

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 20 May 2026



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Rajasthan Receives Global Recognition in 'Tobacco Control Program'



Why in News?

- Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) conferred a global-level honor upon Rajasthan under the 'World No Tobacco Day Awards' for the year 2026.



**RAJASTHAN
RECEIVED FIRST PLACE
GLOBALLY IN THE
TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM.**

WHO

**APPRECIATED RAJASTHAN'S
OUTSTANDING EFFORTS.**



Key Points:

- Awarding Body:** World Health Organization (WHO)
- Recipient:** Department of Medical and Health (Government of Rajasthan)

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- **Region:** Rajasthan was conferred this prestigious honor in the South-East Asia Region category.
- Notably, the WHO presents this award by categorizing countries across the globe into six regions: the African Region, the Region of the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the European Region, the South-East Asia Region, and the Western Pacific Region.
- Currently, more than 500 'Tobacco De-addiction Treatment and Counseling Centers' are operational in Rajasthan, extending down to the block level. These centers have been geo-tagged and made available on digital platforms for the convenience of the general public, enabling individuals in need to easily locate and access the nearest center.
- Additionally, effective enforcement actions are being undertaken under the 'Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003' and the 'Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019'.

Facts for Prelims:

- **World No Tobacco Day:** Observed annually on May 31st by the World Health Organization.
- **Theme for 2026:** "Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction."

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75 Years of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (Four Key Programs)

Why in News?

- Under the year-long 'Amrit Mahotsav' (Golden Jubilee celebrations), the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly will organize four key programs.



Key Points:

- Conference of Former and Current Legislators:** The first program, scheduled for July 2026, will be a conference of former and current members spanning the first through the sixteenth Legislative Assemblies of Rajasthan. This conference will review significant and exemplary laws, socially transformative decisions, and parliamentary traditions.
- Conference of Women Legislators:** A conference of women legislators from across the country will be organized in October 2026.

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- **Youth Parliament:** In January 2027, a 'Youth Parliament' will be organized to connect the nation's youth with the roots of democracy, raise awareness regarding the Constitution, and impart knowledge on parliamentary etiquette.
- **All-India Legislative Mahakumbh:** An 'All-India Legislative Mahakumbh' is proposed to be organized on the occasion of Rajasthan Day – 2027. This event will mark the conclusion of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly's Amrit Mahotsav.

Facts for Prelims (Rajasthan Legislative Assembly):

- According to Article 168 (1) and (2) of the Constitution of India, the Rajasthan Legislature consists of the Governor and the Legislative Assembly.
- Following the general elections, the first Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan was constituted on February 23, 1952, and its first session was held on March 29, 1952.
- The first Legislative Assembly (1952) was constituted with 160 members; from the sixth Legislative Assembly (1977 onwards), the number of members was increased to 200.
- Currently, the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly comprises 200 seats.
- **Reserved Seats:** 34 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) and 25 seats for Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- **First Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly:** Narottam Lal Joshi.

Current Status of the 16th Rajasthan Legislative Assembly:

- **Governor:** Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde.
- **Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:** Vasudev Devnani.
- **Chief Minister:** Bhajan Lal Sharma.
- **Leader of the Opposition:** Tikaram Jolly.

Major Hub for Critical Minerals: Siwana Ring Complex (SRC)

Why in News?

- Recently, a review meeting of the Department of Mines and Coal was held in Jaipur, presided over by Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Union Minister for Mines and Coal, G. Kishan Reddy.

Key Points:

- During the meeting, the Chief Minister issued directives for the appointment of a Nodal Officer within the state to ensure the effective implementation of the 'Siwana Ring Complex' project.
- The Siwana Ring Complex (SRC) is primarily a collapsed caldera structure; it constitutes an anorogenic, rift-related, bimodal volcano-plutonic rock assemblage that forms part of the 'Malani Igneous Suite'.
- The Siwana Ring Complex is a circular/semi-circular igneous rock formation spanning approximately 725 square kilometers across the Barmer and Balotra districts.
- Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and Heavy Rare Earth Elements are present within the Siwana Ring Complex and the Siwana Granite formations.

Other Important Points:

- Petrography:** Petrography is the study of rocks, involving the description of the minerals present within a rock and the interrelationships of their textures. Petrographic analysis helps determine the classification group to which a rock belongs. Petrographic descriptions typically involve field records associated with rock outcrops, as well as the study of thin sections (thin slices) of the rock.

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- **Key Areas:** The Siwana Ring Complex primarily encompasses areas such as Devra, Meli, Bhati Khera, Mangla, Balu, Rakhi, and Dantla, among others.
- Various rock types including Granite, Microgranite, Rhyolite, Trachyte, Trachy-andesite, Basalt, and Dolerite are found in these regions.

Facts for Prelims:

Auction of the Country's First Hard Rock Block: Bhati Khera

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Mines concluded the auction process for India's first 'Hard Rock Block' Bhati Khera.
- It is noteworthy that, following research conducted by the Geological Survey of India and the Atomic Minerals Directorate, a 1.34 sq. km block in Bhatikhera, Siwana, was identified for auction.
- **Rare Earth Corridor:** The Union Budget 2026-27 announced the establishment of 'Dedicated Rare Earth Corridors' in Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu to boost mining and processing activities.
- **National Critical Minerals Mission:** In January 2025, the Union Cabinet approved the 'National Critical Minerals Mission' (NCMM) with a total outlay of ₹34,300 crore over a period of seven years. The objective of this mission is to strengthen India's self-reliance in the critical minerals sector.

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Manav Suthar: Included in the Indian Test Squad

Why in News?

- Manav Suthar, a young spinner from Sri Ganganagar, has been included in the Indian Test squad for the first time for the upcoming solitary Test match against Afghanistan.



Key Points:

- Manav Suthar plays for the Gujarat Titans team in the Indian Premier League (IPL).
- Notably, this marks the first time in 12 years that a player from Rajasthan has been given an opportunity in the Indian Test squad.

4 Other Players from Rajasthan Who Have Played for India:

1. **Salim Durani (1959-60 to 1972-73):** Played 29 Test matches.
2. **Hanumant Singh (1963-64 to 1969-70):** Played 14 Test matches.
3. **Parthasarathy Sharma (1974-75 to 1976-77):** Played 5 Test matches.
4. **Pankaj Singh (2014-15):** Played 2 Test matches.

NATIONAL

Iraq's New Prime Minister

(Source: AIR)

Why in News?

- Ali Falih Kadhim Al-Zaidi officially assumed office as the new Prime Minister of Iraq on May 14, 2026.



Key Points:

- Iraqi President Nizar Amedi nominated Al-Zaidi for the post of Prime Minister in April 2026, following his nomination by the Coordination Framework Iraq's largest Shia-led parliamentary alliance.
- **Iraq's Political System:** Iraq is a federal parliamentary republic located in West Asia. Here, the Prime Minister serves as the Head of Government, while the President fulfills the role of Head of State. Iraq's parliament is known as the Council of Representatives; it is a unicameral legislature that plays a pivotal role in the formation of the government. Iraq adopted a federal parliamentary system following the promulgation of its new constitution in 2005.

Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri

(Source: AIR and PIB)



Key Points:

- Recently, Major General (Retd.) Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand and a senior BJP leader passed away.
- He served two terms as the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand: his first tenure spanned from 2007 to 2009, and his second tenure from 2011 to 2012.

AYUSH Grant Portal

(Source: PIB)



Key Points:

- **Launch:** On May 19, 2026, by Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.
- **Development:** This portal has been developed by the Ministry of AYUSH under the AYUSH Grid initiative, marking a significant milestone in streamlining the submission, processing, approval, and monitoring of funding proposals under the Ministry's various Central Sector Schemes.
- **Primary Objective:** To ensure 100% transparency, efficiency, accountability, and ease of access in the grant management process.

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Italian Open, 2026

(Source: AIR)

Why in News?

- The Italian Open, 2026 (Rome Masters) was held from May 5 to May 17, 2026, at the Foro Italico Stadium in Rome, Italy. It is a major clay-court tennis tournament.



Key Points:

- **Grand Slam:** The Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open are collectively referred to as Grand Slam tournaments. The number of titles won in these competitions is often considered a significant factor in determining the greatest player of an era or the greatest player of all time.
- **Italian Open, 2026:**

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Women's Singles	Elina Svitolina (Ukraine)	Coco Gauff (USA)
Men's Singles	Jannik Sinner (Italy)	Casper Ruud (Norway)

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- **Elina Svitolina (Ukraine):** This marks her first WTA 1000 title since winning the Italian Open in 2018.
- **Jannik Sinner (Italy):** He became the first Italian player to win this tournament in Rome since 1976.

Other Important Points:

- **Australian Open, 2026:** Held from January 18 to February 1, 2026, in Melbourne, Victoria; this was the first Grand Slam of 2026.

Competition	Winner (Champion)	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)
Women's Singles	Elena Rybakina (Kazakhstan)	Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)

Order of Grand Slam Tournaments:

S. No.	Tournament	Time	Location	Court Type
1	Australian Open	January	Melbourne, Australia	Hard Court
2	French Open	May–June	Paris, France	Clay Court
3	Wimbledon Championships	June–July	London, United Kingdom	Grass Court
4	US Open	August–September	New York City, United States	Hard Court

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History and Culture



Martyr Veer Gundadhur

(PIB)



Why in News?

- The Union Home Minister inaugurated the 'Shaheed Veer Gundadhur Seva Dera Jan Suvidha Kendra' (Public Facilitation Center) in Bastar. The objective of this facility center is to provide welfare services, Aadhaar registration, and other benefits in tribal regions.



Key Points:

Shaheed Veer Gundadhur

- He was born into the Dhurwa tribal community in the village of Netanar, Bastar.

Key Contributions

- **Led the Bhumkal Rebellion (1910):** This was an uprising in the Bastar region against British rule and the exploitative local administration.
- **Organized Tribal Communities:** He mobilized the masses through the 'Bhumkal Sabha' to protest against oppression and injustice.
- **Innovative Method of Communication with Rebels:** He utilized 'Dara Miri' (dried red chilies and mango twigs) to secretly disseminate messages regarding the rebellion across the villages.

Economic Developments

India-Bangladesh Trade

(Source: AIR)





Key Points:

- India has emerged as Bangladesh's second-largest trading partner, leaving the United States far behind.
- According to the latest data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, India's share in Bangladesh's total trade stood at 8.47 percent in February 2026, valued at approximately 123 billion Taka. The United States followed closely behind India with a share of 8.46 percent.
- China has retained its position as Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with its contribution to the country's total trade exceeding 21 percent.

UTKARSH

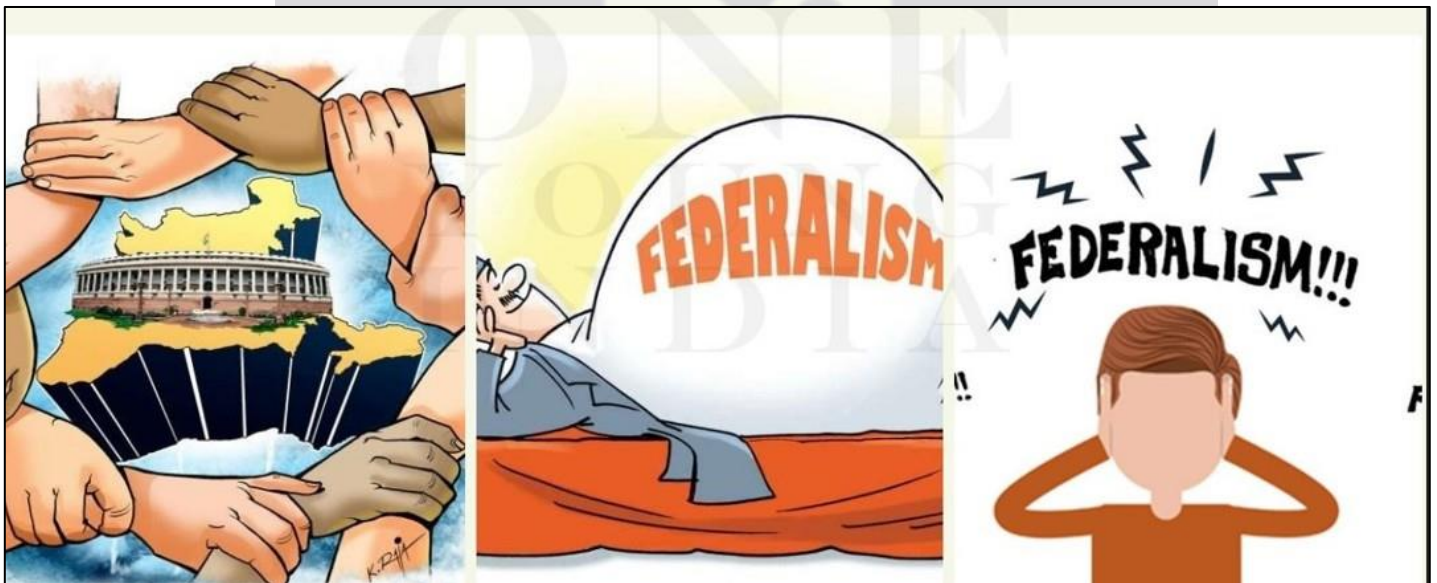
CIVIL
SERVICES

Challenges to Federalism in India

(The Indian Express)

Why in News?

- The book - **A Sixth of Humanity: Independent India's Development Odyssey**, authored by former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian and Devesh Kapur, highlights growing concerns regarding federalism in India. Furthermore, it posits "building consensus" as the solution to address these concerns.



Key Points:

Key Challenges Facing Federalism in India

- **Regional Development Disparities:** Southern and western states have developed economically at a much faster pace compared to the northern states. This has exacerbated regional inequalities.
- **Example:** Developed states feel they are being penalized for their superior economic performance, as the disparity between their economic contributions and the funds received from the Finance Commission continues to widen.

- **Confrontational Federalism:** The growing tendency of the Central Government to make unilateral decisions has undermined consultative and cooperative federalism. This has led to an erosion of trust between the Centre and the States.
- **Example:** The enactment of farm laws by the Central Government in 2020, despite agriculture being a subject listed under the State List as per the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- **Weakening of Democratic Processes:** To protect states that have successfully controlled their population growth from being disadvantaged, representation in the Lok Sabha has been frozen based on the 1971 census. This is impacting the democratic reforms envisaged in the original Constitution.
- **Rising Instances of Centralization:** The powers vested in the Governor under Article 200 specifically those related to granting assent to bills are being misused, particularly in states where the ruling party differs from the party in power at the Centre.

Key Initiatives to Strengthen Federalism

- **Inter-State Council:** Constituted under Article 263 of the Constitution, its objective is to foster coordination between the Centre and the States.
- **GST Council:** Constituted under Article 279A of the Constitution, it comprises representatives from both the Centre and the States. Its objective is to formulate GST-related policies.

Other Initiatives:

- The 16th Finance Commission has formulated a formula for the horizontal devolution of Central Government taxes among the states. Under this formula, 10% of the horizontal devolution is based on the states' contribution to the GDP.

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- A system for a third tier of governance has been established by empowering local bodies through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.
Measures to Promote Federalism:
- **Implementation of the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations (1983):** All residuary powers with the exception of taxation should be transferred to the Concurrent List.
- **Promotion of Balanced Development:** Recommended by the Punchhi Commission (2007).
- **Building Consensus through Institutions:** Such as the Inter-State Council, the GST Council, NITI Aayog, etc.

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🎓 Indian Governance and State System 🎓

Notice of Breach of Privilege

The Hindu

📣 Why in News?

- The Chief Whip of an opposition party in the Rajya Sabha submitted a notice of breach of privilege against the Union Education Minister.

📌 Key Points:

Notice of Breach of Privilege

- This is a notice raised by a Member of Parliament (MP) when they feel that the privileges of Parliament have been violated, or that the House has been held in contempt, by an individual, an institution, or another member.
- Under Article 105 of the Constitution, parliamentary privileges safeguard the powers, dignity, and smooth functioning of Parliament.
- This may include acts such as obstructing the work of MPs, providing misleading information to Parliament, or engaging in conduct that undermines the dignity of the House.
- The responsibility for accepting or rejecting such a notice lies with the Presiding Officer of the House. The Presiding Officer may refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges for examination.

Sociology

Self-Help Groups and Women's Empowerment

(Source: DD News)

Why in News?

- The Union Ministry of Rural Development has launched a nationwide roadmap for SHE-MARTs (Self-Help Entrepreneur Marts).



Key Points:

- SHE-MARTs were announced in the Union Budget 2026-27. Their objective is to empower women entrepreneurs. Under this initiative, community-owned retail stores will be established within the cluster-level federations of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

The Role of Self-Help Groups in Women's Empowerment

- **Financial Inclusion:** These groups promote savings, access to institutional credit, insurance, and digital banking among rural women.

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- **Example:** The 'Bank Sakhi Program' trains women from Self-Help Groups to serve as Bank Mitras (Banking Correspondents).
- **Entrepreneurship Development:** SHGs provide support to women-led enterprises through skill development, market linkages, and networking opportunities.
- **Political Empowerment:** SHGs enhance leadership capabilities, decision-making powers, and political participation among women.
- **Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development:** SHGs improve livelihood security, reduce dependence on moneylenders, and foster inclusive rural development.
- **Example:** The 'Kudumbashree Model' stands as a successful example of women-led poverty alleviation and improved local governance.
- **Social Reform:** By disseminating collective awareness and taking concerted action, SHGs help combat social evils such as child marriage, the dowry system, alcoholism, and gender discrimination.

Government Initiatives for Women's Self-Help Groups

- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):** This is a centrally sponsored program. Under this initiative, more than 10.05 crore women have been organized into Self-Help Groups to facilitate financial inclusion.
- **Lakshpati Didi Initiative:** This initiative operates under the ambit of the DAY-NRLM scheme. Its objective is to enable women associated with SHGs to earn an annual income of at least ₹1 lakh.
- **Other Initiatives:** Self-Help Group–Bank Linkage Programme, Saras Mela, etc.



Persian Gulf Strait Authority

(PGSA) News on Air



Why in News?

- Iran has announced the formation of a new regulatory body, the PGSA, to oversee and manage cargo operations within the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz.



Key Points:

Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)

- This institution is responsible for monitoring developments related to this critical maritime trade route and coordinating its operations.
- Under the new framework, vessels must comply with directives issued by this authority and obtain a transit permit before entering the Strait of Hormuz.
- It will administer a transit toll system for the Strait of Hormuz, although full details regarding this have not yet been made public by Iran.

India–South Korea Relations

THE HINDU



Why in News?

- The Indian Defence Minister's visit to Seoul following the South Korean President's visit to India underscores the growing strength and strategic significance of India–South Korea relations.



Key Points:

- **Establishment of Diplomatic Relations:** India and South Korea established consular relations in 1962 and formal diplomatic relations in 1973.
- Over time, their ties deepened further; both nations elevated their relationship to the level of a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2010, and subsequently upgraded it to a 'Special Strategic Partnership' during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Seoul in 2015.

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Areas of Cooperation

- **Trade and Economic Relations:** The India–South Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), in force since 2010, has strengthened bilateral economic engagement.
- Bilateral trade has grown from US\$ 14.2 billion at the time of the agreement's implementation to US\$ 26.89 billion in 2024–25, representing an increase of approximately 90%.
- South Korea is India's 13th-largest foreign direct investor, having invested a total of US\$ 6.91 billion since 2000.
- **Defence Relations:** India–South Korea defence cooperation is guided by Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed in 2005, 2010, and 2020, covering areas such as industry, logistics, Research & Development (R&D), and a defence industrial roadmap.
- The K9 Vajra-T program developed under the 'Make in India' initiative has emerged as a flagship project of India–South Korea defence cooperation.
- Submarine cooperation has emerged as a key area of focus, driven by South Korea's expertise in conventional submarines, lithium-ion battery systems, and Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) technologies, facilitated through companies such as Hanwha Ocean.
- **Cultural Relations:** India and South Korea share ancient cultural ties.
- Rabindranath Tagore's poem "The Lamp of the East" (1929) encapsulates the cultural spirit of Korea and remains popular in South Korea to this day; it has even been incorporated into the school curriculum.
- **People-to-People Exchanges:** The Indian community in South Korea comprises approximately 18,000 people, consisting primarily of students, researchers, and professionals.

⌚ SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 🌡️

Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE) Mission

(Source: The Indian Express)

📣 Why in News?

- Recently, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) successfully launched their first fully joint space mission, the Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer (SMILE).



📌 Key Points:

- Introduction:** This is a joint Chinese-European space science mission designed to study the interaction between the Sun and Earth's magnetic environment. ESA describes SMILE as the first mission to observe Earth's magnetosphere in X-ray light, which will help scientists understand when, where, and how the solar wind interacts with Earth's magnetic shield.

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- **Full Name of SMILE:** Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer
- **Launch:** Launched on May 19, 2026, aboard a European Vega-C rocket from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana.
- **Agencies Involved:** It is a joint mission between the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).
- **Placement:** It will be positioned approximately 121,000 kilometers above Earth's North Pole and will be capable of providing a comprehensive view of the outer boundary of the magnetosphere.
- **Objective:** To obtain the first X-ray images of the dynamic state of Earth's protective magnetic shield as it combats and deflects harmful charged particles and energies emanating from the Sun.
- **Function:** This mission will observe the magnetosphere, auroras, and solar wind using X-ray, ultraviolet, and in-situ instruments.
- **SMILE Weight:** Approximately 2,600 kg
- **Mission Lifetime:** Approximately 3 years

Four Key Mission Instruments:

Instrument	Developed By	Function
Soft X-ray Imager	European Space Agency	It will capture X-ray images of Earth's magnetosphere.
Ultraviolet Aurora Imager	Chinese Team	It will observe auroras in ultraviolet light.
Light Ion Analyzer	Chinese Team	It will measure solar wind and magnetosheath ions near Earth.
Magnetometer	Chinese Team	It will measure the strength and direction of magnetic fields in the solar wind and magnetosheath.

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Other Important Points:

Earth's Magnetic Shield: The Magnetosphere

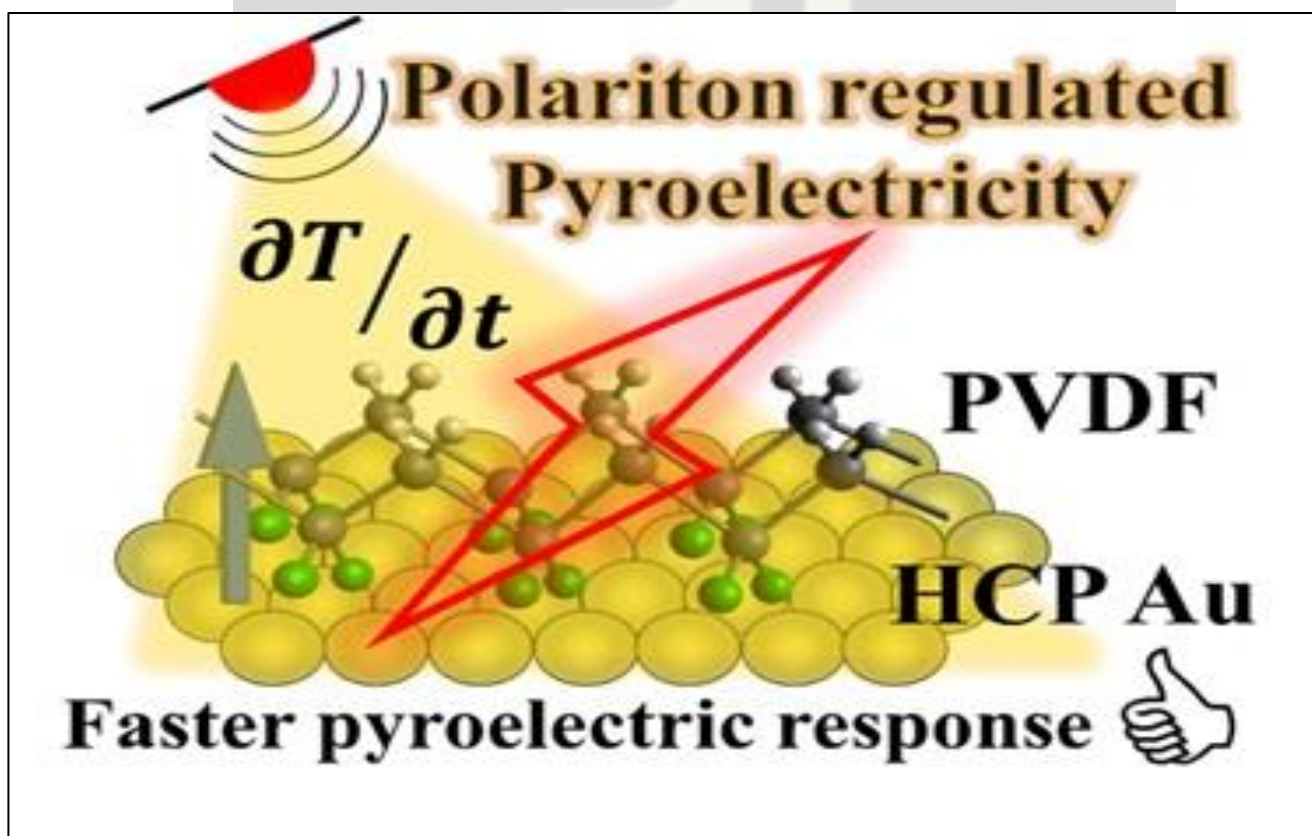
- The magnetosphere is the region surrounding Earth that is controlled by Earth's magnetic field. It forms a vast protective bubble around the planet.
- **It protects Earth in the following ways:**
 - o Deflecting harmful charged particles originating from the Sun.
 - o Mitigating the direct impact of solar winds.
 - o Preventing the gradual erosion of Earth's atmosphere.
 - o Facilitating conditions essential for life.
 - o Safeguarding satellites and communication systems from the effects of space weather.
- Earth's magnetosphere is not static; it constantly changes its shape and size depending on the intensity of solar winds and solar storms.

Incorporation of Nano-Gold in Thin Films

(Source: PIB)

Why in News?

- Scientists at the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) an autonomous institute located in Mohali under the Department of Science and Technology have demonstrated that adding a minute quantity of nano-gold to a common ferroelectric polymer dramatically enhances its pyroelectric potential, or its ability to generate electricity in response to changes in temperature.



Key Points:

- **Publication:** Advanced Functional Materials
- **Researchers:** A team led by Professor Dipankar Mandal, along with Sudeep Naskar.

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- **Film Fabrication:** The film was fabricated using a ferroelectric polymer called Polyvinylidene Fluoride (PVDF). This is a flexible polymer widely used in electronic and sensing applications.
 - **Technique Used:** The researchers adopted a "low-dose in-situ nano-gold strategy."
 - Hexagonal nano-gold particles aligned the dipoles within the PVDF matrix.
 - This resulted in a significant enhancement of the pyroelectric potential.
 - **Features of the Research:**
 1. Effective energy conversion within the temperature range of 294–301 K.
 2. Low energy consumption and high sensitivity.
 3. Capable of responding to both thermal and optical stimuli.
 4. Enhanced broadband optical absorption.
 - **Significance:** This film holds the potential to support future smart photodetectors, low-grade heat harvesters, and advanced flexible electronic systems relevant to healthcare, environmental monitoring, and energy-efficient devices.
- Other Important Points:**
- Pyroelectricity:**
- The ability to generate an electric charge or voltage in response to a change in temperature is known as pyroelectricity.
 - This technique converts minute thermal energy into useful electrical energy.

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