DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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1. Delimitation and Southern States' Concerns

1. Delimitation: Definition and Constitutional Basis

- **Delimitation** refers to the act of redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies based on recent population data to ensure fair representation.

- **Constitutional Provisions:**

  o **Articles 82 and 170** empower Parliament to readjust constituencies after every Census.

  o A **Delimitation Commission** is set up by the Central Government under the **Delimitation Act**.

  o **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** froze delimitation based on 1971 Census until 2001. This was extended to **2026** by the **84th Amendment Act, 2001** to promote population control.

2. Southern States' Concerns Regarding Population-Based Delimitation

- Southern states like **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana** have successfully implemented **population control measures**.

- If future delimitation is based on **post-2026 Census (likely 2031)**, states with higher population growth (mainly northern states) will gain more Lok Sabha seats, **reducing the relative representation** of southern states.

- This is viewed as a **disincentive for population control** and an attack on **federal equity**.

3. Centre's Assurance on Addressing Regional Concerns

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) clarified that **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** has repeatedly assured that **southern states' concerns will be addressed**.

- It emphasized that **discussions with all stakeholders** will be held at an appropriate time before delimitation begins.

4. Delay in Census and Political Implications

- The **Census 2021** has been delayed due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**; it is now scheduled to be completed by **March 1, 2027**.

- **Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin** criticized this delay, alleging that it is a deliberate attempt by the **BJP-led Centre** to influence delimitation and reduce Tamil Nadu's parliamentary representation.

- The Centre responded that enumerators (mostly school teachers) could not be spared during the pandemic, and **quality of Census** would have been compromised otherwise.

5. Budget and Resource Allocation for Census

- The MHA clarified that **budget has never been a constraint**, and **the Centre is committed to funding** the Census exercise fully.

- The logistical challenge includes mobilizing over **30 lakh enumerators**, highlighting the massive scale of the operation.

6. Broader Constitutional and Political Dimensions

- The issue brings into focus **India's federal structure**, balancing **population size and equitable representation**.

- A future **constitutional or political consensus** might be required to ensure **representation does not penalize demographic discipline**.

- Key debates: **"One person, one vote" vs. "Equity in federal representation."**

Conclusion:

The upcoming delimitation, based on a post-2026 Census, will have far-reaching political and federal implications. While the Centre has assured that southern states' concerns will be considered, the controversy underlines tensions between demographic equity and federal balance. The debate also emphasizes the need for a **politically sensitive and constitutionally sound approach** to future delimitation exercises.

2. Kerala Shipwreck and Environmental Transparency

1. Background: Kochi Shipwreck and Environmental Concerns

- A **cargo vessel sank off the Kochi coast** recently, causing environmental concern due to release of materials like **plastic pellets** along Kerala's shoreline.

- The incident has raised **questions about transparency**, ecological safety, and disaster response mechanisms of the State.

2. Kerala High Court's Observations and Directions

- A **Division Bench of the Kerala High Court** (Chief Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice Basant Balaji) directed the **State Government** to disclose:

KERALA SHIPWRECK: ANALYSING WHAT'S THE REAL RISK?

  - A **detailed list of materials** onboard the sunken ship.

  - Their **potential impact on marine and coastal ecology**, especially if leaked into the sea.

- The court held that **citizens have the right to know** about environmental risks that directly affect them.

3. Legal and Constitutional Provisions Involved

- **Right to Information (RTI) under Article 19(1)(a)**: Recognized as part of freedom of speech, includes the public's **right to know** about environmental hazards.

- **Article 21 (Right to Life)**: Expanded by the Supreme Court to include the **right to a healthy environment**.

- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) norms** and **polluter pays principle** are relevant under **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has also taken **suo motu cognizance**, but this doesn't bar parallel writ petitions under **Article 226** in High Courts.

4. Government's Response and Measures Taken

- The **State Attorney** informed the court that:

  o An **expert committee** has been formed to assess ecological impact.

  o **Investigation** into the incident is ongoing.

  o The government is actively **mitigating contamination** and ensuring public safety.

- However, the **suspension of volunteer efforts** to clean the coast was questioned in court.

5. Petitioner's Demands and Wider Implications

- **Congress MP T.N. Prathapan**, the petitioner, sought:

  o A **high-level expert panel** to assess full environmental damage.

  o A **compensation mechanism** for affected **fishermen and coastal communities**.

- The incident highlights the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems to **marine pollution and ship-based disasters**, calling for robust disaster management and environmental governance.

6. Importance of Public Accountability in Environmental Disasters

- The case underscores the principle that **environmental information must be made public** proactively.

- Also emphasizes the **precautionary principle** and **public participation** as cornerstones of environmental jurisprudence in India.

Conclusion:

The Kerala shipwreck case has become a legal and environmental milestone, stressing the importance of **transparency, public awareness, and ecological accountability**. The Kerala High Court's intervention reinforces that **citizens' right to environmental information is constitutionally protected**, and timely disclosure and action by the state is essential for ecological and social justice.

3. UMEED Portal and Waqf Property Management: Key Points

1. UMEED Portal: Purpose and Objective

- **UMEED** stands for **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development**.

- Launched by the **Union Ministry of Minority Affairs**, it is a **centralized digital platform** designed to manage and document **waqf properties** across India.

- The aim is to improve **transparency, record-keeping, and monitoring** of waqf properties through digital integration.

2. Waqf: Definition and Legal Context

- A **waqf** is a permanent endowment made by a Muslim for religious, pious, or charitable purposes.

- Waqf properties are governed by the **Waqf Act, 1995**, which provides for the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards**.

- Key provisions:

  o **Section 3(r)** defines waqf property.

  o **Section 4–6** deal with surveys, registration, and management of waqf assets.

  o **Section 40–51** deal with protection, transfer, and recovery of waqf properties.

3. Telangana Waqf Board's Concerns and Readiness

- The **Telangana State Waqf Board (TGSWB)** has expressed concerns about **lack of clear guidelines** from the Centre regarding required documents.

- Challenges include **documentation of historical properties**, especially **Qutb Shahi-era masjids**, many of which lack formal or digitized records.

- The TGSWB is still **preparing property records** and coordinating with other government agencies to retrieve documents.

4. Functional Mechanism of the UMEED Portal

- Expected to follow a **three-tier verification process**:

  o **Mutawalli** (manager of the waqf) uploads documents (e.g., gazette notifications).

  o **Verification** by State Waqf Board officials.

  o **Final approval** by the Chief Executive Officer of the Board.

- Previous waqf management systems will not be integrated, raising concerns over **data migration** and continuity.

5. Legal Sensitivities and Pending Supreme Court Case

- TGSWB officials have noted that it would have been more appropriate for the Centre to **await the Supreme Court judgment** related to waqf matters before launching the portal.

- This points to **inter-jurisdictional tensions** between central and state waqf governance structures.

6. Importance for Governance and Minority Welfare

- The UMEED portal represents a move towards **good governance, digital record management**, and **curbing encroachments** on waqf land.

- It also intersects with **minority rights, religious freedom (Article 25–26), and federalism**, as religious endowments fall under the **Concurrent List (Entry 28 of List III)**.

Conclusion:

The launch of the UMEED portal is a significant step in modernizing and regulating waqf property management across India. However, **state-level readiness, data clarity, and legal alignment** remain critical. The initiative must balance **technological efficiency with legal sensitivity and cooperative federalism**, ensuring protection and fair use of religious endowments for the benefit of the Muslim community.

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4. India's Commitment to Global Disaster Resilience & Public Health at GPDRR 2025: Key Points

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1. India's Engagement at GPDRR 2025 and G20 DRR Roundtable

- Dr. **P.K. Mishra**, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, represented India at the **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2025** in Geneva.

- He addressed the **G20 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group Roundtable**, highlighting G20's role in **leveraging economic power for global disaster resilience**.

- Emphasis was placed on **international cooperation, shared responsibilities, and collective resilience** against transboundary disasters.

2. Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Africa

- India welcomed the **African Union (AU)** as a new member of the **CDRI**, underlining the expanding global reach of India-led initiatives.

- This aligns with the AU's inclusion as a **permanent G20 member** during India's G20 presidency in **2023**, reflecting India's push for **Global South representation**.

- **CDRI**, launched by India in 2019, is a **multi-stakeholder global initiative** aimed at promoting resilience in infrastructure against climate and disaster risks.

3. Collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)

- Dr. Mishra held discussions with **WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** on **global public health collaboration**.

- India reiterated support for:

  o **Second WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit** (to be hosted in New Delhi in December 2025).

- **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine** in **Jamnagar, Gujarat**, which focuses on evidence-based research and policy on traditional medicine systems.

4. Key Themes: Disaster Resilience and Public Health Diplomacy

- India linked **disaster risk reduction (DRR)** with **sustainable development** and **climate adaptation goals**.

- Promoted **South-South cooperation**, health security, and infrastructure resilience as tools to strengthen **global commons**.

- Highlighted India's role as a **bridge between developing nations and global governance bodies** like WHO, G20, and now, the AU.

5. Constitutional & International Relevance

- **Entry 23 of State List**: Concerns with social security and social insurance, which are relevant in disaster and health preparedness.

- **Entry 29 of Concurrent List**: Prevention of the extension from one State to another of infectious or contagious diseases or pests affecting humans, animals, or plants.

- India's commitment is aligned with **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)** and **UN SDGs**, especially **SDG 3 (Health)** and **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**.

6. India's Soft Power and Global Image

- Through platforms like **GPDRR, WHO summits, and CDRI**, India is enhancing its image as a **responsible global leader** advocating for inclusive, sustainable, and resilient development.

- Promotion of **traditional medicine** also strengthens India's **cultural diplomacy and knowledge systems** on the global stage.

Conclusion:
India's active participation in GPDRR 2025 and support for global disaster resilience and health initiatives signal its evolving leadership role in **climate-resilient development and global health governance**. The inclusion of Africa in CDRI and cooperation with WHO reinforces India's commitment to **multilateralism, equity, and sustainable development**, making it a key stakeholder in shaping future global responses to disasters and pandemics.

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5. AIIA Celebrates World Environment Day 2025 under Meri LiFE Campaign: Key Summary

1. Context: AIIA's Environmental Commitment under National Campaign

- The **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi**, marked **World Environment Day 2025** by participating in the **Meri LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)** campaign initiated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

- The theme for 2025 was **"Ending Plastic Pollution"**, aligning with India's larger environmental goals and SDG targets.

- Activities reflected the institute's commitment to **Ayurvedic principles of harmony with nature** and promotion of ecological consciousness.

2. Key Activities Organized

- A wide array of **awareness and outreach events** were conducted between **May 22 and June 5, 2025**, including:

  o **Environment Awareness Rally** with active participation from scholars, staff, and local police.

  o A **street play (nukkadnatak)** titled *"Plastic Ki Duniya, Prakriti Ka Vinash"* showcased the ecological harms of plastic and Ayurvedic alternatives.

  o **Mass plantation drive**: Over **500 medicinal/native saplings planted** on campus; **200 saplings distributed to patients** for home-based herbal gardening.

3. Community Engagement and Awareness

- Over **5,000 patients** were sensitized through direct awareness campaigns about:

  o The **dangers of plastic pollution**.

  o **Sustainable practices** rooted in Ayurveda and local ecology.

- Educational activities such as **Essay Writing** and **Model Making Competitions** were conducted to engage students in **creative and scientific thinking** on environmental solutions.

4. Institutional and Leadership Participation

- The main program on **June 5, 2025**, at AIIA's Mini Auditorium featured:

  o Participation from senior faculty including **Prof. M.M. Rao (Medical Superintendent)** and **Dr. Meena S. Deogade (Nodal Officer)**.

  o Distribution of awards, **environment pledge**, and recaps of pre-event activities emphasized environmental ethics as a shared duty.

5. Constitutional and Policy Relevance

- **Article 51A(g)** of the Indian Constitution makes it a **Fundamental Duty** of every citizen to **protect and improve the natural environment**.

- The initiative complements:

  o **Swachh Bharat Mission**, **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**, and **LiFE Mission**.

  o **SDGs 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production)** and **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**.

6. Ayurvedic Perspective & Ecological Sustainability

- The celebration promoted **Ayurvedic ecological principles** such as *prakriti-samyam (nature balance)* and the use of **natural remedies and eco-friendly practices** as sustainable alternatives to plastics.

- Reinforces **India's traditional knowledge systems** as effective tools for modern environmental challenges.

Conclusion

The AIIA's proactive participation in World Environment Day 2025 under the Meri LiFE campaign exemplifies the effective fusion of **traditional wisdom with contemporary environmental action**. Through its diverse activities, mass outreach, and sustainable focus, AIIA is helping to shape a **green, plastic-free, and ecologically responsible India**, in line with constitutional duties, national policies, and global environmental commitments.

6. Ayush Nivesh Saarthi Portal: Boosting Traditional Medicine Investment Ecosystem

1. Launch and Purpose of the Portal

- **Ayush Nivesh Saarthi**, launched on **29th May 2025**, is an **investor facilitation digital platform** created by the **Ministry of Ayush** in collaboration with **Invest India**.

- It was unveiled by **Union Ministers Piyush Goyal** and **Prataprao Jadhav** at the **Ayush Stakeholder Meet** in New Delhi.

- The portal aims to position **India as a global investment hub** for traditional medicine systems like **Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, and Naturopathy**.

2. Key Features and Functions

- The portal integrates:

  o **Policy frameworks**, **investment incentives**, and **project databases**.

  o **Real-time investor facilitation** for both **domestic and global investors**.

  o Transparent and centralized access to investment opportunities in **India's AYUSH sector**.

- Acts as a **single-window interface** to streamline investment and ease of doing business.

3. Sectoral Growth and Economic Significance

- India's **Ayush sector** recorded **17% annual growth (2014–2020)** and plays a crucial role in the **$13 billion Medical Value Travel (MVT)** industry.

- The sector also contributes to the **global wellness economy**, catering to the rising demand for **natural and preventive health care**.

- India has **100% FDI permitted under the automatic route** in the Ayush sector—signaling openness for international collaboration.

4. Strategic Vision and Global Potential

- The portal is seen as a **transformational enabler** that connects:

- o India's **legacy of 8,000+ medicinal plant species**,

  - o A **globally trusted wellness tradition**, and

  - o **Proactive government policies** on traditional health systems.

- Enhances India's efforts to become a **global leader in holistic healthcare**, medical tourism, and **Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals**.

5. Constitutional and Legal Backing

- **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Article 47): Encourage **promotion of health and nutrition** including traditional systems.

- The **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) Act, 2020** provides statutory regulation of education and practitioners in AYUSH systems.

- Aligns with **India's commitments to the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre** in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Conclusion

The **Ayush Nivesh Saarthi portal** represents a pivotal step in **mainstreaming traditional medicine** as a vehicle for **economic growth, public health advancement, and global collaboration**. It marks India's strategic pivot toward becoming a **world leader in wellness and sustainable healthcare**, bridging **ancient heritage** with **modern investment frameworks**, and reinforcing the vision of **Viksit Bharat @2047** through health-centric development.

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7. "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" – Highlights on World Environment Day 2025

1. Campaign Overview and Emotional Connect

- **"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"** (One Tree in Mother's Name) is a mass plantation and environmental awareness campaign launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

- Celebrated under the theme **"One Nation, One Mission: End Plastic Pollution"** on **World Environment Day (5 June 2025)**.

- The initiative blends **environmental consciousness with emotional symbolism**, encouraging citizens to plant trees in honor of their mothers—linking personal sentiment with ecological responsibility.

2. Massive Outreach and Scale of Implementation

- Organized by **Coal and Lignite PSUs** under the Ministry of Coal at **~350 locations across 47 districts in 11 states**.

- Activities included **mass plantation drives, anti-plastic campaigns, eco-rallies**, and **pledges for plastic-free workplaces**.

- The initiative engaged a large cross-section of society, including **PSU employees, school students, and local communities**.

3. Environmental Achievements and Green Technologies

- Over the past six years, **29 million saplings** have been planted over **13,400 hectares** in coal and lignite mining areas.

- Use of **innovative afforestation techniques** like the **Miyawaki method**, **drone seeding**, and **seed ball broadcasting** to accelerate restoration of mined-out lands.

- **Target set:** 16,000 hectares of green cover in five years, including 2,800 hectares in FY 2025–26.

4. Strategic Relevance and Net-Zero Alignment

- The campaign directly aligns with India's commitment to **Net-Zero emissions by 2070**.

- Plantation activities help create **natural carbon sinks**, restore **air and water quality**, and reclaim **ecological balance** in degraded mining regions.

- Combines **climate mitigation (carbon absorption)** with **climate adaptation (ecosystem restoration & community health).**

5. Legal and Policy Linkages

- **Article 48A** (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution directs the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.

- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** empowers the government to take all necessary measures to protect and improve environmental quality.

- The campaign supports the **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)** vision, promoting citizen-led environmental actions.

Conclusion

The **"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"** campaign symbolizes a transformative shift in India's coal sector—from **extraction-driven operations to restoration-led development**. It exemplifies how **economic growth can be harmonized with ecological integrity**, making the campaign a model for sustainable industrial practices. Through **massive plantations, anti-plastic efforts, and green technologies**, Coal/Lignite PSUs are not just reducing environmental damage, but **healing the earth—one sapling at a time.**

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8. Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0 and Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE – Key Points

1. About the Campaign: Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0

- **Launched by Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan** on **5th June 2025** (World Environment Day), this campaign is a continuation of the earlier "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative.

- Aims to emotionally connect citizens with **climate action** by encouraging everyone to plant a tree in the name of their mother and **upload a selfie** on the dedicated microsite.

- Target: **10 crore trees** to be planted nationwide, doubling the 5 crore saplings planted last year by educational institutions.

2. Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE in Schools

- Introduced under the **Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)** initiative to foster **pro-planet behaviour** in school children.

- Eco Clubs will function in **14.7 lakh schools** and promote awareness on climate change, biodiversity, sustainability, and eco-friendly lifestyles.

- Supported by the **Department of School Education and Literacy** under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, aligning with experiential learning goals.

3. Key Digital Platforms Launched

- **Mission LiFE Web Portal**: https://ecoclubs.education.gov.in – allows schools to upload and monitor environmental activities with dashboards, QR codes for flora, and school nutrition garden records.

- **Microsite for Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0**: Integrated within the above portal to allow selfie uploads, form submissions, and automatic **e-certificate generation**.

- Portal features include **multilingual access**, enabling **inclusivity** and wide-scale participation.

4. Educational Integration and Special Modules

- Special modules for **Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary** stages link **Mother Earth and motherhood**, instilling emotional and environmental values.

- Includes **puzzles, activities, and research projects** for developing eco-conscious attitudes.

- NEP 2020 emphasizes **Education for Sustainable Development**, encouraging students to become **eco-warriors**.

5. Constitutional, Policy & Environmental Relevance

- Supports **Article 51A(g)** – Fundamental Duty of every citizen to protect the environment.

- Resonates with **Article 48A** – Directive Principle urging the State to protect and improve the environment.

- Promotes India's commitment to **Net Zero by 2070** and aligns with **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** like SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Conclusion

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0 represents an innovative blend of **emotional resonance, educational reform, and environmental activism**. It aligns with India's larger ecological and developmental goals through **youth engagement, digital facilitation, and mass participation**. By empowering the next generation through **Eco Clubs** and leveraging technology for **behavioral change**, the initiative is a vital step in India's journey toward **climate resilience and sustainability**.

9. UIDAI's Record Aadhaar Authentication Transactions – Key Points

1. Aadhaar Authentication Surge in May 2025

- **Over 211 crore Aadhaar authentication transactions** were recorded in **May 2025**, surpassing the previous month and May 2024 (201.76 crore).

- The **cumulative number of Aadhaar authentications** since inception has crossed **15,223 crore**.

- Aadhaar has become a **critical enabler** of digital public infrastructure, streamlining service delivery and welfare disbursement across sectors.

2. Rise in Face Authentication

- **15.49 crore face authentication transactions** were recorded in May 2025, reflecting growing adoption of **AI/ML-based biometric technologies**.

- Used by over **100 entities**, including **government ministries, banks, telecom companies, and oil marketing firms**, it simplifies and secures identity verification.

- Beneficial for the elderly, differently-abled, and remote populations, making Aadhaar more **inclusive and accessible**.

3. Growth in Aadhaar e-KYC Transactions

- **37 crore e-KYC (Electronic Know Your Customer)** transactions were performed in May 2025.

- The Aadhaar-based e-KYC system enhances **ease of doing business** and improves **customer onboarding** for banks, NBFCs, and digital services.

- Reduces paperwork, ensures real-time verification, and promotes **financial inclusion**.

4. Key Definitions & Provisions

- **Aadhaar Authentication:** A process by which a person's Aadhaar number, along with demographic or biometric information, is submitted to UIDAI's system for identity verification.

- **Face Authentication:** A contactless biometric modality introduced by UIDAI using AI and ML to match Aadhaar holders' facial features with their records.

- **Legal Backing:** The **Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016**, provides statutory support for using Aadhaar for authentication and e-KYC.

5. Constitutional & Governance Relevance

- Supports the **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Art. 38 & 39) to ensure welfare delivery and reduce inequality.

- Strengthens the vision of **Digital India**, **financial inclusion**, and **good governance** by curbing leakages, identity frauds, and improving public service delivery.

- Enhances the functioning of schemes like **DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer), PM Ujjwala Yojana, and PM Jan Dhan Yojana**.

Conclusion

Aadhaar's exponential growth in authentication and e-KYC transactions signifies its **central role in India's digital governance ecosystem**. With **AI-based face authentication** and seamless e-KYC integration, Aadhaar is not only empowering millions with ease of living but also strengthening the pillars of **transparency, accountability, and efficient welfare delivery** in line with the constitutional ideals of a **welfare state**.

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10. KVIC Disburses □300 Crore Margin Money Subsidy under PMEGP – Key Highlights

1. PMEGP Disbursement – Empowering Self-Employment

- On **June 5, 2025**, the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** disbursed □**300 crore margin money subsidy** to **8,794 beneficiaries** under the **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)**.

- This disbursement supports loan sanctions worth □**884 crore**, with the aim of creating **micro-enterprises** in both **rural and urban India**.

2. Zonal Coverage and Outreach

- The campaign covered all **six zones**:

  o **South Zone:** □80.26 crore for 2,445 projects (e.g., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka).

  o **Central Zone:** □91.13 crore for 2,366 projects (e.g., UP, MP).

  o **East & Northeast Zone:** □62.68 crore for 2,167 projects (e.g., Bihar, Assam).

  o **North Zone:** □41.80 crore for 1,320 projects (e.g., J&K, Punjab).

  o **West Zone:** □24.12 crore for 496 projects (e.g., Maharashtra, Gujarat).

3. PMEGP Scheme – Overview and Impact

- **PMEGP (launched in 2008)** is a **credit-linked subsidy scheme** under the **Ministry of MSME**, implemented by **KVIC**.

- It aims to **generate employment opportunities** through the establishment of **micro-enterprises** in non-farm sectors.

- **Eligibility:** Any individual above 18 years; no income ceiling; assistance for new projects only.

- So far, **10.18 lakh enterprises** have been set up with over ▢**73,348 crore loans** and ▢**27,166 crore in margin subsidy**, creating employment for over **90 lakh individuals**.

4. Definition and Role of Margin Money

- **Margin Money Subsidy** is the portion of the project cost provided upfront by the government to reduce the burden of repayment on the beneficiary.

- In PMEGP, this subsidy ranges from **15% to 35%** of the project cost depending on the category and area (urban/rural).

- It plays a **catalytic role** in enabling first-generation entrepreneurs to access formal credit and start enterprises.

5. Constitutional and Policy Relevance

- Aligns with **Article 41 (Right to Work)** and **Article 43 (Promotion of Cottage Industries)** of the **Directive Principles of State Policy**.

- Promotes the ideals of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**, **vocal for local**, and **self-reliant rural economy**.

- Supports **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8): Decent Work and Economic Growth**, especially through employment-led enterprise development.

Conclusion

The disbursement of ▢300 crore margin subsidy under PMEGP is a strong step toward **inclusive, employment-driven economic development**. It reflects the government's commitment to **grassroots entrepreneurship**, especially in underserved regions. With over **10 lakh enterprises supported**, PMEGP stands as a cornerstone of **self-reliance, rural upliftment, and job creation** in India's journey toward becoming a **$5 trillion economy** and a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

11. Freedom of Speech in Universities vs Constitutional Protections — Key Points

1. The Core Issue: Expression in Universities vs. Freedom of Speech

- The article discusses the **constitutional tension** between **academic freedom** in universities and **freedom of speech** under **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Indian Constitution.

- Raises questions about whether **university faculty** must seek prior permission for expressing views, and whether dissenting opinion equals activism.

2. Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 19(1)(a)** guarantees **freedom of speech and expression**.

- **Article 19(2)** allows for **reasonable restrictions** on specific grounds: *sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, morality, defamation, etc.*

- **First Constitutional Amendment (1951)** introduced "reasonable restrictions".

- **Sixteenth Amendment (1963)** added "sovereignty and integrity of India" as a ground.

- In **Anuradha Bhasin vs Union of India (2020)**, the **Supreme Court** emphasized the **doctrine of proportionality** in restrictions and upheld that **Internet is part of free speech**.

- **Dr. Janet Jeyapaul vs SRM University (2015):** Held private universities are **'state' under Article 12**, and cannot violate **Article 14** (equality before law).

3. Role of Academia in Democratic Discourse

- The article argues that faculty members, like all citizens, have the right to express **personal views**.

- Merely expressing an opinion should **not be equated to activism**, unless it violates legal boundaries.

- Universities should encourage **open debate**, not suppress diverse viewpoints, as that diminishes **academic excellence and critical thinking**.

4. Global and Historical Perspectives on Free Speech

- Refers to **John Milton's "Areopagitica" (1644)** and his opposition to prior government licensing for publications.

- **John Stuart Mill**: Silencing dissent, even if from one person, is unjust.

- **U.S. Supreme Court (Texas v. Johnson, 1989)** recognized even **flag burning** as protected speech—emphasizing the extent of protection in democratic societies.

- The **First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution** (1791) strongly protects freedom of speech and press.

5. Importance of Free Speech for Individual Fulfilment and Knowledge Creation

- Freedom of expression is linked to **individual self-fulfillment**, **autonomy**, and **truth-seeking**.

- A **regulated and suppressed academic environment** cannot produce great thinkers or scientists.

- Ancient Indian scholars thrived in an education system that was **free from state control**, encouraging **intellectual independence**.

6. Press Freedom and India's Global Image

- India ranks **151 out of 180** in the **World Press Freedom Index**, undermining its claim to be a global thought leader or "Vishwaguru".

- Excessive suppression of speech can contradict India's democratic ideals and global aspirations.

Conclusion

The balance between **national interest** and **freedom of speech** must be **constitutionally guided, not institutionally imposed**. Universities must function as **free spaces of thought**, encouraging **dialogue, dissent, and diversity**. The right to free speech—within constitutional limits—is essential for both **democratic governance** and **academic excellence**. Courts and institutions alike must safeguard this right to uphold **India's constitutional morality** and ensure a vibrant democratic future.
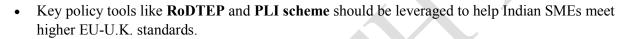
12. "A Eurocentric Reset, a Gateway for India"

1. U.K.-EU Reset: A Strategic Global Shift

- The new agreement between U.K. PM Keir Starmer and the EU marks a significant "reset" in areas like **food standards, defence, fishing rights, and border checks**.

- Though Eurocentric, this shift **opens new diplomatic and trade corridors for India**, potentially redefining India's engagement with Europe and its role in global governance.

2. Trade Implications for India

- In FY 2024, **India's exports** to the EU were **$86 billion** and to the U.K. **$12 billion**.

- Post-Brexit, Indian exporters struggled with dual regulatory regimes. **A harmonised U.K.-EU framework** could:

  - Lower compliance costs and delays.

  - Boost **pharmaceutical**, **textile**, **seafood**, and **agro-based** exports.

- Key policy tools like **RoDTEP** and **PLI scheme** should be leveraged to help Indian SMEs meet higher EU-U.K. standards.

3. Strengthening India's Strategic and Defence Diplomacy

- India can capitalise on **synchronised EU-U.K. foreign policy** to expand engagement in:

  - **Indo-Pacific cooperation**

  - **Defence modernisation**

  - **Cybersecurity and maritime security**

- Existing frameworks like the **EU-India Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2025** and India-U.K. **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022)** serve as platforms for deeper trilateral or multilateral ties.

- Defence ties with **France and Germany** are crucial for India's naval and tech ambitions.

4. Talent and Mobility Opportunities for India

- India has the **world's largest diaspora**, with significant populations in both the U.K. and EU.

- In 2024, the U.K. granted over **1,10,000 student visas** to Indians.

- A **semi-integrated talent corridor** may emerge via renewed U.K.-EU coordination, aiding:

  - Indian students

  - Skilled professionals

  - Migration pacts with **Germany, France, Portugal**, etc.

5. Constitutional and Strategic Relevance

- **Soft power leverage** and **strategic autonomy** can be enhanced if India proactively engages with a united West.

- India must:

  o Modernise export infrastructure.

  o Speed up FTA negotiations (e.g., **India-EU FTA**, **India-U.K. FTA**).

  o Assert its leadership in **climate finance**, **digital governance**, and **WTO reforms**.

- India's G20 presidency legacy (2023) underlines its emerging leadership in the **Global South** and global diplomacy.

Key Constitutional & Policy Provisions

- **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP)**: Guides India's export diversification.

- **Article 246 & 253**: Empower Parliament to legislate on foreign affairs and international agreements.

- **RoDTEP Scheme**: Reimburses taxes not refunded under existing schemes to promote competitiveness.

- **PLI Scheme**: Offers incentives on incremental sales for key sectors including pharma and electronics.

Conclusion

The U.K.-EU diplomatic reset, though European in its scope, offers India a rare opportunity to recalibrate its **trade strategy, talent flows, defence alignment**, and **global influence**. To truly benefit, India must adopt a **reform-driven, forward-looking approach** that aligns its domestic strengths with emerging global realities. A proactive India can use this window to **shape a multipolar world** where its voice carries strategic weight.