

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- **AIM, NITI Aayog Launches Two New Initiatives to Boost Innovation.**
 1. **AIM – Innovation Centre Denmark (ICDK) Water Challenge 4.0**
 - Purpose: Tackle critical water-related problems with innovative solutions.
 2. **Innovations For You – Sustainable Development Goals Entrepreneurs of India Handbook**
 - Purpose: Showcase entrepreneurs from across India who are contributing to society through sustainable innovations.
- **About AIM:**
 - **Launch Year:** 2016
 - **Launched By:** NITI Aayog
 - **Goal:** Foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
 - **Monitoring:** All AIM initiatives are tracked using real-time systems and dynamic dashboards.

Launch of UN-REDD Report “Raising Ambition, Accelerating Action: Towards Enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions for Forests”

- A report by the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** highlights significant gaps in forest protection, management, and restoration within current **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.
 - NDCs are the commitments made by countries to reduce national emissions and adapt to climate change impacts, updated every five years starting **from 2020**.
- **Key Findings:**
 - **Deforestation Emissions:** From 2019 to 2023, an average of 5.6 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent was emitted annually from tropical deforestation in the top 20 countries.
 - **Deforestation Targets:** Only 8 countries have explicit, quantified targets to reduce deforestation, all of which fall short of the global goal to halt deforestation by 2030.
 - **Forest Conversion Measures:** Only 38% of UNFCCC Parties include measures to reduce the conversion of forests and other ecosystems.
- **Drivers of Deforestation**
 - **Agriculture:** A major cause of deforestation. For example, deforestation rates in Indonesia are linked to fluctuations in oil palm market prices.
 - **Land-Use Policies:** Ineffective and unenforced land-use policies contribute to deforestation. For instance, high deforestation rates in the Brazilian Amazon are attributed to reduced environmental policies.
- **Key Recommendations**
 - **Inclusive NDC Targets:** NDC targets should consider the diverse needs and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
 - **Primary Forest Retention:** Emphasize retaining primary forests rather than replacing them with planted forests.
 - **Enhanced Forest-Based Measures:** Strengthen, enhance, and align forest-based measures in NDCs with clearly defined national policies.
- **International Agreements to Prevent Deforestation**
 - **REDD+ Mechanism:** Efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, adopted at UNFCCC COP13.
 - **New York Declaration on Forests:** Aims to halve deforestation by 2020.
 - **Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use:** Aims to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.
 - **Bonn Challenge:** A global goal to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.

International Year of Quantum Science and Technology 2025

- The **United Nations** has designated **2025** as the **International Year of Quantum Science and Technology**, marking the 100th anniversary of the development of quantum mechanics.
- This field studies and applies the principles governing matter and energy at the atomic and subatomic levels.
- **India's Initiatives in Quantum Technology**
 - **National Quantum Mission (2023)**: Aims to promote and expand scientific and industrial research and development in quantum technology, creating a dynamic and innovative ecosystem.
 - **Quantum Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST)**: A research program focused on building quantum capabilities.
 - **Quantum Computing Applications Lab (QCAL)**: Accelerates quantum computing-led research and development to enable new scientific discoveries.

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)

- In a recent joint statement, BRICS Ministers for Foreign Affairs stressed the need for a legal multilateral agreement on the **Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)**.
- **About the PAROS Treaty**:
 - **Draft Submission**: The draft treaty was submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008.
 - **Key Provisions**: It aims to prevent states from:
 - Placing objects carrying weapons in orbit.
 - Installing weapons on celestial bodies.
 - Threatening to use force against objects in outer space.
 - **Relation to the Outer Space Treaty**: The PAROS treaty would complement and reinforce the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which emphasizes the peaceful use of outer space.

Vidyut Rakshak Monitoring System

- The **Indian Army** has introduced the **Vidyut Rakshak Monitoring System** as part of its modernization efforts.
- **About Vidyut Rakshak**
 - **Function**: Vidyut Rakshak is an Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled system for monitoring, protecting, and controlling generators.
 - **IoT**: This system is part of a network where devices connect and exchange data with each other and the cloud.
 - **Development**: It was developed indigenously by the Army Design Bureau (ADB).
 - **Capabilities**: The system allows the integration and remote automation of multiple generators from a single platform.

Retail Inflation Eases To 12-Month Low Of 4.75% In May

- In May 2024, India's **consumer price index (CPI) inflation** fell to **4.75%**, the lowest in **12 months**.
- This is a slight drop from **4.83% in April** and continues the trend of staying within the **Reserve Bank of India's target range of 2-6% since September 2023**.
- Inflation rates in rural and urban areas were **5.28% and 4.15%**, respectively.
- However, food basket inflation remained high at **8.69% in May**, only a bit lower than 8.70% in April.
- The **Reserve Bank of India** aims to keep CPI inflation at **4%**, with a **2%** margin on either side. Recent projections indicate a stable inflation outlook for the coming months.

India Slips In Global Gender Gap Index, Ranks 129th

- According to the **Global Gender Gap Index** released by the **World Economic Forum**, **India** has dropped **two places to 129th position**. Iceland remains at the top of the list. In South Asia, **India is ranked fifth**, behind Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan, with **Pakistan in last place**.
- Despite this drop, India has shown strong gender parity in **secondary education** enrollment and political empowerment. It holds the **10th position** for the number of years with female/male heads of state over the **past 50 years**.
- However, India's overall gender gap closure is **64.1% in 2024**, slightly down from 64.2% last year. The **top five** countries in the index are **Iceland, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, and Sweden**. The U.K. is ranked **14th**, and the **USA** is at **43rd place**.