

Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 18 December, 2025



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RAJASTHAN




Schools in Rajasthan Selected Under the PM-SHRI Scheme




Why in News?

- The PM-SHRI scheme is being implemented in two phases in schools across Rajasthan.



Ministry of Education
Government of India

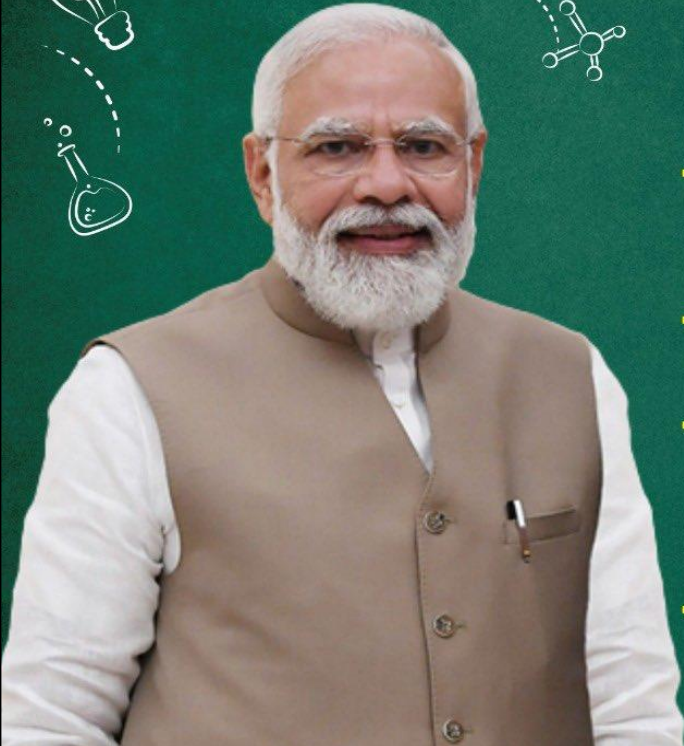


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Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

PM SHRI Schools

(PM Schools for Rising India)

*Nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped with
21st century skills*



More than 14500 Schools across the country to be upgraded & developed

To act as exemplar schools & also offer mentorship to other schools in their vicinity

To showcase all components of the National Education Policy 2020

Pedagogy adopted in these schools will be more experiential, holistic, integrated & play/toy-based

To benefit lakhs of students across the country

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Key Points:

- **First Phase:** 402 schools were selected from the state.
- **Second Phase:** 237 schools were selected from 33 districts of the state.
- A total of 639 schools have been selected under this scheme in the state, including 16 primary, 123 upper primary, 18 secondary, and 482 senior secondary schools.
- **Concerned Departments:** School Education and Literacy Department at the national level, and Rajasthan School Education Council and Education Department at the state level.

Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI)

- **Cabinet Approval:** September 7, 2022
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- **Objective:** To establish 14,500 model schools.
- To provide holistic education, 21st-century skills development, and environmentally friendly infrastructure in the selected schools.

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Technology Developed to Produce Hydrogen from Seawater: IIT Jodhpur



Why in News?

- Recently, researchers at the Electrochemical Energy Conversion and Storage (E2CS) laboratory of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur have developed new technologies in two key areas of sustainable technology: hydrogen production from seawater and aqueous zinc-ion batteries.



Key Points:

- These technologies developed by IIT Jodhpur will be instrumental in achieving the Central Government's 'National Green Hydrogen Mission', Sustainable Development Goals-7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 13 (Climate Action).
- Hydrogen Production from Seawater:** Direct Seawater Electrolysis is a technology that provides clean hydrogen without the use of any freshwater.
- IIT Jodhpur is developing advanced electrocatalysts that enable hydrogen production directly from seawater. This process eliminates the need for water purification and reduces the challenges associated with industrial wastewater treatment.

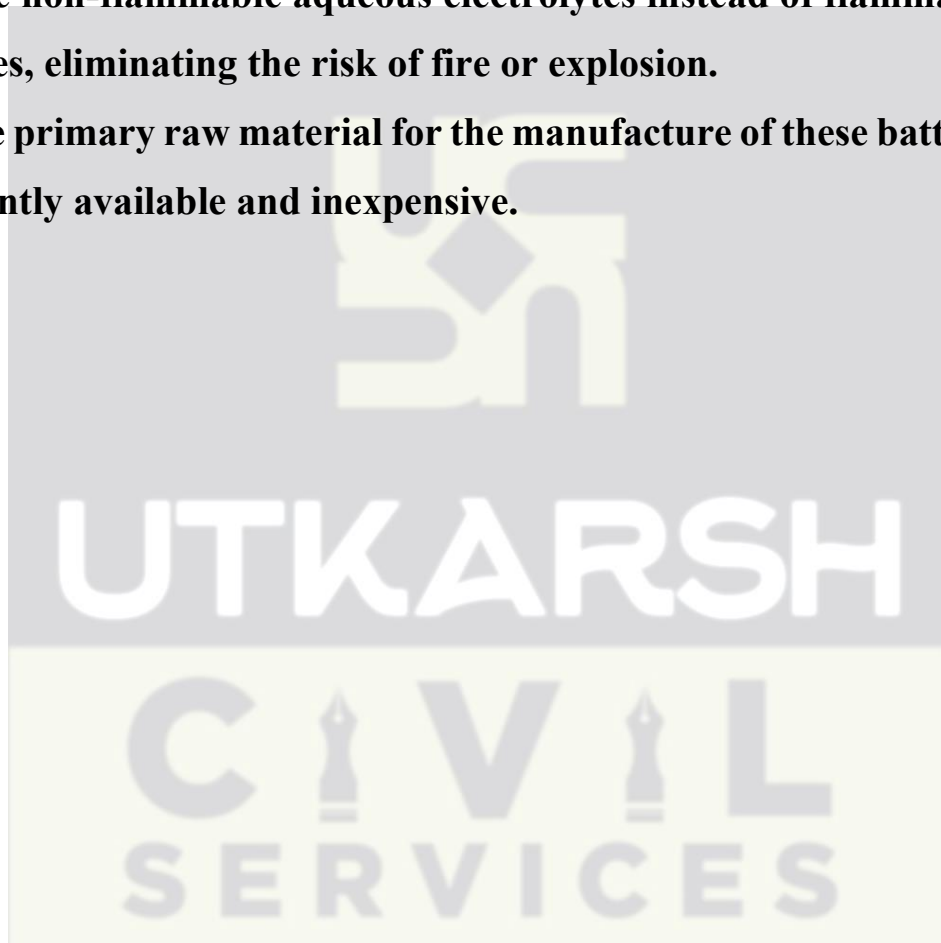
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- **Aqueous Zinc-Ion Batteries:** Aqueous zinc-ion batteries (AZIBs) are a safe, low-cost, and environmentally friendly technology for large-scale energy storage. This technology provides a safer alternative to traditional lithium-ion batteries.
- AZIBs use non-flammable aqueous electrolytes instead of flammable organic electrolytes, eliminating the risk of fire or explosion.
- Zinc is the primary raw material for the manufacture of these batteries, which is abundantly available and inexpensive.



-:5:-

Kurjan Festival – 2025



Why in News?

- The Rajasthan Tourism Department will organize the 'Kurjan Festival' on December 26 and 27, 2025, in Phalodi district to promote tourism and give global recognition to the district's culture and art.



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Key Points:

- **Venue:** Khichan (Phalodi).
- **Edition:** Second.
- The first edition of the Kurjan Festival was held on March 17, 2025, in Khichan (a Ramsar site).

Demoiselle Crane (Kurjan):

- The Demoiselle Crane, locally known as the Kurjan bird, is a migratory bird species native to Siberia, Central Asia, and Mongolia.
- Every year, Kurjan birds migrate from Siberia to Khichan village in Phalodi for the winter.
- Demoiselle Cranes are found in 47 countries worldwide. Although not endangered, the bird faces threats from habitat loss.
- To raise awareness among the general public about the conservation and protection of wildlife in the state, various wildlife species found in different districts are declared as district-wise mascots. In this context, the State Forest Department has declared the Kurjan bird as the mascot of Jodhpur district.
- **Main diet:** Sorghum, salt, limestone, and brackish water.
- **Scientific name:** Anthropoides virgo
- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern

NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p>Engineering College Bikaner receives 'Energy Conservation Award'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ On the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day (December 14, 2025), the Engineering College Bikaner (ECB) was awarded the National Energy Conservation Award-2025 for its remarkable work in the field of energy conservation.■ The event was organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
2.	<p>University of Rajasthan receives 'Pride of Nation Award 2025'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Recently, 13 institutions/universities across the country were honored with the 'Pride of Nation Award 2025' by Veterans India.■ In this award ceremony, the University of Rajasthan was awarded the 'Pride of Nation Award 2025' for promoting youth empowerment and value-based education.
3.	<p>Rajasthan secures third position in National Para Swimming Championship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Venue: Gachibowli Indoor Swimming Stadium, Hyderabad.■ Rajasthan's performance: Third position. 97 medals (36 gold, 38 silver, 23 bronze).■ Organizer: Paralympic Committee of India.
4.	<p>State-level Road Safety Campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Event: From December 11 to 25, 2025, across Rajasthan.■ Inauguration: By Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma at Amar Jawan Jyoti, Jaipur.

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5.

Manish Kumar Badhgoti

- In the Asian Youth Para Athletics Championship held in Dubai, UAE, Manish Kumar Badhgoti from Rajasthan won a bronze medal in the 1500 meters race.

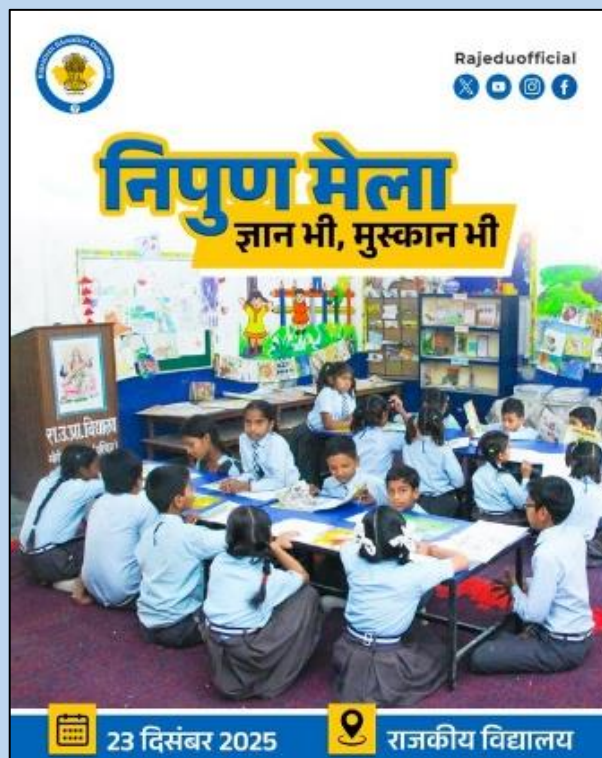
6.

National Biomedical Research Competition (NBRCOM 2025)

- **Event:** Held at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jodhpur from December 5 to 7, 2025.
- **Organizers:** Society of Young Biomedical Scientists (SYBS) India and AIIMS Jodhpur.
- This conference is a leading platform for research, innovation, and young talent in biology, health sciences, and pharmaceutical sciences.

7.

Nipun Fair – 2025



- **Organizer:** Rajasthan School Education Council.
- **Event:** To be held on December 23, 2025, in all government schools of Rajasthan under the National Education Policy 2020.



SCHEMES



ASPIRE Scheme



Why in News?

- More than 100 livelihood business incubators have been approved across the country under the 'Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship' (ASPIRE).



Key Points:

ASPIRE Scheme

- **Launched:** In 2015 by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- **Objective:** To establish a network of Livelihood Business Incubators (LBIs) to promote innovation and accelerate entrepreneurship.
- This scheme will provide skill development and reskilling in new technologies to unemployed and self-employed/working individuals in the agro-rural sector, etc.

Key Benefits:

- Assistance of up to ₹1 crore for government agencies and up to ₹75 lakh for private agencies is provided for plant and machinery.
- Government and private agencies can receive up to ₹1 crore as operational expenditure support for workforce costs, incubation operations, etc.



ECONOMIC SCENARIO



Trade Deficit



Why in News?

- India's trade deficit narrowed by over 61% to \$6.6 billion in November 2025, driven by strong growth in merchandise exports and a decline in merchandise imports.



Key Points:

Trade Deficit

- **Definition:** A trade deficit occurs when the value of a country's imports exceeds the value of its exports over a given period, resulting in a negative balance of trade (BoT).
- **Balance of Trade (BoT) = Total Exports - Total Imports**

Types of Trade Deficits:

- **Merchandise Trade Deficit:** The difference between the export and import of physical goods.
- **Services Trade Deficit/Surplus:** The difference between the export of services (IT, tourism, finance) and the import of services. India typically has a surplus in services trade.
- **Bilateral Trade Deficit:** A trade deficit with a specific country (e.g., India-China trade deficit)

Insurance for All, Protection for All (Insurance Laws Amendment) Bill, 2025



Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha has passed the 'Insurance for All, Protection for All (Insurance Laws Amendment) Bill, 2025'.



Key Points:

- This bill amends the Insurance Act, 1938, the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) Act, 1999.
- **Objective:** To accelerate the growth and development of the insurance sector and ensure the protection of policyholders' interests.

Key Features of the Bill

- **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** The bill increases the FDI limit in Indian insurance companies from 74% to 100% of the paid-up equity capital.
- Paid-up capital refers to the equity capital that has been fully paid by shareholders in exchange for ownership interests.
- **Policyholder Education and Protection Fund:** This fund will be used to protect the interests of policyholders and create awareness among them.
- This fund will be administered by IRDAI.
- **Reduction in Net-Owned Fund Requirement for Foreign Reinsurers:** The 'net-owned fund' requirement for foreign reinsurance companies has been reduced from ₹5,000 crore to ₹1,000 crore. This will allow more reinsurance companies to enter the market.
- **Net-Owned Fund:** This reflects the true financial position of a company. It includes the company's paid-up capital, etc.
- IRDAI will now have enforcement powers similar to SEBI for recovering wrongfully obtained gains.
- Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will be given greater operational freedom. This includes establishing new regional offices without prior government approval.

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Developed India - G RAM G Bill



Why in News?

- The Developed India - Guarantee Mission for Employment and Livelihood (Rural) or VB-G RAM G Bill, 2025 will replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005.



Key Points:

- State governments will notify a scheme in line with this bill within 6 months of its enactment.

Key Features of the Bill

- **Employment Guarantee:** The guarantee of employment for unskilled manual labor for every rural household has been increased from 100 days to 125 days per financial year.
- State governments can now suspend the scheme for a maximum period of 60 days to ensure the availability of agricultural laborers during the sowing and harvesting seasons.
- **Creation of Durable Assets:** Focus will be on four priority areas: water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood-related infrastructure, and special works for extreme weather events.

Planning Structure:

- Developed Gram Panchayat Plans prepared by Gram Panchayats will be integrated with PM Gati Shakti.
- Panchayats will be graded based on their development level.
- Lower-performing Panchayats will receive higher allocations to reduce regional disparities.

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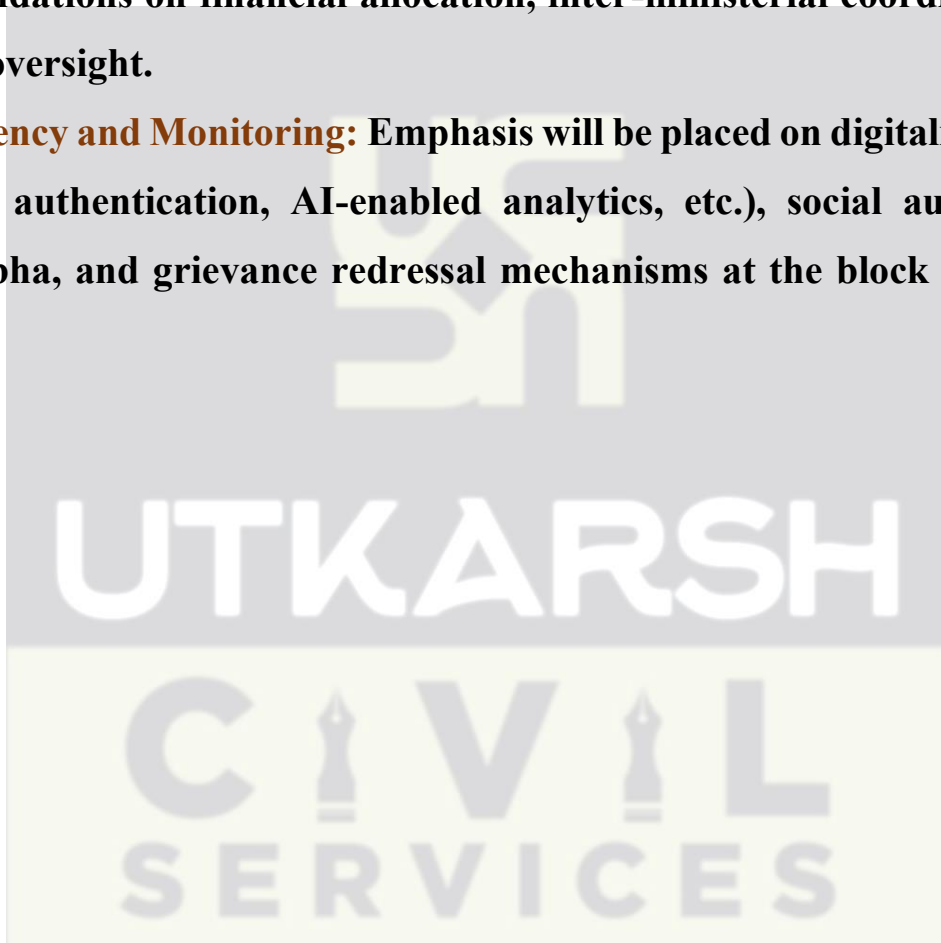
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Institutional Oversight:

- **Central and State Rural Employment Guarantee Councils:** These will review and monitor the implementation of the scheme and provide advice.
- **National and State Level Steering Committees:** These will provide recommendations on financial allocation, inter-ministerial coordination, and strategic oversight.
- **Transparency and Monitoring:** Emphasis will be placed on digitalization (e.g., biometric authentication, AI-enabled analytics, etc.), social audits by the Gram Sabha, and grievance redressal mechanisms at the block and district levels.



Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025



Why in News?

- The SHANTI Bill, 2025, upon becoming law, will replace the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.



Key Points:

Provisions of the SHANTI Bill

- **Opening the nuclear sector to non-governmental entities:** This allows for participation by Indian private companies and joint ventures between the government and private companies, etc.
- **Liability for nuclear reactor accidents:** A tiered liability structure has been established. The liability limit will range from ₹100 crore to ₹3,000 crore, depending on the reactor's capacity.
- The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 currently provides for a uniform liability limit of ₹1,500 crore for nuclear power reactors with a capacity of 10 MW or more. The new law will replace this provision.
- If the compensation amount exceeds the operator's liability limit, the remaining liability will be borne by the central government. A Nuclear Liability Fund may be established for this purpose.
- The previous system of 'no-fault liability' will continue. This means that the operator will be held responsible even without proof of negligence for the accident or damage.
- The provision requiring the operator to obtain insurance equal to the liability amount has been retained.

- **Operator's 'Right of Recourse':** Under the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, the operator was granted the 'right of recourse' for defective equipment, contractual provisions, or intentional acts. This right has been removed in this bill.
- Under the right of recourse, if a nuclear reactor accident occurred due to a supplier, the operator had the right to recover compensation from that supplier.
- **Expansion of jurisdiction for compensation:** According to the new bill, if a nuclear accident in India causes nuclear damage in the territory of another country, compensation will be provided for the damage incurred there, subject to certain specified conditions.
- Under the 2010 Act, compensation could only be claimed for damage occurring within the borders or jurisdiction of India.
- **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB):** It has now been granted statutory status. This will enable the institution to ensure the safe use of radiation and nuclear energy.
- **Nuclear Energy Compensation Advisory Council:** This council will be established to hear appeals against the decisions of the Central Government or the AERB.
- Appeals against the decisions of this council can be filed before the Electricity Appellate Tribunal.

Goldar Committee



Why in News?

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released a second discussion paper on methodological changes in GDP compilation using the expenditure approach. These changes are based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics, chaired by Prof. B.N. Goldar.



Key Points:

Goldar Committee Recommendations

- **Revision of Base Year:** The base year for national accounts should be changed from 2011-12 to 2022-23.
- **Data Integration:** Updated datasets (such as those reflecting the post-GST regime, digitalization, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), etc.) should be incorporated to better understand structural changes, digitalization, and the contribution of the informal sector.