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Current Affairs - 06 November 2025

PRADHAN MANTRI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA



Pradhan Mantri
Kaushal Vikas Yojana

- It is a **skill development programme** launched by government of India in 2015.
- It aims to empower **the youth of India** to **engage in industry relevant skill training** and secure a better livelihood.
- **Implementing Agency:** It is being implemented by the **National Skill Development Corporations** in partnership with multiple stakeholders.
- **Eligibility Criteria of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana**
 - **Age Limit:** Candidates **aged 14 to 35 years** are generally eligible for PMKVY training programs.
 - **Nationality:** Applicants must be Indian citizens to qualify for the scheme.
 - **Educational Qualifications:** PMKVY caters to individuals from diverse educational backgrounds, including those without formal education.
 - **Employment Status:** Priority is given to unemployed or underemployed individuals to enhance their employability.
 - **Aadhar Card:** An Aadhar card is often a mandatory requirement for applying to PMKVY programs.
- **Features of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:**
 - Industry experts are consulted regularly in order to ensure that updated skill training is provided according to industry demands.
 - **Short term training courses** make it easy for people to acquire new skills within a short period of time.
 - **Recognition to Prior Learning** is also acknowledged through certification without undergoing the same training.
 - The scheme also aims to **provide placement assistance** for all the candidates trained in a certain skill.



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INDIA'S FIRST HOUSEHOLD INCOME SURVEY

- India is preparing to launch its first-ever **Household Income Survey (HIS)** in 2026, an ambitious effort aimed at capturing a detailed picture of household incomes, expenditures, and socio-economic conditions across the country.
- For policymakers, the survey promises to fill a critical data gap that has long hindered accurate assessment of income distribution and inequality.
- However, the sensitive nature of income-related questions and challenges in ensuring data accuracy pose significant hurdles to its successful execution.

Scope and Design of the Household Income Survey 2026

- The survey will collect a **comprehensive dataset** covering:
 - **Household characteristics:** Social group, religion, occupation, and whether the household is engaged in agriculture or non-agricultural activities.
 - **Assets and property details:** Land ownership, dwelling type, property value, and loans taken.
 - **Income components:**
 - **Regular salaried workers:** Salaries, overtime pay, performance-based bonuses, stock options, leave encashments, and severance payments.
 - **Casual workers:** Number of days worked, daily wages, and tips earned.
 - **Self-employed individuals:** Crop sales (quantity and value), business sector, and gross receipts.
- This detailed approach will allow for **direct income measurement** and enable cross-comparison with expenditure, debt, and asset data to assess **class dynamics** and **income inequality** more precisely.

Linking Income with Expenditure and Welfare Benefits

- The survey also borrows elements from the **HCES** to ensure a balanced income-expenditure analysis.



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- Respondents will report **input costs** for farming (such as seeds, labour, and transportation) and for non-farm enterprises (such as raw materials and rent).
- Collecting both income and expense data enables accurate **profit margin estimations**, a critical insight into household financial health.
- In addition, the survey will record **pensions, family transfers, and remittances**, alongside funds received under **State-specific welfare schemes** like Tamil Nadu's Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thittam and various Union government initiatives.
- This data will help assess how welfare transfers contribute to total household income, particularly for marginalised and low-income groups.

Key Challenges Identified in Pilot Testing

- A **pilot survey** conducted in August 2025 across randomly selected households revealed major challenges:
 - **Reluctance to Disclose Income:**
 - Around **95% of respondents** considered income-related questions sensitive. Many refused to answer queries about **income tax payments**, fearing misuse of information or privacy breaches.
 - **Recall Errors and Misreporting:**
 - Respondents often **overstated expenses** or miscalculated their income, especially in urban and affluent households. Many could not recall details about **interest earned** on savings or fixed deposits.
 - **Variation in Comfort Levels:**
 - Rural respondents showed greater willingness to answer questions than urban respondents, particularly those in **gated communities** or higher-income brackets, who demanded clarifications and privacy assurances.
 - To address this, the government is considering introducing a **self-compilation option** for affluent households, wherein respondents can submit income details privately after receiving written communication explaining the survey's objectives.
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NATIONAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



राष्ट्रीय सहकारी विकास निगम

National Cooperative
Development Corporation

• It is a statutory organisation under the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India.

• Functions of National Cooperative Development Corporation:

- **Promoting and strengthening farmer cooperatives:** It aims to increasing production, productivity by developing **farmer cooperatives** and instituting post-harvest facilities
- **Postharvest Facilities:** It provides assistance for developing **processing, storage, cold chain and marketing of agricultural produce** and the supply of seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs etc.
- It also **supports income-generating cooperatives** across various non-farm sectors such as weaker section activities which include dairy, livestock, handloom, sericulture etc.
- It **provides financial** assistance to the cooperative sector for their **economic development and social upliftment** through NCDC Sponsored schemes and various GoI schemes implemented by NCDC.

Initiatives of National Cooperative Development Corporation:

- **Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme**
 - It is designed to **promote cooperative start-ups across diverse sectors** by supporting newly formed cooperatives with innovative ideas.
 - It give preferential support extended to cooperatives in the **North Eastern Region**, those operating in **Aspirational Districts** and cooperatives comprising exclusively women, SC, ST, or PwD members.
- **Ayushman Sahakar** : It adopts a holistic approach to strengthening the **healthcare ecosystem through cooperative institutions.**



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STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SOFA) REPORT, 2025

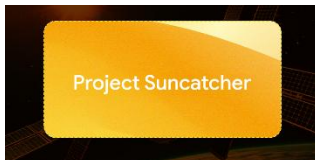
- It is published by the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations (FAO).
 - It provides the most comprehensive analysis about **human-driven land degradation** impacts crop yields, identifies **global vulnerability hotspots**, and examines where these losses intersect with poverty, hunger and other forms of malnutrition.



Key Highlights of State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report 2025

- It stated that **agricultural expansion** remained the **primary driver of global deforestation**, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of forest loss.
- It has reshaped global land use and **transformed land-use patterns** across the planet over centuries.
- The largest affected populations were **concentrated in eastern and southern Asia regions** burdened by extensive degradation and high population density.
- India had some of the highest yield gaps due to human-induced land degradation.
- It highlighted that around **6 mha of croplands were abandoned annually**, with land degradation likely playing a significant role in these losses.

PROJECT SUNCATCHER



- It is a research initiative exploring how constellations of **solar-powered satellites could host data centres in space**.
- It is an **initiative of Google**.
- Google aims to **deploy high-performance AI accelerators** in space and build a space-based infrastructure.
- **Features of Project Suncatcher**
 - Project Suncatcher will **build modular satellite arrays** linked by **high-speed free-space optical communication**, supporting data transfer at tens of terabits per second.



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- It will send AI data centers into space by **launching solar-powered satellites** equipped with its Tensor Processing Units (TPUs), specialized AI chips.
- The plan includes **launching two prototype satellites** in partnership with Planet Labs by early 2027 to test the hardware's durability and performance in space.
- The proposed system consists of a constellation of networked satellites, likely operating in a dawn–dusk **sun-synchronous low earth orbit**.
- Early tests have shown Google's Trillium-generation TPUs withstand radiation at levels similar to those found in space.

EMISSIONS GAP REPORT, 2025



- Emissions Gap Report is an **annual report** published by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- The EGR series tracks our progress in limiting global warming well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C in line with the Paris Agreement.
- It is launched every year **ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP)**.
- The EGR is co-produced by UNEP, the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) and partners.

Key Highlights of Emissions Gap Report, 2025

- Even after countries fully implement their latest **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** under the Paris Agreement, global temperatures are projected to rise by **2.3-2.5 degrees Celsius (°C) this century**.
- Global GHG emissions rose 2.3% in 2024, reaching **7 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent**.
- **Only 60 Parties**, covering 63% of global emissions, have submitted new NDCs for 2035.
- To align with the 1.5°C target, emissions would need to fall by 55 per cent by 2035.



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VAIBHAV FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



- It is awarded to **outstanding scientists/technologists of Indian origin** (NRI/OCI/PIO) who are engaged in research activities in their respective countries.
- It identifies an Indian Institution for collaboration and may spend up to **two months in a year for a maximum of 3 years**.
- **Funding:** The government offers the researchers an **amount of INR 4,00,000 per month** for the entire period.
- **Aim:** Improving the **research ecosystem** of India's Higher Educational Institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.
- It **connects Indian diaspora scientists with Indian institutions** by simplifying travel, extending fellowships, and creating structured student mobility.

Eligibility:

- Researchers from institutions featuring in **the top 500 QS World University Rankings** will be eligible for the fellowship.
- The applicant must have obtained a **D/M.D/M.S degree** from a recognized University.

The **75 selected fellows** would be invited to work in **18 identified knowledge verticals** including quantum technology, health, pharma, electronics, agriculture, energy, computer sciences, and material sciences amongst others.

Nodal Ministry: Department of Science and Technology, **Ministry of Science and Technology**.



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SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2025



- It is a **United Nations** convened summit which reaffirms to **eradicate poverty, promote full and productive employment and decent work for all, and foster social inclusion.**
 - It is designed to align with other recent global processes, such as the **2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration**, the **Pact of the Future** and the forthcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4).
 - **History:** The **first World Summit for Social Development** was held in **Copenhagen in March 1995.**
 - The second **World Summit for Social Development** is held in **Doha, Qatar.**
 - **Main Objectives of Second World Summit for Social Development 2025**
 - Global solidarity and **accelerate action** on social development by assessing progress, addressing gaps.
 - Strengthening implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.**
 - Reaffirm the **10 Commitments** of the **Copenhagen Declaration**
 - Promote equality, inclusion, and well-being for all
 - Strengthen global solidarity and cooperation.
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REFORMING INDIA'S SEZ POLICY AMID US TARIFF PRESSURES

- SEZs in India are **geographically delineated, duty-free enclaves** that are **treated as foreign territory** for the purposes of **trade operations, duties, and tariffs.**
- They are **industrial areas designed to promote exports**, attract domestic and FDI, generate employment, and develop robust infrastructure by offering a more **stable and business-friendly regulatory environment** with a variety of incentives.



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SEZs and Their Challenges:

- **Export performance:** India's SEZ exports in FY25 stood at \$172 billion from nearly 276 units, with **only 2% of production** catering to the domestic market.
- **Comparative lag:** Indian SEZs have underperformed compared to **China's SEZ model**, which transformed its industrial base through large-scale manufacturing, logistics integration, and export-led growth.
- **Current crisis:** Several SEZ units catering primarily to the US market face **reduced competitiveness** due to tariff hikes, leading to production losses and job risks.

Way Forward:

- **Adopt reverse job work policy:** Allow limited DTA access under transparent norms ensuring fairness with domestic manufacturers.
- **Promote R&D and skill development:** Establish dedicated innovation funds and training centres within SEZs.
- **Enhance FDI attractiveness:** Introduce investment protection agreements and marketing initiatives to improve SEZ image.
- **Streamline SEZ governance:** Simplify compliance and integrate SEZs within the logistics and industrial corridors.
- **Sectoral support measures:** Particularly for gems and jewellery, offer credit relief, export extensions, and infrastructure upgrades.

Conclusion:

- India's SEZ policy is **at a crossroads**. While global trade disruptions and US tariffs have exposed **structural weaknesses**, they also present an **opportunity** to restructure SEZs for long-term competitiveness.
 - It is essential to **revitalise SEZs as engines of export-led industrial growth**, ensuring both resilience and job preservation in key manufacturing sectors.
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