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National and International News

<p><b>Venus Orbiter Mission</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM).</li></ul> <p><b>Mission Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Venus Orbiter Mission, managed by the Department of Space, aims to send a spacecraft into Venus' orbit to study:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Venusian surface and subsurface.</b></li><li><b>Atmospheric processes and the Sun's influence on Venus' atmosphere.</b></li></ul></li><li>Studying Venus, once thought to be habitable, will aid in understanding the evolution of both Venus and Earth.</li></ul> <p><b>Mission Timeline and Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Venus Orbiter Mission is scheduled to <b>launch in March 2028</b>, taking advantage of an available window for optimal orbital insertion.</li><li>The mission is expected to <b>address key scientific questions about Venus, contributing valuable insights into planetary science.</b></li><li>Collaboration with various industries will boost employment and create technological advancements applicable to other sectors of the economy.</li></ul> <p><b>Financial and Technological Aspects</b></p> <p><b>Funding and Budget:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The total approved budget for VOM is <b>Rs. 1236 crore, with Rs. 824 crore allocated for spacecraft development.</b></li><li>The budget covers the creation of the spacecraft, specific payloads, technology elements, global ground station support, and launch vehicle costs.</li></ul> <p><b>Significance of Studying Venus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Venus is believed to have formed <b>under conditions similar to Earth</b>, making it a key object of study for understanding planetary evolution.</li><li>VOM aims to provide insights into Venus' atmosphere, geology, and surface, helping scientists understand how planetary environments can diverge despite having similar beginnings.</li></ul>
<p><b>NPS Vatsalya scheme</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p>



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the NPS Vatsalya scheme

- On September 18, 2024, Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman officially launched the **"NPS Vatsalya Yojana"** from New Delhi.

### About:

- **Target Group:** Children aged 0 to 18 years.
- **Minimum Deposit:** INR 1,000 per month.
- **Maximum Deposit:** No upper limit.
- **Account Operation:** Managed by parents until the child turns 18.
- **Account Transition:** After the child turns 18, the account can be converted into a regular NPS or a non-NPS scheme.
- **Objective:** Encourages children to develop the habit of saving, ensuring long-term financial security.

### Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanrakshAn Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)

### Context:

- The Union Cabinet extended the PM-AASHA price support scheme in agriculture until 2025-26 with a financial outlay of ₹35,000 crore.

### About:

The Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanrakshAn Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) is a comprehensive initiative launched by the Government of India aimed at ensuring fair and remunerative prices for farmers' produce. Announced in September 2018, the scheme has been extended recently through 2025-26.


### Components

**PM-AASHA comprises three main components:**

- **Price Support Scheme (PSS):**
  - This involves the physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds, and copra by central nodal agencies like the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), with state governments playing a proactive role.
  - The central government bears the costs associated with procurement.
- **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):**
  - Under this scheme, direct payments are made to pre-registered farmers whose selling prices fall below the MSP.
  - This does not involve physical procurement; instead, it compensates farmers by paying the difference between the MSP and the market price directly into their bank accounts.
- **Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS):**
  - This pilot scheme allows private players to participate in the procurement process for



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	<p>oilseeds in selected districts. It aims to enhance competition and efficiency in the procurement of crops.</p>
<p><b>Seaweeds</b></p>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Department of Fisheries</b>, under the <b>Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying</b>, has recognized the <b>ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)</b> as a <b>Centre of Excellence for seaweed cultivation</b>.</li> <li>The <b>Mandapam Regional Centre of CMFRI, located in Tamil Nadu</b>, will act as the primary hub for seaweed research, development, training, and capacity building.</li> </ul> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Seaweeds</b>, also known as marine macroalgae, are a diverse group of aquatic plants that grow in the ocean and other bodies of water.</li> <li>They play a crucial role in marine ecosystems and have been utilized by humans for thousands of years for various purposes, including food, medicine, and industrial applications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Centre of Excellence for Animation</b></p> 	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the <b>National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR)</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>National Centre of Excellence (NCoE):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NCoE will be established on the lines of the <b>Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs)</b>.</li> <li>The Centre will be set up as a Section 8 Company under the Companies Act, 2013, and will be located in Mumbai.</li> </ul> <p><b>Objectives and Vision:</b> <b>Empowering India's Content Creation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NCoE aims to strengthen India's position as a leading content provider globally.</li> <li>It will focus on creating intellectual property (IP) .</li> <li>The centre is expected to attract foreign investments, further boosting the country's media and entertainment industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focus on Training and Research:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Centre will offer specialized training programs in AVGC-XR technologies to both professionals and amateurs.</li> </ul>



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- It will act as a hub for research, bringing together experts from various disciplines such as computer science, engineering, design, and art to make breakthroughs in AVGC-XR technologies.

### Incubation and Employment:

- The NCoE will function as an incubation hub for startups.
- It will also serve as a significant employment generator for the youth, especially in the creative arts and design sectors, contributing to the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.



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