

RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR



- It is a **prestigious national award** recognizing outstanding contributions in the **fields of science, technology, and innovation**.
- The RVP seeks to **honour scientists, technologists**, and innovators whose work has significantly advanced India's scientific landscape and contributed to national development.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Scientists/technologists/innovators working in **government or private sector organizations** or any individual working outside any organization, who have made **distinguished contributions** in terms of path-breaking research or innovation or discovery **in any field of science, technology, or technology-led innovation** shall be eligible for the awards.
 - **People of Indian Origin** staying abroad with exceptional contributions benefiting the Indian communities or society shall also be eligible for the awards.

The awards will be presented in **four categories:**

- **Vigyan Ratna (VR):** For **lifetime achievements** in science and technology.
- **Vigyan Shri (VS):** For distinguished contributions in the field.
- **Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB):** To encourage young **scientists (up to 45 years)** showing exceptional promise.
- **Vigyan Team (VT):** For **collaborative excellence** by research teams of three or more members.
- The awards are **administered by the RVP Secretariat, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, Ministry of Science & Technology, under the guidance of the **Principal Scientific Advisor** to the Government of India.

CAPF BILL SPARKS CONTROVERSY

- The **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026**, introduced in the Rajya Sabha, proposes reserving senior leadership positions in CAPFs largely for IPS officers on deputation.
- It mandates:
 - 50% of Inspector General (IG) posts
 - At least 67% of Additional Director General (ADG) posts
 - 100% of Special DG and DG posts
 - to be filled by IPS officers.
 - The proposal has drawn criticism from the Opposition and retired CAPF officials, who argue it may limit career progression opportunities for cadre officers within CAPFs.

About CAPFs

- The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) include seven forces:
 - Assam Rifles (guards Indo-Myanmar and counter insurgency operations in NE)
 - BSF (guards Pakistan and Bangladesh borders),
 - CISF (protects airports and critical infrastructure),
 - CRPF (handles internal security and law and order),
 - SSB (guards Nepal and Bhutan borders), and
 - ITBP (secures the China border).
 - National Security Guard (an elite counter-terrorism unit)
- Currently, IPS officers occupy key leadership roles in CAPFs, with 20% of Deputy Inspector General posts and 50% of Inspector General posts reserved for them through executive orders.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) controls both CAPFs and IPS cadres.

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Why is there opposition to the Bill?

- Retired CAPF officials oppose the Bill, arguing it undermines the Supreme Court's ruling.
- They highlight **career stagnation**, noting that CAPF officers face slow promotions compared to IPS officers, who advance much faster.
- They also object to reserving 100% of Special Director General posts for IPS officers, limiting career growth for CAPF personnel.
- **Government's Justification**
 - The government maintains that CAPFs handle critical national security functions requiring coordination with states.
 - It argues that IPS officers are essential for effective functioning and for maintaining strong Centre–State relations.
- **Concerns Raised by Opposition Leaders**
 - Opposition leaders have criticised the Bill as an overreach.
 - They said it undermines judicial authority and pointed to low morale in CAPFs due to poor promotions.
 - They argued Parliament cannot override court rulings without proper legal basis.

Other Concerns

- **Need for Institutional Continuity** - CAPFs handle complex roles like border security, counter-insurgency, and disaster response, which require long-term experience and continuity of leadership—something cadre officers are better positioned to provide.
 - **Equality and Fair Opportunity** - Permanent exclusion of CAPF officers from top leadership raises concerns under Articles 14 and 16 (equality and equal opportunity).
 - **National Security vs Service Interests** - Critics argue the Bill prioritises IPS career progression over strengthening CAPFs. The focus on coordination and administrative control may not stand legal scrutiny, as courts have already examined these arguments.
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RBI WEIGHS E-CHEQUES TO MODERNISE PAYMENT SYSTEM

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has proposed the introduction of **electronic cheques (e-cheques)** as part of its effort to modernise India's payment ecosystem.
- The proposal was outlined in the **RBI's Payments Vision 2028** report, which also covers cross-border payments, payment switching, and systemic stability.
- The initiative aims to merge the trusted features of traditional paper cheques with the efficiency and security of digital payment systems.

What are E-Cheques and How Do They Work?

- An e-cheque is a **digital version of a paper cheque**, created, signed, and sent online instead of on paper.
- **Process**
 - The payer fills in the payment details and signs it using a **secure digital method**.
 - It is then sent to the payee or bank, which verifies and processes it like a normal cheque.
- **Advantages over Paper Cheques**
 - **Faster** processing and settlement
 - **More secure**: reduced risk of physical fraud or tampering
 - **Paperless**: environmentally friendly and cost-efficient
 - **Easy to track**: full digital audit trail

Why is RBI Proposing E-Cheques?

- **Unique Value of Cheques**
 - The RBI acknowledges that cheques offer **unique benefits** over other payment methods: particularly for high-value, deferred, and business transactions where a written instrument is preferred.
- **Limitations of the Current System**

- The existing framework is built on **CTS-2010 standards** (Cheque Truncation System introduced in 2010).
- Banks have independently added their own security features over time, leading to **inconsistencies and variations** across the system.
- **What the Review Will Do?**
 - A comprehensive review of the **design and security features** of cheques will be undertaken to:
 - Enhance **uniformity** across all cheque instruments
 - Strengthen **fraud prevention** mechanisms
 - Ensure **alignment with emerging processes and technologies**
 - Best practices identified through the review will be made **applicable across all cheque instruments**.

Payments Switching Service (PaSS)

- The RBI will examine providing customers with the **flexibility** to switch seamlessly among payment service providers through a dedicated Payments Switching Service (PaSS).
- This is aimed at:
 - Enhancing **customer convenience and choice**
 - Promoting **healthy competition** among payment service providers
 - Reducing **lock-in effects** that currently limit consumer mobility across platforms

Regulatory Expansion for Systemic Stability

- Entities deemed to play a critical role in facilitating digital payments will be brought within the regulatory fold.
- This move is aimed at:
 - Promoting **systemic stability** in India's growing digital payments landscape
 - Ensuring **integrity and accountability** among key payment intermediaries
 - Reducing risks arising from **unregulated but systemically important** players operating outside the oversight framework



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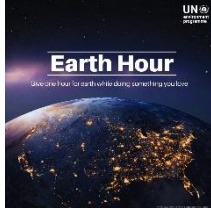
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EARTH HOUR



- It is a **global grassroots movement uniting** people to take action on environmental issues and protect the planet.
 - It is **organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**.
 - **Background:** It started in **Sydney, Australia, in 2007** as a symbolic lights-out event and has since grown into a global movement involving millions of people in over 190 countries and territories.
 - It takes place towards the **end of March every year**.
 - **Participation:** “Earth Hour” encourages people to **switch off all lights for an hour, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.** local time, to promote awareness of climate change challenges and energy conservation.
 - Governments and companies also **participate by turning off non-essential lights** in their buildings, monuments, and landmarks to raise awareness about the impact of energy consumption on our planet.
 - This symbolic act, **known as the ‘lights off’ moment**, unites people worldwide in a show of support for the planet and serves as a reminder of the environmental issues facing us.
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G7 GROUP



- The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal grouping of seven of the world’s advanced economies.
 - It was **founded in 1975** in response to the oil crisis.
 - **Members:** Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
 - Russia was **member from 1998**, the group temporarily became the G8.
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- In 2014, the group returned to the G7 format.
- The G7 originally dealt exclusively with issues related to the development of the global economy.
- It now covers the **entire spectrum of global issues**, such as foreign and security policy, trade, climate, and development.
- **Governance**
 - There is **no firmly established secretariat**, procedural guidelines, or administrative structures.
 - Its **presidency rotates each calendar year** among the member states. The EU does not hold the rotating presidency of the G7.
 - The changing agenda and thematic priorities of the G7 are determined by the respective presidency.
 - **Decisions** are usually taken by consensus.

BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL



Recently, an inaugural meeting of the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council-Research Advisory Board (BRIC-RAB) was held at the Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB), Faridabad.

- It is an **Apex Autonomous Body** established as a **registered Society**.
- It was formed by **subsuming 14 Autonomous Institutes** of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

BRIC aims to provide a **centralized and unified governance mechanism** for the administration of its research institutions through intra-mural core grants.

- It **emphasizes multi-disciplinary research support** from basic discovery to application in areas of strength within the DBT institutions.

BRIC seeks to nurture the next generation of scientific leaders by enabling the pursuit of knowledge and innovation in globally competitive and nationally relevant ecosystems.

The objectives of BRIC are:

- Promoting cutting-edge research in biotechnology aligned with national priorities
- Fostering innovation and translation across institutional boundaries
- Developing indigenous technologies and capabilities in line with the principles of Atmanirbhar Bharat
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Science and Technology

ZOJILA PASS



- Zojila Pass, also known as ‘The Mountain Pass of Blizzards’, is a high mountain pass located in the **Kargil district of Ladakh**.
- It is located on the **Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway (NH-1)**.
- It lies in the **Greater Himalayan Range**.

What is Avalanche?

- It is a large **amount of snow** that quickly moves down a slope.
- It **can be deadly** because it will bury or sweep away anything in its path.
- Many different conditions make an avalanche possible.
 - An avalanche is more likely to happen on a slope without trees or large rocks. These things help to keep snow in place.
 - A weak layer of snow also makes an avalanche likely.

SATPURA TIGER RESERVE





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- **Location:** It is located in **Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is **situated in the Satpura ranges** of the Central Indian Landscape.
- It lies **south of the river Narmada**.
- The tiger reserve **comprises three protected areas, Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, and Pachmarhi Sanctuary.**

Terrain: The terrain here is extremely rugged and consists of **sandstone peaks**, narrow gorges, ravines, and dense forests.

- Geological formations include the **Deccan trap series, Gondwanas, and metamorphic rocks.**

Vegetation: It mainly consists of **mixed deciduous forest** with a variety of flora typical of the Central Indian Highlands.

Flora: It includes teak, bamboo, Indian ebony, various acacias, wild mango, Indian gooseberry, satinwood, etc.

- Twenty-six species of the Himalayan region and 42 species of the Nilgiri areas are found. Hence, STR is also known as the **northern extremity of the Western Ghats.**

Fauna: It is home to tigers, leopards, sloth bears, Indian gaurs (bison), and sambar deer.
