

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 April 2026



## Index

Sr. No.	Topic
1.	Rajasthan in the Cultural Talent Search Scholarship Scheme (CTSSS)
2.	Rajasthan AI-ML Policy – 2026
3.	Sale of 'Bt Cotton' Hybrid Seeds in Rajasthan
4.	Census 2027 in Rajasthan – Phase I
5.	News in Shorts 1. MoU between Indian Army and BITS, Pilani for Indigenous Defence Modernization 2. Dr. Sandeep Bakshi: UN IIMSAM Goodwill Ambassador
6.	Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool
7.	Petroglyphs (Rock Carvings)
8.	Jagadguru Basaveshwara
9.	Gold Mining
10.	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III)
11.	Vishwa Sutra
12.	Samudra Manthan Mission (National Deep Water Exploration Mission)
13.	Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)
14.	Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) Agreement
15.	India-Sri Lanka Relations: Visit by the Vice President of India
16.	India's First 'Advanced 3D Semiconductor Packaging Unit'

--:1:--



### Rajasthan in the Cultural Talent Search Scholarship Scheme (CTSSS)

#### Why in News?

- Recently, the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) announced scholarships under the 'Cultural Talent Search Scholarship Scheme (CTSSS),' wherein 10 child artists from Rajasthan were selected.



#### Key Points:

- The Cultural Talent Search Scholarship (CTSS) is awarded by the CCRT—under the Union Ministry of Culture—to talented children aged 10 to 14 years for specialized training.
- Categories:** Dance, Music, Painting, Drama, etc.

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 April 2026



- Under the scholarship, recipients receive an annual scholarship amount of ₹3,600 and a reimbursement of tuition fees up to ₹9,000; this scholarship is renewable until the age of 20 years.

## Artists Selected from Rajasthan:

Name	Subject
Gitisha Pandey	Drama
Aunik Jain	H.M. - Vocal
Rajat Pandey	H.M.I. - Tabla
Anvi Jain	Kathak Dance
Veronica Pahwa	Kathak Dance
Annika Gupta	Kathak Dance
Nirvi Ajmera	Kathak Dance
Trinjal Rajawat	Painting
Atharva Bijawat	Painting
Yashasvi Inda	Painting

## Facts for Prelims:

- The Regional Centre of the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) in Rajasthan is located in Udaipur.
- This centre works towards the preservation of Rajasthan's rich folk art, culture, and traditions, as well as promoting their integration with education.

--3--

## Rajasthan AI-ML Policy – 2026

### Why in News?

- The 'Rajasthan AI-ML Policy – 2026' has been implemented with the objective of positioning the state as a technological leader by promoting Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) across governance, education, industry, and startups within Rajasthan.



--4--

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 April 2026




## 📌 Key Points:

- **Launch:** By the Chief Minister on January 6, 2026, in Jaipur, during the 'Rajasthan Regional AI Impact Conference – 2026'.
- **Full Name:** Rajasthan Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI-ML) Policy – 2026
- **Announcement:** This policy was announced in the Rajasthan Budget 2025-26.
- **Approval:** Approved by the Rajasthan Cabinet on December 30, 2025.
- **Objectives:** To make public service delivery faster, more transparent, and citizen-centric through the responsible, ethical, and secure use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning; to enhance administrative efficiency; and to foster innovation-driven economic growth.
- Additionally, developing Rajasthan as a hub for Information Technology (IT) and IT-Enabled Services (ITES) is among the primary objectives of this policy.
- Keeping in mind the growing significance of Information Technology in service delivery, this policy will ensure the expansion of e-governance.
- **Provisions:** Under this policy, special emphasis has been placed on making AI systems transparent, accountable, fair, and privacy-preserving, as well as on mitigating bias within AI systems, ensuring data security, and maintaining clarity in decision-making processes.

--5:--

# Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 21 April 2026



- The policy also includes provisions for clear procedures regarding the reporting and resolution of cybercrimes related to AI.
- This policy contains provisions to promote AI education in schools, ITIs, polytechnic institutions, and colleges.
- **Note:** The policy includes a provision for the establishment of an ‘Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence’.
- Under the policy, each department shall identify the potential for utilizing AI within its respective domain, and an AI Nodal Officer shall be appointed.

UTKARSH

CIVIL  
SERVICES

--6:--

## Sale of 'Bt Cotton' Hybrid Seeds in Rajasthan

### Why in News?

- Recently, the State Government issued formal permission for the sale of Bt cotton hybrid seeds for the commercial cultivation of non-modified (BG-II, GFM) Bt cotton hybrids.

**Bt cotton is currently the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation in India.**

Safe. Scientific. Sustainable.

- SAFE**  
Rigorous scientific testing ensures safety for people, animals, and the environment.
- SCIENTIFIC**  
Developed using advanced biotechnology to protect against bollworm.
- SUSTAINABLE**  
Helps improve yield, reduce insecticide use, and support farmers' livelihoods.

Only GM Crop Approved in India

Bt COTTON  
TRUSTED BY MILLIONS OF FARMERS

Bt Cotton – The only GM crop Approved. Trusted. Transforming Indian Agriculture.

Source: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India

### Key Points:

- This permission has been issued in accordance with the recommendations of the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Standing Committee on Bt Cotton.
- Season:** For the Kharif-2026 season.

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 April 2026



- Under this arrangement, 34 approved seed companies will be able to supply Bt cotton hybrid seeds across various agro-climatic zones of the state, subject to prescribed conditions.
- **Note:** A complete ban has been imposed on the sale of Bt cotton hybrids that are susceptible to Whitefly and Cotton Leaf Curl Virus (CLCuD) in western districts such as Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, and Bikaner.

## Bt Cotton:

- Bt cotton is a genetically modified (GM), insect-resistant variety of cotton. Currently, it is the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation in India.
- Approved in 2002, it covers over 90 percent of India's cotton acreage; its objective is to combat bollworm pests through the production of Bacillus thuringiensis protein.

## Facts for Prelims:

### Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

- The GEAC is India's apex regulatory body for biotechnology.
- **Ministry:** Operates under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- **Basis of Establishment:** Constituted under the 'Rules of 1989,' which were notified pursuant to the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- **Composition:** Chaired by the Special Secretary or Additional Secretary of the Ministry. A representative from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) serves as the Co-Chairperson.

--8:--



# Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 21 April 2026



## Key Functions:

- **Approval of GM Crops:** Approval from the GEAC is mandatory for the commercial use or environmental release of Genetically Modified (GM) crops (such as Bt cotton and GM mustard) in India.
- **Regulatory Role:** It regulates the manufacture, use, import, export, and storage of hazardous microorganisms, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), and cells.
- Additionally, the GEAC also evaluates the environmental impact of recombinants used on a large scale in research and industrial production.

UTKARSH

CIVIL  
SERVICES

--9:--

## Census 2027 in Rajasthan – Phase I

### Why in News?

- Between May 16 and June 14, 2026, the first phase of Census 2027—specifically, the House Listing operation—will be conducted in Rajasthan.



## Key Points:

- As an innovative initiative aimed at making the first phase of the Census—"House Listing and Housing Census (HLO)"—completely digital and participatory, the Government of India has introduced a 'Self-Enumeration' facility.

**Duration of Self-Enumeration:** May 1 to May 15, 2026.

- The objective of the Self-Enumeration facility is to provide an opportunity, via digital means, for working or busy households—or those simply wishing to provide their details at their own convenience—to fill in their information themselves.
- It is noteworthy that on January 29, 2026, the State Government issued a notification regarding the questions (totaling 33) to be asked during the first phase of the Census.
- **Official Mascots of the Census:** 'Pragati' (Female) and 'Vikas' (Male); these were unveiled by the Union Home Minister on March 5, 2026.
- **Census Brand Ambassador:** Renowned sand artist and Padma Shri awardee, Sudarsan Pattnaik (Odisha).

## **Other Important Points:**

### **Census – 2027:**

- India's 16th Census will be conducted in two phases. Under this framework, the first phase—comprising the House Listing and Housing Census operations—will be carried out between April 2026 and September 2026.
- In the second phase, the population enumeration will take place in September–October 2026 in the country's snowy regions—such as Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand—and in February–March 2027 across the rest of India.

# Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 21 April 2026



- While the Census operations in India are conducted under the aegis of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, the responsibility for the Census in Rajasthan lies with the Department of Statistics.
- In accordance with a Gazette Notification issued under Section 3 of the Census Act, 1948, the process of House-listing and Housing Census has commenced prior to the Census.
- **Fully Digital:** The 2027 Census will be India's first fully digital census.
- **Caste Census:** This will be the first nationwide caste-based enumeration since 1931.

UTKARSH

CIVIL  
SERVICES

-:12:-

## NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p><b>MoU between Indian Army and BITS, Pilani for Indigenous Defence Modernization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army's Sapta Shakti Command and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani, to foster collaboration in the fields of defence research and development, as well as technological innovations.</li><li>This agreement was concluded at the Jaipur-based headquarters of the Sapta Shakti Command.</li><li>The objective of this strategic partnership is to integrate academic expertise with emerging military operational requirements and to foster an innovation-driven ecosystem capable of addressing the complex challenges of the modern battlefield.</li></ul>
2.	<p><b>Dr. Sandeep Bakshi: UN IIMSAM Goodwill Ambassador</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dr. Sandeep Bakshi, Chancellor of Jaipur National University (JNU), was recently appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador for UN IIMSAM (Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition).</li><li>Dr. Bakshi is the first university head from India to receive this prestigious international responsibility.</li><li>His appointment aims to spearhead the global campaign against malnutrition and to promote the nutritional benefits of 'Spirulina'.</li></ul>



### Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool

#### Why in News?

- The government has approved the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, worth ₹12,980 crore, to secure the movement of goods by ships. This aligns with the Maritime India Vision 2030.

#### Key Points:

##### Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool

- **Objective:** To ensure affordable and continuous insurance coverage even in the event of foreign insurance companies withdrawing during times of war or conflict.
- **Coverage:** All maritime risks, including Hull, Machinery, Cargo, Protection and Indemnity (P&I), and War risks.
- **Significance:** It promotes trade security and self-reliance.



### Petroglyphs (Rock Carvings)

#### Why in News?

- The foundation stone for India's first petroglyph conservation park was laid on the banks of the Indus River in Ladakh.
- The objective of this park is to serve as a dedicated conservation site for centuries-old rock carvings (petroglyphs). These carvings are currently under threat due to unregulated tourism, excessive infrastructure development, and a lack of awareness.

#### Key Points:

##### Petroglyphs

- Petroglyphs are prehistoric images, symbols, or carvings. They are incised directly onto rock surfaces.
- They serve as "open-air museums" and "civilizations carved in stone." They present a continuous record of human history, spanning from the Paleolithic era to later historical periods.
- These carvings depict ancient trade routes, migration patterns, and belief systems. Furthermore, they also chronicle ecological history.
- **Major Petroglyph Sites in India:** Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh), Ratnagiri (Maharashtra), Gavilgarh Hills (Odisha), etc.

## Jagadguru Basaveshwara

### Why in News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Jagadguru Basaveshwara on the occasion of Basava Jayanti.
- Basaveshwara, also known as Basavanna, was a 12th-century philosopher, social reformer, and a prominent figure of the Bhakti movement, who was primarily active in the Kalyana region of present-day Karnataka.
- He is considered the founder of Lingayatism and advocated for equality, social justice, and the rejection of caste hierarchies and social discrimination.
  - o Lingayats are classified as a Hindu sub-caste known as "Veerashaiva Lingayats" and are considered Shaivites.
- He served as a minister under King Bijjala II of the Kalachuri dynasty.
- Basaveshwara introduced the concept of Ishtalinga, which fosters a direct and personal connection with God, transcending social divisions.
- He also established the Anubhava Mantapa (often referred to as the world's first parliament), a pioneering platform for open dialogue where people from diverse backgrounds—including women—could participate in discussions on spiritual and social issues.

## Geography and Geology

### Gold Mining

#### Why in News?

- India's first private-sector gold mining project is set to commence in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh (at the Jonnagiri mine).

#### Key Points:

##### Gold

- Gold is a soft, malleable, and corrosion-resistant metal. It is found in its natural state (as nuggets, in gold-bearing veins within fissures, and in alluvial deposits).
- It dissolves in cyanide (used in mining) and forms an amalgam with mercury.

##### Deposits and Distribution:

- India:** 518.23 million tonnes of gold ore (as of 2020).
- Top States (Deposits):** Bihar (43%), Rajasthan (approx. 25%), and Karnataka (approx. 20%).
- Leading Producer:** Karnataka (approx. 97%); the principal mine is the Hutti Gold Mine.
- Placer Deposits:** Kerala.

##### Global:

- Top Producers:** China (10%), Russia, Australia.
- Top Importers:** Switzerland, China, UK.
- Top Exporters:** Switzerland, UAE, UK.

## Schemes and Policies

### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III)

#### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III) until March 2028.

#### Key Points:

#### Key Features of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):

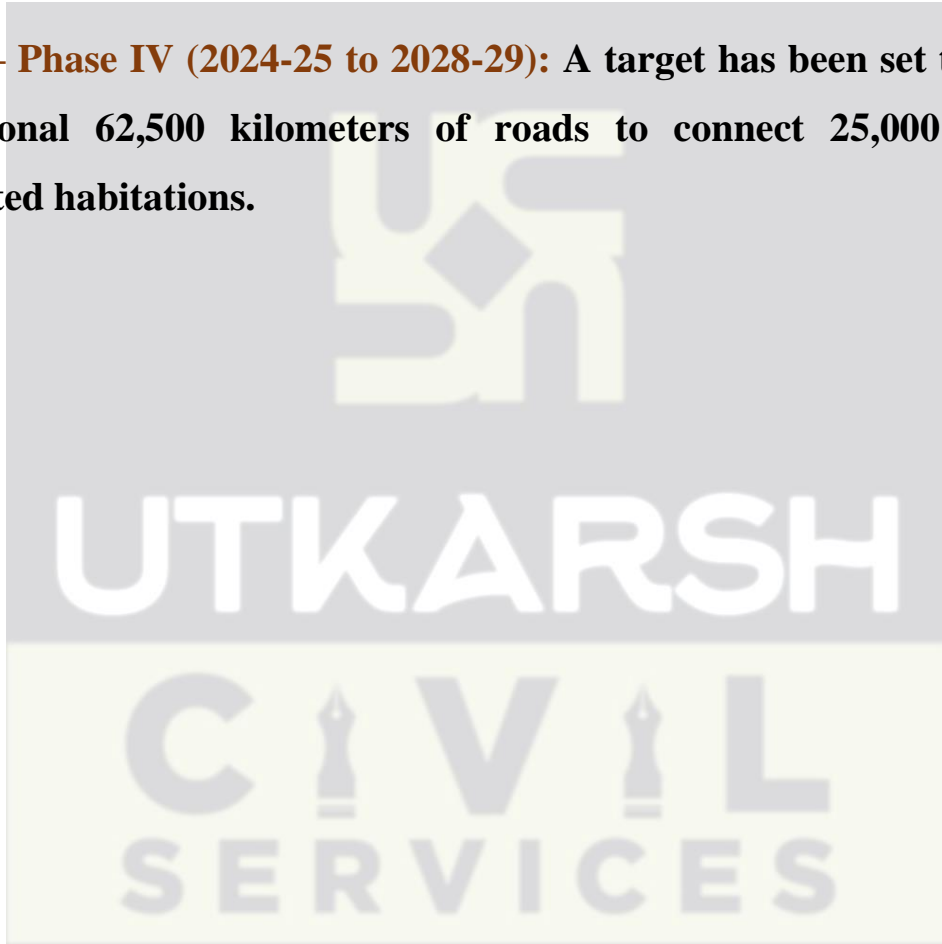
- **Inception:** Launched on December 25, 2000, as a flagship Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Objective:** To reduce poverty by connecting unconnected rural habitations with all-weather roads. The population norms for this purpose are as follows:
  - Rural habitations with a population of 500 or more in plain areas.
  - Habitations with a population of 250 or more in Special Category Areas (such as the North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, Desert Areas, and selected backward districts).
- **Major Phases of the Scheme:**
  - **PMGSY-Phase I (2000):** Focused on providing initial all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations.
  - **PMGSY-Phase II (2013):** In this phase, the focus shifted from constructing new roads to upgrading existing rural roads. The target was to upgrade 50,000 kilometers of the rural road network.
  - **Road Construction in Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas (2016):** Targeted 44 districts across nine states severely affected by Left-Wing Extremism.

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 21 April 2026



- o **PMGSY-Phase III (2019):** Aimed to upgrade 125,000 kilometers of 'Through Routes' and 'Major Rural Links' to directly connect villages to rural agricultural markets, higher secondary schools, and hospitals.
- **Extension:** This phase has now been extended from March 2025 to March 2028.
- **PMGSY – Phase IV (2024-25 to 2028-29):** A target has been set to construct an additional 62,500 kilometers of roads to connect 25,000 previously unconnected habitations.



-:19:-

## Vishwa Sutra

### Why in News?

- The Union Ministry of Textiles has launched an initiative titled ‘Vishwa Sutra – India’s Weavers for the World’.

### Key Points:

#### Vishwa Sutra

- This initiative has been launched by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).
- **Objective:** To present Indian handlooms within a contemporary global design framework.
- Under this initiative, 30 distinct handloom weaves from across the country have been brought together. Each of these weaves represents a different state.
  - o These weaves have been creatively reinterpreted using design inspirations drawn from 30 different countries. They reflect diverse cultural elements, silhouettes, and design sensibilities.
  - o **Examples:** Odisha Ikat featuring Greek motifs; Kanchipuram incorporating Norwegian lines; Muga silk with Egyptian elements; Patola with Spanish influences; and Banarasi silk paired with ensembles inspired by the UAE.

## Samudra Manthan Mission (National Deep Water Exploration Mission)

### Why in News?

- The Samudra Manthan Mission will promote deep-water exploration and energy security.

### Key Points:

#### Samudra Manthan Mission

- **Launch:** It was announced by the Prime Minister in 2025, as India's National Deep Water Exploration Mission.
  - o It will be implemented in a mission mode.
- **Objective:** Its aim is to discover oil and gas reserves.

## Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)

### Why in News?

- The Central Government has approved the procurement of potatoes under the MIS to prevent distress sales by farmers at low prices.

### Key Points:

#### Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)

- **Introduction:** This is a component of PM-AASHA. This scheme is designed for perishable crops such as tomatoes, onions, and potatoes. These crops are not covered under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) or the Price Stabilization Scheme.
  - o Originally, the MIS was launched in 1983. Subsequently, in 2024, it was incorporated into PM-AASHA.
- **Implementation:** By the Union Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, upon the request of the State governments.
- **Objective:** To prevent distress sales at low prices during periods of bumper production and a consequent decline in market prices.
- **Conditions:** This scheme is invoked when there is an increase in production of 10% or more, or when market prices fall by 10% or more below the previous normal levels.
- **Sharing of Losses:** The Centre and the State share the losses in a 50:50 ratio; for Northeastern states, this ratio is 75:25.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Support (RELOS) Agreement

#### Why in News?

- Recently, the RELOS agreement signed between India and Russia came into force.




#### Key Points:

#### RELOS

- Objective:** It permits the reciprocal use of military bases, ports, and air facilities. This also includes access to the Arctic region for India.
- Scope:** It encompasses logistics support, joint exercises, training, and humanitarian missions.

# Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 21 April 2026



- **Provisions for Usage:** It provides for the deployment of 3,000 troops, 5 warships, and 10 aircraft in each other's territory for a period of 5 years.
- **Significance:** It strengthens defense cooperation and coordination amidst global geopolitical tensions. Additionally, it ensures continued support for Russian-origin weaponry.



-:24:-

## India-Sri Lanka Relations: Visit by the Vice President of India

### Why in News?

- During his visit to Sri Lanka, the Vice President of India held discussions on bilateral cooperation, economic assistance, and issues concerning fishermen, while also announcing changes to the policy regarding Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards.



## Key Points:

### Highlights of the Vice President's Visit to Sri Lanka

- **OCI Extension and Diaspora Engagement:** Eligibility has been extended up to the sixth generation of Tamils of Indian origin.
- **The Diaspora as a 'Bridge':** This fosters diaspora diplomacy and cultural ties, while enhancing access to education, employment, and mobility within India.
- **Welfare and Socio-Economic Initiatives:** Increased support under the Ceylon Estate Workers Education Trust, aimed at improving the social mobility of Tamils of Indian origin.
- **Development Cooperation and MoUs:** Projects under the assistance program following Cyclone Ditwah; and the construction of medical infrastructure (Mullaitivu Hospital).
- **Focus on the 'Neighborhood First' Policy:** Sri Lanka acknowledged India's role during its economic crisis (2022) and its disaster relief assistance.
- This reinforces India's role as a key security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

### India-Sri Lanka Relations

#### Historical Evolution:

- **Ancient and Medieval Periods:** Shared Buddhist heritage (Ashoka's mission to Sri Lanka). Strong cultural, linguistic, and trade ties.
- **Colonial and Post-Independence Phases:** Migration of Tamils of Indian origin during British rule. Agreements such as the Sirima-Shastri Pact (1964) to resolve citizenship-related issues.
- **Post-1980s Phase:** Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and India's involvement:
  - India-Sri Lanka Accord (1987)
  - Deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF)

# Daily Current Affairs

 Date : 21 April 2026



- **21st Century:** A shift towards economic cooperation, connectivity, and development partnerships.

- Increased strategic significance within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

## Current Status of Relations

- **Political Relations:** Regular high-level visits and institutional dialogue.
- **Economic Relations:** Bilateral trade of approximately US\$ 5.5 billion (2023-24); India is one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners and investors.
- **Development Cooperation:** Assistance (loans and grants) exceeding US\$ 7 billion provided by India.
- **Connectivity:** Ferry services, air connectivity, digital payments (UPI), energy connectivity.

UTKARSH

CIVIL  
SERVICES

-:27:-

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### India's First 'Advanced 3D Semiconductor Packaging Unit'

#### Why in News?

- The foundation stone for India's first 'Advanced 3D Semiconductor Packaging Unit' was laid in Bhubaneswar.
- This project marks a significant step toward strengthening the domestic semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem and advancing the vision of a 'Self-Reliant India' (Atmanirbhar Bharat).
- This facility will function as a vertically integrated 'Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging' (ATMP) unit.

#### Key Points:

##### Need and Importance of Boosting Domestic Semiconductor Manufacturing:

- **Reduced Dependence on Imports:** This will bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing capabilities, thereby reducing excessive reliance on imports.
  - Currently, India imports over 90% of its semiconductor requirements.
- **Supply Chain Diversification:** At present, approximately 70% of global semiconductor manufacturing is concentrated in South Korea, Taiwan, China, the United States, and Japan.
- **Boost to Emerging Sectors:** A domestic semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem will contribute to the growth of sectors such as data centers, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), 5G/6G communication, defense, aerospace, and advanced electronics.

- **Economic Security:** This will help in mitigating situations involving chip shortages—such as those witnessed during global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

## Initiatives Launched to Boost the Semiconductor Industry

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) and Semicon India Programme:** These initiatives aim to build a robust ecosystem for semiconductors and displays in India, with the objective of establishing the country as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.
- **Talent and Skill Development:** This includes initiatives such as the ‘Chips to Startup’ (C2S) program, AICTE curriculum updates (including the introduction of specialized engineering programs), and others.
- **Indigenous Technologies:** Under the Microprocessor Development and ‘Digital India RISC-V’ programs, native processors such as SHAKTI, VIKRAM, and DHRUV64 have been developed.
- **Global Collaboration:** For instance, the ‘India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)’, participation in the US-led ‘Pax Silica’ initiative, etc.
- **State Policies:** Such as the ‘Gujarat Semiconductor Policy 2022-27’.
- **Other Initiatives:** Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS), Electronics Components and Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), etc.