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National and International News

<p>SDG India Index 2023-24</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SDG India Index 2023-24, the fourth edition was released by NITI Aayog. <p>About SDG India Index 2023-24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Release and Launch: Released by NITI Aayog. ● Purpose: Measures and tracks national progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all States and UTs. ● Indicators: 113 indicators aligned with MoSPI's National Indicator Framework (NIF). ● Scoring and Progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Composite scores for States and UTs range between 0-100. ■ Higher scores indicate greater progress. ○ National Progress: India's composite score improved from 57 in 2018 to 66 in 2020-21, and 71 in 2023-24. ○ Significant Goals: Notable advancements in Goals 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 13 (Climate Action) which are in the 'Front Runner' category (score 65-99). ● Government Interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing: Over 4 crore houses under PM Awas Yojana (PMAY). ○ Sanitation: 11 crore toilets and 2.23 lakh Community Sanitary Complexes in rural areas. ○ Cooking Fuel: 10 crore LPG connections under PM Ujjwala Yojana. ○ Water: Tap water connections in over 14.9 crore households under Jal Jeevan Mission. ○ Healthcare: Over 30 crore beneficiaries under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. ○ Food Security: Coverage of over 80 crore people under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). ○ Medical Access: 150,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandir for primary medical care and affordable generic medicines. ○ Financial Inclusion: Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of ₹34 lakh crore through PM-Jan Dhan accounts. ○ Skill Development: Skill India Mission trained and
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	<p>upskilled over 1.4 crore youth and reskilled 54 lakh youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Entrepreneurship: PM Mudra Yojana sanctioned 43 crore loans totaling ₹22.5 lakh crore. ○ Renewable Energy: Increase in solar power capacity from 2.82 GW to 73.32 GW in the past decade. ○ Electric Capacity: Added around 100 GW of installed electric capacity between 2017 and 2023, 80% from non-fossil fuels. ○ Digital Infrastructure: Reduced internet data costs by 97%, fostering financial inclusion.
<p>Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Centralised hiring leads to language, cultural barriers in Eklavya schools. <p>About EMRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction: EMRS are aimed at providing quality education to tribal students in remote areas. ● Objective: To bridge the educational gap between tribal and non-tribal populations, providing equal opportunities for higher education and career advancement. ● Establishment: Initiated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in 1997-98. ● Purpose: To provide holistic education to Scheduled Tribe students from Class VI to XII, enabling their overall development. ● Curriculum: Follows the CBSE curriculum with emphasis on both academics and extracurricular activities. ● Facilities: Includes well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, libraries, hostels, sports facilities, and residential quarters for staff. ● Funding: Fully funded by the Central Government under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. ● Infrastructure: Built to accommodate at least 480 students, with provisions for boys and girls hostels. ● Teachers and Staff: Recruitment is centralized, and teachers are often from different states, leading to cultural and language adaptation challenges. ● Locations: Spread across various states in India, especially in areas with a significant tribal population.
<p>Public Distribution System (PDS)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Public Distribution System (PDS) impact on household expenditure. <p>About PDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PDS is a government-sponsored chain of shops responsible for distributing basic food and non-food commodities to the needy at subsidized prices.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purpose: To provide essential items like rice, wheat, sugar, and kerosene to the poor at affordable prices and to ensure food security in the country. ● Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operated through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPS) across the country. ○ Managed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. ● Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Central Pool: Food grains procured by the government and stored for distribution. ○ Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS): Categorizes households into Above Poverty Line (APL), Below Poverty Line (BPL), and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY). ● Legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013: Legal entitlement to subsidized food grains for approximately two-thirds of India's population. ○ Coverage: Ensures food grains at subsidized rates to up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population.
<p>Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a notification allowing resident individuals to open Foreign Currency Accounts (FCAs) in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) at GIFT City in Gujarat under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). <p>About LRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a foreign exchange policy initiative introduced by the RBI in 2004. ● It is intended to simplify and streamline the process of remitting funds outside India. ● This scheme helped Indians overcome international fund transfer restrictions as set by the FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act), 1999. ● Under LRS, all resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year (April–March). ● Only individual Indian residents are permitted to remit funds under LRS. Corporates, partnership firms, HUFs, trusts, etc. are excluded from its ambit. ● The remittances can be made in any freely convertible foreign currency.
<p>Technology Development Fund scheme</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has approved seven new projects for the private sector



under the Technology Development Fund scheme.

About Technology Development Fund scheme:

- **Initiative:** Part of the 'Make in India' initiative to promote self-reliance in defence technology.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Defence.
- **Execution:** Managed by DRDO to meet the needs of Tri-Services, Defence Production, and DRDO.
- **Encouragement:**
 - **Encourages participation from public/private industries**, especially MSMEs and startups.
 - **Aims to create an ecosystem for enhancing cutting-edge technology** capability in the defence sector.
- **Benefits:** Provides **grants-in-aid for indigenous technology development** and other benefits to the industry.
- **Funding Support:**
 - **Project Cost:** Up to INR 50 crore.
 - **Funding Amount:** Up to 90% of the total project cost.
 - **Collaboration:** Industry may collaborate with academia or research institutions (academia's involvement should not exceed 40% of the total project cost).
- **Project Duration:** Maximum development period of four years.
- **Ownership:**
 - Must be **owned and controlled by a resident Indian citizen**.
 - Entities with more than **49% foreign investment are ineligible**.
- **Startups:**
 - Must be recognized by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
 - **Nascent startups** (incorporated less than three years from the application date) must be incubated at government-assisted incubators.
 - **Should not have received any similar government grants**.
 - Must be **owned and controlled by a Resident Indian citizen with at least 51% shareholding**.

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