

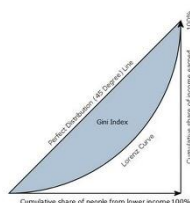
WHAT IS NIPAH VIRUS?



- Nipah virus (NiV) is an emerging **zoonotic virus** that can be **transmitted to humans from animals** (both wild and domestic).
- It can also be transmitted through **contaminated food or directly from person-to-person**.
- **Fruit bats** of the Pteropodidae family are the **natural hosts** of Nipah virus.
- NiV infection can be **asymptomatic or mild (subclinical)**, but it also **causes acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis**.
- **Symptoms:**
 - **Initial symptoms** of NiV infection may include **fever, headache, myalgia** (muscle pain), nausea, vomiting, sore throat, cough, and/or respiratory discomfort.
 - **Acute encephalitis might develop** with the following symptoms: dizziness, drowsiness, altered state of consciousness, and any other indicative neurological signs.
 - In **severe cases, encephalitis and seizures** occur and may **lead to coma** within 24–48 hours.
 - **Progression to encephalitis** indicates a poor prognosis, with **death within a median of six days after the onset of symptoms**.
- The case **fatality rate** is estimated between **40–75% or higher**, and it varies depending on the specific NiV strain, access to and quality of healthcare, or the severity of illness.
- **Treatment:** There are **no specifically approved treatments or vaccines** available for NiV infection, **either for people or animals**.
- **So far, NiV outbreaks** have only been **described in Asia**.
 - The first reported outbreak occurred in 1998–1999 and involved pig farmers in the village of Sungai Nipah (Malaysia).

- Since then, sporadic outbreaks have been documented in **Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, and Singapore.**
- NiV infection is one of the **priority diseases on the World Health Organization (WHO) R&D Blueprint** because of its epidemic or pandemic potential.

WHAT IS THE GINI INDEX?



- The Gini index, also called the Gini coefficient or Gini ratio, **determines a nation's level of income inequality by measuring the income distribution or wealth distribution across its population.**
- The Gini index was **developed in 1912 by Italian statistician Corrado Gini.**
- The coefficient of the Gini index **ranges from 0 (or 0%) to 1 (or 100%),** with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality.
 - To offer two hypothetical examples, if a nation were to have absolute income equality, with every person earning the same amount, its Gini score would be 0 (0%).
 - On the other hand, if one person earned all the income in a nation and the rest earned zero, the Gini coefficient would be 1 (100%).
- Mathematically, the Gini coefficient is **defined based on the Lorenz curve.**
 - The Lorenz curve **plots the percentiles of the population on the graph's horizontal axis according to income or wealth,** whichever is being measured.
 - The **cumulative income or wealth of the population is plotted on the vertical axis.**
- The Gini index is **not an absolute measure of a country's income or wealth.** The coefficient only **measures the dispersion of income or wealth within a population.**
- **India's Gini Index:**

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Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

- According to the recent **World Bank report**, India's **Gini Index** stands at **5**, placing it as the **fourth most equal country globally**, behind only the **Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Belarus**.
- This performance not only **surpasses** regional peers like **China**, which holds a Gini score of 35.7, but also positions India **ahead of every G7 and G20 nation** in terms of income equality.
- It marks a steady **improvement from** a Gini score of **8 in 2011** to 25.5 in 2022, signalling meaningful gains in bridging income gaps over the past decade.

GREEN CLIMATE FUND



- It is the world's **largest dedicated climate fund** which was set up at **COP 16** held in Cancun in 2010.
- It is an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
- It is mandated to support developing countries raise and **realize their Nationally Determined Contributions ambitions** towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways.
- It accelerates transformative climate action in developing countries through a country-owned partnership approach and use of flexible financing solutions and climate investment expertise.
- A core GCF principle is to follow a country-driven approach, which means that developing countries lead GCF programming and implementation.
- GCF is mandated to invest 50% of its resources to mitigation and 50% to adaptation in grant equivalent. At least half of its adaptation resources must be invested in the most climate vulnerable countries (SIDS, LDCs, and African States).
- The GCF is a **legally independent institution** with a fully independent secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary.
- **The Secretariat**, located in **Songdo South Korea**, began its work in December 2013.

Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

PROMISE AND PITFALLS OF THE EMPLOYMENT-LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Union Cabinet has approved an Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme with a budget of ₹99,446 crore, as announced in the 2024–25 Union Budget.

Aimed at boosting job creation, especially in the manufacturing sector, the ELI scheme is part of the Prime Minister's broader five-scheme employment package, which also includes internships with major companies and youth skill development initiatives.

Key Provisions of the Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

- **Implementation duration:** August 1, 2025 – July 31, 2027
- **Implementing Agency:** Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)
- **Goal:** Create over 3.5 crore jobs in two years
- **Expected Beneficiaries:** 1.92 crore newly employed individuals
- **Employee Benefits**
 - **Eligibility:** Salaries up to ₹1 lakh/month
 - **Incentive:** One-month EPF wage (up to ₹15,000)
 - **Disbursal:**
 - 1st instalment after 6 months of service
 - 2nd instalment after 12 months
 - **Mode:** Direct bank transfer
 - **Savings Component:** Part of the benefit will go into a **fixed deposit account**, withdrawable later
- **Employer Incentives**
 - **Eligibility:** Establishments registered with EPFO
 - **Support:** Up to ₹3,000/month for each new employee retained for at least 6 months, for two years
 - For manufacturing firms, the incentives extend to the 3rd and 4th years as well

Employers' Response to the Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

- Employers have called the ELI scheme a “laudable initiative” that encourages first-time employment and sustained job creation, especially in manufacturing.
- They highlighted the scheme’s potential to **boost labour-intensive sectors** and **transform India’s employment ecosystem**.
- Industry experts stressed the need to include **micro and small manufacturing units**, especially those **with fewer than 20 employees**, under the scheme’s benefits.
 - They proposed shifting the scheme to the **Ministry of MSME** and using a **structured reimbursement model** based on payroll growth.
- Experts suggested a **direct monthly subsidy** to both employer and employee, tied to continued employment, for **simpler and wider adoption**.

Trade Union Response and Concerns on the ELI Scheme

- The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) has welcomed the scheme but called for expanding social security and improving job quality.
- The other 10 central trade unions have criticised the scheme, citing risks and past experiences.
- **Fear of Misuse of Funds**
 - Unions fear that the ELI scheme could **divert workers' savings** to subsidise employers.
 - They referenced the 2020 Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, where benefits reportedly went to large firms without meaningful job creation.
- **Concerns Over EPFO’s Role**
 - **EPFO is a custodian of employee savings**, not a job-creating body.
 - Unions question how it can implement an incentive scheme without **dedicated government funding**.
- **Call for a Separate Implementation Body**
 - There is growing demand for the creation of a **specialised agency** to administer the scheme, instead of placing the responsibility on **EPFO**, which lacks the **mandate and mechanism for employment generation**.

VERY MASSIVE STARS



- These are those stars that have over **100 times the mass of the Sun**.
- They have a much **higher mass than the Sun**, they use their nuclear fuel at a much higher rate, making their average **lifespan only a few million years**.
- Once their nuclear fuel is exhausted, very luminous stars **collapse to form black holes**.
- These stars **produce stellar wind** that is powerful enough to blow their own outer layer into space.
- **Importance of Very Massive Stars**
 - These stars, despite their short lifespan, still **influence the region around them**.
 - Their powerful stellar winds can push newly formed elements into their surroundings. While most form new stars, elements key to life, such as carbon and oxygen, are also emitted.
 - In spite of their distance from our Earth, they still bear an influence on it.
 - These stars can be **considered the predecessor to black holes**. This occasionally leads to black hole binaries, where two black holes orbit around each other. These cause gravitational waves, which we then detect on Earth.

3 BY 35 INITIATIVE



- It is an initiative urging countries to raise real prices on **tobacco, alcohol and sugary drinks by at least 50 per cent by 2035**.
- The initiative has an ambitious goal of **raising US \$1 trillion over the next 10 years**.
- It aims to **revitalize health taxes** as a powerful tool to **reduce harmful consumption**, save lives, and generate vital public revenue.

Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

- By implementing well-designed and effectively enforced taxes on these products, countries can mobilize significant domestic resources while advancing public health.

The 3 by 35 Initiative has three key actions:

- **Mobilizing countries**– WHO and partners will engage heads of state, finance and health ministries, and civil society to build political momentum. Countries participating in the Initiative will benefit from peer learning, strategic support, and global recognition.
- **Supporting country-led policies**– Countries requesting assistance will receive direct support to develop tailored, evidence-based health tax policies. Others will benefit from a shared knowledge platform offering guidance, tools, and best practices.
- **Building commitment and partnerships**– Through inclusive dialogue and collaboration, the Initiative seeks to shift public and political perceptions, foster cross-sector alliances, and strengthen the role of civil society in advocating for sustainable health financing.

INDIA RANKS 4TH IN GLOBAL INCOME EQUALITY: WORLD BANK REPORT

- According to the World Bank's latest estimates, India has achieved a remarkable position as the fourth most income-equal country globally, with a Gini Index score of 25.5.
 - Only the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Belarus have recorded better equality indicators.
- This development comes alongside a **significant reduction in extreme poverty, falling from 16.2% in 2011-12 to just 2.3% in 2022-23 based on the global poverty line of USD 2.15/day**
- Over 171 million Indians have been lifted out of extreme poverty in the last decade, signalling the success of India's welfare-oriented policy architecture.

Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

Understanding the Gini Index and India's Score

- The **Gini Index** is a statistical measure used to gauge inequality in income, wealth, or consumption. A score of 0 represents perfect equality, while 100 denotes maximum inequality.
- **India's Gini Index (2022-23)** is 25.5. In comparison, **China: 35.7, United States: 41.8, G7/G20 Averages:** Significantly higher than India
- India's placement within the "moderately low inequality" category (Gini score of 25-30) positions it far ahead of many advanced economies and closer to the "low inequality" threshold.

Government Schemes and Inclusive Policy Interventions

- The World Bank attributes this achievement not only to economic growth but to India's focused, inclusive welfare policies. Key initiatives include:
- **Financial Inclusion and Direct Transfers**
 - **PM Jan Dhan Yojana:** Over **55 crore bank accounts** have expanded financial access, especially for rural and underbanked citizens.
 - **Aadhaar-linked Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT):** Enabled efficient and leak-proof delivery of government benefits, saving over ₹3.48 lakh crore by March 2023.
- **Health and Social Security**
 - **Ayushman Bharat:** Offers ₹5 lakh in health insurance, with over **41 crore cards** issued to date.
 - **PMGKAY:** Provided free food grains to over **80 crore beneficiaries**, contributing to food security and nutrition.
- **Livelihood and Entrepreneurship**
 - **Stand-Up India:** Supports SC/ST and women entrepreneurs with loans and financial assistance.
 - **PM Vishwakarma Yojana:** Aims to uplift traditional artisans with training, credit, and market support.

Current Affairs - 06 July 2025

Balancing Growth with Equity

- India's journey reflects a rare convergence of **economic reform** with **social protection**.
- According to the Social Welfare Department's statement, "India's path to income equality has been steady and focused. The Gini Index of 25.5 reflects real change in people's lives, better access to food, jobs, healthcare, and banking."
- The country's progress in this domain is being seen as a model for developing economies that aim to pursue **growth with fairness**.

Global Context and India's Distinct Approach

- India's achievement stands out among 167 countries surveyed. Other nations in the "moderately low inequality" category include Scandinavian welfare states like **Norway**, **Finland**, and **Belgium**, as well as rapidly growing economies like **Poland** and the **UAE**.
 - While many of these nations have relied on long-standing welfare systems, India's success has come through **digital inclusion**, **targeted cash transfers**, and **integrated rural support**, making it a unique example of equity in a large, diverse democracy.
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