

7. Short news

1. Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025

Recently, President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025 on 24 scientists and innovators at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar is India's apex national science award framework recognising excellence across lifetime achievement, distinguished contributions, young scientists, and team-based innovation.

Launch – It was instituted by the Government of India in 2023, with the first set of awards announced in August 2024 to recognize scientific contributions, replacing previous science awards like the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize

Organised By – Government of India under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Objective – To honour scientific excellence, promote innovation, and highlight science's role in national development and societal transformation.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2025 Categories

Rashtriya Vigyan Ratna Puraskar – Awarded posthumously to Jayant Vishnu Narlikar for lifetime contributions to cosmology and science communication.

Rashtriya Vigyan Team Puraskar – Conferred on CSIR–Aroma Mission for enabling the Purple Revolution through lavender-based agri-entrepreneurship.

Vigyan Shri – Recognised distinguished contributions across disciplines including agriculture, atomic energy, biology, chemistry, engineering, environment, mathematics, space science, and technology.

Vigyan Yuva–Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award – Honoured scientists below 45 years for innovative research across physical, life, medical, earth, agricultural, and space sciences.

Significance – The awards highlight India's scientific depth, women's growing leadership in science, and the role of research in inclusive development and grassroots innovation.

2. ICAO Council

India has been re-elected to the ICAO Council with one of the highest mandates.

About the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

It The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for coordinating global civil aviation.

Establishment – ICAO was established in 1944 under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Headquarters – Montreal, Canada

Objective – ICAO aims To ensure the safe, secure, orderly, and sustainable development of international civil aviation worldwide.

Membership – ICAO has 193 member States, all signatories to the Chicago Convention. India is a founding signatory of the Convention

Core Functions – It develops Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), promotes aviation safety, security, efficiency, environmental protection, and capacity-building.

No Country Left Behind (NCLB) Initiative – This ICAO initiative supports developing countries by strengthening aviation capacity and harmonising global standards, with India emerging as a key partner.

Structure of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

Assembly – The sovereign body comprising 193 member States, meeting every three years to set policy, approve budgets, and review ICAO's work.

Council – A 36-member governing body elected by the Assembly, responsible for implementing decisions, managing finances, and adopting Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

Secretary General – The chief executive heading the Secretariat and overseeing daily operations.

Secretariat – Manages routine functions through five Bureaus Air Navigation, Air Transport, Technical Cooperation, Legal Affairs & External Relations, and Administration & Services.

Supporting Bodies – Include the Air Navigation Commission, expert panels, and seven regional offices

facilitating global implementation.

About ICAO Council

The ICAO Council is the permanent governing body of ICAO between Assembly sessions.

Participants – The ICAO Assembly, held every three years, elects 36 member States to the Council for a three-year term.

Composition – Each Council State appoints a diplomatic representative, while members elect a non-voting Council President.

Council States 2022 – 2025 – The following States were elected from Member States during the 2022 ICAO Assembly.

PART I – States of chief importance in air transport – Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom and the United States.

PART II – States which make the largest contribution to the provision of facilities for international civil air navigation – Argentina, Austria, Egypt, Iceland, **India**, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, and Venezuela.

PART III – States ensuring geographic representation – Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mauritania, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe.

Role and Functions – The Council oversees the ICAO Secretariat, adopts policies, ensures implementation of SARPs, and conducts ongoing diplomatic and technical decision-making.

Significance – India's re-election reflects its expanding role in global aviation governance, technical cooperation, and leadership in supporting developing aviation systems.

3. Samudra Pratap

The Indian Coast Guard has inducted Samudra Pratap, India's first indigenously designed Pollution Control Vessel, strengthening national capacity to prevent and respond to marine oil spills.

About Samudra Pratap

Samudra Pratap is a specialised Pollution Control Vessel (PCV) built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for the Indian Coast Guard, marking a major step in indigenous maritime capability.

Key Features

The vessel is 114.5 metres long, 16.5 metres wide, with a displacement of about 4,170 tonnes, and is manned by 14 officers and 115 sailors. It is equipped with flush-type side-sweeping arms, advanced radar systems for oil spill detection, and onboard facilities to recover, treat, and store spilled oil. It features Dynamic Positioning System, retractable stern thruster, pollution response boats, and external firefighting systems, along with modern weaponry for maritime security. The vessel has over 60% indigenous content, aligning with Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives.

Significance

Enhances the Indian Coast Guard's oil spill response and pollution control capability along India's coastline, EEZ, and high seas. Strengthens enforcement of marine environmental protection laws, alongside roles in search and rescue and maritime law enforcement. Demonstrates India's growing self-reliance in specialised shipbuilding for environmental security and coastal resilience.

4. "Pa Pa Pagli Yojana"

Gujarat's Dahod district has drawn attention for implementing a play-based early childhood learning model through Anganwadi centres under the "Pa Pa Pagli Yojana".

About "Pa Pa Pagli Yojana"

"Pa Pa Pagli (First Steps of the Child)" is a play-oriented pre-school education initiative aimed at children aged three to six years in Anganwadi centres.

Objective – The scheme seeks to strengthen early childhood education, enhance cognitive development, and build a strong learning foundation during the most critical phase of brain development.

Nodal Bodies – The programme is a flagship initiative of the Gujarat Women and Child Development Department, implemented with technical and knowledge support from UNICEF India.

Key Components

1. A games-cum-class learning model that combines structured play with pre-school education.
2. Activities focused on language development, motor skills, social interaction, and basic life skills.
3. Use of interactive games and educational videos to improve engagement and curiosity.

Implementation - The programme is delivered through Anganwadi workers, who are trained to integrate play-based learning into daily routines across over 3,000 Anganwadi centres in Dahod.

Significance - By improving confidence, learning ability, and school readiness in a backward district with high dropout rates, the model offers a scalable template for early childhood education reforms across India.