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INS VIKRANT



- It is **India's first indigenously designed** and **manufactured aircraft carrier.**
- The ship has been **designed** in-house by the **Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau** and **constructed** by **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** in Kochi.
- It is the **largest warship** ever **constructed in the country.**
- It **takes its name** from **India's first aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant (R11), bought from the UK**, which was decommissioned in 1997.
- It was **commissioned** into the Indian Navy in **2022**.
- With the induction of INS Vikrant, the **Indian Navy now has two aircraft carriers** in its fleet–**INS Vikramaditya** (a modified Kiev-class aircraft carrier purchased from Russia) **being the other one.**
- With it, **India** also **joins the elite group of nations**–the **US, Russia, France, the UK,** and **China** – who are **capable of designing and constructing aircraft carriers.**
- **Features**:
    - **76 percent** of the ship is indigenously built.
    - It is powered by **four gas turbines** that together generate about 88 megawatts of power.
    - It can achieve a maximum designed speed of 28 knots.
    - **It** is capable of functioning **independently for up to 45 days at sea.**
    - It is capable of operating an **air wing consisting of 30 aircraft** comprising **MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, and MH-60R** multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) (Navy).
    - It operates on the **Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery (STOBAR) system,** which allows **aircraft** to **take off using a ski jump** and **land with the help of arrester wires.**

Cross And Climb

NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU

- It is the **nodal drug law enforcement** and intelligence agency under the **Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.**
- It was constituted under the provisions of the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act).**
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Functions of Narcotics Control Bureau:**
  - Coordination among various Central and State Agencies engaged in drug law enforcement.
  - It assists states in enhancing their drug law enforcement effort.
  - Analysis of seizure data, study of trends and modus operandi.
  - It prepares **National Drug Enforcement Statistics.**
  - It liaison with International agencies such as UNDCP, INCB, INTERPOL, Customs Cooperation Council, RILO etc.
  - It works as national contact point for **intelligence and investigations**
  - It also functions as an **enforcement agency** through its zonal offices.
  - The zonal offices collect and analyse data related to seizures of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, study trends, modus operandi, collect and disseminate intelligence, and work in close cooperation with the Customs, State Police, and other law enforcement agencies.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT (ICIMOD)



- It is an **intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre** working on behalf of the people of the **Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH).**

- It was formally **established** and inaugurated on 5 December **1983**.
- It is **based** in **Kathmandu, Nepal.**
- It works in and for its **eight regional member countries (RMCs) of HKH**: A**fghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.**
- **Mission**: **Build and share knowledge** that **drives regional policy** and action and **attracts investment** that enables the diverse countries and communities of the HKH to **transition to greener,** more inclusive, and **climate-resilient development.**
- Globalization and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people.
- ICIMOD aims to **assist mountain people** to understand these changes, **adapt** to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while **addressing upstream-downstream issues.**
- It **supports regional transboundary programmes** through partnerships with regional partner institutions, facilitates the **exchange of experience**, and serves as a regional knowledge hub.
- It also strengthens networking among regional and global centres of excellence.

Key Facts about Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH):

- It is a vast mountain region that **extends 3500 km** over **eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.**
- It is considered the **Third Pole** (after the North and South Poles) and has significant implications for climate.
- It forms the **largest area of permanent ice cover outside** of the **North and South Poles** and is home to **4 global biodiversity hotspots.**
- It is the **source of ten large Asian river systems**: the **Amu Darya, Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtse, Yellow River, and Tarim.**
- The basins of these rivers provide water to 1.9 billion people, a fourth of the world's population.

THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL MEDIA COUNCIL

- The crackdown on journalists during protests organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), has reignited the **debate over press freedom**, journalistic identity and government accreditation.
- Freelance and independent journalists were removed and detained, while only those accredited by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) or Directorate of Information and Publicity (DIP) were allowed to cover the protests.
- The **incident raises two fundamental questions**: Who qualifies as a journalist, and who has the authority to recognise one?
- Resolving these questions is crucial to protecting freedom of expression while ensuring professional accountability.

Recognising Journalists

- **The Legal Definition of a Working Journalist**
  - The Occupational Safety, Health and **Working Conditions Code, 2020**, defines a working journalist as someone whose principal occupation is journalism and who is employed in newspaper, electronic or digital media.
  - Those working in managerial or administrative capacities are excluded.
  - The Central and State governments provide **accreditation to eligible journalists**, freelancers, camerapersons and technicians.
- **Government Accreditation and Its Limitations**
  - In Delhi-NCR, the PIB facilitates coverage of the Central government, while the DIP provides accreditation for covering the Delhi government.
  - However, **accreditation depends on eligibility criteria** and quotas linked to newspaper circulation, news agency subscriptions, television licences and digital platforms' unique visitors.
  - Making accreditation the sole criterion for covering public events risks excluding legitimate journalists and **restricting access to information.**

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The Way Forward

- **The Need for a National Media Council**
  - A proposed solution is establishing an **independent** national media council or commission to recognise journalists across different platforms.
  - A media council could establish transparent recognition procedures for working journalists, freelancers, camerapersons and technicians.
  - It **could maintain a national register**, issue professional identification, establish ethical guidelines and provide mechanisms for addressing complaints against journalists and authorities.
- **Balancing Professional Accountability and Press Freedom**
  - Social media has blurred the boundaries between journalists, influencers and content creators.
  - Although digital platforms have democratised information, they have also facilitated misinformation, sensationalism and unverified reporting.
  - A national media council could promote **transparent accreditation**, ethical standards and accountability. Nevertheless, it must safeguard editorial independence and remain free from political interference.
  - Government accreditation should not become the sole criterion for **practising journalism or reporting public events.**

Conclusion

- The detention of independent journalists during the CJP protests demonstrates the need to reconsider how journalists are recognised and protected in India.
- Existing legal definitions and accreditation systems do not adequately address the **challenges of freelance journalism and digital media.**
- An independent, transparent and inclusive national media council could bridge this gap, provided it promotes professional standards without monopolising the right to report.
- Ultimately, **democracy requires both responsible journalism and an independent press.**

AGRIVOLTAICS: CAN INDIA GROW CROPS AND GENERATE SOLAR POWER ON THE SAME LAND?

The Government recently announced plans to introduce agri-photovoltaics (agrivoltaics) under the second phase of PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) — its flagship scheme to solarise irrigation.

The approach combines solar power generation with crop cultivation on the same land, letting farmers keep growing crops while earning extra income from electricity generation.

The announcement came at the **Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026** – "Powering the Global South" in New Delhi on October 25.

What Is Agrivoltaics?

- Agri-photovoltaics (agri-PV) involves installing solar panels on elevated structures over agricultural land. This lets farmers continue cultivation underneath, while electricity is generated from the same plot.
- Technology-wise, the photovoltaic panels themselves are identical to those used in conventional ground-mounted solar projects.
- The key difference: the additional infrastructure needed to elevate the panels, leaving enough space below for farming activities to continue.
- As per MNRE, panels are installed at a height of 3.5 to 4 metres above ground, enough to allow routine agricultural operations and movement of machinery, without interruption.

Why the Government Is Pushing This?

- The govt said the approach could address the **shortage of land** for solar projects while letting farming continue beneath elevated panels.

Not All Crops Are Suitable

- Agrivoltaics doesn't work uniformly across all crop types.
- Government assessment studies show agri-PV is suitable for fruits and leafy vegetables.
- It has not been found suitable for crops like rice and sugarcane — meaning the approach currently applies to a limited crop range.

The Cost Factor

- Agri-photovoltaic projects cost around 25-30% more than conventional ground-mounted solar projects, due to the additional civil and structural infrastructure needed to elevate panels.
- This higher upfront cost is a key challenge for scaling the model, especially for small and marginal farmers.

Concerns Over Crop Yields and Farmers' Interests

- The government faces the challenge of developing a policy framework that allows solar power generation to expand **without compromising** crop yields, soil health, or farmers' livelihoods.
- Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, speaking at the conference, flagged several issues needing resolution before the approach can be scaled up.
- Key farmer-equity concern: Over 85% of India's farmers are small and marginal, with average landholding just 0.96 hectares.
- The model must ensure farmers don't lose control of their agricultural land or suffer a decline in crop production.
- Since most projects remain at the pilot stage, their impact on farming must be properly assessed before scaling up.

Conclusion

Agrivoltaics represents a genuinely promising solution to one of India's toughest land-use dilemmas: how to expand solar capacity without competing with agriculture for scarce land.

With an estimated 1-2 terawatt potential, the approach could meaningfully advance India's renewable energy goals while giving farmers a new income stream.

However, with over 85% of India's farmers being small and marginal landholders, and projects still largely at the pilot stage, the real test will be whether the policy framework protects farmer control over land, crop yields, and livelihoods — rather than letting higher project costs and limited crop suitability turn agrivoltaics into a model that benefits large developers more than the smallholders it is meant to serve.

WHAT IS THE OSKAR KLEIN MEDAL?



- It is a prestigious **international award** that recognises outstanding contributions to **theoretical physics.**
- **Established** in **1988**, the medal **honours** the legacy of **Swedish theoretical physicist Oskar Klein.**
- The medal is **awarded annually** by **Stockholm University and the Nobel Committee for Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.**
- **Past recipients** of the medal have included some of the world's top physicists, Alan Guth and Stephen Hawking, and Nobel laureates Peter Higgs, Kip Thorne, and Steven Weinberg, among others.

2026 Winner:

- **Professor Ashoke Sen,** a renowned **Indian theoretical physicist**, was awarded the Oskar Klein Medal 2026.
- He is the **first Indian to receive** the award.
- The award **recognizes his pioneering contributions to string theory,** which seeks to **explain** the **fundamental nature of the universe, black hole entropy,** and **string field theory,** which have significantly **shaped modern theoretical physics.**

What is String Theory?

- String theory is a scientific framework that **attempts to explain how the universe works at its most fundamental level.**
- According to this theory, the **smallest building blocks of matter** are **not point-like particles but tiny, one-dimensional objects called strings.**
- **These strings** can **vibrate in different ways**, with **each pattern of vibration corresponding to a different particle.**
- In this way, string theory offers a **possible common framework for understanding** the **different particles and forces** found in nature.

Cross And Climb

RANTHAMBORE TIGER RESERVE



- It is located in **Rajasthan.**
- It derives its name from the **Ranthambore Fort** (a World Heritage Site) situated within its precincts.
- It is located at the junction (great boundary fault) of the **Aravalis and Vindhyan ranges.**
- It is one of the **largest tiger reserves** in northern India.

Vegetation: It has **dry deciduous forests** and open grassy meadow.

Rivers: It is bounded to the north by **the Banas River** and to the **south** by the **Chambal River.**

Lakes: There are several lakes in the park known as **Padam Talab, Raj Bagh Talab, and Malik Talab.**

Flora: Trees like Dhok, Acacia, Capparis, Zizyphus, Prosopis, etc are found here.

Fauna:

- It hosts leopard, caracal, jungle cat, sambar, chital, chinkara, and wild boar.
- Peacocks, partridges, green pigeons, parakeets, sparrows, prinias, warblers, etc. are also found here.

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