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Coverage of

13th Feb. - 19th Feb., 2026

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UPSC ESE, PSUs, RRB, SSC, Banking & State Services Exams

India AI Summit 2026

India hosted the first International AI Summit in the Global South.

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13th FEBRUARY 2026

CPI at New Base year 2024

- **Context:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the provisional Consumer Price Index (CPI) with the Base year 2024.

Key Facts

- The base has been revised from 2012 to 2024 using Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24.
- 12 Divisions in place of 6 Groups in accordance with Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP) 2018.
  - COICOP is the international classification of household expenditure developed by the United Nations Statistics Division.
  - The objective of the COICOP is to provide a framework of homogeneous categories of goods and services from the point of view of its usage by the households.
  - Its adoption ensures that India's CPI is comparable with CPIs worldwide.

About Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- CPI measures the average change in prices paid by consumers for a basket of goods and services over time i.e., it tracks retail inflation.
  - Tracks cost of living and purchasing power.
  - Includes items like food, housing, clothing, transport, etc.
  - It is published monthly, the earlier base year: 2012 which is revised to 2024.
  - **Released by:** NSO, MoSPI.

Revision of Base Year

- It has been introduced to ensure that the index remains representative of current household consumption patterns, price structures, and the evolving nature of the Indian economy.
  - The Base Year is a chosen year taken as a reference point (index = 100) to compare prices over time.
  - It is important because it helps measure how much prices have increased or decreased and keeps inflation figures relevant.
- The base updation exercise mainly involves revising the CPI item basket and updating item weights based on the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES).

Sustainable Harnessing of Advancement of Nuclear Technology for India (SHANTI) Act, 2025

- **Context:** The SHANTI (Sustainable Harnessing of Advancement of Nuclear Technology for India) Act 2025, have triggered concerns regarding safety standards, victim compensation, and long-term energy strategy.

Key Facts

- The Act indemnifies nuclear suppliers by channeling liability for any accident to the operator. It omits the "right of recourse" that allows operators to sue suppliers for accidents caused by defective equipment. The Act also omits Clause 46 of the CLNDA, which allowed victims to invoke other laws, including criminal laws, to seek remedies.
- The Act provides a legislative framework for the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board but limits the Board's independence by stipulating that its members will be selected by a committee constituted by the Atomic Energy Commission.

- It allows exemption from a license for limited activities like research, development, and innovation-related work.
- It provides a regulatory framework for the use of nuclear and radiation technologies in health care, agriculture, industry, research, and other peaceful applications.

14th FEBRUARY 2026

Bacillus Subtilis: The 'State Microbe' of Kerala

- **Context:** Kerala has become the first Indian state to designate an official "State Microbe," selecting Bacillus subtilis, a beneficial, soil-dwelling bacterium.

About Bacillus subtilis

- It is a non-pathogenic, rod-shaped, gram-positive bacterium found commonly in soil, water, and the human gut.
- Bacillus subtilis is a probiotic or good bacterium that plays a vital role in improving gut health and strengthening immunity.
- The bacterium is widely used in agriculture as a biofertilizer and biocontrol agent to enhance crop productivity and suppress plant diseases.
- Due to its resilience and spore-forming ability, it has significant industrial and biotechnological applications.

Centre of Excellence in Microbiome

- The Centre of Excellence in Microbiome (CoEM), established by the Government of Kerala under the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment.
- Located in Thiruvananthapuram, is India's first dedicated multi-domain research institution for microbiome studies.

Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Bill, 2026

- **Context:** The Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was introduced in Lok Sabha.

Key Facts

- The Bill seeks to amend the Industrial Relations Code, 2020. The Code provides for matters such as recognition of trade unions, notice periods for strikes and lock-outs, and resolution of industrial disputes.
- The 2020 Code replaces three Acts, namely:
  - the Trade Unions Act, 1926,
  - the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, and
  - the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
  - The Bill clarifies that these three Acts stand repealed from November 21, 2025.

15th FEBRUARY 2026

India's First Road-cum-Rail Tunnel

- **Context:** Recently, the Union cabinet has approved the construction of the country's first underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel project under the Brahmaputra River in Assam at an estimated cost of ₹18,662 crore.

About Project

- It is an around 34 kilometre-long four-lane access-controlled Greenfield connectivity project.
- It will feature two parallel tunnels, designed to facilitate smooth and high-capacity movement of both road and rail traffic.
- The stretch will connect Gohpur on NH-15 and Numaligarh on NH-715 in Assam, cutting short the distance between the two Assam cities to just

34 kilometres from the current 240 kilometres. The travel time will be reduced to just 20 minutes from six hours now.

- The project will provide significant benefit to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and other North – Eastern States.
  - This will enhance the efficiency of freight movement, reducing logistics cost and driving socio-economic growth in the region.
  - It will enhance connectivity, reduce logistics costs and accelerate growth across Assam and the entire Northeast.
  - It will play a pivotal role in strategic considerations, regional economic growth, strengthening connectivity between major economic centers and opening new avenues for trade and industrial development.

About **Brahmaputra River**

- The Brahmaputra is a major transboundary river in Asia. It originates from the Chemayungdung Glacier near Lake Manasarovar (Mapam Yumco) in Tibet.
- It is known variably as Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet (its longest upper stretch), Siang or Dihang in Arunachal Pradesh, Brahmaputra in Assam and Jamuna in Bangladesh.
- It flows east through Tibet's plateau, enters India via Arunachal Pradesh, widens in Assam's plains, and merges with the Ganges in Bangladesh before reaching the Bay of Bengal.

Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0

- **Context:** Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0) with a corpus of ₹10,000 crore to mobilise venture capital for the country's rapidly expanding startup ecosystem.

About **Venture capital**

- It is funding provided to emerging companies by wealthy individuals or institutional investors (venture capitalists) seeking long-term growth.

- It is high-risk but potentially high-return and can be provided through equity, debentures, or conditional loans.

About **Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0)**

- Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0 (FoF 2.0) follows the success of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS 1.0), launched in 2016 to address funding gaps and catalyse domestic venture capital investments.
- It was launched under the Startup India initiative. Under FFS 1.0, the entire ₹10,000 crore corpus was committed to 145 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), which have collectively invested over ₹25,500 crore in more than 1,370 startups across sectors such as artificial intelligence, robotics, clean technology, fintech, healthcare, manufacturing, biotechnology and space technology, among others.
- The first phase played a key role in nurturing first-time founders and crowding in private capital to build a strong venture capital ecosystem.

Objectives

- The scheme aims to expand investment beyond major metropolitan centres to ensure that innovation thrives across the country.
- It is expected to play a critical role in advancing India's innovation-driven growth agenda by supporting startups that develop globally competitive technologies, products and solutions.
- It is aligned with the government's vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 and is expected to contribute to economic resilience, enhanced manufacturing capabilities, job creation and India's emergence as a global innovation hub.

16th FEBRUARY 2026

Ol Chiki Script

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the centenary celebration of the Ol Chiki script in New Delhi, emphasising its importance in preserving Santhal heritage.

Key Facts

- Ol Chiki was developed in 1925 by Pandit Raghunath Murmu to provide a dedicated writing system for the Santhali language.

- It comprises 30 letters designed to capture Santhali phonetics with precision, allowing systematic documentation of its vocabulary and grammar.

- Santhali, a member of the Austroasiatic language family, is spoken across Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, and Bihar. It was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003.

> **Do you Know?**
>
> Before the creation of Ol Chiki, the language was written in scripts such as Roman, Bengali, Odia, and Devanagari.

Bhu-Aadhaar

- **Context:** The Government of Delhi has initiated the assignment of a 14-digit Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), popularly termed 'Bhu-Aadhaar', to every land parcel in the Capital.

About ULPIN (Bhu-Aadhaar)

- Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) is part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

- It is a 14-digit identification number accorded to a land parcel based on the longitude and latitude coordinates of the land parcel and depends on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps. The system integrates GIS mapping, drone surveys, and Ortho Rectified Images (ORI) for accuracy.

- It functions as a digital land identity, similar in concept to Aadhaar for individuals.

- **Significance:**
  - The initiative aims to enhance transparency, curb fraudulent transactions, and modernise land records through geospatial technology.
  - It complements the SVAMITVA Scheme, under which 48 villages in Delhi have already been covered.

17th FEBRUARY 2026

India AI Impact Summit 2026

- **Context:** At the India AI Impact Summit 2026 held in New Delhi, a high-level discussion on "The Future of Employability in the Age of AI" brought together policymakers, industry leaders, educators and innovators.

Key Highlights

- The discussion examined which skills, roles, and mindsets will remain relevant as automation accelerates and what individuals must do to stay employable.

- Speakers emphasised the growing importance of creativity, systems thinking, adaptability, and lifelong learning over narrow task-based expertise.

- The Chief Economic Advisor underlined that aligning technological adoption with mass employability must be a clear national commitment. This effort must extend beyond government to become a Team India initiative involving policymakers, industry, educators, and society at large.

- The deliberations underscored that while AI presents significant disruption, it also offers India an opportunity to build an inclusive, innovation-driven and responsible AI ecosystem aligned with national priorities and citizen welfare.

About India–AI Impact Summit 2026

- **Hosted by:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- The India–AI Impact Summit 2026, was announced by the PM at the France AI Action Summit and it will be the first-ever global AI summit hosted in the Global South.
- It will strengthen existing multilateral initiatives while advancing new priorities, deliverables, and cooperative frameworks.
- **The Three Sutras:** Three foundational pillars, known as 'Sutras' i.e. People, Planet and Progress, define how AI can be harnessed through multilateral cooperation for collective benefit.

Impact of AI on Jobs in India

- Routine, repetitive tasks are most vulnerable: Roles in sectors like BPO/ customer service, basic clerical work, assembly-line tasks, and routine logistics can be significantly reduced as AI-driven automation takes over these functions.
- Traditional mid-skill jobs, which have historically provided stable employment, are being squeezed as automation substitutes many of those functions.
- **IT and outsourcing:** AI tools are increasingly handling tasks such as coding, testing, and support work contributing to workforce restructuring in major IT firms and outsourcing companies.

Emerging Opportunities

- Emerging technologies are creating new job categories that didn't exist before such as: AI/ML engineers, Data scientists and analysts, Cloud architects, Cybersecurity specialists, AI product managers and prompt engineers.
  - These roles often command higher salaries and are rapidly growing in demand.

- Forecasts suggest millions of new tech jobs could be added over the next few years, with estimates of ~4.7 million AI/tech roles emerging in India by 2027.
- **Shift in Skill demands:** About 38% of the Indian workforce could experience shifts in skill needs due to AI by 2030 the highest among BRICS countries. Traditional academic credentials are becoming less predictive of employability; recruiters are prioritizing technology skills, analytical abilities, and adaptive learning.

PM RAHAT

- **Context:** Prime Minister Modi has approved the launch of the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme.
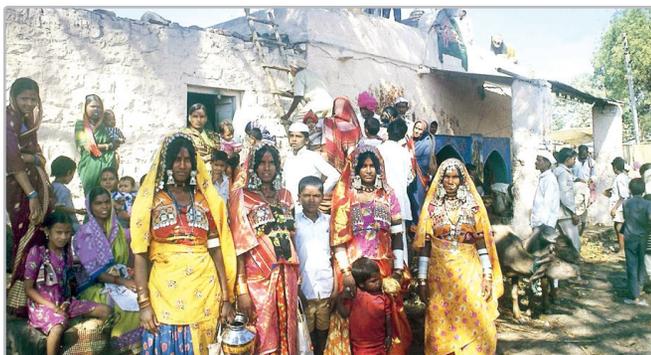
Key Features of the Scheme

- Every eligible road accident victim on any category of road will be entitled to cashless treatment up to one lakh 50 thousand per victim, for a period of seven days from the date of accident.
- Stabilization treatment will be provided for up to 24 hours in non-life-threatening cases and up to 48 hours in life-threatening cases, subject to police authentication on an integrated digital system.
- It is implemented through a technology-driven framework amalgamating the Electronic Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) platform of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with the Transaction Management System (TMS 2.0) of the National Health Authority. This integration enables seamless digital linkage from accident reporting to hospital admission, police authentication, treatment administration, claim processing, and final payment.
- Reimbursement to hospitals will be made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAF).
- Grievances of road accident victims will be addressed by a Grievance Redressal Officer nominated by the District Road Safety Committee.

18th FEBRUARY 2026

Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)

- **Context:** The Union Government assured leaders of Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) that they will be enumerated in the second phase of the 2027 Census, but details of the process remain unclear.

About Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)

- Denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes were once labeled "criminal" by colonial authorities under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871, which described certain communities as inherently predisposed to crime due to caste-based heredity. This act allowed for registration, surveillance, and control of these so-called criminal tribes.
- The CTA was repealed in 1952, officially denotifying these communities and creating the category of denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes (DNTs).
- However, the same year, states enacted habitual offender laws, which, while removing hereditary criminality, continued to target these communities as "habitual offenders," perpetuating discrimination in a new form.

Issues and Concerns

- **Social stigma:** Denotified Tribes (DNTs) in India, though included in SC, ST, and OBC lists in many states, continue to face social, economic, and political marginalization, partly due to lingering stigma and laws like the Habitual Offenders Act.
- **Lack of documentation:** Many remain outside caste-based reservations due to unclear classification.
- **Economic vulnerability:** Traditional livelihoods (performing arts, pastoralism, itinerant trades) have declined, leaving them impoverished.
- **Education gap:** High illiteracy and low access to formal schooling.
- **Political invisibility:** Absence of reliable census data and weak representation in policymaking.

Government Steps

- National Commission for DNTs (2014) Identified communities and recommended welfare measures.
- Development and Welfare Board for DNTs (2019) was established to oversee schemes and welfare programs.
- The Department of Social Justice has formulated a Scheme namely, Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) for the Development and Welfare of DNT/NT/SNT. It supports DNT communities through education (coaching), health (Ayushman Cards), livelihoods (SHGs), and housing (PMAY and other schemes).
- Other programs are Dr. Ambedkar Pre/Post-Matric Scholarships for DNTs (since 2014-15) and the Nanaji Deshmukh Hostel Scheme for DNT students.
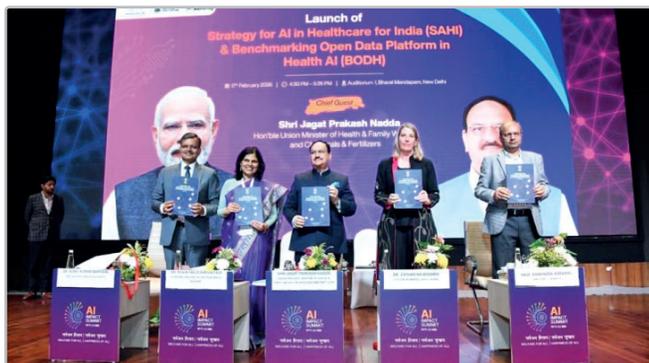
SAHI and BODH Initiatives

- **Context:** The Union Health and Family Welfare Minister launched two digital health initiatives — SAHI (Secure AI for Health Initiative) and BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI) — during the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

Key Facts

- SAHI is a governance framework, policy compass, and national roadmap for the responsible use of AI in healthcare, for leveraging AI in an ethical,

transparent, accountable, and people-centric manner. The platform will also serve as a knowledge-sharing and governance hub, promoting best practices in health AI development and implementation.

- BODH, developed by the IIT Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority, will enable systematic evaluation of AI models using diverse, anonymized real-world health datasets. It provides a structured mechanism to test and validate AI solutions before large-scale deployment.
- Together, SAHI and BODH represent India's commitment to building a trustworthy, inclusive, and globally competitive health AI ecosystem grounded in innovation, responsibility, and public trust.

Bee Corridor

- **Context:** In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has unveiled an ambitious plan to create dedicated "bee corridors" along India's national highways.

Key Facts

- The initiative aims to establish continuous linear stretches of bee-friendly vegetation featuring carefully selected flowering trees and plants.
- Unlike traditional decorative plantings, the new corridors will be designed to provide year-round nectar and pollen, ensuring sustained food sources for pollinators.

- The NHAI plans to plant around 40 lakh trees along NHs during the year 2026–27, around 60 per cent of which will be planted under the 'bee corridor' initiative.
- The initiative will help reduce the increasing ecological stress faced by honeybees and other pollinators, which is adversely impacting pollination services, agricultural and horticultural productivity, and overall ecological balance.

19th FEBRUARY 2026

Project Vault

- **Context:** The United States unveiled Project Vault, an independently governed and operated public-private partnership.

Key Facts

- It is aimed at establishing a strategic domestic reserve of critical minerals in the United States.
- The partnership is backed by $10 billion in financing by the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and an additional $2 billion in private funds.
- This stockpile build-up represents a whole-of-government transformative approach to reduce dependence on foreign-controlled supply chains.
- Project Vault is intended to function as a long-term insurance for domestic manufacturers, who could procure minerals without geographic restrictions, based on supply availability and commercial considerations, and store them.

About Critical Minerals

- Critical minerals are elements that are the building blocks of essential modern-day technologies, and are at risk of supply chain disruptions. The lack of availability of these minerals or the concentration of extraction or processing in a few geographical locations could potentially lead to "supply chain vulnerabilities and even disruption of supplies".

Applications of Critical Minerals

- Clean technologies initiatives such as zero-emission vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels etc. Critical minerals such as Cadmium, Cobalt, Gallium, Indium, Selenium and Vanadium and have uses in batteries, semiconductors, solar panels, etc.

- Advanced manufacturing inputs and materials such as defense applications, permanent magnets, ceramics. Minerals like Beryllium, Titanium, Tungsten, Tantalum, etc. have usage in new technologies, electronics and defense equipment.

- Platinum Group Metals (PGMs) are used in medical devices, cancer treatment drugs, and dental materials.

List of Critical Minerals

- Different countries have their own unique lists of critical minerals based on their specific circumstances and priorities.

- A total of 30 minerals were found to be most critical for India: Antimony, Beryllium, Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Gallium, Germanium, Graphite, Hafnium, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Niobium, Nickel, PGE, Phosphorous, Potash, REE, Rhenium, Silicon, Strontium, Tantalum, Tellurium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Zirconium, Selenium and Cadmium.

Bhirrana Site

- **Context:** The research suggests the Indus Valley Civilisation could be far older than previously believed, not just by a few centuries, but by thousands of years.

Key Facts

- Experts studying pottery and animal remains at Bhirrana in northern India suggest that the Indus Valley Civilization may stretch back around 8,000 years.

- If confirmed, that would place its earliest beginnings well before the era of Egypt's first pharaohs. For decades, historians have placed the great civilisations of the ancient world in an order from first Mesopotamia, then Egypt with its pyramids and pharaohs, and alongside them, the Indus Valley Civilisation.

About Indus Valley Civilization

- The Harappan civilization is believed to be one of the oldest world civilizations that flourished roughly between 2600 and 1900 BC.

- It was developed along the river Indus and for that reason it is also known as the Indus Valley Civilization.

- At its height, it covered vast areas of what is now Pakistan and north-west India.

- It is identified as a Bronze-age civilization because many objects have been found that are made up of copper-based alloys.