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MARCH 01 & 02

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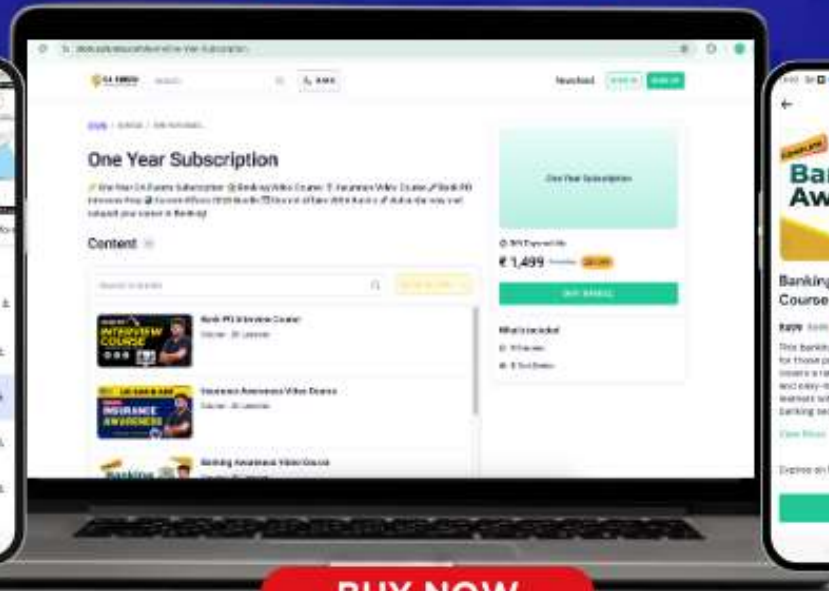
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Important Days



➤ **When is World Seagrass Day observed annually?**

- A) April 22
- B) March 1
- C) June 5
- D) September 16
- E) May 22

Answer
B) March 1



Important Days



Event and Location:

- **Event:** World Seagrass Day 2025.
- **Date:** March 1, 2025.
- **Location:** Global Observance.



Important Days



About World Seagrass Day:

- **Declared by:** United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on May 22, 2022.
- **Proposed by:** Sri Lanka.
- **Purpose:** To raise awareness about seagrass conservation and its role in marine ecosystems.



Important Days



What is Seagrass?

- A flowering marine plant found in shallow coastal waters, except Antarctica.
- Unlike seaweed, seagrass has roots, stems, and leaves, making it similar to land plants.
- It supports marine biodiversity, stabilizes coastlines, and acts as a major carbon sink.



Important Days



Types of Seagrass:

- **Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*):** Found in temperate waters, providing fish habitats.
- **Shoal Grass (*Halodule wrightii*):** Thrives in shallow waters, a food source for marine herbivores.
- **Star Grass (*Halophila engelmannii*):** Supports diverse marine life in tropical and subtropical regions.



Important Days



Ecological Importance:

- **Supports Marine Life:** Provides food and shelter to marine species like turtles, manatees, and fish.
- **Improves Water Quality:** Traps sediments and prevents coastal erosion.
- **Carbon Sequestration:** Stores more carbon per area than tropical rainforests.



Important Days



Threats to Seagrass Ecosystems:

- **Coastal Development & Pollution:** Leads to habitat destruction.
- **Climate Change:** Rising sea levels affect growth and distribution.
- **Unsustainable Fishing Practices:** Trawling and anchoring damage seagrass beds.



Important Days



Conservation Efforts:

- **Seagrass Restoration:** Countries like Australia, the UK, and the USA are actively replanting seagrass beds.
- **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** Preventing destructive activities near seagrass habitats.
- **Seagrass-Watch Program:** Monitors seagrass health and promotes conservation.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** Encourages responsible boating, diving, and snorkeling.



Important Days



How Can Individuals Contribute?

- Reduce plastic waste to prevent marine pollution.
- Support eco-friendly tourism and marine conservation programs.
- Participate in beach clean-ups and promote seagrass protection policies.



Important Days



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Date	March 1, 2025
Declared By	UNGA on May 22, 2022
Proposed By	Sri Lanka
Purpose	Conservation awareness and ecological importance of seagrass
Key Benefits	Supports marine biodiversity, prevents erosion, stores carbon
Major Threats	Coastal development, pollution, climate change, overfishing
Conservation Efforts	Restoration projects, MPAs, Seagrass-Watch, sustainable tourism



➤ **How many times have India and New Zealand faced each other in the ICC Cricket World Cup?**

- A) 8
- B) 9
- C) 10
- D) 11
- E) 12

Answer
C) 10



Event and Location:

- **Event:** India vs New Zealand Head-to-Head in ICC Tournaments.
- **Date:** March 2, 2025.
- **Location:** Dubai International Cricket Stadium.



Head-to-Head Record in ICC Events:

Competition	Matches	India Wins	New Zealand Wins	Draws/NR
ICC World Cup	10	4	5	1
ICC Champions Trophy	1	0	1	0
ICC T20 World Cup	3	0	3	0
ICC World Test Championship	5	1	3	1
Total	19	5	12	2



India vs New Zealand in ICC Cricket World Cup:

- **First Meeting (1975):** New Zealand defeated India in Manchester.
- **Most Recent Encounter (2023):** India won by 4 wickets in the league stage at Dharamshala.
- **2019 World Cup Semi-Final:** New Zealand won by 18 runs, knocking India out.
- **Overall Record in World Cups:** New Zealand leads 5-4, with one match ending in No Result.



India vs New Zealand in ICC Champions Trophy:

- **Only Meeting:** 1998 Final (then known as ICC KnockOut Tournament).
- **Result:** New Zealand won, despite India's strong opening partnership of 141 runs by Sourav Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar.



India vs New Zealand in ICC T20 World Cup:

- India has never defeated New Zealand in three T20 World Cup encounters.
- **2021 T20 World Cup:** New Zealand comfortably chased 111 runs against India in Dubai.



India vs New Zealand in ICC World Test Championship (WTC):

- **Total Matches:** 5 (across two WTC cycles).
- **India's Only Win:** One victory out of five encounters.
- **2021 WTC Final:** New Zealand defeated India in Southampton to claim the title.



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Total ICC Matches	19
India Wins	5
New Zealand Wins	12
Draws/No Result	2
World Cup Meetings	10 matches (India 4, NZ 5, 1 NR)
T20 World Cup Record	India 0 - 3 New Zealand
ICC Champions Trophy Record	India 0 - 1 New Zealand
ICC WTC Record	India 1 - 3 New Zealand (1 Draw)



OBITUARY



➤ Who was Boris Spassky?

- A) The first World Chess Champion
- B) The 10th World Chess Champion
- C) A renowned American chess player
- D) A chess grandmaster from France
- E) The longest-reigning chess champion



Answer

B) The 10th World Chess Champion



OBITUARY



Event and Location:

- **Event:** Russian Chess Grandmaster Boris Spassky Passes Away at 88.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** Russia.



OBITUARY



About Boris Spassky:

- **Birthplace:** Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Soviet Union.
- **Chess Career:** Became an International Grandmaster in 1955. Won the World Chess Championship in 1969 by defeating Tigran Petrosian.
- **Playing Style:** Known for his universal playing approach, excelling in both positional and attacking strategies.



OBITUARY



1972 Match of the Century:

- Faced **Bobby Fischer** in Reykjavik, Iceland, in a Cold War-era battle.
- Despite winning the **first two games**, lost the match **12.5-8.5**.
- Praised for **his sportsmanship**, notably applauding Fischer after losing the sixth game.
- The match **transcended chess**, symbolizing U.S.-Soviet rivalry.



OBITUARY



Later Life:

- **Moved to France** in 1978, became a French citizen, and played for France in **three Chess Olympiads** (1984, 1986, 1988).
- Frequently played casual chess in **Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris**.
- **His health declined in the 2000s**, and he mysteriously disappeared from Paris in **2012**, later resurfacing in Moscow.



OBITUARY



Legacy:

- Regarded as one of **the greatest chess minds**, respected for his **strategic depth and sportsmanship**.
- Tributes from chess legends like **Anatoly Karpov** called his passing a **huge loss for the chess world**.



OBITUARY



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Age at Death	88
World Chess Champion	1969-1972
Famous Match	Lost to Bobby Fischer in the 1972 "Match of the Century"
Moved to France	1978, represented France in Chess Olympiads
Final Years	Faced health issues, disappeared from Paris in 2012, resurfaced in Moscow
Legacy	Renowned for his universal chess style and sportsmanship



RANKING



➤ **What was the year-on-year (YoY) growth of the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) in January 2025?**

- A) 3.5%
- B) 4.2%
- C) 5.6%
- D) 6.1%
- E) 2.8%

Answer
B) 4.2%



RANKING



Event and Location:

- **Event:** Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) – January 2025 Report.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** India.



About ICI:

- **Definition:** Measures the performance of eight key industries contributing 40.27% to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- **Industries Included:** Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, Electricity.
- **January 2025 YoY Growth:** 4.2%, up from 3.5% in December 2024.
- **Cumulative Growth (April 2024 – January 2025):** 6.1%, compared to 5.3% in the previous year.



Sector-Wise Performance:

- **Coal:** Grew 8.5%, driven by increased domestic production and power sector demand. **Cumulative growth:** 9.2%.
- **Crude Oil:** Declined -2.1%, affected by production cuts and maintenance shutdowns. **Cumulative decline:** -1.5%.
- **Natural Gas:** Increased 3.8%, supported by rising industrial and household demand. **Cumulative growth:** 4.2%.
- **Refinery Products:** Grew 5.3%, fueled by strong petroleum demand and improved refining capacity. **Cumulative growth:** 6.5%.



Sector-Wise Performance:

- **Fertilizers:** Grew 2.7%, supported by high agricultural demand and government subsidies. **Cumulative growth:** 3.9%.
- **Steel:** Increased 6.8%, driven by infrastructure projects and automobile sector demand. **Cumulative growth:** 7.1%.
- **Cement:** Grew 5.6%, backed by construction and real estate expansion. **Cumulative growth:** 5.9%.
- **Electricity:** Increased 4.1%, supported by higher industrial and residential demand. **Cumulative growth:** 5.3%.



RANKING



Key Takeaways:

- **ICI Growth:** 4.2% YoY, showing an improving industrial trend.
- **Top Performers:** Coal, Steel, Refinery Products showed strong growth.
- **Weak Sector:** Crude Oil remained in decline, impacting overall industrial performance.
- **Government Support:** Boosted growth in Fertilizers, Cement, and Electricity.
- **Stable Momentum:** 6.1% cumulative growth, indicating steady industrial expansion.



RANKING



Economic Impact:

- **Boost to GDP:** Strong performance in steel and cement suggests continued infrastructure growth.
- **Energy Concerns:** Decline in crude oil production highlights energy security risks.
- **Power Sector Stability:** Growth in electricity generation supports renewable energy integration.



RANKING



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
January 2025 ICI Growth	4.2% YoY
December 2024 Growth	3.5%
Cumulative Growth (Apr 2024 – Jan 2025)	6.1%
Strongest Sectors	Coal, Steel, Refinery Products
Weakest Sector	Crude Oil (-2.1%)
Impact on Economy	Boosts industrial production and infrastructure development



➤ What is the proposed reduction in the share of central tax revenues allocated to states from 2026?

- A) 39%
- B) 40%
- C) 41%
- D) 42%
- E) 38%

Answer

B) 40%



Event and Location:

- **Event:** Centre's Proposal to Reduce States' Share of Central Taxes from 2026.
- **Date:** March 2025 (Expected Cabinet Approval).
- **Location:** India.



Mandates and Objectives:

- **Reduction in Tax Share:** The Centre will propose reducing states' tax share from 41% to at least 40%.
- **Implementation Year:** The proposal is expected to be implemented from the fiscal year 2026-27.
- **Finance Commission:** The proposal will be submitted to the Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya.
- **Revenue Impact:** A 1% reduction in states' share could provide the Centre with an additional ₹350 billion (\$4.03 billion).



Reasons for Reducing States' Share:

- **Fiscal Deficit:** The Centre's fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is estimated at 4.8% of GDP, while states' deficit is at 3.2%.
- **Historical Tax Devolution:** The share of states in tax devolution has increased from 20% in 1980 to 41% currently.
- **Centre's Spending Requirements:** Increased expenditure due to economic slowdowns, post-COVID-19 recovery, and infrastructure investments.
- **Cesses and Surcharges:** The Centre's tax revenue from cesses and surcharges, which are not shared with states, has increased to 15% from the earlier 9-12%.



Impact on State Revenues & Spending:

- **State Contribution:** States contribute over 60% of total government spending, focusing on health, education, and social welfare.
- **GST Impact:** The introduction of GST in 2017 has reduced the autonomy of states in raising additional revenues.
- **Reallocation of Spending:** A reduction in tax transfers may force states to adjust their budget priorities.



Restrictions on Freebies & Revenue-Deficit Grants:

- **Grant Conditions:** The Centre plans to link revenue-deficit grants to fiscal discipline conditions.
- **Restrictions on Expenditure:** The move aims to discourage states from offering freebies, debt waivers, and cash handouts.
- **Decline in Revenue-Deficit Grants:** Revenue-deficit grants have decreased from ₹1.18 trillion in 2021-22 to ₹137 billion in 2025-26.



Important Terms Explained:

- **Finance Commission of India:** A constitutional body under Article 280 responsible for recommending tax revenue distribution between the Centre and states.
- **Tax Devolution:** The process by which the central government distributes a portion of its tax revenues to state governments.
- **Fiscal Deficit:** The difference between the government's total revenue and total expenditure.
- **Revenue-Deficit Grants:** Funds given by the Centre to states to cover their revenue shortfall.
- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** A tax reform introduced in 2017 that replaced multiple indirect taxes, reducing states' revenue autonomy.



Tabular Summary:

Key Aspect	Details
Event	Centre's Proposal to Reduce States' Share of Central Taxes
Location	India
Proposed Reduction	41% to at least 40%
Implementation Year	2026-27 fiscal year
Finance Commission Head	Arvind Panagariya
Expected Cabinet Approval	By March 2025
Revenue Impact	1% reduction = ₹350 billion (\$4.03 billion) for Centre
Fiscal Deficit (2024-25)	Centre: 4.8% of GDP / States: 3.2% of GDP
State Spending Focus	Health, education, social welfare
Centre Spending Focus	Infrastructure projects
GST Impact on States	Limited revenue-raising capacity
Revenue-Deficit Grants (Decline)	₹1.18 trillion (2021-22) → ₹137 billion (2025-26)
Restrictions on Freebies	Grants may be linked to fiscal discipline



- **What is the primary purpose of SEBI's Bond Central platform?**
- A) To regulate stock exchanges
 - B) To provide a centralised database for corporate bonds
 - C) To facilitate foreign investment in India
 - D) To manage mutual fund investments
 - E) To replace credit rating agencies



Answer

B) To provide a centralised database for corporate bonds



Event and Location:

- **Event:** SEBI Launches Bond Central: A Centralised Database for Corporate Bonds.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** India.



About Bond Central:

- **Launched by:** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- **Developed by:** Online Bond Platform Providers (OBPP) Association and Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) (Stock Exchanges & Depositories).



Objective:

- Enhance **transparency** in the corporate bond market.
- Provide **a single, free-access database** for corporate bond information.
- Standardise bond-related data to **reduce information asymmetry**.
- Enable investors to **compare corporate bonds** with other financial instruments.



Key Features of Bond Central:

- **Unified Data Repository:** Provides an integrated view of corporate bonds across stock exchanges and issuers.
- **Comparison with G-Secs & Indices:** Allows investors to compare corporate bonds with Government Securities (G-Secs) and other fixed-income indices.
- **Risk Assessments & Disclosures:** Offers detailed risk evaluations and issuer disclosures for informed decision-making.



Key Features of Bond Central:

- **Standardised Bond Data:** Ensures uniformity in bond-related data, improving transparency and market trust.
- **Free & Open Access:** Available without subscription or fees, making financial data accessible to all investors.



Implementation & Future Enhancements:

- **Phase 1 Launched:** The first version of Bond Central is live.
- **Upcoming Features:** SEBI plans to introduce new functionalities based on stakeholder feedback.



Expected Impact:

- **Investors gain real-time access** to corporate bond data, improving investment decisions.
- **Retail & Institutional Investors** can compare bonds more efficiently, boosting market participation.
- **Market Transparency & Trust** are strengthened through standardised financial data.
- **Regulators & Analysts** benefit from a comprehensive corporate bond database for market surveillance and research.



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Platform Name	Bond Central
Launched By	SEBI
Developed By	OBPP Association & MIs (Stock Exchanges & Depositories)
Objective	Provide a centralised, transparent database for corporate bonds
Key Features	Data repository, risk disclosures, bond comparison, free access
Launch Status	First phase live; more updates to follow
Impact	Improved investor access, transparency, and market efficiency



➤ **What was India's Real GDP growth rate in Q3 of FY 2024-25?**

- A) 5.4%
- B) 5.6%
- C) 6.2%
- D) 7.1%
- E) 9.9%

Answer
C) 6.2%



Event and Location:

- **Event:** India's Economic Growth in Q3 of FY 2024-25.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** India.



Key Highlights:

- **Real GDP Growth:** Increased to 6.2% in Q3 of FY 2024-25 from 5.4% in Q2.
- **Nominal GDP Growth:** Reached 9.9%, up from 7.6% in the previous quarter.
- **GDP at Constant Prices:** ₹47.17 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2024-25, compared to ₹44.44 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2023-24.
- **GDP at Current Prices:** ₹84.74 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2024-25, compared to ₹77.10 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2023-24.



Sectoral Growth Trends:

- **Manufacturing:** Grew 12.3% in FY 2023-24, playing a key role in economic expansion.
- **Construction:** Expected to grow 8.6% in FY 2024-25, driven by infrastructure and real estate.
- **Financial & Real Estate Services:** Projected 7.2% growth, reflecting a strong financial sector.
- **Trade, Transport & Communication:** Estimated to grow 6.4%, indicating positive service sector performance.



Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE):

- Expected to grow **7.6%** in FY 2024-25, compared to **5.6%** in the previous year.
- Signifies higher consumer spending and domestic demand.



Gross Value Added (GVA) Trends:

- **Real GVA:** ₹43.13 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2024-25, up 6.2% from ₹40.60 lakh crore in Q3 FY 2023-24.
- **Nominal GVA:** ₹77.06 lakh crore, reflecting a 10.2% growth.



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Real GDP Growth	6.2% in Q3 FY 2024-25
Nominal GDP Growth	9.9% in Q3 FY 2024-25
GVA Growth	6.2% (Real GVA), 10.2% (Nominal GVA)
Key Sectors Driving Growth	Manufacturing, Construction, Financial Services
PFCE Growth	7.6% in FY 2024-25
Economic Outlook	Positive growth momentum with strong domestic demand



➤ What is the interest rate retained by EPFO for provident fund deposits in FY 2024-25?

- A) 8.00%
- B) 8.10%
- C) 8.25%
- D) 8.50%
- E) 8.75%

Answer
C) 8.25%



Event and Location:

- **Event:** EPFO Retains 8.25% Interest Rate on Provident Fund Deposits for 2024-25.
- **Date:** February 28, 2025.
- **Location:** India.



Key Highlights:

- **Interest Rate Decision:** The Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of EPFO decided to retain the 8.25% interest rate for FY 2024-25, despite demands for an increase.
- **Reason for No Hike:** Government cited economic considerations and stable returns compared to other investment options.



Trade Union Demands:

- **CITU representative R. Karumalaiyan** demanded an increase to 8.5%, citing inflation and economic pressures.
- **Government's Response:** Stated that RBI's recent repo rate cut and economic stability concerns made a hike unfeasible.



Comparison with Other Investment Options:

- EPF remains **one of the most stable** fixed-income instruments.
- **Tax-free interest** (up to a limit) makes it **an attractive long-term savings option**.



Other Discussions in the Meeting:

- **Increase in Minimum Pension Amount:** Proposal under review.
- **Raising Contribution Slab for Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS):** EPFO to submit a detailed report.
- **Higher Pension Processing Update:** 72% of applications have been processed so far.



Key EDLI Scheme Modifications:

- **Minimum Life Insurance Benefit:** ₹50,000 for EPF members who pass away within one year of service.
- **EDLI Benefit Eligibility:** Employees dying within six months of their last contribution remain eligible.
- **Employment Continuity Norms:** A two-month job gap is now considered continuous service for EDLI benefits.



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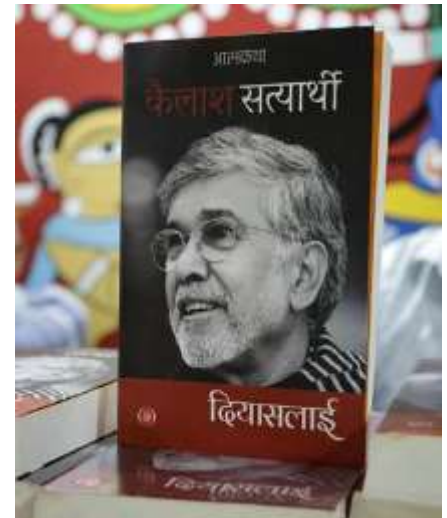
Aspect	Details
Interest Rate for FY 2024-25	8.25%
CBT Meeting Date	February 28, 2025
Reason for No Hike	Economic considerations and stable returns
Trade Union Demand	8.5% interest rate due to rising prices
Higher Pension Processing	72% of applications processed
Key EDLI Changes	₹50,000 minimum benefit, extended eligibility, relaxed job continuity norms



➤ **What is the title of Kailash Satyarthi's autobiography?**

- A) My Experiments with Truth
- B) Diyaslai
- C) Wings of Fire
- D) The Story of My Life
- E) Long Walk to Freedom

Answer
B) Diyaslai



BOOKS AND AUTHORS



Event and Location:

- **Event:** Kailash Satyarthi's Autobiography 'Diyaslai' – A Literary Exploration at IGNCA.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), India.



BOOKS AND AUTHORS



About the Book – Diyaslai:

- **Author:** Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and child rights activist.
- **Theme:** Chronicles his life's struggle against child labor and exploitation.



BOOKS AND AUTHORS



Key Highlights:

- Covers his **early life in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh.**
- Narrates his activism, including leading **the Global March Against Child Labour** across **186 countries.**
- Emphasizes **the role of compassion in democracy and social justice.**



BOOKS AND AUTHORS



Tabular Summary:

Aspect	Details
Book Title	Diyaslai
Author	Kailash Satyarthi
Event Venue	IGNCA, India
Theme	Child rights, social justice, global compassion
Major Activism	Led the Global March Against Child Labour in 186 countries
Nobel Peace Prize	2014



➤ **What is the primary purpose of NASA's SPHEREx telescope?**

- A) To detect black holes in the Milky Way
- B) To analyze dark matter distribution
- C) To create a detailed infrared map of the universe
- D) To search for exoplanets similar to Earth
- E) To study solar flares on the Sun



Answer

C) To create a detailed infrared map of the universe



Event and Location:

- **Event:** NASA's New Telescope to Unveil the Most Colorful Cosmic Map.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** United States.



Mission Overview:

- **Full Name:** Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer (SPHEREx).
- **Mission Duration:** Two years.
- **Primary Purpose:** To create the most detailed and colorful infrared map of the universe.
- **Data Collection:** Expected to generate 8 million spectroscopic images covering the entire sky.



Advancements in Cosmic Mapping:

- **Infrared Spectroscopy:** SPHEREx will analyze light in 96 bands, far beyond human vision.
- **Sky Coverage:** Unlike the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and Hubble, which observe small sections, SPHEREx will map the entire sky.
- **Objects Mapped:** The telescope is expected to map 1 billion galaxies, 100 million stars, and 10,000 asteroids.
- **Scientific Impact:** The large-scale mapping will help scientists understand the structure and history of the universe.



Studying Cosmic Inflation:

- **Definition:** Cosmic inflation refers to the rapid expansion of the universe after the Big Bang.
- **Unsolved Mystery:** The process remains one of the biggest unanswered questions in cosmology.
- **SPHEREx's Role:** By mapping galaxies in 3D, the telescope will help astronomers test different theories of inflation.



Locating Life-Bearing Molecules:

- **Biogenic Molecules:** SPHEREx will identify molecules like water, carbon dioxide, and methanol trapped in icy dust clouds.
- **Life Formation:** The data will trace how these molecules travel from space to planetary surfaces, helping to understand life's origins.
- **Comparison with JWST:** JWST captures a few thousand spectroscopic images, whereas SPHEREx will collect 8 million.
- **Sky Survey:** A complete sky scan will help pinpoint regions with potential for life formation.



Complementing Other Infrared Telescopes:

- **SPHEREx vs. James Webb Space Telescope (JWST):**
 - JWST Focus: High-resolution imaging of small regions of space.
 - SPHEREx Focus: Wide-area mapping of the entire sky.
 - Collaboration: SPHEREx will identify key areas, allowing JWST to conduct detailed studies.



Important Terms Explained:

- **SPHEREx Telescope:** NASA's infrared telescope designed for full-sky mapping using spectroscopy.
- **Infrared Spectroscopy:** A technique that measures light beyond human vision, allowing the detection of molecular compositions.
- **Cosmic Inflation:** A theory describing the rapid expansion of the universe just after the Big Bang.
- **Biogenic Molecules:** Organic compounds like water, carbon dioxide, and methanol, essential for life formation.
- **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST):** A space telescope specializing in high-resolution imaging of faint and distant cosmic objects.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Tabular Summary:

Key Aspect	Details
Event	NASA's New Telescope to Unveil the Most Colorful Cosmic Map
Location	United States
Mission Name	SPHEREx (Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer)
Mission Duration	Two years
Key Feature	Infrared spectroscopy with 96 light bands
Data Collected	8 million spectroscopic images
Scope of Mapping	Entire sky
Comparison with JWST	Covers entire sky, unlike JWST's focused observations
Study of Cosmic Inflation	Measures 3D positions of 1 billion galaxies to understand universe expansion
Search for Life	Locates biogenic molecules like water and carbon-based compounds
Number of Objects Mapped	1 billion galaxies, 100 million stars, 10,000 asteroids
Scientific Impact	Revolutionizes our understanding of cosmic evolution and life formation



➤ **When was the Central Sector Scheme for the Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs launched?**

- A) January 15, 2021
- B) February 29, 2020
- C) March 5, 2019
- D) April 10, 2022
- E) December 25, 2018



Answer

B) February 29, 2020



Event and Location:

- **Event:** Government Achieves 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) Goal.
- **Date:** March 2025.
- **Location:** Khagaria, Bihar.



About the Scheme:

- **Launched by:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- **Launch Date:** February 29, 2020.
- **Budget Allocation:** ₹6,865 crore for 2020-2027.
- **Objective:** Formation of 10,000 FPOs to enhance farmers' income through collective farming and marketing.
- **Latest Milestone:** The 10,000th FPO was launched in Khagaria, Bihar, focusing on maize, banana, and paddy cultivation.
- **Beneficiaries:** 30 lakh farmers, with 40% participation from women.



Financial Assistance:

- **Equity Grants:** ₹254.4 crore provided to 4,761 FPOs.
- **Credit Guarantee Cover:** ₹453 crore allocated for 1,900 FPOs.

Financial Support to FPOs:

- **Management Costs:** ₹18 lakh per FPO for three years.
- **Matching Equity Grant:** ₹2,000 per farmer (up to ₹15 lakh per FPO).
- **Credit Guarantee Facility:** Up to ₹2 crore per FPO.



Role of FPOs in Agriculture:

- **Definition:** Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) are registered farmer groups working collectively for better market access and resource utilization.
- **Regulation:** FPOs are governed under the Companies Act (Part IXA) or the Co-operative Societies Act.
- **Nodal Agency:** The scheme is mandated by the Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC).



Objectives of FPOs:

- **Market Linkages:** Strengthen farmers' income through better market connections.
- **Lower Input Costs:** Provide affordable access to seeds, fertilizers, and farming technology.
- **Financial & Credit Support:** Offer financial aid and loans to small farmers.
- **Value Addition:** Facilitate processing, branding, and marketing of agricultural products.
- **Sustainable Farming:** Encourage environment-friendly and efficient farming practices.



Government Support & Ministry Convergence:

- **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare:** Provides licenses, dealership support, and e-NAM linkages.
- **Ministry of Food Processing:** Offers 35% capital subsidy and 50% grants for branding and marketing.
- **Ministry of MSME:** Funds for management, equity grants, and credit facilities.
- **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying:** Allocated ₹500 crore for dairy FPOs.
- **APEDA:** Supports registered FPOs in agricultural exports.
- **Spices Board:** Promotes value-added spice production and exports.



Key Initiatives under the Scheme:

- **Credit Guarantee Fund (CGF):** Ensures financial security for banks lending to FPOs.
- **ONDC Integration:** Over 5,000 FPOs onboarded on the Open Network for Digital Commerce for online selling.
- **CSC MoU:** Agreement signed to convert 10,000 FPOs into Common Service Centers (CSCs), offering digital services in rural areas.



Activities & Services Provided by FPOs:

- **Input Supply:** Provide seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides at lower costs.
- **Machinery Rental:** Offer farm equipment on a rental basis.
- **Value Addition & Processing:** Facilitate cleaning, grading, and packaging of produce.
- **Storage & Transportation:** Help in better logistics and storage facilities.
- **Market Linkages:** Enable collective selling and price negotiation for better profits.
- **Additional Activities:** Engage in beekeeping, seed production, and organic farming.



Important Terms Explained:

- **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs):** Legally registered groups of farmers that collectively undertake agricultural business activities.
- **Equity Grant:** Financial aid provided by the government to FPOs to strengthen their financial base.
- **Credit Guarantee Fund (CGF):** A fund ensuring banks provide loans to FPOs with reduced lending risk.
- **ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce):** A government-backed platform enabling digital commerce access for FPOs.
- **Common Service Centers (CSCs):** Digital infrastructure hubs in rural areas providing online services to farmers.



NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Tabular Summary:

Key Aspect	Details
Event	Government Achieves 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) Goal
Location	Khagaria, Bihar
Launch Date	February 29, 2020
Budget	₹6,865 crore (2020-2027)
Milestone	10,000th FPO launched in Khagaria, Bihar
Equity Grants Released	₹254.4 crore (4,761 FPOs)
Credit Guarantee Cover	₹453 crore (1,900 FPOs)
Support to Each FPO	₹18 lakh (management), ₹2,000 per farmer (equity), ₹2 crore credit guarantee
Total Farmers Benefited	30 lakh (40% women)
Key Ministries Involved	Agriculture, Food Processing, MSME, Fisheries, APEDA, Spices Board
Key Initiatives	Credit Guarantee Fund, ONDC integration, CSC conversion
Services Provided by FPOs	Input supply, machinery rental, value addition, storage, logistics, marketing support



QUICK RECALL



- **World Seagrass Day is observed on March 1 to promote seagrass conservation.**
- **India and New Zealand have faced off 10 times in the ICC Cricket World Cup.**
- **Boris Spassky, the 10th World Chess Champion, passed away at the age of 88.**
- **The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) grew by 4.2 percent in January 2025.**
- **Centre proposed reducing states' tax share from 41 percent to 40 percent.**
- **SEBI launched Bond Central, a centralised database for corporate bonds.**



QUICK RECALL



- **India's Real GDP grew by 6.2 percent in Q3 of FY 2024-25.**
- **EPFO retained the 8.25% interest rate on provident fund deposits for FY 2024-25.**
- **Kailash Satyarthi's autobiography Diyaslai was discussed at IGNCA.**
- **NASA is launching SPHEREx to create the most detailed infrared map of the universe.**
- **The government has achieved its goal of forming 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations.**



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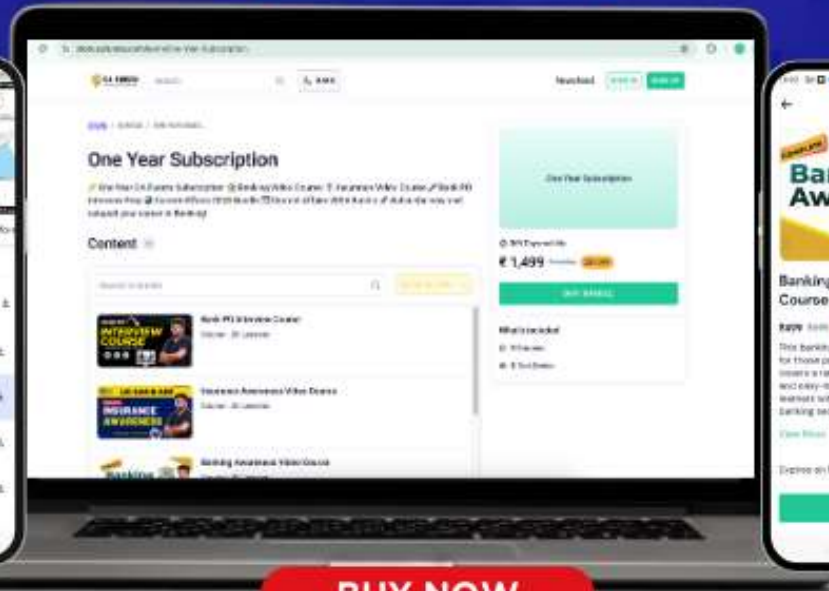
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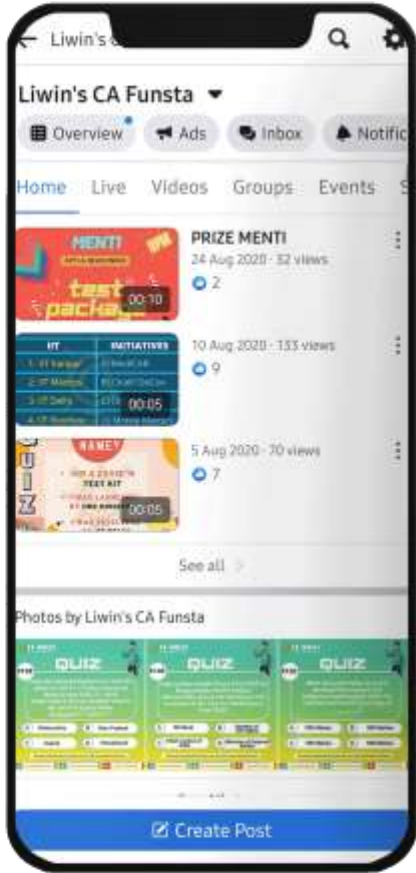
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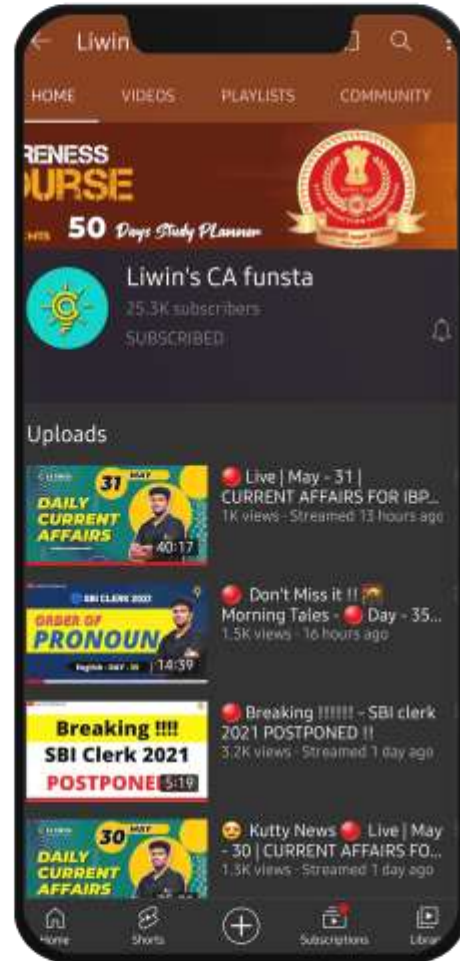


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