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Current Affairs - 13 August 2025

INDIA SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION (ISM)



- It is a specialized and independent institution under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.
- It is an independent Business Division within the Digital India Corporation.
- It aims to build a vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.
- ISM has all the administrative and financial powers and is tasked with the responsibility of catalysing the India Semiconductor ecosystem in manufacturing, packaging, and design.
- ISM has an advisory board consisting of some of the leading global experts in the field of semiconductors.
- ISM is serving as the nodal agency for efficient, coherent, and smooth implementation of the programme for development of semiconductor and manufacturing ecosystem in India.
- ISM has been working as a nodal agency for the schemes approved under the Semicon India Programme.

Key Facts about Semicon India Programme:

- The ISM was launched in 2021 with a total financial outlay of Rs. 76,000 crores under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), Government of India.
- It is part of the comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystems in the country.
- The programme aims to provide financial support to companies investing in semiconductors, display manufacturing, and design ecosystem.
- It also promotes and facilitates indigenous Intellectual Property (IP) generation and encourages, enables, and incentivizes the Transfer of Technologies (ToT).



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- The following **four schemes** have been introduced under the aforesaid programme:
 - Scheme for setting up of Semiconductor Fabs in India.
 - Scheme for setting up of Display Fabs in India.
 - Scheme for setting up of Compound Semiconductors/Silicon Photonics/ Sensors Fab and Semiconductor Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP)/OSAT facilities in India.
 - Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.

KEY FACTS ABOUT CESS



- A cess is a **form of tax levied by the government on tax with specific purposes** till the time the government gets enough money for that purpose.
- Different from the usual taxes, and duties like excise and personal income tax, a cess is **imposed as an additional tax besides the existing tax (tax on tax)**.
- For example, the Swachh Bharat cess is levied by the government for cleanliness activities that it is undertaking across India.
- A cess, generally **paid by the everyday public**, is **added to their basic tax liability** paid as part of total tax paid.

Difference between Tax and Cess:

- A **cess** is different from taxes as it is **imposed as an additional tax besides the existing tax (tax on tax)**.
- Another difference lies in the way the revenue recovered from the cess is maintained.
- While revenue from **taxes like income tax** is kept in the **Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)**, and the **government can use it for any purposes** it deems fit, the **revenue coming from cess** is first credited to the Consolidated Fund, and the



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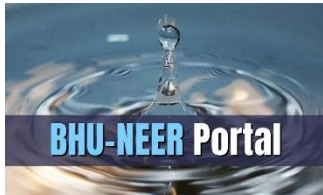
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government may then, after due appropriation from Parliament, **utilise it for the specified purpose.**

- Another major difference between central taxes and cess is that the **proceeds of a cess may or may not be shared with the State Governments, while that of taxes have to be shared.**

BHU-NEER PORTAL



- It is a new state of the art portal which was rolled out in 2024 by the **Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA)** under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
- **Purpose:** To provide a smooth and efficient mechanism for **regulation of ground water development** and management in the country by providing a quick and easy to use platform for filing **No Objection Certificate (NOC) applications** for ground water abstraction.
- **Features of BHU-NEER Portal**
 - Its centralized database will allow **users to access critical information on groundwater** compliance, policies, and sustainable practices.
 - The portal is developed with several user-friendly features to offer streamlined process flow to the project proponents seeking groundwater withdrawal permits.
 - Having a simplified yet informative interface, and features like **PAN based single Id system**, NOC with QR code etc., “Bhu-Neer” marks a significant improvement over its previous version NOCAP.
 - **No Objection Certificate:** The Bhu-Neer portal is for the purpose of online application and processing of NOC for **extraction of ground water by industries**, infrastructure projects and mining projects

Significance: By helping in enforcement of the Guidelines meant for curbing indiscriminate extraction of ground water, the Bhu-Neer contributes to **sustainable development and management of ground water resources** in the country.



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SATELLITE INTERNET IN INDIA

- Satellite internet is emerging as a transformative solution in global connectivity, especially for remote and underserved areas.
- Unlike traditional ground-based networks dependent on cables and towers, satellite internet can offer high-speed access in areas where physical infrastructure is unviable.
- Hence, it ensures resilience during disasters and operational continuity for both civilian and military applications.

Significance of Satellite Internet

- Ground-based broadband, while efficient in urban hubs, struggles in sparsely populated or disaster-prone regions due to high infrastructure costs and vulnerability to physical damage.
- Satellite internet overcomes these constraints by providing coverage irrespective of terrain, rapidly deploying during emergencies, and servicing mobile or remote operations such as on ships, aircraft, or oil rigs. This makes it not just a backup but a potential primary connectivity mode in specific scenarios.

Key Features and Dual-Use Nature

- The arrival of satellite mega-constellations like Starlink marks a new era. These networks, consisting of thousands of satellites, have applications across:
 - **Civilian sectors:** healthcare, agriculture, transportation, education, disaster response.
 - **Military sectors:** secure communications, battlefield coordination, and navigation in remote conflict zones.
- Global examples highlight its importance. Viasat enabled disaster relief during Hurricane Harvey, while Starlink has been crucial to Ukrainian defence in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- In India, the Army has utilised satellite internet in strategic locations like the Siachen Glacier. However, its borderless nature also poses risks, as seen in cases of smuggled terminals being used by insurgent groups.



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Applications Across Sectors

- **Communications:** Internet access in remote regions, support for IoT networks.
- **Transportation:** Enhanced navigation, self-driving vehicle support, and real-time logistics.
- **Disaster Management:** Early warnings, emergency coordination, and resilient communication lines.
- **Healthcare:** Telemedicine, diagnostics, and remote monitoring.
- **Agriculture:** Precision farming and crop analytics.
- **Defence:** Secure communications, surveillance, and operational readiness in remote zones.
- **Environmental Monitoring & Energy:** Tracking natural resources, supporting renewable energy operations.
- Future innovations like direct-to-smartphone satellite connectivity could eliminate the need for dedicated terminals, integrating satellite capabilities directly into consumer devices.

Challenges and Strategic Importance

- While costs remain higher than terrestrial broadband (approx. \$500 for hardware and \$50/month for service), the benefits in remote connectivity and strategic resilience justify the investment.
 - However, its dual-use nature raises regulatory and security concerns, making governance critical.
 - For India, satellite internet offers the opportunity to:
 - Bridge the digital divide.
 - Strengthen disaster resilience.
 - Enhance national security capabilities.
 - Play a role in shaping the international governance of satellite networks.
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STATE HEALTH REGULATORY EXCELLENCE INDEX



- It is a first-of-its-kind national initiative to benchmark and strengthen state drug regulatory systems through a transparent, data-driven framework.
- The initiative, proposed by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) aims to drive improvements in the performance of state drug regulatory authorities across India, ensuring drug safety and quality standards are consistently met.
- It will have 27 indices for Manufacturing States across five key themes: Human Resources, Infrastructure, Licensing Activities, Surveillance Activities and Responsiveness and 23 indices for Primarily Distribution States.
- States will submit the data on predefined metrics to CDSCO which will be collected by 25th of every month and these metrics will be scored on the 1st of next month and shared with all states and UTs.
- SHRESTH is a virtual gap assessment tool for states to assess their current position and help towards maturity certification
- **Significance:** This Index will enable targeted improvements in human resources, infrastructure, and digitization across states, ensuring drug safety is guaranteed for every Indian, regardless of geography.

SUPREME COURT'S ORDER ON STREET DOGS IN DELHI - LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- **Trigger:** The apex court took suo motu cognisance of media reports on fatal street dog attacks.
- **Concerns:** Threat to infants, children, and elderly from unvaccinated street dogs.



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- **Historical context:** Human–canine conflict has been a recurring issue in India, debated across courts and policy forums.

Key Issues with the Order:

- **Violation of existing law:**
 - It contradicts -
 - The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.
 - The PCA (Animal Birth Control) Rules, 2023 - prohibit relocation, mandate scientific population control.
 - **Implication:** Undermines rule of law and sets a precedent for ignoring legal frameworks.
 - **Ignoring judicial precedent:**
 - Violates the **stare decisis** principle (to stand by things decided).
 - The SC had already settled the matter in the **Animal Welfare Board of India vs People for Elimination of Stray Troubles (2024)**.
 - Frequent reopening of settled issues **erodes public faith** in judiciary and diverts state resources from implementation.
 - **Violation of natural justice:**
 - Principle of **Audi alteram partem** (hear the other side) breached.
 - Requests for impleadment by relevant parties ignored; suggestions from amicus curiae dismissed.
 - The order **lacked evidence-based reasoning**, scientific grounding, and feasibility assessment.
 - **Contradiction with fundamental duties:**
 - **Article 51A(g) of the Constitution:** Citizens have a duty to show compassion to living creatures.
 - Threatening action against those opposing relocation **undermines this constitutional duty**.
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RECOGNISE ORGAN DONATION AS A LIFELINE

- A major barrier to organ donation in India is the persistence of myths and fears among families of the deceased.
- Many believe that **organ retrieval disfigures the body**, making proper funeral rites impossible, or that it violates religious traditions.
- In truth, organ removal is performed respectfully, preserving the donor's appearance for final ceremonies, and all major faiths regard it as a compassionate act aligned with spiritual values.
- Another false fear is that doctors may **hastily declare brain death to obtain organs**.
- The reality is that brain death certification is governed by the **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994**, which mandates a strict, transparent, and legally binding process.
 - This involves multiple expert confirmations, clinical assessments at set intervals, and thorough documentation, ensuring ethical conduct and eliminating bias.
- Public education and awareness are essential to overcome these misconceptions and increase donation rates.

Breaking Age and Health Myths Around Organ Donation

- A common misconception is that only young accident victims can be organ donors.
 - In reality, many organs and tissues—including **kidneys, liver segments, lungs, corneas, bone, skin, and heart valves**—can be donated by older individuals or those who die of natural causes.
 - To address such myths, sustained awareness efforts are vital. Television, social media campaigns, and stories of real donor families and recipients can make the message relatable.
 - Community workshops, led by trained counsellors, can directly tackle concerns about funeral rites, medical eligibility, and donation protocols.
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BANDIPUR TIGER RESERVE



- It is situated in the Mysore and Chamarajanagar revenue districts of southern Karnataka.

- It is located at the **tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.**
- Geographically, it is an **“ecological confluence” of the Western and Eastern Ghats.**
- It was **once a hunting ground** for the rulers of the neighbouring **kingdom of Mysore.**
- It is **part of the larger Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**, which is recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **BTR is surrounded by:**
 - **Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu)** in the North West (Kabini Reservoir separates the two).
 - **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu)** in the South.
 - **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala)** in the South West.
- **Rivers:** It is **surrounded by River Kabini** in its north and **River Moyar** in its south.
- **Climate:** Bandipur has a typical **tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons.**

Flora:

- It comprises diverse vegetation of **dry deciduous to tropical mixed deciduous.**
- It includes **rosewood, Indian kino tree, sandalwood, Indian laurel, clumping bamboo and giant clumping bamboo etc.**

Fauna:

- It is a shelter for the **largest population of wild Asian elephants in South Asia.**
- It comprises other mammals such as **Bengal tiger, gaur, sloth bear, golden jackal, dhole and four-horned antelope etc.**