

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 18 May 2026



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RAJASTHAN



Conclusion of the 'Gram Rath Abhiyan'



Why in News?

- On May 16, 2026, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma addressed the concluding ceremony of the 'Gram Rath Abhiyan' (Village Chariot Campaign) which was organized across the state via video conferencing from Thikariya (Bagru) village in Jaipur.

ग्राम रथ अभियान
27 अप्रैल, 2026 से प्रारंभ

'ग्राम-2026' आयोजन के व्यापक प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए

- 15 दिवसीय ग्राम रथ अभियान
- 183 ग्रामीण बहुल विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में पहुंचेंगे ग्राम रथ
- प्रतिदिन 4 से 5 ग्राम पंचायतों में जन-जागरूकता कार्यक्रम

श्री भजनलाल शर्मा
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, राजस्थान

सूचना एवं जनसंपर्क विभाग, राजस्थान [f](#) [@](#) [X](#) [v](#) /DIPRRajasthan

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Key Points:

- **Launch of the 'Gram Rath Abhiyan':** From the Harish Chandra Mathur Rajasthan State Institute of Public Administration (HCM RIPA), Jaipur.
- **Duration:** From April 27 to May 16, 2026.
- This was a 15-day statewide campaign, the primary objective of which was to promote the 'Global Rajasthan Agritech Meet-2026' across the state's 183 Assembly constituencies and to raise awareness among farmers regarding government schemes.
- Additionally, a primary goal was to disseminate public welfare schemes of 13 key departments including Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy, and Rural Development to the villagers.

Other Significant Points:

The Chief Minister at 'Gram Vikas Chaupals':

- As part of the 15-day 'Gram Rath Abhiyan', the Chief Minister participated in several 'Gram Vikas Chaupals' (Village Development Forums) and 'Gram Utthan Shivirs' (Village Upliftment Camps) across the state.

Key Visits:

- In Bambori village, Pratapgarh district.
- In Khandela (Jajod village), Sikar district.
- In Kadail village, Pushkar (Ajmer).
- In Mandiyai Khurd village, Osian (Jodhpur).
- In Panseri village, Jalore.

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Assistance of up to ₹11,000 Crore to the State under the SASCI Initiative

Why in News?

- Rajasthan is set to receive interest-free loan assistance of up to ₹11,000 crore under the Central Government's 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) 2026-27'.

केंद्र सरकार की SASCI पहल के तहत राज्य को 11 हजार करोड़ रुपये तक की ब्याज मुक्त सहायता



Key Points:

- Under this initiative, the State had received ₹10,547.88 crore in the year 2025-26.
- **Objective:** To accelerate the creation of capital assets and infrastructure development works within the State.
- **Project Cost:** This amount may be utilized for major capital projects and infrastructure development works in the State costing ₹5 crore or more. This will strengthen infrastructure creation, the expansion of economic activities, and future productive capacity.

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About the SASCI Initiative:

- **Inception:** Operationalized by the Central Government since the year 2020-21.
- **Concerned Department:** Department of Expenditure (Ministry of Finance).
- Under this scheme, incentive funds are released on a 'First Come, First Served' basis.
- Under this initiative, States are provided with interest-free loan assistance for a period of 50 years for capital investment projects.
- Through this initiative, infrastructure and reforms are being promoted in the States via various ministries (such as the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Mines).

UTKARSH

CIVIL
SERVICES

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RUHS Implements 'Teachers' Welfare Fund Regulation – 2026'



Why in News?

- Recently, the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS) implemented the 'Teachers' Welfare Fund Regulation – 2026' to provide financial security to its faculty members.



**RUHS द्वारा
'टीचर्स वेलफेयर फंड
रेग्यूलेशन – 2026' लागू**

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Key Points:

- This regulation covers approximately 10,700 teachers across 597 constituent and affiliated medical institutions under RUHS.
- Under this scheme, teachers or their family members will receive financial assistance in the event of a critical illness, accident, hospitalization, or untimely death.

Key Provisions of the Regulation:

- **Assistance in case of Untimely Death:** Upon the untimely demise of a teacher, their nominee or legal heir will receive financial assistance of ₹3 lakh.
- **For Treatment of Critical Illnesses:** Assistance of up to ₹1 lakh for the treatment of critical ailments such as heart disease, cancer, paralysis, Central Nervous System (CNS) disorders, kidney ailments, and stroke.
- **In case of Accidents or Serious Injuries:** Financial assistance of up to ₹50,000 in the event of any accident or serious injury.
- **Upon Hospitalization:** Assistance of up to ₹30,000 in the event of general hospitalization.

Initiative to Develop Fabric from 'Kota Doria' and 'Eri Silk'

Why in News?

- Recently, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) launched an initiative to develop a new premium fusion fabric by blending Rajasthan's traditional Kota Doria with the renowned Eri Silk of Northeast India.



Key Points:

- The primary objective of this ambitious initiative is to target high-end global and domestic markets by bringing together two of the country's richest handloom traditions.

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- **Signing of MoU:** To take this initiative forward, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between the District Industries Centre (DIC) of the Government of Rajasthan and the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC).
- This initiative aligns with the Prime Minister's '5F Vision'- The 5F Vision encompasses: Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fabric, Fabric to Fashion, and Fashion to Foreign.

Facts for Prelims (Kota Doria):

- Kota Doria sarees are traditionally known as 'Mansuriya' sarees.
- Recognizing its distinct identity and traditional hand-weaving craftsmanship, Kota Doria was granted a Geographical Indication (GI Tag) by the Government of India in the year 2005.
- The Common Facility Centre (CFC), located in the town of Kaithoon in the Kota district, is a key hub established for the conservation and development of the world-renowned Kota Doria saree, as well as for promoting local weavers.

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RAJ PAHAL (Portable Access for Holistic and Assisted Learning)

Why in News?

- Recently, a delegation representing the Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic tribal communities including the Gadariya, Gadri, Gayari, Dhangar, Pal, and Baghel groups met with the Chief Minister.

स्कूल ऑन व्हील्स शिक्षा पहुंचेगी हर वंचित तक

→ आगामी वर्ष RAJ PAHAL (PORTABLE ACCESS FOR HOLISTIC AND ASSISTED LEARNING) कार्यक्रम शुरू किया जाएगा।

→ प्रत्येक जिले में एक SCHOOL ON WHEELS स्थापित किया जाएगा।

Key Points:

- During this meeting, the Chief Minister unveiled the poster for the state-level ceremony to be held on the 301st birth anniversary of Punyashlok Ahilya Bai Holkar.
- Additionally, the Chief Minister made special mention of Veer Singh Baghel, who set an inspiring example of indomitable courage, valor, and unwavering loyalty while fighting alongside Rana Sanga against the Mughal invaders during the 'Battle of Khanwa'.

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Facts for Prelims:

RAJ PAHAL and the 'School on Wheels' Program:

- Notably, in the State Budget for the year 2026-27, the government announced the launch of the 'RAJ PAHAL (Portable Access for Holistic and Assisted Learning)' and 'School on Wheels' programs for the children of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities specifically the Gadiya Lohar, Banjara, and the laborer classes.

The Main Objectives of this Initiative:

- **Reaching Educationally Deprived Children:** To deliver education directly to the doorsteps of children belonging to the Gadiya Lohar, Banjara, and daily-wage laborer communities who are unable to attend regular schools.
- **Empowerment of Marginalized Communities:** To provide socially, economically, and politically backward classes with equal access to their rights, self-confidence, and resources.
- **Reduction in Drop-out Rates:** To eliminate the problem of children having to discontinue their studies midway (dropping out) due to migration.

NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p>Rajasthan in NSO's 'Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently, Rajasthan secured the eighth position in the 'Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises' (ASUSE), released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).According to the survey, 41.45 lakh establishments are operational within the state. The total number of such establishments across the country stands at 7.92 crore, with Rajasthan accounting for a share of 5.23 percent.Top 8 States: Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
2.	<p>Prime Minister Welcomed in the Netherlands with 'Padharo Mhare Des'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcomed by the Indian diaspora in The Hague, Netherlands, with Rajasthan's famous folk song, 'Padharo Mhare Des' (Welcome to My Land).
3.	<p>Pali's 'Migrant Cell' in the Spotlight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently, the Pali district administration established a special 'Migrant Cell' under the "Aao Gaon Chalen" (Let's Go to the Village) campaign.Its objective is to connect migrants from Pali—residing both within India and abroad—with public welfare initiatives in their ancestral villages, such as education, healthcare, water management, and environmental conservation.This initiative strengthens social participation through collaboration with the Rajasthan Foundation.



'National Compliance Reduction and Deregulation' Initiative



Why in News?

- Tripura has become the first state to complete all the priority sectors under Phase-II (Deregulation) of the 'National Compliance Reduction and Deregulation' initiative.



Key Points:

- Reducing or eliminating government oversight or control over a specific industry or sector is known as deregulation.

National Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Initiative

- **Inception:** A Task Force on Compliance Reduction and Deregulation was constituted in 2025, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.
- **Objective:** To identify unnecessary or obsolete regulations and recommend their simplification; and to guide states in amending laws and procedures in alignment with the principles of 'minimum regulation.'
- The Task Force identified 23 priority sectors across 5 broad domains.
- Phase-II was launched in January 2026 to cover these priority sectors, which include Land, Building and Construction, Utilities and Permissions, Environment, Education, Healthcare, Labor, and broader reforms.



History and Culture



Sukhdev Thapar (1907 – 1931)



Why in News?

- The birth anniversary of Martyr Sukhdev Thapar was observed on May 15.



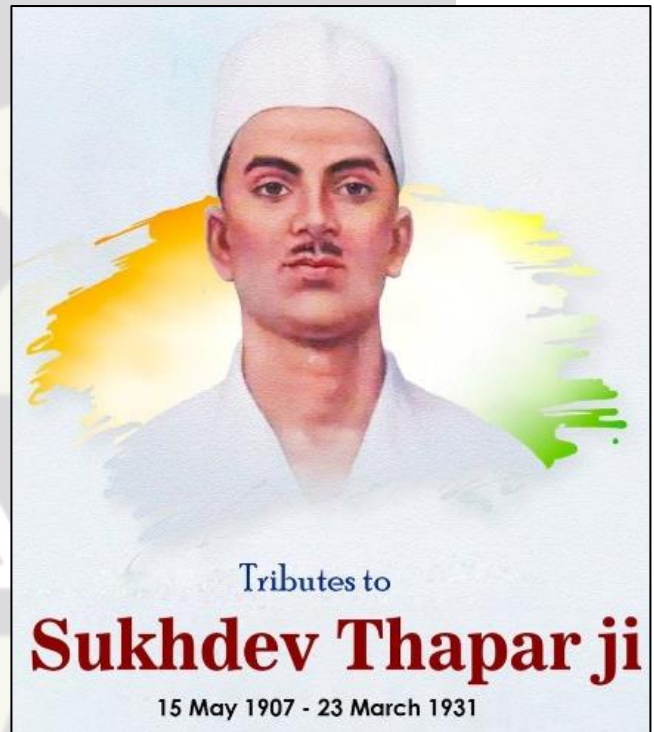
Key Points:

Sukhdev Thapar

- He was born in Ludhiana (Punjab).

Key Contributions:

- He is regarded as a key strategist of the 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Association' (HSRA).
- He was arrested alongside Bhagat Singh and Rajguru for his involvement in the assassination of British police officer J.P. Saunders (the Lahore Conspiracy Case).
- He was hanged in Lahore Jail on March 23, 1931, along with Martyr Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru. March 23 is observed as Martyrs' Day.



Geography and Geology

Dam Rehabilitation and Safety Modernization: India

Why in News?

- India is implementing one of the world's largest 'Dam Rehabilitation and Safety Modernization' programs. The objective of this program is to strengthen and ensure the safety of aging water infrastructure.

Key Points:

Status of Dams in India

- Third Rank Globally:** India possesses the world's third-largest network of dams. The top two positions are held by the United States and China. The total number of dams in India stands at 6,628.
- Ownership by State Governments:** Approximately 98.5% of the dams in India are owned by state governments.
- Highest Number of Dams:** The highest number of dams in India is located in Maharashtra, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

Key Concerns Regarding Dam Safety in India

- Aging Infrastructure:** Approximately 26% of these dams are over 50 years old.
- Sediment Accumulation:** Reservoirs have lost, on average, 19% of their gross storage capacity due to sediment accumulation.
- Tectonic Activity:** For instance, the foundation soil of the Chang Dam was compromised following the earthquake that struck Bhuj (Gujarat) in 2001.
- Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF):** For example, the Chungthang Dam (Sikkim) was washed away during a flash flood caused by the bursting of a glacial lake in 2023.
- Other Concerns:** Shifts in hydrological patterns and climate change.

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Initiatives Launched to Ensure Dam Safety in India

- **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP):** This is a multi-phase program launched in 2012 with the assistance of the World Bank. It is being implemented in three phases. The program emphasizes undertaking structural improvements to dams, conducting regular inspections for dam safety, and formulating emergency action plans.
- **Dam Safety Act, 2021:** It provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of listed dams.
- A four-tier institutional framework has been established under this Act: the National Committee on Dam Safety, the National Dam Safety Authority, State Committees on Dam Safety, and State Dam Safety Organizations.

Other Initiatives:

- Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA) Platform,
- Provision for mandatory pre-monsoon and post-monsoon inspection of all specified dams.



Economic Developments



Living Wage



Why in News?

- In the context of protests by workers in Noida, the Supreme Court underscored the State's obligation under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) of the Constitution to provide a "living wage" to workers.



Key Points:

- Under the DPSP, Article 43 directs the State to endeavor to ensure a "living wage" and a dignified standard of living for all workers.

Living Wage

- A living wage is the remuneration received by a worker for a standard workweek that is sufficient to ensure a dignified standard of living for themselves and their family.
- Typically, a living wage is higher than the minimum wage.
- The minimum wage is the legally mandated minimum remuneration that employers are required to pay to their workers.

INTERNATIONAL

India and the United Arab Emirates

Why in News?

- During the Indian Prime Minister's visit to the UAE, both nations signed a 'Framework for a Strategic Defence Partnership.'

Key Points:

- This framework will foster cooperation between the two countries in areas such as defense industry collaboration, innovation and cutting-edge technology, training, joint exercises, education and doctrine, special operations, and interoperability.



Other Key Highlights of the Framework

- **Promotion of Strategic Petroleum Reserves:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to enhance energy security through the storage of crude oil in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (located at Visakhapatnam and Chandikhol).
- **Ship Repair Cluster at Vadinar (Gujarat):** An MoU was signed between Cochin Shipyard Limited and Drydocks World to establish a 'Repair and Offshore Fabrication Cluster.'
- **MAITRI:** Both nations welcomed the operationalization of a Virtual Trade Corridor utilizing MAITRI (Master Application for International Trade and Regulatory Interface).

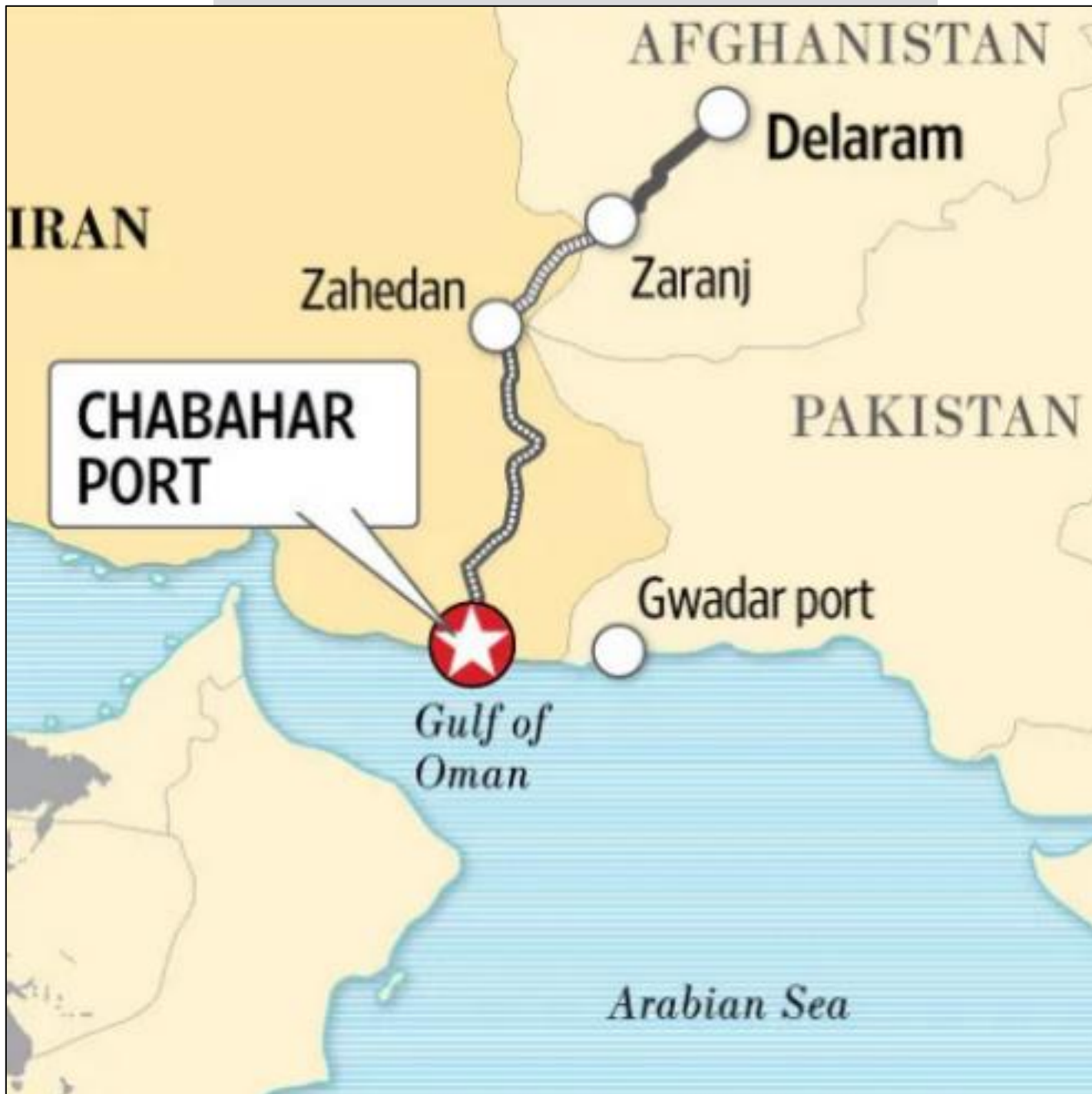
Significance of India-UAE Relations

- **Trade and Investment:** Bilateral trade between the two countries reached US\$ 101.25 billion in the financial year 2025-26. The target is to further increase this figure to US\$ 200 billion by 2032.
- The UAE is the 7th largest investor in India. Economic ties between India and the UAE have been further strengthened and streamlined through the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) of 2022, the Bilateral Investment Treaty of 2024, and the Rupee-Dirham payment mechanism.
- **Energy:** The UAE is India's fourth-largest supplier of crude oil and its largest supplier of LPG. Furthermore, it is the only foreign partner participating in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve program.
- **Strategic and Security Cooperation:** For instance, both countries are members of the I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) and UFI (UAE-France-India) trilateral groups.
- **People-to-People Contacts:** 3.5 million Indian expatriates reside in the UAE, constituting the largest expatriate community in the country. This community makes a significant contribution to remittances in India.

Chabahar Port

Why in News?

- Iran's Foreign Minister highlighted Chabahar Port as a key symbol of India-Iran cooperation and described it as the 'Golden Gate' to Central Asia.





Key Points:

- In 2018, an Indian company, 'India Ports Global Limited,' took over the operations of Chabahar Port.
- In 2024, a 10-year agreement was signed for the operation of the 'Shahid Beheshti Terminal' at Chabahar Port.

Chabahar Port

- **Location:** It is situated on the Makran coast in southeastern Iran, within the Sistan and Baluchestan province, on the Gulf of Oman.
- **Two Terminals:** Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.
- It is Iran's only port that enjoys direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- It is a key component of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which facilitates trade among India, Central Asia, and Russia.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Pollution Caused by Space Launches

Why in News?

- According to a recent study, the significant increase in the number of satellites launched into space since 2019 is causing powerful and long-lasting 'black carbon' or soot pollution in the upper atmosphere.



Key Points:

- Black carbon is a component of fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5). It is emitted through the incomplete combustion of wood, waste, and fossil fuels.

Impact on the Atmosphere:

- The accumulation of soot particles is reducing the amount of sunlight reaching the Earth's surface. In this way, it is acting as a form of geo-engineering.
- This soot persists in the upper layers of the atmosphere for a longer duration compared to soot emitted from ground-based sources. Consequently, it exerts an impact on the climate that is 500 times greater.
- Satellite launches can also generate chemicals such as chlorine within the atmosphere; these chemicals can react directly with ozone, thereby causing its depletion.

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⌚ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 🕒

Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) – 5th Generation

📣 Why in News?

- The Defence Minister laid the foundation stone for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program facility in Andhra Pradesh.



📌 Key Points:

Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

- **Indigenous Stealth Fighter:** The AMCA is India's indigenous 5th-generation, medium-weight, stealth, multi-role combat aircraft.
- **Developer:** Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), DRDO.
- **Variants:** AMCA Mk1 (equipped with the GE-F414 engine); AMCA Mk2 (equipped with an indigenous engine).

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- **Timeline:** A prototype is estimated to be ready by 2028–29, with the goal of inducting it into the armed forces by 2034–35.

Features of 5th-Generation Combat Aircraft

- **Twin-Engine Design:** In such aircraft, if one engine fails, the second engine automatically activates. Thus, these aircraft provide a high level of flight safety.
- **Stealth Capabilities:** These capabilities reduce radar, infrared, and visual signatures, making it difficult for the enemy to detect and attack the aircraft.
- **Supercruise:** It possesses the ability to sustain supersonic speeds (greater than Mach 1) without the use of fuel-intensive afterburners. This significantly enhances the aircraft's operational range and efficiency.
- **Other Features:** Integrated avionics; the use of AI to facilitate better coordination between the pilot and the aircraft; and robust networking and communication systems.
- **Examples of Currently Operational 5th-Generation Combat Aircraft:** F-22 and F-35 (United States), Sukhoi Su-57 (Russia), Chengdu J-20 (China).

Strategic Significance of the 5th-Generation AMCA Fighter Aircraft

- **Modernization of the Indian Air Force:** It will help bridge the critical capability gap arising from the phased retirement of MiG-29 and Mirage aircraft, and will bolster the Indian Air Force's dwindling squadron strength.
- **Technological Sovereignty:** It will reduce dependence on foreign defense platforms and foster long-term defense self-reliance through the 'Make in India' initiative.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India):** It will empower India's indigenous defense capabilities by developing a robust domestic aerospace industrial ecosystem.

'Abhay': An AI-Powered Verification System

Why in News?

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched an AI-based chatbot named "Abhay" for the authentication of CBI notices.

The infographic features the CBI logo and the text 'CBI LAUNCHES 'ABHAY'' in large, bold letters. Below this, it states 'AI-POWERED NOTICE VERIFICATION SYSTEM'. Three key features are highlighted: 'REAL-TIME VERIFICATION' (Verify authenticity of CBI notices in real time), 'AI-POWERED HELPBOT' (Advanced AI detects genuine or fraudulent notices), and 'EMPOWERING CITIZENS' (Putting the power of verification in the hands of every citizen). A 'HOW IT WORKS' section shows a five-step process: 1. Visit CBI's official website www.cbi.gov.in, 2. Verify your mobile number with OTP, 3. Upload a scanned copy of the notice, 4. ABHAY AI analyzes and verifies the notice, and 5. Get instant result Genuine or Potentially Fraudulent. On the right, a laptop and a smartphone are shown. The laptop screen displays the 'ABHAY' interface with an 'UPLOAD NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION' button and a chatbot icon. The smartphone screen shows a 'NOTICE VERIFIED' message with a green checkmark and the text 'This notice is GENUINE'.

Key Points:

'Abhay'

- It is an AI-powered, chatbot-style verification mechanism available to the public for verifying notices issued by the CBI.
- It has been created to protect citizens from the growing threat of cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.
- It has been designed with due consideration for data privacy and the need for a publicly accessible authentication mechanism.