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## Current Affairs - 29 September 2025

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### ASTROSAT



- It is the first dedicated **Indian astronomy mission**.
- It was launched by **PSLV-C30 (XL) rocket** from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on September 28, 2015.

- The minimum useful life of the **AstroSat mission** was around **5 years** but still it is providing valuable information.
- It was designed to observe the universe in the **Visible, Ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray** regions of the electromagnetic spectrum simultaneously with the help of its five payloads.

**Payloads of Astrosat:** Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (UVIT), Large Area X-ray Proportional Counter (LAXPC), Cadmium–Zinc–Telluride Imager (CZTI), Soft X-ray Telescope (SXT) and Scanning Sky Monitor (SSM).

### Objectives of Astrosat

- To **understand high energy processes** in binary star systems containing neutron stars and black holes.
  - Estimate magnetic fields of **neutron stars**.
  - Study **high energy processes** in star systems lying beyond our galaxy.
  - Detect new briefly **bright X-ray sources** in the sky.
  - Perform a limited deep field survey of the Universe in the **Ultraviolet region**.
  - The spacecraft control center at **Mission Operations Complex (MOX)** of **ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC)**, Bengaluru, manages the satellite during its entire mission life.
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### WHAT IS THE PM E-DRIVE SCHEME?



- The PM E-DRIVE (Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement) scheme is a flagship initiative launched in October 2024 with a financial outlay of Rs.10,900 crore.
- It came into effect from **October 1, 2024**, and will remain in force until **March 31, 2026**. Its primary aim is to accelerate the **adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs)**, establish **charging infrastructure**, and **build a robust EV manufacturing ecosystem** in the country.
- It promotes mass mobility through the support of public transportation systems.
- The key objective is to speed up the transition to EVs by **offering upfront incentives for EV purchases** and **encouraging the development of charging infrastructure**.
- The scheme seeks to **reduce transportation-related environmental impacts** and improve air quality while also promoting an efficient and competitive EV manufacturing sector in line with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
- This is to be accomplished through a **Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP)** designed to **boost domestic manufacturing** and strengthen the EV supply chain.
- The PM E-DRIVE scheme to be implemented through the following **key components**:
  - **Subsidies**: Demand incentives to be provided for **electric vehicles such as e-2 wheelers (e-2W), e-3 wheelers (e-3W), e-ambulances, e-trucks**, and other emerging categories of EVs.
  - **Grants for creation of capital assets**: Funding to be provided for the **acquisition of electric buses (e-buses)**, the **establishment of a comprehensive network of charging stations**, and the **upgrading testing facilities of the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)**.
  - **Administration of the Scheme** including IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for project management agency (PMA).



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- States are encouraged to offer additional fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, such as road tax waivers, reduced toll and parking fees, and permit exemptions, to further promote EV adoption.
- To qualify for the PM E-DRIVE incentives, vehicles must be registered as “Motor Vehicles” under the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR) and equipped with advanced battery technology.
- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) is the nodal agency for:
  - Demand aggregation for charging infrastructure
  - Development of a Unified EV Super App for users across India.
    - The app will offer real-time charger availability, slot booking, payment integration, and deployment progress tracking, ensuring digital ease-of-use for all EV stakeholders.

### JAL PRAHAR 2025



- It is a biannual joint amphibious exercise conducted by the Indian Navy in close coordination with the Indian Army
- The Jal Prahar 2025 showcased synergy, coordination, and interoperability between the Indian Navy and Indian Army, enhancing operational readiness, maritime security and national defence capabilities.
- The exercise was conducted in two phases:
  - The Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam focused on the induction and integration of army troops onboard INS Gharial.
  - This included onboard training, safety briefings, orientation towards a mariner’s life, sports and interactions sessions to foster camaraderie, the release stated.
  - The Sea Phase witnessed the execution of amphibious operations, which included hard beaching at Kakinada, launching of LCAs and BMPs, and validation of SOPs and Joint Training Protocols.



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### DELHI RELAXES LOUDSPEAKER RULES FOR FESTIVALS

#### Legal Framework Governing Loudspeakers in India

- The **Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000**, under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, regulate the use of loudspeakers.
- **Rule 5(1)** requires **written permission** from authorities before use, while **Rule 5(2) bans their use between 10 pm and 6 am**, except in closed premises like auditoriums or conference halls.
- The rules prescribe **maximum permissible noise levels for different areas**, categorised as industrial, commercial, residential and silence zones.
  - For residential areas, the daytime limit (6 am to 10 pm) is 55 decibels (dB) while that for nighttime is 45 dB.
    - For context, a whisper is about 30 dB, while normal conversation is about 60 dB.
  - Importantly, **Rule 5(3)** allows state governments to relax restrictions, permitting loudspeaker use **till midnight for up to 15 days a year** during cultural or religious festivities.

#### Court Rulings on Loudspeaker Use in India

- Over the past two decades, Indian courts have shaped a strong jurisprudence on noise pollution, balancing religious freedom with the fundamental right to a peaceful environment.
- **Supreme Court: Loudspeakers Not a Fundamental Right**
  - In 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that no religion mandates prayers by disturbing others, rejecting the use of loudspeakers as a right under Article 25 (freedom of religion).
  - In 2005, it further held that the right to a noise-free environment is implicit under Article 21, and “aural aggression” cannot be justified under free speech.
  - This ruling established the 10 pm–6 am loudspeaker ban.



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### Concerns Over Delhi's Loudspeaker Extension

- Environmental experts criticised Delhi's decision to allow loudspeakers till midnight, calling it a backward step that undermines Noise Pollution Rules designed to protect children, patients, and residents.
  - Activists warned that public health is being sacrificed for short-term convenience, noting that citizens already face excessive noise from construction and commercial establishments.
  - In 2024, Delhi Police received over 40,000 noise complaints, with 82% linked to DJs and loudspeakers.
  - This prompted fresh guidelines in March, **requiring written permission for loudspeaker use and booking violators under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Sections 270, 292, and 293.**
  - The amended order also tightened limits, mandating that private sound systems cannot exceed ambient noise standards by more than 5 dBA, compared to the earlier 10 dBA allowance.
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### WHAT IS STUDY IN INDIA (SII) PORTAL?



- It is a flagship project of the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, Government of India, to **encourage international students to explore educational opportunities at top Indian universities.**
  - It is a **single-window interface for international students**, which facilitates **submission of applications, admission processes, and visa applications** for those seeking to pursue regular, short-term, or long-term courses in Indian academic institutions or HEI's.
  - It serves as a seamless digital **gateway to India's higher education ecosystem.**
  - The website will **illustrate academic programs**, including undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), and doctoral-level programs.
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- It will also **provide information about courses in the Indian Knowledge System**, such as Yoga, Ayurveda, classical arts, etc
  - Additionally, the portal will present **information about the academic facilities, research support, and related information.**
  - **All foreign students who wish to study in India, are mandated to register on the SII portal and submit the required information** on the portal.
  - **Upon registration, the portal generates a unique ID or 'SII-ID', which must be quoted on the student visa application.**
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### SONAM WANGCHUK HELD UNDER NSA: KEY FACTS ABOUT THE LAW

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, leading the movement for Ladakh's statehood and Sixth Schedule protections, was detained under the **National Security Act (NSA)** and shifted to **Jodhpur jail**.

#### **About Preventive Detention**

- Preventive detention is the practice of detaining a person not for a crime already committed, but to prevent them from acting in a manner that could threaten public order, security, or essential supplies.
- It aims to stop potential harm before it occurs.

#### **Preventive Detention and the NSA**

- Preventive detention in India traces back to colonial times and was institutionalised post-Independence through the **Preventive Detention Act, 1950**.
- It was followed by the controversial **Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), 1971**, repealed after the Emergency.
- In 1980, the **National Security Act (NSA)** was enacted, empowering the Centre, states, District Magistrates, and Police Commissioners (when authorised) to detain individuals pre-emptively.



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- Unlike punitive arrests under criminal law, **NSA detention is preventive**, aimed at stopping individuals from acting in ways “prejudicial to India’s defence, foreign relations, national security, public order, or essential supplies.”
- The Act gives governments wide-ranging powers to address threats, while incorporating certain procedural safeguards to check misuse.

### What the NSA Provides?

- Under NSA, detention orders function like warrants of arrest, allowing authorities to hold individuals in designated places, transfer them across states, and impose conditions.
- Grounds of detention must be communicated within 5 to 15 days, and detainees can submit a representation to the government.
- An Advisory Board of High Court judges must review the case within 3 weeks and order release if there is “no sufficient cause.”
- Detention can last up to 12 months, though it may be revoked earlier.
- However, safeguards are limited:
  - detainees cannot have legal representation before the Advisory Board, and
  - the government may withhold facts citing public interest, leaving significant powers in official hands.

### Past Use and Misuse of the NSA

- The NSA has been invoked in several high-profile cases.
  - In 2023, radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh was detained under NSA and moved to Dibrugarh jail.
  - Earlier, Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad was booked in 2017, though the order was later revoked by the Supreme Court.
  - During the anti-CAA protests (2020), multiple protesters in Uttar Pradesh were detained under the Act.
  - These instances show a pattern where governments justify NSA as vital for security, while critics denounce it as a blunt instrument prone to abuse.
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### WHAT AN EMPTY PLATE OF FOOD SHOULD SYMBOLISE

- Every year on **September 29**, the world observes the **International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFWL)**.
- Far from being symbolic, **this occasion underscores a crisis** that quietly undermines both global food security and climate stability.
- **Nearly one-third of all food produced worldwide is either lost or wasted**, representing not only a missed opportunity to nourish people but also an immense drain on natural resources.
- As one of the world's largest food producers, **India faces this challenge acutely**, with post-harvest losses imposing heavy economic, social, and environmental costs.

### The Scale of the Problem

- **India's agricultural sector experiences substantial post-harvest losses** across diverse crops and commodities.
- A **2022 study by NABCONS revealed that losses remain alarmingly high**, cutting across fruits, vegetables, cereals, and livestock products.
- The **economic toll is estimated at nearly ₹1.5 trillion annually**, equivalent to 3.7% of India's agricultural GDP.
- **Fruits and vegetables are most at risk**, with **10–15% spoilage rates**, while even staples like wheat (4.2%) and paddy (4.8%) are far from immune.

### Pathways to Solutions

- **Strengthening Infrastructure**
  - While the scale of India's food loss problem is daunting, solutions are within reach. **Strengthening infrastructure is the cornerstone.**
  - **Cold chains, encompassing pre-cooling facilities, refrigerated transport, and modern storage**, are vital for perishables such as dairy, meat, fruits, and vegetables. Initiatives like the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY)** are already working to modernise India's food logistics



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- **Affordable and Decentralized Technologies**
  - In addition to large-scale infrastructure, **affordable and decentralised technologies can empower smallholders.**
  - **Solar-powered cold storage units, low-cost cooling chambers, durable crates, and moisture-proof silos are practical tools to curb spoilage.**
- **Foodbanks and Community Kitchens**
  - At the retail and consumer level, **surplus food can be redirected to food banks and community kitchens**, ensuring nutritional redistribution.
  - **Unavoidable waste can still serve productive purposes**, being converted into compost, animal feed, or bioenergy.
  - **Realising these circular solutions, however, requires robust policy support**, from subsidies and credit guarantees to incentives for private sector participation.
- **Shared Responsibility**
  - Food loss is **not a problem any single actor can solve in isolation**. Governments must embed food loss reduction into national climate strategies and invest in resilient infrastructure.
  - **Businesses must adopt circular economic models** and scale technological innovations.
  - **Civil society and academia can advance research and advocacy**, while consumers must cultivate mindful practices to minimize waste and support redistribution efforts.

### Conclusion

- The **observance of IDAFLW is more than a reminder**, it is a call to collective action.
  - India stands at a crossroads where **tackling food loss is essential not only to secure nutrition for its people but also to meet its climate goals** and conserve overstretched resources.
  - **Every meal saved represents not just sustenance but also a safeguard** for ecosystems and livelihoods.
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