1. **Composite Backwardness Index (CBI):** Recently, in a major policy innovation with nationwide implications, the **Telangana government** announced its plan to unveil the **Composite Backwardness Index (CBI).**
   - **About CBI:** A scientifically designed metric that objectively assesses the degree of backwardness among various castes on a scale of **0 to 126.**
     - **Aim:** To objectively assess the socio-economic status of various sub-castes across the state.
       - ✓ It operates independently of population size, focusing solely on socio-economic conditions.
       - ✓ This initiative represents a significant shift in **India's approach to social justice**, especially in the context of Backward Classes (BCs), moving beyond traditional caste-based classifications.
     - **Developed by:** An 11-member Expert Working Group chaired by former Supreme Court **judge B. Sudarshan Reddy.**
     - The index is based on comprehensive data gathered from **Telangana's extensive caste survey.**
     - **Indicators:** A total of **42 indicators** across **nine broad categories** were statistically validated to feed into the CBI scoring model.
     - **Usage:** The report will provide **rankings of all 245 castes** and offer recommendations on how the data can inform policy design.

2. **Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR Joint Exercise**: Recently, the Indian Navy and the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) announced a joint naval exercise in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), underscoring growing India-Europe maritime cooperation.
   - **Key Joint Naval Exercises Include**:
     - **June 2021**: First India-EU joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Aden.
     - **August 2022**: Indian Navy's participation in the Maritime Partnership Exercise with EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta.
     - **October 2023**: Joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea.

- Two European warships under EUNAVFOR **Operation Atalanta** will participate: ESPS Reina Sofia (Spain) and ITS Antonio Marceglia (Italy) .
- These ships will operate alongside Indian Navy warships and aircraft in joint tactical maneuvers targeting counter-piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing.

3. **ASKAP J1832-0911:** Recently, astronomers identified ASKAP J1832-0911, an unusual celestial object in our Milky Way galaxy.
   - Located approximately 15,000 light-years from Earth and displays an unusual pattern.
- **About ASKAP J1832-0911:** First detected through a collaboration between NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory and the Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope.
  - It belongs to the rare class of celestial objects known as **Long Period Radio Transients (LPTs)**, characterized by unusually long-duration radio signals.
  - The object emits intense bursts of radio waves and X-rays every 44 minutes, with each burst lasting about two minutes.
  - Unlike typical pulsars, which emit signals within milliseconds to seconds, LPTs produce radio pulses spanning many minutes or even hours, posing a scientific mystery.
- **Possible Nature of the Object**: While the exact identity of ASKAP J1832-0911 remains uncertain, it is believed to be a dead star.
  - Hypotheses about its nature include:
    - ✓ A **magnetar**, an ultra-magnetic neutron star formed from a supernova remnant.
    - ✓ A **binary system** comprising a highly magnetized white dwarf paired with another star.

4. **International Air Transport Association (IATA):** Recently, India's aviation industry has made a strong comeback, surpassing pre-pandemic levels to emerge as the world's third-largest aviation market by passenger traffic, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- **Key Highlights:** India now ranks as the **sixth-largest market for air cargo**, reflecting its growing role in global aviation logistics.
  - This growth is attributed to the rise of strong Indian airlines expanding their domestic and international networks.
  - **Surge in Passenger Traffic (December 2024)** : **International traffic**: Up nearly **20%** compared to 2019 and **Domestic traffic**: Increased by **over 8%** compared to pre-pandemic levels.

- **About IATA:** A global trade association representing airlines, focused on simplifying regulations and ensuring safe, efficient air transport.
  - **Established**: April 1945, **HQ:** Montreal, Canada
  - **Objectives and Core Functions:** Represents global airline interests, advocating for fair regulations and reduced operational costs.
    - ✓ Sets international technical and commercial standards to ensure safe, efficient, and sustainable air transport.
    - ✓ Represents 317+ member airlines from over 120 countries, accounting for approximately 82% of global air traffic.
  - **Develops global frameworks for**: Safety and security , Ticketing and reservations, Cargo handling and Financial settlement systems
  - **Organizes the World Air Transport Summit (WATS)** to address key industry challenges such as: Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)
    - ✓ Decarbonization and energy security
    - ✓ Innovation in airport infrastructure and connectivity
    - ✓ Green financing for aviation sustainability

5. **Right to Services (RTS) Commissions:** Recently, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has initiated a key partnership with the Right to Services (RTS) Commissions across States and Union Territories.
   - This collaboration aims to enhance grievance redressal systems and improve citizen satisfaction.
- **About Right to Services**: A governance initiative aimed at ensuring timely delivery of public services to citizens.
  - It mandates specific services to be delivered within a stipulated time frame.
  - If services are not delivered within this time, citizens have the right to file complaints and seek redressal.
- **Key Highlights**: A key measure in the Right to Services (RTS) initiative is linking the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) with RTS frameworks to ensure faster, technology-enabled grievance resolution within stipulated timeframes.

- A detailed review of 204,000 public grievances registered via CPGRAMS covered key sectors such as land, labour, environment, and banking.
- Over 20,000 e-services are offered by states under the **National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA)** framework, underscoring the need for system integration and supervisory oversight.
- **Pilot Project in Haryana:** Haryana RTS Commission will pilot the CPGRAMS-RTS API linkage to enable seamless transfer of service-related grievances from CPGRAMS to state RTS systems, allowing real-time monitoring and enhanced accountability.

6. **NAKSHA :** Recently, the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) under the Ministry of Rural Development announced the launch of the second phase of the **NAKSHA (NAtional geospatial Knowledge-based land Survey of urban HAbitations)** capacity-building programme.
   - **About the NAKSHA Program:** This initiative is part of the broader Digital India Land Records Modernization Program (DILRMP).
     - As a pilot, it will be implemented across 152 cities, including 10 towns within 9 districts of Madhya Pradesh.
     - **Purpose:** This program aims to transform the urban land records system by creating a detailed and accurate geospatial database for land management.
     - **Key Benefits:** Simplifies processes for citizens by providing clear and accessible property information.
       - ✓ Supports smarter urban planning, facilitating more effective and sustainable city development.
       - ✓ Promotes transparency and operational efficiency through a digitized, IT-enabled land record system.
       - ✓ Minimizes land-related conflicts by maintaining precise and undisputed property records.
7. **Kumbakonam Vetrilai:** The Government of India recently awarded the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Kumbakonam Vetrilai, the famed betel leaf known locally as paan leaf.
   - **About Kumbakonam Vetrilai:** Grown mainly in the fertile Cauvery river basin of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu and known for its unique flavor and aroma.

- Leaves vary from dark to light green and are elongated heart-shaped.
- Cultivated extensively in Kumbakonam and nearby villages like Ayyampettai, Swamimalai, and Rajagiri.
- An important part of South Asian culture, used to prepare paan (a traditional post-meal chew).
- The high-quality Kumbakonam Vetrilai is also exported internationally.

- **Harvesting Details:** First leaves, called **kolunthu vetrilai**, appear 20–25 days after planting.
  - The first-year harvest (7th to 12th month) produces maaruvethalai leaves, which are larger and have a shelf life of 6–7 days.
  - Maaruvethalai leaves fetch higher market prices.
  - Second and third-year harvests yield smaller leaves known as kelavethalai and kattavethalai respectively.

8. **Pedicularis Rajeshiana:** Scientists have recently identified a new species named Pedicularis rajeshiana in the high-altitude zones of Rohtang Pass, located in the western Himalayas.



- **About Pedicularis Rajeshiana:** Belongs to the **"Lousewort"** group of hemiparasitic plants that partially rely on other plants for nutrients while also photosynthesizing.
  - Discovered at about 4,390 meters (14,400 feet) altitude on shaded rocky slopes in **Rohtang Pass, Himachal Pradesh.**
  - Found in sparse clusters during a botanical survey by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEF&CC) and the Botanical Survey of India under the "Flora of India" project.
- **Key Features:** India has 83 known Pedicularis species, with 36 endemic to the western Himalayas.
  - These species have parasitic behavior and specific habitat requirements, limiting their distribution to specialized ecological niches.
  - The discovery adds to the biodiversity of the western Himalayas and highlights the ecological significance of its delicate high-altitude ecosystems.