

NDA OPENS ROUTE FOR WOMEN TO LEAD ARMED FORCES

Long Journey to NDA: A Milestone in Women's Military Inclusion

- Women's entry into the Indian military began with the British-era Military Nursing Service in 1888. In 1958, the Indian Army Medical Corps started granting regular commissions to women doctors.
- **Opening Non-Medical Roles (1992–2008):**
 - The Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) was introduced in 1992, allowing women to join select non-combat branches as Short Service Commission (SSC) officers.
 - In 2008, women SSC officers in the Judge Advocate General department and Army Education Corps (AEC) became eligible for Permanent Commission (PC).
- **Expanding Opportunities (2019–2020)**
 - In 2019, women were allowed PC in eight additional non-combat streams, though command roles were still denied. Legal challenges culminated in a landmark 2020 Supreme Court verdict affirming women's right to PC and command roles in ten streams, rejecting gender-based discrimination.
- **Breaking Barriers (2021–2024):**
 - Following a Supreme Court directive in 2021, the NDA opened its doors to women.
 - The 17 women cadets who recently graduated were the first batch admitted after this historic ruling, symbolizing a transformative shift in India's military landscape.

Integration into Squadrons: A New Era at NDA

- **Growing Presence of Women Cadets**
 - Since 2022, the NDA has admitted 126 women cadets up to its 153rd batch, starting a new chapter in gender-inclusive military training.

- **Gender-Neutral Training Approach**

- The NDA adopted a gender-neutral training model with minimal changes to its existing curriculum.
- Training is largely joint, with male and female cadets undergoing the same regimen to prepare for future command roles.

- **Learning from Other Academies**

- To structure its women's training, the NDA borrowed methods from established academies like the Officers Training Academy (Chennai), Indian Naval Academy (Ezhimala), and Air Force Academy (Dundigal), where women SSC officers have been trained since 1992.

- **From Separate Housing to Full Integration**

- Initially housed separately, women cadets were fully integrated into the NDA's 18 squadrons during their final term — a major milestone that reflects deeper inclusion. Squadrons serve as core living and training units, fostering camaraderie and discipline.

- **Equality in Action**

- Today, women cadets live, train, and march alongside their male counterparts, indistinguishable in uniform and routine — symbolizing true equality in one of India's most prestigious military institutions.

- **Path to Becoming Service Chiefs**

- Women NDA graduates can now start their careers young, making it feasible to serve for 35–40 years — a key requirement for rising to the rank of service chief.
- Their training also prepares them for combat command roles, such as in infantry, artillery, naval warships, or fighter squadrons, essential for advancement.

- **Need for Cultural and Structural Reforms**

- Challenges remain — some combat roles are still closed to women, and systemic reforms are needed in areas like maternity policy, childcare, spousal postings, promotion criteria, and infrastructure support.

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ULLAS - NAV BHARAT SAAKSHARTA KARYAKRAM



• Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society

(ULLAS) is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented from **2022-2027**.

- The scheme, aligned with NEP 2020, targets adults (**aged 15 years and above**) who can't go to school.
- **Aim:** It aims to empower those adults **aged 15 years** and above from all backgrounds who **could not get due schooling** and mainstream them with society to be able to contribute more to the growth story of the country.
- The scheme **has five components** - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, Vocational Skills and Continuing Education.
- The vision of the ULLAS Scheme is to make India Jan Saakshar and is based on the spirit of Kartavya Bodh and is being implemented on volunteerism.
- The **ULLAS app** can be used for registration of learners and volunteers either through self-registration or by surveyors.
- It will serve as a digital gateway for learners to engage in diverse learning resources through the **DIKSHA portal** of NCERT.

NAKSHA PROGRAMME



• The **NATional geospatial Knowledge-based land Survey of urban Habitations (NAKSHA)** programme is a city survey initiative under the existing **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**.

- It is spearheaded by the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), **under the Ministry of Rural Development**.

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- Under the new initiative, **maps of towns and cities will be prepared**. The programme has been launched as a pilot across 152 urban local bodies in 26 states.
- **The cities selected meet two criteria:** area less than 35 sq km and population less than 2 lakhs. The pilot will be completed in a year.
- **Objectives**
 - Creates a comprehensive geospatial database for urban land records.
 - Uses aerial and field surveys integrated with GIS technology.
 - Enhances land governance, streamlines property records, and supports urban planning.
 - Improves decision-making, ensures efficient land use, and facilitates smoother property transactions.
- The **Survey of India is the technical partner for NAKSHA programme** which is responsible for conducting aerial surveys and providing orthorectified imagery, through third party vendors, to state and Union Territory governments.

WHAT IS KRISHI NIVESH PORTAL?



- It is an initiative by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** to facilitate farmers and investors.
- The portal will cater to diverse stakeholders, including **farmers, entrepreneurs and industries**, by providing easy access to **information regarding various Central and State Government schemes**.
- There are many government schemes for farmers' welfare through which the **investors can avail the subsidized benefits** provided by various departments, divisions and ministries.
- This portal is a **one-stop place for availing the benefits promulgated** by different Government **departments and ministries** in the agriculture sector.

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- It is a comprehensive platform designed to **enhance agribusinesses, attract investments**, and improve farmers' income.
- It serves as a **centralized interface to track investment opportunities, monitor the status** of applications and **access information on schemes — all from a single source**.
- It is designed to streamline the investment process, making it more transparent and efficient.
- The portal features a **user-friendly interface, real-time assistance through chatbot and interactive dashboards** for data-driven decision-making.
- It **currently provides information on 17 flagship agri-sector schemes**, including the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund, PM Kisan Sampada Yojana, and PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan), covering initiatives from seven ministries on a single platform.
- Currently, the portal is being **utilised by multiple ministries**, including those of agriculture, food processing, rural development, jal shakti, new and renewable energy and fertilisers.

INDIA OPENS DOORS TO FOREIGN LAW FIRMS AMID LEGAL CONCERNS

- India's legal services sector is undergoing a historic transformation with the **Bar Council of India (BCI)** formally notifying rules in May 2025 that allow foreign law firms and lawyers to operate in the country.
- The move represents a decisive policy shift from decades of resistance and judicial barriers.

Regulatory Framework for Foreign Law Firms in India

- **Scope of Entry and Practice**
 - The 2025 BCI notification permits foreign law firms and foreign lawyers to operate in India under strict conditions.

- They are allowed to engage only in non-litigious practice, meaning they cannot appear before Indian courts, and are limited to advising on foreign law, international legal matters, and arbitration proceedings involving foreign parties.
- Their entry is conditional upon **reciprocity**, i.e., Indian lawyers should be allowed similar access in their jurisdictions.

Benefits of Allowing Foreign Law Firms

- **Global Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**
 - Proponents see the move as a catalyst for modernization.
 - With foreign law firms entering the Indian market, domestic firms could benefit from knowledge exchange, innovation, and adoption of global best practices.
- **Opportunities for Indian Lawyers**
 - The new rules include a **dual registration provision**, allowing Indian lawyers to register for practicing international law without giving up their right to practice Indian law. This is expected to create global career pathways for young Indian lawyers.
- **Boost to India's Legal Services Exports**
 - By integrating into the global legal services framework, India aims to position itself as a hub for international arbitration and cross-border legal consultancy.
 - This would align well with India's broader ambitions under initiatives like **Make in India** and **Ease of Doing Business**.

Conclusion

India's decision to allow foreign law firms marks a significant milestone in the evolution of its legal sector.

While the initiative offers numerous benefits from global exposure to increased competitiveness, it is equally burdened with legal contradictions and practical uncertainties.

For a smooth transition, a holistic legislative framework and detailed implementation roadmap will be essential. Only then can India ensure that the legal profession evolves without compromising its constitutional and professional integrity.

REGULATING INDIA'S VIRTUAL DIGITAL ASSETS REVOLUTION

- India has emerged as a global leader in grassroots cryptocurrency adoption, topping Chainalysis's Geography of Crypto report for two consecutive years (2023 and 2024).
- With Indian retail investors having poured over \$6.6 billion into crypto assets and projections indicating the potential creation of over 800,000 jobs by 2030, the country is clearly embracing the Web3 revolution.
- In addition, India boasts one of the fastest-growing developer ecosystems in the blockchain space.
- However, this rapid adoption starkly contrasts with the country's ambiguous and restrictive policy environment, raising pressing questions about the future of virtual digital assets (VDAs) in India.

The Way Forward: Toward a Balanced and Future-Ready Framework

- The current scenario, taxing without regulating, is unsustainable and counterproductive.
- Without a comprehensive framework, India not only risks losing substantial tax revenue but also its ability to oversee a growing and strategically important sector.
- The potential of VDAs to contribute to national economic growth, job creation, and innovation cannot be fully realised under a policy vacuum.
- A forward-looking, balanced regulatory approach must be rooted in transparency, investor protection, and global interoperability.
- Instead of curbing innovation through prohibitive taxation or blanket bans, Indian regulators should recognise the constructive role played by VASPs and create a conducive environment for them to operate under oversight.
- Such a framework should aim to integrate crypto into the broader financial ecosystem without compromising on security or monetary control.

Conclusion

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- India has demonstrated remarkable adoption and innovation in the digital asset space, yet its regulatory stance remains fragmented and reactive.
- To harness the full potential of the VDA economy while safeguarding its financial integrity, India must develop a pragmatic and comprehensive legal framework.
- Empowering compliant domestic platforms, harmonising with global standards, and focusing on risk-based regulations will enable the country to transition from a reluctant participant to a responsible global leader in the digital asset revolution.

NALSAROVAR BIRD SANCTUARY



- It is located approximately 64 km west of Ahmedabad in Gujarat.
- It is a **natural lake** with shallow waters and muddy lagoons, dotted by **360 islets**.
- Spread over an area of 120.82 sq km, this sanctuary is a **paradise for bird watchers** and nature enthusiasts.
- The **Ramsar Convention designation** of Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary in **2012** recognized its ecological importance as a wetland habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- **Flora:**
 - The sanctuary area has 48 species of algae and 72 species of flowering plants.
 - The common aquatic plants are Cyperus sp., Scirpus sp., Typha unguistata, Eleocharis palustris, Ruppia, Potamogeton, Vallisnaria, Naias, Chara, etc.
- **Fauna:**
 - The sanctuary has **about 250 bird species**, which include **greater and lesser flamingoes, pelicans**, ducks & geese, rails, coots, **cranes**, cormorants, herons, egrets, **storks**, ibises, spoonbills, teals, sarus cranes, moorhens, and waders, etc.
 - **Other animals:** On southern or southwestern fringes, small herds of **wild ass** can be seen. Mongoose, jungle cat, Indian fox, jackal, wolf, and hyena are also there.

VALLEY OF FLOWERS NATIONAL PARK



- It is located in the state of
- It is a **UNESCO World Heritage** Site and forms one of the two core zones (the other being the Nanda Devi National Park) of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.
- The valley is believed to have been discovered in 1931, when three British mountaineers – led by **Frank S Smythe** – lost their way and chanced upon this spectacular valley.
- The Valley of Flowers is located within the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, spread over an area of 87 sq.km.
- The gentle landscape of the Valley of Flowers National Park complements the rugged mountain wilderness of Nanda Devi National Park. Together they encompass a unique **transition zone** between the mountain ranges of the **Zaskar and Great Himalaya**.

Flora: Flower species such as orchids, poppies, primulas, marigold, daisies and anemones can be found here. The valley also abounds in medicinal plants and herbs.

- **Sub-alpine forests birch and rhododendron** cover parts of the park's area.

Fauna: It is home to such rare and amazing wildlife species like the **gray langur**, the flying squirrel, the **Himalayan weasel**, and black bear, the red fox, the lime butterfly, the **snow leopard**.