Dhaka** against Indian diplomatic missions and cultural centers.

Way Forward

- **Need for Balanced Diplomacy:** India must address concerns over attacks on minorities and the need for a **democratic and inclusive** process in Bangladesh.
 - Simultaneously, India should also listen to the concerns of its neighbors to mitigate regional spillover effects.
- **Engagement with New Realities:** India should engage with the current political realities in Bangladesh.
 - A **"close, consultative partnership"** is essential for the long-term interests of both nations.

Source: [The Hindu: Two to Tango](#)

How to make self-employment count

Context

The dominance of the agricultural sector, coupled with a shift towards the services sector while neglecting manufacturing, significantly contributes to the persistently high levels of self-employment.

Key Characteristics of India's Labour Force

- **Low Participation and Stagnant Structure:** India has a **low rate of workforce participation** among the working-age population.
 - The structure of labour force participation has remained **largely unchanged for decades**.
- **High Self-Employment Rates:** India has a **higher proportion of self-employed workers** and a **smaller share of wage and salaried workers** compared to other middle-income economies.
 - **Over 50%** of the working population is self-employed:
 - **Rural Areas:** Approximately **60%** self-employed.
 - **Urban Areas:** About **40%** self-employed.
 - There has been an **increase in self-employment** between **2017-18** and **2023-24**, particularly in rural areas and among women.
- **Gender Disparity in Self-Employment:**
 - **Men:** Predominantly **own-account workers** (running their enterprises).
 - **Women:** Largely **"helpers in household enterprises"**.
 - While the gender gap in own-account workers has narrowed between 2017-18 and 2023-24, the proportion of women working as **"helpers"** has increased.

Implications of High Self-Employment

- **Work Quality and Productivity Issues:** High self-employment levels indicate **poor work quality** and low productivity, especially in rural areas.
 - Self-employment is often a **fall-back option** due to the lack of better opportunities.
- **Informality and Lack of Security:** Self-employed workers lack **formal job benefits** such as:
 - Social security coverage
 - Paid annual or sick leave
 - Written employment contracts
 - This results in increased **informality of work**.
- **Low Earnings and Underemployment**
 - **Self-employed earnings** are barely above casual labour levels.
 - The **gender earnings gap** has widened between 2017-18 and 2023-24, particularly in rural areas.
 - **Zero earnings:** Almost all self-employed helpers report zero earnings, regardless of gender.
 - Self-employed women often work **less than 40 hours per week**, leading to **underemployment**.

Constraints to Improving Self-Employment Quality

- **Education and Skills Deficiency**
 - **Low Education Levels:** In 2017-18, only **17%** of self-employed workers had completed Grade XII or higher, which marginally increased to **20.6%** in 2023-24.
 - **For self-employed women:**
 - **2017-18:** 9% completed high school or beyond.
 - **2023-24:** Increased to only **11.4%**.
 - **Vocational Training:**

- **Abysmally low:** Only **3%** of all self-employed had any formal or vocational training.
 - This gap limits their ability to enhance their skills and improve their work quality.
 - **Limited Access to Formal Credit**
 - **Limited Credit Access:** Many self-employed workers lack access to formal credit markets, which restricts their ability to expand their businesses.
 - Approximately 41% of unincorporated non-agricultural establishments operate on a small scale within household premises.
 - Limited credit increases borrowing costs and reduces loan size, constraining the growth of enterprises.
 - **Impact on Productivity:** Own Account Establishments (OAEs) have significantly lower productivity (₹1 lakh per worker) compared to Hired Worker Establishments (HWEs) (₹2 lakhs per worker).
 - **Administrative and Legal Challenges**
 - **Complex Legal Processes:** Starting formal enterprises remains challenging due to **bureaucratic hurdles**.
 - Entrepreneurs are often forced to rely on **family-managed firms**, inhibiting growth.
 - **Impact of Poor Court Efficiency:** Court inefficiency hampers contract enforcement and lowers productivity.
 - Disproportionate negative effects on **SC-ST entrepreneurs**.
 - Affects the ability of enterprises to expand and generate employment.
 - **Example of Impact:** The difference in professional management accounts for **11%** of the per capita income gap between India and the US.

Solutions for Enhancing Self-Employment Quality

- **Vocational Training and Education:** Expanding vocational training and linking it with **entrepreneurship opportunities**.
 - Facilitating **credit access** for ITI graduates under schemes like **PM Mudra Yojana**.
- **Access to Formal Credit:** Improving access to **formal credit markets** to expand self-employment and enterprise size.
- **Administrative and Legal Reforms:** Simplifying the process of starting and managing formal enterprises.
 - Enhancing the **efficiency of courts** to improve contract enforcement and reduce friction in business operations.

Source: [Indian Express: Making Her Work Count](#)