

Future of the Free Speech Index 2025:

- A new global survey by Future of Free Speech, an independent U.S.-based think tank, has ranked India 24th out of 33 countries surveyed on question of support for free speech.
- Report - 'Who in the world supports free speech?'
- Scandinavia dominated top rankings, with Norway and Denmark finishing at the apex of the Future of the Free Speech Index with scores of 87.9 and 87.0.
- India, with a score of 62.6, was placed 24th, between South Africa (66.9) and Lebanon (61.8).
- 37% of Indian respondents supported statement that governments should be able to prevent people from criticising government policies - highest percentage among all countries surveyed.

SANSAD BHASHINI:

- An MoU was signed between Lok Sabha Secretariat and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) for development of Sansad AI.
- It is envisioned to provide comprehensive In-House AI solutions for multilingual support and streamlined processes in parliamentary operations.
- key AI Initiatives under Sansad Bhashini are-
 - 1.AI-Based Translation
 - 2.AI-Powered Chatbot for Parliament Website
 - 3.Speech-to-Text Conversion & Live Interpretation
 - 4.Speech-to-Speech Conversion with Real-Time Transcription

Kamba Ramayana:

- Ministry of Culture to Revive and Sustain 'Kamba Ramayana' through Statewide Festival and Educational Initiatives in Tamil Nadu.
- Kamba Ramayana, also known as Ramavataram, is a Tamil epic based on the Sanskrit Valmiki Ramayana.
- Composed by Tamil poet Kambar in the 12th century CE.
- Kambar lived and flourished in the Chola Empire during the reign of Kulothunga III.
- Patronized by Thiruvennai Nallur Sadayappa Vallal, whose name appears every 1,000 verses in gratitude.
- Divided into 6 Kandams (chapters), 113 Padalams (sections), and around 10,569 verses.
- Combines Tamil folk elements with deep philosophical and spiritual symbolism.

Indore to set up India's First PPP Green Waste Processing Plant:

- Under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, Indore will have India's first green waste processing plant, developed through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- Built on 55,000 square feet land in Bicholi Hapsi, plant will recycle wood & branches to produce wooden pellets, serving as alternative to coal & promoting energy conservation.

BILATERAL NAVAL EXERCISE - VARUNA 2025:

- 23rd edition of annual bilateral naval exercise VARUNA between India and France is set to take place from 19 to 22 Mar 25 in Arabian Sea.
- It started in 2001.

Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative:

- New Zealand to participate in Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative.

- IPOI was launched by India in November 2019 at the ASEAN-led East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok.
- Non-treaty-based voluntary arrangement.
- It does not envisage a new institutional framework and leans heavily on the EAS mechanism, which includes ASEAN member states and its eight dialogue partners.
- It outlined seven pillars, and it was indicated that one or two countries could take lead for a pillar with others joining in voluntarily. e.g. Maritime Security: The United Kingdom (UK) and India. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: India and Bangladesh.

Ana Sagar lake:

- Artificial lake situated in Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- Built by raising a dam across the Luni or Lavanavari River.
- Built by Arnoraja Chauhan, the grandfather of Prithviraj Chauhan, in 1135 - 1150 AD.
- Daulat Bagh Gardens, located on the banks of the lake, was built by Jehangir.
- There is an island in the center of the lake.
- Lake gets dry every summer.

Audible enclaves:

- They are small pockets of sound that are not disturbed by surrounding noise.
- They are produced by new technologies designed to deliver sounds that only one specific person can hear, even if they are in a crowd.

Cyclone Jude:

- Third cyclone to strike Mozambique this season.

Truth Social:

- It is a social media platform owned by Trump Media & Technology Group. US President Donald Trump is the biggest shareholder in this company.

UIDAI partners with GenAI Company Sarvam AI:

- Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has partnered with Bengaluru based Sarvam AI, an indigenous full-stack Generative AI (GenAI) company to enhance user experience, while availing Aadhaar services.

Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme:

- Implemented w.e.f. 01.04.2010 for Phosphatic & Potassic (P&K) fertilizers by Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- Under NBS scheme, a fixed amount of subsidy, decided on an annual/bi-annual basis, is provided on subsidized P&K fertilizers depending on their nutrient content including Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP).
- Under NBS scheme, P&K sector is decontrolled, fertilizer companies are allowed to fix MRP at reasonable levels which is monitored by the Government.
- Fertilizer companies manufacture/import fertilizers as per market dynamics.
- Urea is provided to farmers at a statutorily notified Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
- Difference between delivered cost of urea at farm gate and net market realization by urea units is given as a subsidy to urea manufacturer/importer by Government of India.

Prime Minister's Young Authors Mentorship Scheme (YUVA) Scheme:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Education (MoE) and the National Book Trust (NBT) of India launched third edition of Prime Minister's Young Authors Mentorship Scheme, known as YUVA 3.0, on March 11, 2025. ○ Inaugural edition, YUVA 1.0, was launched in May 2021 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations to commemorate 75 years of India's independence. ○ It aims to nurture young writers under 30 years of age, providing them with mentorship and exposure to hone their creative writing skills. ○ Themes of PM-YUVA 3.0 are: Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Nation Building; Indian Knowledge System; and Makers of Modern India (1950-2025).
<p>World Sparrow Day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is celebrated every year on March 20th. ○ It was initiated by "Nature Forever," a bird conservation organization in 2010. ○ Aim was to raise awareness about the declining sparrow population. The event has spread to over 50 countries. ○ In 2012, the house sparrow became Delhi's state bird. ○ Known by various names such as "Goraiya" in Hindi, "Kuruvi" in Tamil and "Chirya" in Urdu. ○ "Save the Sparrow" campaign led by environmental conservationist Jagat Kinkhabwala.
<p>Vigyan Dhara Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Central sector scheme. ○ Came into force with effect from 16.01.2025. ○ It merges three key umbrella schemes, focusing on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Science and Technology (S&T) Institutional and Human Capacity Building: This component focuses on strengthening India's scientific infrastructure and human resource pool. It aims to build and enhance research and development (R&D) labs across academic institutions, creating a robust environment for scientific research.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Research and Development (R&D): Vigyan Dhara emphasises research in various critical areas, including basic research, translational research in sustainable energy and water, and access to international mega facilities. This component also fosters collaborative research through international bilateral and multilateral cooperation. 3. Innovation, Technology Development, and Deployment: This segment of scheme aims to drive innovation at all levels, from schools to higher education and industry. It seeks to promote technology development and deployment, with a particular focus on increasing collaboration between academia, government, and industry, as well as supporting startups.
<p>PM Special (Training of Geriatric Care Givers) scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Launched to bridge gap in supply and increasing demand in field of geriatric caregivers to provide more professional services to senior citizens and also to create a cadre of professional caregivers in the field of geriatric. ○ Free of cost training is provided.
<p>PM-DAKSH Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Central Sector Scheme. ○ It was started in 2020-21 to provide skill development training to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Weaker Section (EWS), De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs), Safai Karamcharis, including Waste Pickers through empanelled training institutes. ○ Three Corporations of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment are implementing agencies. ○ Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) is constituted to scrutinize proposals of training institutes for their empanelment.

PRACTICE MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements about Kamba Ramayana:

1. It is a Tamil epic composed by Tamil poet Kambar in the 12th century CE.
2. It combines Tamil folk elements with deep philosophical and spiritual symbolism.
3. Kambar lived and flourished in the Pandya kingdom.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Q2. Consider the following statements about fertilizers subsidy in India:

1. Urea is provided to farmers at a statutorily notified Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
2. Difference between delivered cost of urea at farm gate and net market realization by urea units is given as a subsidy to urea manufacturer/importer by Government.
3. Subsidy on phosphorus and potash fertilizers is given based on their nutrient content.

How many statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: C

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. India's first green waste processing plant will be set up in Bhopal.

2. It will be set up under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban.
3. It will be developed through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: D

Q4. Consider the following statements about the Future of the Free Speech Index 2025:

1. It is published by an independent U.S.-based think tank 'Future of the Free Speech'.
2. India ranked 24th out of 33 surveyed countries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

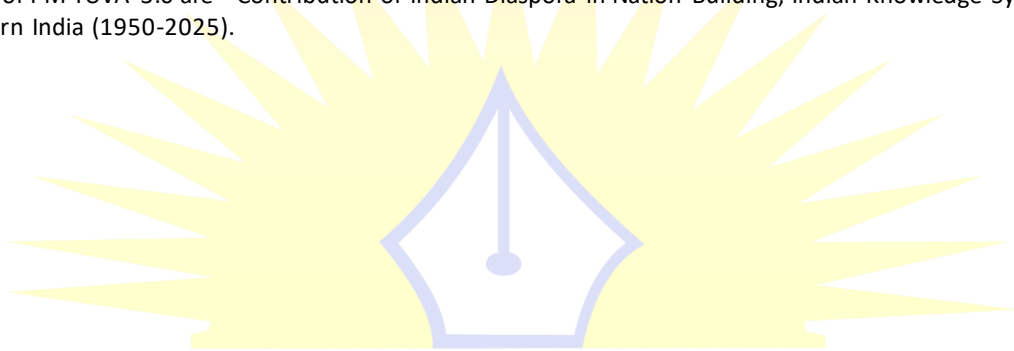
- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Q5. Which of the following statements is incorrect about PM-YUVA 3.0 initiative?

- a) Ministry of Education and the National Book Trust of India launched it in 2025.
- b) Inaugural edition, YUVA 1.0, was launched in May 2021 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.
- c) It aims to nurture young writers under 35 years of age, providing them with mentorship.
- d) Themes of PM-YUVA 3.0 are - Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Nation Building; Indian Knowledge System; and Makers of Modern India (1950-2025).

Answer: C



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