



# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## 1 Regional Conference on Drug Trafficking and National Security

**Context:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired the **Regional Conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security'**, emphasizing the need for states, UTs, and agencies to adopt a **ruthless approach** against **illegal drug laboratories**.



- **Organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**, the conference aimed to tackle the escalating issue of drug trafficking and its implications for **national security**.

### Key Highlights from the Conference:

#### Record-Breaking Drug Seizures in 2024:

- India achieved its **highest-ever drug seizures**, confiscating **narcotics worth 16,914 crore** in 2024.
- This represents a **seven-fold increase** in seizures over the past decade, attributed to the government's decisive anti-drug measures.

#### Emerging Challenges: Dark Web and Technology:

- The **dark web**, **cryptocurrency**, and **drones** were identified as significant **technological challenges** in combating drug trafficking.
- **What is the Dark Web?**
  - It is a small, encrypted part of the internet that is **inaccessible** through traditional search engines like Google.
  - It requires special tools like **Tor (The Onion Router)** or **I2P (Invisible Internet Project)**.
- The Home Minister urged **collaboration between technocrats, states, and the Central government** to develop effective **technical solutions**.

#### Success Against Narco-Terrorism:

- The government has **dismantled numerous narco-terror networks** in states such as **Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh**.
- These efforts have significantly weakened **terrorism linked to drug trafficking**.

#### Drug Disposal Fortnight:

- **Drug Disposal Fortnight (January 11–25)** was inaugurated to destroy **1 lakh kg of narcotics worth 8,600 crore**.
- This initiative is part of a **broader strategy** to achieve a **drug-free India by 2047**.

#### Three-Pronged Strategy for a Drug-Free India:

1. **Strengthening Institutional Frameworks.**
2. **Enhancing Coordination** among narcotics agencies.
3. **Public Awareness Campaigns** to educate citizens about the dangers of drug abuse.

#### A Decade of Progress: Seizures and Destruction:

- Between **2004–2014**, only **3.63 kg** of drugs were seized.
- From **2014–2024**, this figure surged to **24 lakh kg**, marking a **seven-fold increase**.
- The value of destroyed drugs rose from **8,150 crore** to **54,851 crore**, reflecting an **eight-fold increase**.

**NCB's Initiatives and Expansion:**

- **Inauguration of the NCB Bhopal Zonal Unit** to bolster regional operations.
- **Extension of MANAS-2 Helpline (1933)** across all **36 states and UTs**, enhancing accessibility for reporting drug-related activities.

**Regulatory Framework in India: Fighting the Drug Menace:****Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 47** of the Indian Constitution mandates the State to **prohibit the consumption of intoxicating drugs**, except for medicinal purposes.

**India's Role in Global Conventions:****India is a signatory to:**

1. The **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)**.
2. The **Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)**.
3. The **United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)**.

**Key Legislation in India:**

1. **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**.
2. **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985**.
3. **Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988**.

**Institutional Efforts:**

- **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** was established in 1986 as a **nodal agency** to combat drug trafficking.
- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** and **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE)** handle **drug demand reduction** and **rehabilitation programs**.

**Technological Interventions:**

- **NCORD Portal**: A platform for effective information exchange among agencies.
- **MANAS Helpline (1933)**: A toll-free number to report drug-related activities.
- **NIDAAN Portal**: Tracks narco-offenders nationwide.

**Additional Measures for a Drug-Free India:**

- Creation of **Anti-Narcotics Task Forces (ANTF)** in every state and UT.
- Deployment of **canine squads** for drug detection.
- Establishment of **Special NDPS Courts** and **Fast-Track Courts** for expedited trials.
- **Strengthening forensic capabilities** to investigate drug-related cases.

**The Vision for 2047: A Drug-Free India:**

- The **Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan** is a cornerstone in realizing **PM Modi's vision** of a **developed and drug-free India** by 2047.
- **Collective responsibility**, public awareness, and institutional strength are pivotal in safeguarding the **youth** and securing the nation's future.



## 2 Groundwater Contamination in India: Nitrate and Chemical Pollutants

**Context:** A recent assessment by the **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** has revealed alarming levels of **nitrate contamination** in several Indian states. This issue poses a significant **health and environmental risk**, affecting over half of India's districts.

### Central Ground Water Board (CGWB): A Key Player

#### About the CGWB:

The **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** operates under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** and is tasked with the **monitoring, management, and regulation of groundwater resources** across India.

- **Headquarters:** Bhujal Bhawan, Faridabad, Haryana
- **Leadership:** Headed by a Chairman with a team of five members.

#### Monitoring Groundwater Levels:

- **Observation Network:** 26,000 wells are used to manually measure groundwater levels.
- **Digital Integration:** Since 2023, **16,000–17,000 piezometers** equipped with digital water-level recorders provide **real-time data** to a central monitoring system.

### Nitrate Contamination in Groundwater: A Rising Concern

#### Increase in Nitrate-Contaminated Districts:

- In **2017**, **359 districts** reported excessive nitrate levels in groundwater.
- By **2023**, this figure rose to **440 districts**, impacting **56% of India's districts**.

#### Groundwater Testing Trends:

- **2017:** Of **13,028 samples**, **21.6%** exceeded safe nitrate levels (above **45 mg/l**).
- **2023:** Out of **15,239 samples**, **19.8%** showed contamination.
- While the **percentage** of affected samples remained relatively stable, the number of **contaminated districts increased significantly**.

#### Health Implications:

Excessive nitrate causes **methemoglobinemia** or "blue baby syndrome," which reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of red blood cells, particularly affecting **infants and vulnerable populations**.

#### Environmental Impact:

- High nitrate levels lead to **algal blooms** in water bodies, causing **oxygen depletion** and damaging aquatic ecosystems.

#### Sources of Nitrate Contamination:

- **Agricultural Practices:** Fertilizers like **ammonium nitrate, urea, and diammonium hydrogen phosphate** contribute to nitrate leaching.
- **Forms of Nitrogen in Groundwater:**
  - Nitrate ( $\text{NO}_3^-$ )
  - Ammonium ( $\text{NH}_4^+$ )
  - Ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ )
  - Nitrite ( $\text{NO}_2^-$ )
  - Nitrogen gas ( $\text{N}_2$ )
  - Nitrous oxide ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ )
  - Organic nitrogen

#### Regional Analysis of Nitrate Contamination:

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### States with the Highest Proportion of Contamination

1. **Rajasthan:** 49% of samples tested exceeded nitrate limits.
2. **Karnataka:** 48% of samples were contaminated.
3. **Tamil Nadu:** 37% of samples had unsafe nitrate levels.

### Persistent Issues in Some States:

- **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat** have faced **long-standing nitrate contamination** since 2017.

### Emerging Concerns:

- **Central and Southern States** are reporting **increasing nitrate contamination**.
- Key states:
  - **Maharashtra:** 35.74%
  - **Telangana:** 27.48%
  - **Andhra Pradesh:** 23.5%
  - **Madhya Pradesh:** 22.58%

### Other Major Chemical Contaminants in Groundwater

#### Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron, and Uranium

In addition to nitrate, these contaminants are critical threats to **groundwater quality**.

#### Fluoride Contamination:

- **9.04%** of groundwater samples exceed permissible fluoride levels.
- **High-Risk States:** Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

#### Uranium Contamination:

- Uranium levels in some samples exceed **100 ppb (parts per billion)**, far above the safe limit of **30 ppb**.
- **High-Risk States:** Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka.

#### Root Cause:

- Over-exploited groundwater zones where **withdrawal exceeds natural replenishment** are more prone to contamination.

#### The State of Groundwater in 2024:

##### Extraction Trends:

- India's groundwater extraction rate is **60.4%**, consistent since 2009.

##### Safe Zones:

- Approximately **73% of blocks** are classified as 'safe,' indicating adequate replenishment to balance water withdrawal.

##### The Way Forward:

1. **Promote Sustainable Agriculture:** Encourage the use of organic fertilizers and precision farming techniques to reduce nitrate leaching.
2. **Strengthen Monitoring Systems:** Expand digital water-level recorders and observation networks for real-time data.
3. **Enhance Public Awareness:** Educate communities about the health and environmental risks of groundwater contamination.
4. **Policy Interventions:** Enforce strict regulations on fertilizer usage and groundwater withdrawal in vulnerable zones.

##### Conclusion:

India's groundwater faces **critical challenges** from nitrate and other chemical contaminants. Addressing this issue requires **collective efforts** from government agencies, local authorities, and the public to ensure a **sustainable and safe water future**.

## 3 Interpol's Silver Notice: A New Tool Against Criminal Asset Laundering

**Context:** The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) has recently introduced its first-ever 'Silver Notice', a groundbreaking initiative aimed at tracking and retrieving criminally acquired assets across borders.

**What is the Silver Notice?**

**A New Addition to Interpol's Colour-Coded Alerts**

The **Silver Notice** expands Interpol's suite of **colour-coded alerts**, focusing specifically on **assets obtained through criminal activities**.

**Purpose:**

- Designed to help countries **trace and recover assets linked to crimes** such as fraud, corruption, drug trafficking, and environmental violations.
- Facilitates international cooperation to identify and **track laundered assets** across borders.

**Origins and Scope:**

- Launched as part of a **pilot project** involving **52 countries**, including India.
- The initiative was initiated following a request from **Italy** to locate the assets of a senior mafia member.
- The project will run until **November 2025**, with **500 Silver Notices** available for use by participating nations.

**How Does the Silver Notice Work?**

- Requesting Information:** Countries can issue Silver Notices to gather information on various **criminally linked assets**, including properties, vehicles, businesses, and financial accounts.
- Identifying and Locating Assets:** Enables the identification and location of these assets, paving the way for **legal actions** such as **seizure or confiscation**, in compliance with national laws.
- Global Coordination:** Acts as a bridge between countries to facilitate **asset tracing** on an international scale, ensuring that no criminal asset goes unnoticed.

**India's Participation and Potential Gains:**

**India as a Key Participant:** India is among the **52 nations** participating in this initiative.

**Significance for India:**

- India faces challenges with **fugitive economic offenders** and **unaccounted black money** stashed abroad.
- The **Silver Notice** offers a powerful tool to **trace and recover these offshore assets**, boosting the country's fight against economic crimes.

**Why is the Silver Notice Important?**

- Targeted Approach:** Focuses on the **financial aspect of crimes**, ensuring that illicit profits are identified and retrieved.
- Global Reach:** Facilitates **cross-border collaboration** in asset recovery, reducing safe havens for criminals.
- Complement to Legal Actions:** Enhances the ability of nations to take **legal and punitive measures** against offenders.

**Conclusion:** Interpol's **Silver Notice** is a **game-changer in combating international financial crimes**. By streamlining the process of tracing and recovering criminal assets, it strengthens global efforts to curb economic offenses and enhances cooperation among nations. For India, this initiative is a significant step forward in its quest to address the challenges posed by **fugitive offenders and laundered wealth**.



## 4 India Joins UN Panel on Big Data for Official Statistics

**Context:** India has become a member of the **UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD)**.

- This milestone, announced by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, marks India's active role in shaping global standards for leveraging **Big Data and data science** in official statistics.



### About UN-CEBD:

#### Establishment and Purpose:

- Formed in **2014** under the **UN Statistical Commission**, the **UN-CEBD** explores the potential of **Big Data and data science** in enhancing official statistics.
- It provides **strategic vision, coordination**, and direction for implementing global programs on **Big Data** for statistical purposes.

#### Focus Areas:

- Promoting the use of **Big Data** to monitor progress toward achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Addressing challenges and opportunities posed by **Big Data technologies** in statistics.

### UN Statistical Commission:

#### Overview:

- Established in **1946** by the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, the **UN Statistical Commission (UNSC)** is the **highest decision-making body** for international statistical activities.
- It develops **statistical standards** and methodologies while overseeing their implementation at the **national and international levels**.

#### Composition:

- Comprises **24 member countries**, elected by the **United Nations Economic and Social Council** to ensure **equitable geographical representation**.

### What is Big Data?

#### Definition:

**Big Data** refers to massive and complex datasets that traditional tools cannot efficiently process or analyze.

#### Key Characteristics (3Vs):

- Volume:** Enormous quantities of data generated from sources like **social media, sensors, and transactions**.
- Velocity:** High-speed generation and processing of data in real time.
- Variety:** Diverse data formats, including **structured, unstructured, and semi-structured data**.

#### Additional Dimensions:

- Veracity:** Reliability and quality of data.
- Value:** Insights and actionable intelligence derived from data.

### Significance of India's Membership:

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- India's participation in the **UN-CEBD** reinforces its commitment to using **data science** for improving **official statistics**.
- It provides an opportunity for India to:
  - Collaborate on **global data initiatives**.
  - Contribute to the development of **statistical frameworks**.
  - Address key challenges in monitoring **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

### Conclusion:

India's inclusion in the **UN-CEBD** represents a significant step toward **modernizing statistical practices** and harnessing the potential of **Big Data and data science**. By playing a proactive role in this global initiative, India will help set standards that align with the evolving demands of data-driven decision-making and sustainable development.



## 5 Gen Beta is Here: Understanding Generations and Their Unique Characteristics

**Context:** A generational shift is upon us. Starting from **January 1, 2025**, children born until **December 31, 2039**, will belong to a new era: **Generation Beta**. This cohort follows the **Alpha Generation**, marking a continuation of evolving societal norms and technological advancements.



### What is Generation Beta (2025–2039)?

- **Successors to Generation Alpha:** Generation Beta will follow **Gen Alpha**, also known as the **iPad Generation**, born between **2010 and 2024**.
- **Parental Lineage:** They will primarily be the children of **younger Millennials** and **older Gen Zers**.
- **Naming Origin:** The name “Beta” derives from the **Greek alphabet**, continuing the trend started with **Gen Alpha**, a term introduced by demographer **Mark McCrindle**.

### What Defines a Generation?

- A **generation** refers to a group of individuals born in the same time frame, sharing similar experiences and influences.
- The concept gained prominence through **Karl Mannheim’s 1928 paper**, *The Problem of Generations*.
- **Cohort:** A subgroup within a generation that experiences specific historical or cultural events, influencing shared values and beliefs.

### How Are Generations Named?

Generational names often reflect key societal or historical changes:

1. **Baby Boomers:** Named after the post-World War II baby boom.
2. **Millennials:** Referring to those reaching adulthood around the turn of the millennium.
3. **Greek Alphabet:** Recently adopted for naming, starting with **Generation Alpha** (2010–2024).

### Notable Generations and Their Traits:

#### 1. Baby Boomers (1946–1964):

- **Historical Context:** Born during a time of post-war optimism and significant population growth.
- **Indian Perspective:** Experienced the **Emergency**, wars, and socialist policies.
- **Traits:** Idealistic, competitive, with a strong sense of independence and mistrust of authority.

#### 2. Generation X (1964–1979):

- **Identity:** Known for skepticism, with “X” symbolizing a break from traditional norms.
- **Influences in India:** Economic reforms, the rise of telecommunications, and early IT growth.
- **Nickname:** Called the “**Sandwich Generation**” for balancing care for aging parents (Boomers) and children (Gen Z).

#### 3. Millennials or Gen Y (1980–1995):

- **Technology Revolution:** Witnessed the dawn of the internet and technological breakthroughs.
- **Key Events:** Shaped by events like **9/11** and the rise of school violence, fostering a “live in the moment” attitude.



- **Traits:** Tech-savvy, socially conscious, and prioritizing **work-life balance**.

#### 4. Generation Z (1996–2010):

- **Digital Natives:** Grew up entirely in the age of **social media** and smartphones.
- **Challenges:** Lived through the **2007 financial crisis**, fostering resilience.
- **Advocacies:** Mental health, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

#### 5. Generation Alpha (2010–2024):

- **Social Media Natives:** This generation has only known a world dominated by digital platforms.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The pandemic shaped their formative years.
- **Focus Areas:** Strong emphasis on **inclusion, sustainability**, and **mental health awareness**.

#### What Can We Expect from Generation Beta?

- **Inheriting Global Challenges:** Climate change, urbanization, and socio-economic inequality will define their environment.
- **AI-Driven World:** They will grow up in a world where **artificial intelligence** and **automation** are seamlessly integrated into everyday life.
- **Traits and Values:** Likely to emphasize **adaptability, hyper-connectivity**, and **sustainability**.

#### Conclusion:

As **Generation Beta** emerges, they will represent the next wave of cultural and technological evolution. Defined by their **hyper-connected lives**, they will shape the future while tackling inherited challenges. Each generation leaves its mark, and **Gen Beta** promises to be no exception.

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## New National Museum in Delhi: A Glimpse into India's Timeless Legacy

**Context:** As part of the **Central Vista redevelopment plan**, the iconic **North and South Blocks** in New Delhi are being transformed into the country's most prestigious museum, '**Yug Yugeen Bharat**'—symbolizing **Eternal India**. This ambitious project is a step toward preserving and showcasing India's rich heritage while modernizing urban spaces.



### About 'Yug Yugeen Bharat'

- **Symbolism:** The name translates to "Eternal India," capturing the essence of India's continuous civilizational journey.
- **Collaboration with France:** India has partnered with France, signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to develop the museum, drawing inspiration from globally renowned cultural projects like the **Louvre Museum**.
- **Architectural Significance:** The transformation of the North and South Blocks represents a perfect blend of **modern innovation** and **architectural preservation**.

### Key Features of the Museum:

#### 1. Chronological and Thematic Displays:

- **North Block:** Artefacts will be arranged **chronologically** across **250 galleries**, narrating the story of India's historical evolution.
- **South Block:** This space will feature **thematic displays**, covering subjects such as **literature, architecture, art, and culture**.

#### 2. Immersive and Educational Spaces:

- **Augmented Reality (AR) Galleries:** Visitors can experience artefacts in an **interactive, digital format**, blending history with modern technology.
- **Learning Zones:** The museum will house **educational centres** and **children's corners**, fostering curiosity and learning among young minds.

#### 3. Largest Collection:

With **25,000–30,000 artefacts**, the museum aims to become the **largest cultural repository in the world**, surpassing many global counterparts in scale and diversity.

### Adaptive Reuse: A Sustainable Transformation:

- **Retrofitting for Cultural Heritage:** The North and South Blocks are being **repurposed** into world-class museum spaces, retaining their **colonial architectural charm** while adapting them to modern requirements.
- **Global Inspiration:** The approach draws parallels with France's '**Grand Projects**' initiative, which converted historic government buildings like the **Louvre Museum** and the **Grand Palais** into cultural landmarks.

### Office Relocation and Space Utilization:

- **Current Offices in North Block:** Houses the Ministries of **Finance** and **Home Affairs**.
- **Current Offices in South Block:** Includes the **Prime Minister's Office**, Ministry of **Defence**, and Ministry of **External Affairs**.



- These offices are being relocated to the **Common Central Secretariat (CCS)** on **Janpath**, making way for the museum's construction.

### Additional Insights:

#### Historical Significance of the North and South Blocks:

- Designed by British architects **Herbert Baker** and **Edwin Lutyens** in the **1920s**, these structures have been at the heart of India's governance.
- The transformation into a museum marks the beginning of a new chapter in the buildings' legacy, ensuring their relevance for future generations.

#### Why This Museum Matters:

- **Global Benchmark:** Once completed, it will set a **new benchmark** in the world of museums, showcasing India's vast heritage on an unprecedented scale.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Collaborating with France strengthens India's cultural ties with one of the world's leading nations in **museum development**.
- **Public Engagement:** By integrating **technology and education**, the museum aims to become a hub for learning and global tourism.

#### Fact Corner:

- **Largest Museum in the World:** The Louvre Museum in Paris currently holds this title, with **380,000** artefacts.
- **India's Current Largest Museum:** The **Indian Museum in Kolkata**, founded in **1814**, houses **over 100,000** objects.
- **Significance of Central Vista:** This redevelopment project includes **new government offices**, the **Parliament building**, and the museum, reflecting India's **aspirational growth** while respecting its historical roots.

#### Conclusion:

The '**Yug Yugeen Bharat**' Museum is not just a cultural initiative—it's a testament to India's vision of balancing **modernity and tradition**. By preserving the architectural legacy of the **North and South Blocks** while showcasing the country's rich heritage, this project promises to redefine **India's cultural identity** on the global stage.