



29 January 2025

National and International News

<p><b>India-US Relations</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. President Donald Trump has indicated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Washington D.C. in February to deepen strategic relations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship between India and the United States has evolved into one of the most significant partnerships in the 21st century.</li> <li>It spans <b>economic, strategic, and cultural dimensions, reflecting the shared values and mutual interests of the world's largest democracies</b></li> <li>The two nations are motivated by common interests: <b>India aims to become the world's third-largest economy, while the US seeks reliable allies to counterbalance China's growing influence.</b></li> <li><b>Defense Ties:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2018, India was elevated to <b>Strategic Trade Authorization tier 1 status, which allowed India to receive license-free access to a wide range of military and dual-use technologies regulated by the US's department of commerce.</b></li> <li>The signing of foundational agreements like <b>LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018), and BECA (2020)</b> has enabled deeper military cooperation.</li> <li><b>Joint exercises like Malabar and the establishment of the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in 2018</b> have further strengthened strategic ties.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recent initiatives like the <b>US-India Artificial Intelligence Initiative and the Critical and Emerging Technology Initiative (iCET) launched in 2022</b> underscore the strategic importance of tech cooperation in bilateral ties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GSLV-F15 mission      NVS-02</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will oversee its historic 100th launch from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota with the GSLV-F15 mission.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NVS-02 will be the second satellite in the series of 2nd-generation navigation satellites and the 9th satellite in the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).</b></li> </ul>

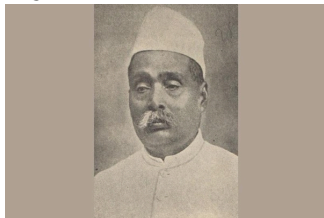


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- NavIC consists of a constellation of **7 satellites (First-generation Satellites)**
  - NVS-01 (the first 2nd generation satellite was launched in May 2023)
- **Launch vehicle:** GSLV Mark II
  - NVS-02 will likely have two kinds of payloads - **navigation payload and ranging payload.**
- **What is NavIC?**
  - NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) is the independent stand-alone navigation satellite system of India. It was earlier known as IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System).
  - **Features:**
    - NavIC consists of a constellation of seven satellites. Three satellites are located in the geostationary orbit and the remaining four are located in geosynchronous orbits around the Earth: **IRNSS-1A, IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1C, IRNSS-1D, IRNSS-1E, IRNSS-1F, and IRNSS-1G.**
    - The **first satellite of the seven-satellite navigation system was launched in 2013, and the seventh satellite was launched in 2016.**
    - NVS-01 replaced **IRNSS-1G.**
    - NVS-02 is also a replacement satellite for one of the satellites in NavIC.
    - NavIC provides positioning, navigation, and timing services to users across India and the region extending up to 1,500 km around the country, with position accuracy of better than 20 meters, and timing accuracy of better than 50 nanoseconds.
    - **Developed by:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

**Person in news: Lala Lajpat Rai**



**Why in news?**

- Lala Lajpat Rai's birth anniversary is observed on January 28th each year.

**Key Points:**

- Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the greatest freedom fighters of India. He was also called 'Punjab Kesari' and 'Lion of Punjab'.
- **Birth:**
  - He was born on 28th January, 1865 in a small village named Dhudike in Punjab's Ferozepur district.
- He believed that the ideals in Hinduism combined with nationalism will lead to the establishment of a secular state.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, he formed the Lal-Bal-Pal trio of extremist leaders.</li> <li>● He was also involved with the Hindu Mahasabha. He fought against untouchability.</li> <li>● <b>Contributions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Political:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ He joined the Indian National Congress (INC) and participated in many political agitations in Punjab.</li> <li>■ He was opposed to the partition of Bengal.</li> <li>■ He founded the Home Rule League of America in 1917 in New York. In the USA, he worked to get moral support for the Indian independence movement from the international community.</li> <li>■ He was also elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress.</li> <li>■ He protested against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre that followed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Social:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ He founded Hindu Relief movement in 1897 to provide help to the famine -stricken people and thus prevent them falling into the clutches of the missionaries.</li> <li>■ He founded the Servants of People Society in 1921.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Literary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ His important literary works include Young India, England's Debt to India, Evolution of Japan, India's Will to Freedom, Message of the Bhagavad Gita, Political Future of India, Problem of National Education in India, The Depressed Glasses, and the travelogue 'United States of America'.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Waqf Amendment Bill 2024</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Parliament's Joint Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has urged the government to enact a law to protect tribal land from being designated as "Waqf" property.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024, introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 8, 2024, proposes significant changes to the governance and management of Waqf properties in India.</li> <li>● This legislation seeks to <b>amend the Waqf Act of 1995, aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the administration of Waqf properties</b> while addressing long-standing issues within the system.</li> </ul>




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>What is a Waqf Property?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Waqf is a property donated by Muslims for a specific religious, charitable, or private purpose. Ownership of the property is considered to belong to God, while its benefits are directed to the specified purposes.</li> <li>○ <b>Establishment:</b> A Waqf can be established through a written deed, legal instrument, or orally.</li> <li>○ <b>Use and Permanence:</b> A property may be recognized as Waqf if it has been used for religious or charitable purposes over an extended period. Once declared Waqf, the property's status is permanent and irreversible.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Key Changes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Waqf Amendment (Bill) 2024 proposes changing the name of the parent Act from the Waqf Act of 1995 to the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act of 1995.</li> <li>○ <b>Government Property:</b> Government properties identified as waqf will revert to state ownership. The District Collector will determine ownership in disputed cases.</li> <li>○ <b>Waqf Property Determination:</b> The Waqf Board's power to determine waqf properties is removed.</li> <li>○ <b>Waqf Survey:</b> Collectors will conduct waqf surveys under state revenue laws.</li> <li>○ <b>Tribunal Composition:</b> Muslim law experts are removed. Tribunals will include a District Court judge and a state officer of joint secretary rank.</li> <li>○ <b>Appeals:</b> Tribunal decisions can be appealed to the High Court within 90 days.</li> <li>○ <b>Central Government Powers:</b> The central government can set rules on registration, waqf accounts, and Board proceedings. Audits can be conducted by the CAG.</li> <li>○ <b>Separate Waqf Boards:</b> Separate Waqf Boards are allowed for Bohra and Agakhani sects.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Reports &amp; Indices:</b>  <b>Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 indicates a recovery in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills among school students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ASERs (by NGO Pratham) have been <b>surveying children aged 6 to 14 since 2005 to track trends in school enrollment, attendance and reading and arithmetic abilities.</b></li> <li>● ASER reports are usually referred to by the government</li> </ul>



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	<p>while formulating policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>The youths were surveyed on 4 points –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Basic reading, math and English abilities;</li> <li>○ Application of basic skills to everyday calculations;</li> <li>○ Reading and understanding written instructions; and</li> <li>○ Financial calculations that need to be done in real life.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Key Findings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>On Enrolment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The ASER 2024 report highlights a decline in government school enrollment, returning to 66.8%, similar to 2018 levels, after a surge to 72.9% during the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, private school enrollment has been rising, reflecting a shift in educational preferences.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Digital Literacy Among Youth:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It found that 82.2% of children aged 14-16 can use a smartphone, but only 57% use it for educational purposes, highlighting a gap between access and effective use for learning.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Recovery from Learning Losses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The report shows a full recovery from pandemic-induced learning losses, with 27.1% of Class 3 children reading at the expected level and 44.8% of Class 5 children reading at a Class 2 level. This improvement is credited to educational reforms, including the NEP 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Attendance Rates and Classroom Dynamics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attendance rates in government schools have improved, with student attendance rising to 75.9% in 2024 from 73% in 2022, and teacher attendance increasing to 87.5%.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>State-wise Performance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The report notes that states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu have shown remarkable recovery in learning levels.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Uniform Civil Code (UCC)</b></p>	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama officially introduced the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for all residents of the state, excluding Scheduled Tribes and natives who have migrated out.</li> <li>● With this, Uttarakhand becomes the first Indian state to implement the UCC after Independence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Uniform Civil Code refers to a <b>single law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.</b></li> <li>• It is intended to <b>replace the system of fragmented personal laws, which currently govern interpersonal relationships and related matters within different religious communities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Constitution of India on UCC:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Article 44</b> of the Constitution lays down that the State shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.</li> <li>○ These, as defined in Article 37, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court) but the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.</li> <li>○ These principles consist of all the ideals which the State should follow and keep in mind while formulating policies and enacting laws for the country.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Species in news:</b> <b>Corpse Flower</b></p> 	<p><b>Why in news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently, a “corpse flower” at the Royal Botanic Gardens of Sydney has drawn more than 20,000 curious viewers to a special display for its much-anticipated opening.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is native to the <b>Indonesian island of Sumatra, gets its name from the literal translation of the Indonesian phrase Bunga bangkai.</b></li> <li>• Its species name is <b>Amorphophallus titanum.</b></li> <li>• The life cycle depends on the time it takes for the “<b>corm</b>” of the flower to gather enough energy to bloom.</li> <li>• The bloom lasts for a day, with the spathe (the purple, petal-like structure surrounding the spadix) taking hours to fully unfurl.</li> <li>• Insects attracted to the odor are ones that lay their eggs in decaying meat, but they have the benefit of moving pollen between male and female flowers to trigger the flower’s reproductive cycle.</li> <li>• These flowers have both male and female flowers. Female flowers open first to prevent a plant from pollinating itself.</li> <li>• Chemicals emitted during female flowering are: <b>Dimethyl disulfide, Dimethyl trisulfide, 3-Methylbutanal, Dimethyl sulfide and Methanethiol, Methyl thioacetate and Isovaleric acid.</b></li> <li>• It is categorized as <b>Endangered by the IUCN.</b></li> </ul>





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