

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 13 May 2026

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY 2026



- National Technology Day (NTD) is celebrated in India on May 11 every year, commemorating the successful nuclear tests conducted at Pokhran in 1998.
- This day also acknowledges the country's scientific achievements and technological advancements, honouring the contributions of scientists, engineers, and innovators.

History:

- On May 11, 1998, India marked a significant milestone with successful nuclear tests at the Pokhran range in Rajasthan, led by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- India conducted three underground nuclear tests on May 11, followed by two additional tests on May 13.
- These tests, known as Operation Shakti, established India as the sixth country to join the 'Nuclear Club'.
- On the same day, India performed a successful test firing of the Trishul Missile (a surface-to-air short-range missile) and had test-flown the first indigenous aircraft, 'Hansa – 3'.

The day was officially declared by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998, and since 1999, it has been celebrated as NTD.

- Every year, the Technology Development Board of India (a statutory body under the Ministry of Science and Technology) celebrates the day by awarding individuals with the National Award for their contribution to science and technology in India.
- NTD 2026 Theme: 'Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth'

NEET-UG CANCELLATION - CRISIS OF CREDIBILITY IN INDIA'S EXAMINATION SYSTEM

- The National Testing Agency (NTA) cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3 for **over 22 lakh** candidates following allegations of **paper leaks** and malpractices.

Reasons for Cancelling NEET-UG 2026:

- **Allegations of paper leak and malpractice:**
 - On May 7, the NTA received information about a PDF containing alleged NEET-UG questions circulating after the examination. The matter was referred to law enforcement agencies on May 8.
 - Investigations reportedly found evidence suggesting prior circulation of exam-related material.
- **Findings by investigative agencies:**
 - The Rajasthan Special Operations Group reportedly recovered a “**guess paper**” containing 410 questions, of which around 120 appeared in the actual examination.
 - Based on inputs from central agencies and investigative findings, the NTA decided to cancel the entire examination.

Structural Challenges in Conducting NEET-UG:

- **Massive scale of examination:**
 - NEET-UG is India's **largest** entrance examination; conducted in a single day and single shift; and attended by nearly 25 lakh candidates. Such scale creates logistical vulnerabilities, transportation risks, and coordination challenges.
- **Continued dependence on pen-and-paper testing (PPT):**
 - **Risks in PPT:** Physical transportation of papers creates leakage points. Printing, storage, and distribution involve multiple intermediaries. Local-level collusion becomes possible.

Reasons for Not Implementing CBT:

- **Concerns regarding normalisation:** The biggest hurdle is ensuring fairness across multiple shifts.
- **What is normalisation?** Normalisation is a statistical method used to balance differences in difficulty levels across various question papers. This standard-score approach helps compare candidate performance across different exam sessions.
- **Challenges:** NEET-UG may require over 15 shifts for 25 lakh candidates. Variations in paper difficulty may trigger litigation, allegations of unfairness, and delays in admissions.
- **Judicial concerns:** During NEET-PG 2024 controversy, The SC raised concerns regarding multi-shift examinations and fairness concerns.

Broader Issues Highlighted by the Crisis:

- **Crisis of institutional credibility:** Repeated controversies have weakened public trust in national testing systems; affected the morale of genuine candidates.
- **Coaching and commercialisation of exams:** High-stakes competitive exams have created large coaching economies; and incentivised organised cheating networks.
- **Technological and administrative gaps:** Despite digital advances exam administration remains fragmented; cybersecurity and data protection measures remain inadequate.

Measures Already Implemented by NTA:

- Following the 2024 controversy, the NTA introduced:
 - Aadhaar-based biometric verification;
 - GPS-enabled transportation of papers;
 - Police escort for exam materials;
 - Centralised CCTV monitoring;
 - Coordination with district administrations; and
 - Security mock drills.
- However, these measures proved insufficient to fully prevent leaks.

INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION



- It was established in 1997 as an intergovernmental organisation of States on the rim of the Indian Ocean.
- It was formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC).
- Objectives of IORA:
 - To promote sustainable growth and balanced development of the region and member states.
 - To focus on those areas of economic cooperation which provide maximum opportunities for development, shared interest and mutual benefits.
 - To promote liberalisation, remove impediments and lower barriers towards a freer and enhanced flow of goods, services and investment within the Indian Ocean Rim.
- Member countries:
 - It has members from Africa, West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and Oceania.
 - It currently comprises 23 member states and 12 dialogue partners.
 - Asia: India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
 - Africa: Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles.
 - Oceania:
 - Europe: France
 - Dialogue Partners: China, Egypt, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



- It is an **international financial institution** and a **specialized agency of the United Nations**.
- It was established as an international financial institution in **1977 through United Nations General Assembly Resolution**.
- **Objective:** It is **dedicated to eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas** of developing countries.
- IFAD is the only UN agency exclusively dedicated to transforming agriculture, rural economies and food systems.
- IFAD seeks to **empower rural people to increase their food security**, improve the nutrition of their families.
- Its projects and programmes are carried **out in remote and environmentally fragile locations**, including least-developed countries and Small Island developing States.
- It is a **member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDP)**.
- IFAD **extends two types of grants**, depending on the nature of the innovation and the scope of intervention: **global or regional grants and country-specific grants**.
 - IFAD grants support research, innovation, institutional change, and pro-poor technologies.
- **Membership:** Currently, **IFAD has 180 Member States**, including India. (India is a founding member of IFAD).
- **Governance:** Its **Governing Council** is the **highest decision-making body** which meets every three years.
- **Headquarter:** Rome, Italy.

What is Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP)?

- It is aimed at **strengthening rural incomes**, improving resilience and expanding sustainable livelihood opportunities across India.

HOW INDIA IS GOVERNING ITS WATER RESOURCES

- India's water crisis is often viewed as a problem of **water scarcity**, but the real challenge lies in ineffective **water governance** and inefficient resource management.

Enduring Paradox

- **Abundance of Rainfall but Limited Usable Water**
 - India possesses only about 4% of the world's **freshwater resources** while supporting nearly one-fifth of the global population.
 - According to the NITI Aayog Composite **Water Management Index**, nearly 600 million people experience high to extreme water stress.
 - Although annual rainfall is significant, only around 1,100 billion cubic metres of water are considered usable because of inadequate **storage infrastructure**, uneven rainfall patterns, and ecological limitations.
- **Declining Per-Capita Water Availability**
 - The growing pressure on water resources is reflected in the sharp decline in per-capita water availability.
 - After independence, water availability exceeded 5,000 cubic metres per person annually, but today it has fallen to nearly 1,400 cubic metres.
 - Rapid **urbanisation**, industrialisation, and population growth have intensified this crisis.
- **Overdependence on Groundwater**
 - India has become the world's largest user of **groundwater extraction**, accounting for nearly one-fourth of global usage.
 - Groundwater has supported **agriculture**, food production, and rural livelihoods, but excessive extraction has caused falling water tables in many regions.
 - This growing dependence reveals weak regulation and unsustainable patterns of consumption.

Institutional Structure of India's Water Governance

- India's water governance system operates through a complex **federal structure** involving the Union government, State governments, and local bodies.
- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** functions as the central authority responsible for water resources, drinking water supply, and sanitation.
- The Central Water Commission manages surface water planning, flood control, and river basin development, while the Central Ground Water Board monitors groundwater resources and promotes sustainable aquifer management.
- However, most water-related responsibilities, including irrigation and water supply, fall under State jurisdiction.
- This decentralised structure often creates coordination problems, overlapping responsibilities, and fragmented policymaking.

The Path Forward: A Circular Water Economy

- **Need for Sustainable Water Management**
 - India's future water strategy increasingly focuses on building a circular water economy based on conservation, recycling, and efficient utilisation of resources.
 - Expanding **wastewater recycling** in cities can reduce pressure on freshwater resources, while better crop selection and improved irrigation practices can increase agricultural productivity.
- **Role of Technology and Public Participation**
 - Technological innovation, scientific planning, and community participation are crucial for ensuring **water sustainability**.
 - Efficient governance systems, stronger regulations, and improved infrastructure can help transform India's water economy from one driven by scarcity and overexploitation to one based on sustainability and resilience.

Conclusion

- **Sustainable water governance**, scientific planning, efficient infrastructure, and active public participation are essential for securing India's future.

NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME



- It is a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme **launched in 1995**.
 - It extends financial support to individuals living **below poverty line (BPL)**.
- Nodal Ministry:** It is implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- It is a key social welfare scheme that provides **pensions to vulnerable groups, including the elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities**.

Currently, NSAP covers five schemes:

- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):** Under IGNOAPS, the Centre provides financial assistance of **Rs 200 per month** to individuals aged **60–79 years** and **Rs 500 per month** to those aged **80 and above**.
- **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS):** Under IGNWPS, the Centre provides **Rs 300 per month** to **widows aged 40–79 years** and **Rs 500** to those **80 and above**.
- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS):** Financial assistance of **Rs 300 per month** is provided to individuals with severe or multiple **disabilities aged 18–79**, and **Rs 500** to those aged **80 years** and above.
- **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):** Under this the amount of **one-time financial assistance is fixed at Rs 20,000**. This is provided to families after the death of a **primary breadwinner aged 18 to 59**.
- **Annapurna Scheme:** Under this component **10 kg of food grains per month**, free of cost, are provided to those **senior citizens** who, though eligible, were **not receiving old-age pension**.

NATIONAL FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARD



- It was instituted by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India in the year 1973.
- It is a prestigious award given to **outstanding nursing personnel** employed in Central, State/UTs and Voluntary Organizations.
- It honours the dedication, compassion, and resilience of **the nursing profession**.
- These prestigious awards are presented to **Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and Lady Health Visitors** serving across Central and State Governments, Union Territories, and voluntary organizations.

Award: Each award includes a Certificate of Merit, a **cash prize of ₹1,00,000**, and a medal.

Who was Florence Nightingale?

- Florence Nightingale was an **English social reformer, statistician** and the **founder of modern nursing**.
- Nightingale came to prominence while serving as a manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War, in which she organised care for wounded soldiers at Constantinople.
- **Contribution:** Her efforts to formalize nursing education led her to establish the first scientifically based nursing school—the **Nightingale School of Nursing**, at **Thomas' Hospital in London**.