

REVISED GREEN INDIA MISSION: A RENEWED PUSH FOR FOREST REVIVAL AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- Launched in **2014** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**, the Green India Mission aims to:
 - Increase forest and tree cover on **5 million hectares**
 - Improve the quality of forest cover on **another 5 million hectares**
 - Restore degraded ecosystems and enhance **livelihoods of forest-dependent communities**
- **Afforestation Progress**
 - From 2015-16 to 2020-21, the mission supported tree plantation and afforestation across 11.22 million hectares through various central and state schemes.
- **Funding and Utilisation**
 - Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, the Centre allocated ₹624.71 crore to 18 states for GIM-related interventions, of which ₹575.55 crore has been utilised.
- **Targeted Implementation**
 - GIM activities are prioritized in states based on:
 - Ecological vulnerability
 - Carbon sequestration potential
 - Forest and land degradation levels
 - Restoration potential

Revised GIM: Key Highlights

- **Need for Revision**
 - The **Green India Mission (GIM)** roadmap has been revised based on:
 - Ground-level climate impacts
 - Feedback from implementing partner states
 - Recommendations from scientific institutions

- The updated plan adopts a **region-specific, ecologically tailored approach.**
- **Focus on Vulnerable Landscapes**
 - The revised mission prioritizes **restoration and saturation of vulnerable landscapes**, including:
 - Aravalli ranges
 - Western Ghats
 - Indian Himalayas
 - Mangrove ecosystems
 - Best practices will be adapted to local ecological conditions for effective restoration.

GIM Integration with Aravalli Green Wall Project

- Centre's **Aravalli Green Wall Project** aims to:
 - Combat degradation and desertification
 - Close 12 ecological gaps contributing to **dust storms in Delhi-NCR and Punjab**
 - Initially restore **8 lakh hectares across 29 districts and 4 states**
 - Use **native plant species**, restore **grasslands, forests, and water systems**
- Estimated cost: **₹16,053 crore**
- Aim: Create a **5-km buffer zone** covering **6.45 million hectares**

Action in the Western Ghats

- In the **Western Ghats**, GIM will focus on: Afforestation efforts; Groundwater recharge; Eco-restoration of abandoned mining zones.
- This is in response to threats from deforestation, degradation, and illegal mining.
- The revised roadmap reflects a **strategic, region-sensitive approach to ecological restoration and climate resilience.**

WHAT IS MERCHANT BANKING?



• Merchant Banking refers to financial services designed especially for businesses and corporate clients.

- These services help business owners raise funds, manage investments, and expand operations.
- Banks registered as merchant bankers provide expert advice on mergers, acquisitions, and other business activities requiring capital.
- They act as intermediaries between companies and investors to ensure smooth financial growth.
- The role of a merchant banker is similar to that of a financial advisor.
 - They help make critical decisions and also help businesses expand by arranging private equity investments or strategic partnerships.
- One of the primary services merchant bankers provide is issue management. It involves helping companies raise capital from the public by managing the process of issuing shares, debentures, or other securities.
- Merchant banks do not provide regular banking services to the general public.
- The regulatory framework governing merchant banks in India is primarily overseen by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
 - One of the key regulations involves the maintenance of minimum net worth requirements, which ensures that merchant banks have sufficient financial resources to undertake their activities and absorb potential losses.
 - Additionally, SEBI mandates that merchant banks adhere to a strict code of conduct, which includes provisions related to fair dealing, conflict of interest, and transparency.
 - Merchant banks are also subject to periodic inspections and audits by SEBI to ensure ongoing compliance.

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- Any violations can result in penalties, including suspension or cancellation of the registration certificate.
- **Services Offered by Merchant Banks:**
 - **Corporate advisory services:** Offering guidance on mergers, acquisitions, and restructuring
 - **Capital raising:** Helping businesses raise funds through debt or equity.
 - **Investment management:** Managing large-scale investments and portfolios.
 - **Underwriting:** Assisting in public offerings by guaranteeing the sale of securities.
 - **Risk management:** Reducing financial risks by offering expert advice.

WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT 2025



- It is an **annual report** published by the **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**.
- It focuses on **trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide**, at the **regional and country levels**, and emerging measures to improve its contribution to development.

Highlights of 2025 Report:

- Overall, **global FDI fell by 11 percent in 2024**, marking the **second consecutive year of decline** and confirming a deepening slowdown in productive capital flows.
- **Although global FDI rose by 4 percent in 2024 to \$1.5 trillion**, the increase is the **result of**, among other factors, **volatile financial conduit flows through several European economies**, which often serve as **transfer points for investments**. **When these are excluded**, global FDI registered an **11% decline**.
- The report also found that **investment in sectors related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries fell by 25–33% across**

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infrastructure, renewable energy, water and sanitation, and agrifood systems. **Only the health sector saw growth**, though from a small base.

- **FDI flows to the digital economy grew 14%. But 80% of greenfield projects in digital sectors in the Global South went to just 10 countries**, leaving most developing nations excluded from the digital transformation.
- The **United States** retained its position as the **top FDI destination** globally, with inflows rising to \$279 billion in 2024 from \$233 billion in the previous year.
- **China fell to fourth place with a 29 percent decline in FDI inflows, dropping from the second position** it held in 2023.
- **FDI in Africa surged 75%, South-East Asia saw record greenfield levels, and momentum was seen in India, the Gulf, and parts of Latin America.**
- In 2024, developing economies of Asia attracted \$605 billion in FDI.
- **Despite a 3% dip in value from the year before, developing Asia** remained the world's **leading destination for inward foreign investment**; overall in 2024, Asia received **40% of the world's total FDI** and **70% of inflows to developing economies.**
- **Within the South Asian region, India was the top FDI recipient.**
- **Despite a marginal dip in inflows** at \$27.6 billion, **India climbed up to 15th place globally in 2024**, from 16th position in 2023 when it received \$28.1 billion in FDI.
- There was a **notable increase in greenfield project announcements**, where **India ranked fourth** with 1,080 greenfield projects announced in 2024.
- The country was also **among the top five economies** in terms of **international project finance deals**, securing 97 such transactions.
- **India also climbed in the global ranking of FDI outflows**, moving to the **18th slot** with \$24 billion in outward investments — up from 23rd in 2023, when outflows totalled \$14 billion.

WHAT IS A GENDER BUDGETING KNOWLEDGE HUB?



- It is a **dedicated digital platform** designed to **promote gender-responsive planning nationwide**.
- It was launched by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- The portal's primary aim is to empower policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders with a **centralised repository of tools** – “including **policy briefs, best practices, and gender-disaggregated data**” to **support the integration of a gender lens** into all stages of **planning and budgeting, both at the Central and state levels**.
- The portal will equip stakeholders with **evidence-based tools** to better integrate gender perspectives into planning and budgeting.

Gender Budgeting in India:

- Gender budgeting is a tool for gender mainstreaming, **applying a gender lens to the entire policy process**.
- It involves **gender-sensitive formulation, resource allocation, and continuous monitoring** to address vulnerabilities faced by women throughout their life cycle.
- India adopted its **first gender budget in 2005-06**, marking a significant step towards addressing gender disparities in resource allocation.
- Over the **past 11 years, gender budget allocations have increased by four and a half times**—from Rs. 0.98 lakh crore in 2014-15 to **4.49 lakh crore in 2025-26**.

How is gender budgeting implemented?

- **Nodal authorities, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development** at the central level, **spearhead gender budgeting implementation**.

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- Departments of Women and Child Development/Social Welfare, Finance, or Planning Department are also responsible for gender budget implementation in states and Union territories.
- District subs for Empowerment of Women are also active in states and Union territories to coordinate and fulfil the objectives of schemes.
- These hubs are also required to have **at least one gender specialist**.

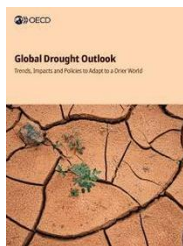
FASTAG ANNUAL PASS SCHEME



- FASTag is an electronic toll collection system managed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- A FASTag was **launched in 2014** as a pilot project and made mandatory at every toll plaza in the country in 2021.
- The new annual pass scheme, activated on the FASTag, will allow free passage of private car, jeep or van at **National Highway (NH) and National Expressway (NE) fee plazas** for the given duration, **without per-trip user fee charges**.
- Once the Annual Pass completes **either 200 trips or one year from the date of activation**, it will automatically revert to a regular FASTag.
- However, the user may re-purchase the Annual Pass once the 200-trip limit is exhausted, even if the one-year validity period has not yet ended.
- The pass is **non-transferable** and is **valid only for the vehicle** on which the FASTag is affixed and registered.
- For the **point-based fee plazas**, each crossing of the fee plaza will be counted as one trip. A round trip (to and fro) will be counted as two trips. For closed tolling fee plazas, one pair of entry and exit will be counted as one trip.
- The Annual Pass is applicable **only for private non-commercial cars, jeeps and vans**.
- It is valid only at National Highway and National Expressway fee plazas.

- It will be activated after verifying the eligibility of the vehicle and the associated FASTag. Upon successful verification, the user will have to make a payment of Rs. 3,000 for the base year 2025–26 through the Rajmargyatra mobile application or the NHAI website.

GLOBAL DROUGHT OUTLOOK REPORT



- It assesses how countries can strengthen **drought management** to **adapt to a changing climate**.
- It provides new insights into the rising human, environmental, and economic impacts of droughts and offers practical policy solutions to minimise losses, build long-term resilience, and support adaptation to a drier future.

Key Findings:

- Droughts across the world:** 40% of the world's land area faces increasingly frequent and severe droughts.
- Economic impact:** 3% - 7.5% annual increase in the economic cost of an average drought episode.
- 35% minimum projected increase in drought-related economic losses by 2035
- Since 1980, **37% of global land** has experienced **significant soil moisture loss**, while water levels in many rivers and aquifers globally are in decline.
- The majority of monitored **groundwater table levels** have also shown widespread **declines** in recent decades.
- Despite accounting for only 6% of natural disasters, droughts cause 34% of all disaster-related deaths and exacerbate displacement and migration, especially in SubSaharan Africa.

KANHA TIGER RESERVE



- Kanha Tiger Reserve, also called Kanha National Park, is located in the “Maikal” ranges of the Satpuras and falls in the Mandla and Balaghat districts of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is located in the **Central Indian Highlands**, which are part of the extensive tableland that forms India’s main peninsula.
- It is the **largest national park in Madhya Pradesh**. It sprawls over an area of 2074 sq.km., with 940 sq. km. of core area and 1,009 sq. km. of buffer zone.
- It was declared a reserve forest in 1879 and revalued as a wildlife sanctuary in 1933. Its position was further upgraded to a national park in 1955.
- **Corridor**: It has an active corridor **between Kanha and Pench Tiger Reserves**. Kanha is also **connected with the Achanakmar Tiger Reserve of Chhattisgarh**
- **Habitat**: It is characterized mainly by **forested shallow undulations, hills with varying degrees of slopes, plateaus, and valleys**.
- The **forest depicted in the famous novel by Rudyard Kipling, The Jungle Book**, is thought by some to be **based on jungles, including this reserve**.
- The region is known for some of the ancient **tribal communities**, like the **Gond and Baiga**, that still inhabit the region.
- It is also the **first tiger reserve in India** to officially **introduce a mascot, “Bhoorsingh the Barasingha”**.
- **Flora**: It is primarily a moist **Sal and moist mixed deciduous forest** where Bamboo, Tendu, Sal, Jamun, Arjun, and Lendia flourish.
- **Fauna**:
 - The park has a significant population of **Royal Bengal Tigers, leopards, sloth bears, Indian wild dogs and Barasingha** (the state animal of Madhya Pradesh).