

1. Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM has approved the **FRP** for sugarcane for the upcoming 2025–26 sugar season.

- **About FRP:** The minimum statutory price that sugar mills must pay to sugarcane farmers in India.
 - It is fixed by the Government of India based on the recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP – under MoA&FW)** to ensure farmers receive fair returns.
 - **Considering factors:** Cost of production, reasonable profit margins, and the demand-supply situation,
 - ✓ Return to growers from alternative crops & general trend of prices of agricultural commodities,
 - ✓ Availability of sugar to consumers at a fair price,
 - ✓ Price at which sugar produced from sugarcane is sold by sugar producers, recovery of sugar from sugarcane,
 - ✓ Realization made from sale of by-products viz. molasses, bagasse, press mud.
 - **Introduction:** In 2009 and replaced the **Statutory Minimum Price (SMP)** with the amendment of the **Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966.**
 - It is based on the **Rangarajan Committee** report of reorganizing the sugarcane industry.

2. Right To Digital Access : Recently, the Supreme Court's judgment affirming that the right to digital access is an intrinsic part of the **right to life and liberty under Article 21** marks a landmark step toward a more inclusive digital India.

- **About the Judgment:** The Court has mandated the government and private sector to remove digital barriers for persons with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments or facial disfigurements due to acid attacks.
 - RBI must revise KYC norms to allow alternative, non-visual identity verification methods, addressing discrimination against the blind and those with facial disfigurements.
 - All public and private entities must appoint digital accessibility nodal officers, conduct regular audits, and involve persons with disabilities in user testing.
 - The Court highlighted that the **digital divide affects not just PwDs but also the elderly, rural, economically weaker sections, and linguistic minorities.**
 - Bridging the digital divide is now a constitutional obligation, not just a policy choice.

3. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) : The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) have partnered to establish 75 Space Labs in Eklavya Model Residential Schools across 19 states in India.

- **Objective and Impact:** The initiative will help bridge educational gaps and open new avenues for tribal students in STEM fields (Space Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).
 - **Target Group:** Tribal youth in EMRS schools, which aim to provide quality education to ST students.
 - **Expected Beneficiaries:** Over 50,000 tribal students from 19 states.
 - **Total Sanctioned Amount:** Around ₹12 crores under BPCL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.
- **About EMRS:** A scheme for making model residential schools for Indian tribals (ST- Scheduled Tribes) across India, started in the year 1997-98.
 - **Objective:** To impart quality education to tribal students, with an emphasis on not only academic education but the all-around development of tribal students.
 - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
 - **Implementing agency:** National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS).

4. Greenfield High-Speed Corridor : The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), led by PM, has greenlight the development of a 166 km Greenfield High-Speed Corridor on NH-6 .

- **About Greenfield High-Speed Corridor:** Will stretch from Mawlyngkhung (near Shillong) in Meghalaya to Panchgram (near Silchar) in Assam.
 - The project will be executed on the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM).
 - This large-scale infrastructure investment is in line with the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan** for multi-modal connectivity.
 - The corridor will provide direct and faster access from Guwahati to Silchar and beyond.
 - It will significantly enhance connectivity to **Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur**, and the **Barak Valley** region.
 - Integrates with major highways: **National Highways:** NH-27, NH-106, NH-206, NH-37 and **State Highways:** SH-07, SH-08, SH-09, SH-38.
 - **Connect Airports:** Guwahati, Shillong, and Silchar.

5. Shri Basaveshwara: Union Ministers led the first-ever floral tribute to Shri Basaveshwara at the Prerana Sthal, Parliament House, New Delhi, on his 894th birth anniversary, marking a historic recognition of his legacy.



- The ceremony was attended by **Jagadguru Shri Basava Jaya Mrutyunjaya Swamiji** from Kudalsangam Lingayat Panchamasali Peetha.

• **About Shri Basaveshwara:** A revolutionary social reformer who advocated for equality, justice, and the dignity of labor, emphasizing work as worship and promoting a casteless society and gender equality.

- Focused on building a society rooted in love, compassion, and the rights of the marginalized, laying the foundation for modern democratic values.
- Inspired society through the **Anubhav Mandapam**, symbolizing inclusive democracy, and his teachings continue to influence Karnataka and the broader nation, promoting social harmony, peace, and inclusive democracy.

6. Caste Census : The Union Cabinet has announced a historic decision to include a caste census in the upcoming population census, demonstrating the government's commitment to social justice.

• **About Caste-Based Census:** Records the population by caste during the national census to assess socio-economic conditions and support affirmative action.

- Caste data has historically informed administration, from colonial times to the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC), which was never released due to data inconsistencies.
- Articles 16(4) and 340 of the Constitution support affirmative action for backward groups, though often based on expert opinion rather than empirical data, as with the Mandal Commission.
- Despite repeated demands for a national caste census, only **Bihar** conducted its own in **2023**.

• **Need : Address Inequities:** Helps uncover intra-caste disparities and ensures fair distribution of resources.

- **Data-Driven Policy:** Offers empirical evidence to shape and justify affirmative action.
- **Evaluate Impact:** Assists in assessing the effectiveness of reservation policies.
- **Improve Governance:** Informs better planning and execution of welfare schemes through accurate demographic insights.

7. Raghuji Bhonsle I : Recently, the Maharashtra government successfully reclaimed the ceremonial sword that once belonged to Raghuji Bhonsle I, a prominent Maratha leader.

• **About Raghuji Bhonsle I:** A powerful **18th-century Maratha general** and founder of the **Nagpur Bhonsle dynasty**.

- Rose to prominence after defeating his uncle in 1730 and establishing authority over Berar and Gondwana.
- Played a pivotal role in expanding Maratha rule to Odisha, culminating in a 1751 treaty with Alivardi Khan.
- Instrumental in reviving the Jagannath Temple in Puri, funding rituals, endowments, pilgrim welfare, and infrastructure.
- Led campaigns into **Bengal, Bihar, UP, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh**, with the dynasty eventually ruling an area of over **2.17 lakh sq km**.

• **Features of the Sword:** A type of Basket-hilt sword with a European-style single-edged blade.

- Design: Slight curvature and two fullers (grooves).
- Inscription: Inlaid in gold Devanagari script, it reads: **"Shrimant Raghuji Bhosale Sena Saheb Subah Firang"**
- Significance: Likely ceremonial, possibly gifted by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj along with the conferment of the title Sena Saheb Subah, a prestigious military designation in the Maratha hierarchy.



8. National Conference on e-Governance: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) announces the 28th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG), which will be jointly organized with the MeitY, in collaboration with the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

• **About 28th NCeG:** Will be centered around the theme "Viksit Bharat: Civil Service and Digital Transformation".

• **Key objectives include:** Enhancing delivery of public services through digital platforms.

- Promoting innovation in governance.
- Advancing the "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" approach.
- Setting new standards of good governance in India's digital journey.

9. National Security Advisory Board (NSAB): The Union government has recently reconstituted the NSAB, appointing former RAW chief Alok Joshi as its chairperson and inducting six new members to the panel.

- **About NSAB:** Advises the National Security Council (NSC) on national security issues, focusing on both internal and external threats.
 - **Composition:** It includes experts from the armed forces, IPS, IFS, academia, and civil society, with expertise in defense, foreign affairs, internal security, economic policy, and science & technology.
 - **Key Functions:** Provides strategic analysis and policy recommendations to the NSC on long-term security issues, contributing to frameworks like India's Nuclear Doctrine and Strategic Defence Reviews.

10. S8 Tension: Recent cosmic-shear (gravitational lensing) surveys, including a deep sky survey by the University of Tokyo using the Hyper Suprime-Cam on the Subaru Telescope in Hawaii, have reported an S8 value of 0.747—aligning with earlier lensing-based estimates.

- **About S8:** S8 (Sigma Eight) is a cosmological parameter that measures how clumpy matter is on scales of ~26 million light-years. It reflects the degree of matter clustering, including both visible and dark matter, across the universe.
 - The universe began nearly uniform after the Big Bang (~13.8 billion years ago), as seen in the Cosmic Microwave Background. Tiny density fluctuations later evolved into galaxies, clusters, and cosmic structures.
- **S8 Tension:** There's a growing discrepancy in the measured values of S8:
 - **Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) Data (Planck mission):** Suggests a higher S8 — more clumping.
 - **Cosmic Shear Surveys (gravitational lensing):** Show a lower S8 (~0.747) — less clumping.
 - This mismatch is called the **S8 tension**, challenging the prevailing **Λ CDM model** (Lambda Cold Dark Matter), which assumes a universe dominated by dark matter and dark energy.