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WHAT IS PRIME MINISTER'S WI-FI ACCESS NETWORK INTERFACE (PM-WANI)



SCHEME?

PM-WANI Scheme was launched by the Department of Telecommunication in 2020.

- It aims to **enhance the proliferation of public WiFi hotspots** to create robust digital communications infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas.
- Through better access to public hotspots, the government aims to **increase employment for small and micro-entrepreneurs and provide low-cost internet** to the underserved urban poor and rural households.
- The scheme **encourages local shops and establishments to provide Wi-Fi** for last-mile internet delivery, which **does not require a licence or charge a registration fee**.

How can one get access the PM-WANI internet?

- To access public hotspots under the PM-WANI scheme, one **needs to download a relevant app** which shows the available networks.
- The user can then **choose from a list of available connections and make a payment** to use the network.
- The user can access the network till his/her balance is exhausted.

PM-WANI Ecosystem Components:

- **Public Data Office (PDO):** Sets up Wi-Fi hotspots and provides internet access. No license is required from DoT.
- **Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA):** Offers authorization, accounting services, and user interfaces for purchasing data plans and monitoring usage.
- **App Provider:** Develops applications to help users locate and connect to nearby PM-WANI hotspots, facilitating easy internet access.



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SIACHEN GLACIER



Recently, the Siachen Glacier was equipped with 4G and 5G service by a private telecom firm of India.

Siachen Glacier is a **piedmont glacier** located in the **Karakoram Range**.

- It lies in the heavily glaciated Himalayan region known as the “Third Pole,” because mountain glaciers in this region contain more fresh water than is found anywhere else on Earth except for the polar ice caps.
 - It lies between the **Saltoro Ridge**, a subrange of the Karakorams, to the west and the main Karakoram Range to **the east**.
 - It is the **second longest nonpolar glacier** in the world, after **Fedchenko Glacier** in Tajikistan.
 - It originates at the **base of the Indira Col West**, a col (low point) on the Indira Ridge.
 - It is located so strategically that while it **dominates Shaksgam Valley**(ceded to China by Pakistan in 1963) in **the north**, controls the routes coming from **Gilgit Baltistan** to Leh from the west, and at the same time, it dominates the **ancient Karakoram Pass** in the eastern side too.
 - It is the **major source** of the 80km long **Nubra River**, a major tributary of the Shyok River.
 - It is considered the **world’s highest battleground** and in 1984, India took its control under **Operation Meghadoot**.
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ISRO’S THIRD LAUNCH PAD



- The Third Launch Pad project envisages the establishment of the launch infrastructure at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh for the **Next Generation Launch Vehicles of ISRO**.

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- It also support as standby launch pad for the **Second Launch Pad at Sriharikota**. This will also enhance the launch capacity for future Indian human spaceflight missions.

Implementation strategy and targets:

- It is designed to have configuration that is as universal and adaptable as possible that can support not only NGLV but also **the LVM3 vehicles with Semicryogenic stage** as well as scaled up configurations of NGLV.
- It will be realized with **maximum industry participation** fully utilizing ISRO's experience in establishing the earlier launch pads and maximally sharing the existing launch complex facilities.
- TLP is targeted to be established within a duration of 48 months or 4 years.

Funding: The total fund requirement is **3984.86 Crore** and includes the establishment of the Launch Pad and the associated facilities.

Significance: The Project will **boost the Indian Space ecosystem** by enabling higher launch frequencies and the national capacity to undertake human spaceflight & space exploration missions.

Background:

- Presently, Indian Space Transportation Systems are completely reliant on two launch pads viz. **First Launch Pad (FLP) & Second Launch Pad (SLP)**.
- FLP was realized 30 years ago **for PSLV** and continues to provide launch support for PSLV & SSLV.

SLP was established primarily **for GSLV & LVM3** and also functions as standby for PSLV. SLP has been operational for almost 20 years and has enhanced the launch capacity towards enabling some commercial missions of PSLV/LVM3 along with the national missions including the Chandrayaan-3 mission



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QS WORLD FUTURE SKILLS INDEX



- The inaugural Future Skills Index, released by London-based **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, evaluates countries on their readiness to meet evolving job market demands.
- **The index assesses four main areas:** skills fit, academic readiness, future of work, economic transformation

Highlights of the Report:

- The index highlights India's strong potential in critical sectors such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital, and green industries.**
- India ranks 25th overall across all indicators, earning recognition as a **“future skills contender.”** Notably, the country **excels in the “Future of Work”** category, securing the second-highest global score (99.1), just behind the United States.
- India's performance in the Future of Work indicator underscores its readiness to meet emerging job market demands. Alongside Mexico, **India is identified** as the most prepared nation to **recruit for digital roles.**
- **“India's outstanding GDP growth, youthful population, and burgeoning start-up culture** position the country as a global leader in future-ready skills.
- While India shines in certain areas, the report highlights opportunities for improvement. These include:
 - **Enhancing Industry Collaboration:** Bridging the gap between higher education institutions and industry needs to be done.
 - **Equipping Graduates with In-Demand Skills:** Expanding focus on digital, AI, and green sectors needs to be aligned with employers'
 - **Future-Oriented Innovation and Sustainability:** India scores low on this metric, indicating a need to prioritize sustainable practices and forward-looking solutions.



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BHARAT RANBHOOMI DARSHAN



Bharat Ranbhoomi Darshan is developed by the **Ministry of Defence** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tourism**.

- This app opens the doors to India's **most iconic battlefields**, offering citizens a chance to explore the country's wartime history like never before.
- The move is aimed at promoting **connectivity, tourism, and socio-economic development** in border regions. The Army is collaborating with local civil authorities to facilitate these efforts while maintaining high operational preparedness.

Features:

- It features details on various **battlefields and border areas, offering virtual tours, historical narratives, and interactive content**. The sites will also be highlighted by the Tourism Ministry as part of the Incredible India campaign.
- It will be a one-stop destination for the visitors to make all necessary arrangements for their travel planning, including how to apply for permits for some of these places.
- The Indian Army, in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, has shortlisted **Galwan** (the river valley in Ladakh) **Doklam** which is a tri-junction between India, Bhutan and China and **75 other forward sites** alongside the country's border that have witnessed military action in the past for "battlefield tourism."
- Most of these sites fall along **India's borders with China** (Line of Actual Control) and Pakistan (Line of Control) that have had a history of wars after independence and other clashes in recent times — the 1962 war with China and the 1967 war, at Nathu La in Sikkim.
- Along the Western border, the **Battle of Longewala** was one of the first major engagements during the India-Pakistan war of 1971, fought at the Indian border post of Longewala in the Thar desert.



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AN ALLIANCE OF DEMOCRACIES, WITH INDIA AT ITS CORE

- The year 2024, marked by critical elections worldwide, set the stage for 2025 to become a pivotal moment for democracies to regroup and strengthen their alliances.
- Among these, the relationship between Europe and India stands out as an essential partnership that has long been rich in strategies but poor in tangible outcomes.
- Both entities must seize the opportunity to redefine their collaboration, focusing on practical measures that align economic, technological, and security interests.

The Way Forward to a Robust EU-India Partnership

- **Strengthening Economic Ties**
 - The economic potential of an EU-India partnership is immense. India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy in the next decade, offering a dynamic market for European businesses seeking growth beyond their borders.
 - To facilitate these opportunities, both parties must break down barriers to trade and investment.
 - The EU and India should prioritise sectors with mutual benefits, such as green energy, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, and digital innovation.
- **Deepening Cultural and Educational Exchanges**
 - Europe and India must enhance cultural, academic, and professional exchanges to build trust and mutual understanding.
 - Programs that promote student and faculty exchanges between European and Indian universities can create a generation of leaders with firsthand knowledge of both regions.
- **Enhancing Collaboration on Global Challenges**
 - The EU and India share common concerns about climate change, public health, and global security, making collaboration on these issues a practical necessity.

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- For example, **joint initiatives in renewable energy development can help accelerate the transition to a green economy.**
- **Europe's leadership in clean technologies, coupled with India's ambitious renewable energy targets, offers a perfect opportunity for collaboration.**
- **Creating a Model Partnership**
 - **The ultimate goal of building practical connections is to create a model partnership that other democracies can emulate.**
 - **By demonstrating how regions with different historical and cultural contexts can work together effectively, Europe and India can inspire other nations to forge similar alliances.**
 - **In this effort, both sides must commit to regular engagement at all levels— political, economic, and social.**
- **Bridging Democratic Challenges**
 - **Both Europe and India face challenges in maintaining and strengthening their democratic institutions.**
 - **By working together, they can learn from each other's experiences and develop strategies to address issues like polarization, misinformation, and the erosion of civil liberties.**
 - **Forums for democratic dialogue, including joint research initiatives and policy workshops, can create mutual learning and innovation in democratic governance.**

Conclusion

- **Europe, India, and the United States are individually influential, but their collective power is unparalleled in countering autocratic forces.**
 - **By prioritising strategic cooperation in defence, technology, and economic security, the EU-India partnership can evolve into a cornerstone of global democratic stability. This is not just a necessity for these regions but a vital step in shaping a future where democracies lead the way.**
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CAUSES, IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY CHALLENGES OF THE DEVALUATION OF THE INDIAN RUPEE

The Indian rupee recently witnessed a sharp devaluation against the dollar after a period of relative stability post-COVID.

This article examines India's exchange rate policies, structural constraints in the economy, and the broader implications of rupee depreciation.

Understanding Exchange Rate Regimes:

Basis	NOMINAL EXCHANGE RATE	REAL EXCHANGE RATE
Meaning	It tells the currency that can be bought by 1 unit of other currency.	It compares general price level of 2 countries.
Calculation	Determined by macro factors & demand & supply of currency.	Nominal exchange rate is used to determine real exchange rate.
Exports	Used to price exports as well as imports.	Used to assess export competitiveness of country.
Use	Used in everyday foreign transactions.	Used in case of overall economy.

- **Nominal and Real Exchange Rates:** The nominal exchange rate is the official exchange rate that doesn't account for inflation, while the real exchange rate is the nominal exchange rate adjusted for inflation.

Implications of Rupee Devaluation:

Chart shows the dollar exchange rate in India (in ₹)



- **Positive effects:**
 - **Boosting exports:** Depreciation can make domestic goods cheaper, enhancing export competitiveness if:
 - Net exports respond positively to a weaker real exchange rate.
 - Nominal depreciation leads to real depreciation.
 - **Adverse effects:**
 - **Inflationary pressures:** Increased import costs raise domestic prices.
 - **Reduced purchasing power:** Firms pass on higher costs to consumers, squeezing real incomes.



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PENCH TIGER RESERVE (PTR)



- It is located in the southern reaches of the **Satpura hills** in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts in **Madhya Pradesh** and shares the southern boundary with **Maharashtra**.

- In 1983, it was declared a National Park, and in 1992, a tiger reserve. It is spread across 1,180 sq.km., including a buffer zone of 768 sq.km.
- It is named after the **Pench River**, meandering through the reserve from north to south.
- It comprises the **Indira Priyadarshini Pench National Park**, the **Pench Mowgli Sanctuary**, and a buffer.
- The area of the **PTR** and the surrounding area is the **real story area of Rudyard Kipling's famous "The Jungle Book"**.
- **Vegetation:** The undulating topography supports a mosaic of vegetation ranging from a **moist sheltered valley to an open, dry deciduous forest**.

Flora:

- The reserve boasts a diverse range of flora, including **teak, saag, mahua**, and various **grasses and shrubs**.
- **Teak forests** are found in about **one quarter of the area**. **Bamboo plantations** are also present near the water banks.

Fauna:

- The area is especially famous for large herds of **Chital, Sambar, Nilgai, Gaur** (Indian Bison), and **wild boar**.
- The **key predator is the tiger**, followed by the leopard, wild dogs, and wolf.
- There are over 325 species of resident and migratory birds, including the **Malabar Pied Hornbill, Indian Pitta, Osprey, Grey Headed Fishing Eagle, White Eyed Buzzard**, etc.