



Daily Current Affairs



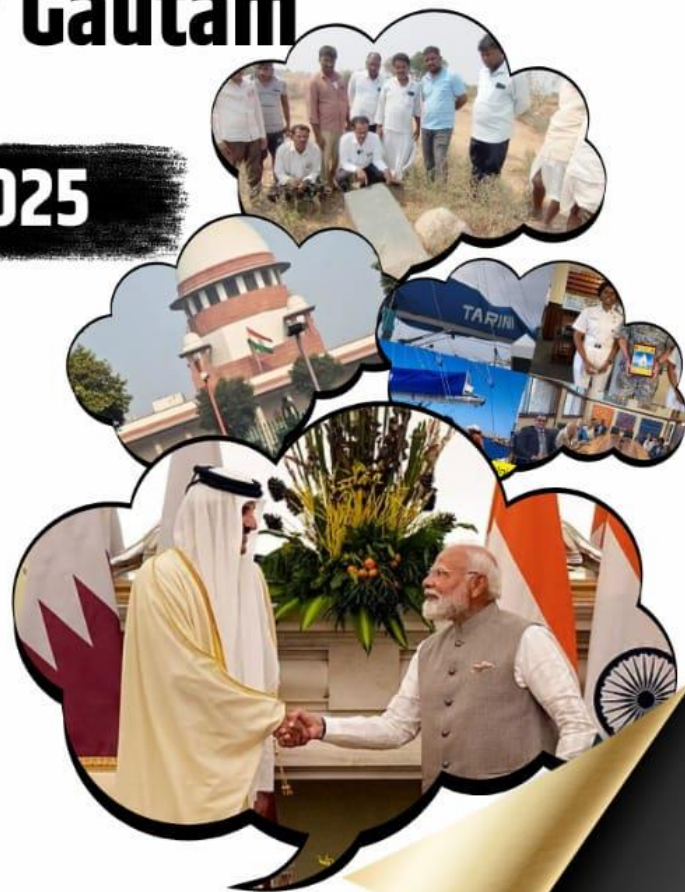
To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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RuTAGe Smart Village Center (RSVC): Transforming Rural India with Technology

Context: The RuTAGe Smart Village Center (RSVC) has been launched in **Mandaura village, Sonipat**, marking a groundbreaking step in rural technological development. This initiative aims to integrate **advanced technology** into village life, empowering communities with **sustainable and scalable solutions**.



Concept and Vision:

The **RSVC model** was conceptualized by the **Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)**. It is designed to serve as a **permanent technology hub** at the **Panchayat level**, providing continuous support to **15-20 villages** over several years. Its success was recognized when it won **first prize at the NSE's Social Stock Exchange event in Varanasi (2024)**.

Technological Innovations and Services:

The **RSVC initiative** offers a diverse range of **12 technology tracks** to address key rural challenges:

1. Agriculture & Waste Management:

- Solutions for **agriculture, waste disposal, homestays, and village tourism**
- Support from **pre-sowing to post-harvest** in collaboration with **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**

2. RuTAG Technologies:

- Innovations developed by **7 IITs** under the guidance of the **Office of the PSA**

3. Livelihood & Entrepreneurship:

- Strengthening **local businesses** through schemes like the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)**

4. Renewable Energy:

- Deployment of **solar hybrid and wind technologies** with technical assistance from **SELCO Foundation**

5. WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene):

- **Waste management and water sanitation** solutions
- Implementation of **IIT Madras Aquamaps and weVois technologies**

6. FinTech and Digital Inclusion:

- **Financial inclusion** apps and **AR/VR-based tech solutions** developed by **IISC and XR Group**

7. Capacity Building:

- Training programs in partnership with **Tier 2 & 3 colleges**
- **NIFTEM** piloting **local biscuit manufacturing** using **sugar and ghee**
- **NAARM** conducting **skill development** for **RSVC heads**

8. Government Scheme Apps:

- Dissemination of **welfare programs and tech-driven government schemes** through **citizen-centric apps**

9. Assistive Technologies:

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- Development of **solutions for differently-abled individuals** in collaboration with the **Assistive Technology Foundation**

Why RSVC Matters:

The **RSVC initiative** is designed to bridge the gap between **rural communities** and **technological advancements**. It aims to:

- Solve pressing rural issues like **animal intrusion, organic farming, and skill development**
- Introduce **cutting-edge innovations** that improve **agriculture, education, and livelihoods**
- Enhance access to **financial services, water conservation, and digital literacy**

The Role of Technology in Rural Development:

1. Agriculture:

- **GPS-based precision tools** and **mechanization** help **increase productivity** and reduce labor costs

2. Education:

- Digital learning platforms like **PM e-VIDYA** and **SWAYAM** enable **quality education** for rural students

3. Financial Inclusion:

- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** and **PM Jan Dhan Yojana** promote **cashless transactions**, reducing fraud and ensuring transparency

4. Water Management:

- The **National Program on Aquifer Mapping and Management** uses **technology** for **groundwater conservation** in farming

Future Outlook:

The **RuTAGE Smart Village Center (RSVC)** represents a **major milestone** in **rural empowerment through technology**. With continuous **updates and feedback**, the initiative aims to **scale its impact**, ensuring that **innovation reaches every village**.

This model has the potential to **revolutionize rural development**, making **villages self-sufficient, sustainable, and technologically advanced**.

2

India and Qatar Forge Strategic Partnership to Enhance Trade, Investment & Energy Ties

Context: India and Qatar have strengthened their bilateral relations with the signing of a **Strategic Partnership Agreement**, aiming to boost **trade, investment, and energy cooperation**. The visit of **Qatar's Amir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani**, to India marked a significant milestone in diplomatic and economic collaboration.



India-Qatar Bilateral Relations:

India and Qatar share **historic ties, high-level diplomatic engagements, and a strong Indian diaspora**, playing a crucial role in Qatar's development.

Defense Collaboration:

- Defense ties include **training programs, naval visits, and participation in DIMDEX (Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference)**.
- The **Defense Cooperation Agreement**, extended in **2018**, is managed by the **Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC)**.

Trade and Investment Relations:

- **Bilateral trade** between India and Qatar stood at **\$18.77 billion in 2022-23**.
- **India's exports to Qatar** were valued at **\$1.96 billion**, while **imports from Qatar** reached **\$16.8 billion**.
- India is among Qatar's **top three export destinations**, alongside **China and Japan**.

Energy Cooperation:

- **Qatar is India's largest supplier of LNG**, delivering **10.74 million metric tonnes (MMT) worth \$8.32 billion** in **2022-23**, accounting for **48% of India's total LNG imports**.
- It is also the **largest supplier of LPG to India**, providing **5.33 MMT worth \$4.04 billion**, covering **29% of India's LPG imports**.

Cultural and Labor Relations:

- **Over 835,000 Indian nationals** reside in Qatar, making up **27% of its population**.
- Qatar has introduced **labor reforms**, including the **abolition of the Kafala system**, introduction of **minimum wages**, and **enhanced worker protections**.

Key Outcomes of the Visit:

Upgrading Relations to a Strategic Partnership:

- **India and Qatar have elevated their diplomatic ties to a Strategic Partnership**, joining **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait** in India's **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) engagements**.

Doubling Bilateral Trade to \$28 Billion:

- Both nations set an ambitious goal to **double bilateral trade to \$28 billion by 2030**, focusing on **trade, investment, and energy**.

Qatar's \$10 Billion Investment in India:

- **Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Fund** has committed **\$10 billion** for investments in:



- Infrastructure
- Ports & Shipbuilding
- Renewable Energy
- Smart Cities & Food Parks
- Startups, AI, Robotics, and Machine Learning

Exploring a Free Trade Agreement (FTA):

- India and Qatar discussed the possibility of an **FTA** to enhance economic collaboration.
- Separately, India is also negotiating an **FTA with the GCC**, which includes Qatar.

Key Trade and Financial Developments:

- **Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)** will establish an office in India to expand investment operations.
- India's **UPI payment system** will be operational at **Qatar National Bank (QNB) Point of Sales terminals**.
- **Qatar National Bank** will expand its presence in India by opening an office in **GIFT City, Gujarat**.

Agreements and MoUs Signed:

- Two major **agreements** and five **Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** were signed, covering:
 - **Economic cooperation**
 - **Youth affairs**
 - **Double taxation avoidance**

Strengthening Energy Partnership:

- **Qatar** reaffirmed its commitment to India's energy security.
- A long-term agreement between **Qatar Energy** and **Petronet LNG Limited** was signed, ensuring the supply of **7.5 MMT of LNG annually for 20 years starting in 2028**.

Conclusion:

Qatar remains a **key strategic partner** for India, given its **geopolitical significance, trade potential, energy resources, and large Indian diaspora**. This visit marked a **major reset in relations** following tensions over the imprisonment of **eight Indian Navy veterans**—seven of whom have returned, while one remains in Qatar.

This new **Strategic Partnership** signals a new era of **economic, security, and energy cooperation**, solidifying India-Qatar ties for years to come.

3

Navika Sagar Parikrama II: INSV Tarini Reaches Port Stanley

Context: The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini successfully reached Port Stanley on February 18, 2025, completing the third and most challenging leg of the Navika Sagar Parikrama II expedition.

About Navika Sagar Parikrama II:

The Navika Sagar Parikrama initiative highlights the Indian Navy's commitment to women empowerment and maritime excellence.

- The expedition is crewed by two women officers, Lieutenant Commander Dilna K and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A.
- The mission promotes ocean sailing, self-reliance, and India's maritime heritage.
- The historic journey was flagged off from Goa on October 2, 2024, by the Chief of the Naval Staff.
- Covering over 21,600 nautical miles (approx. 40,000 km), the journey consists of five legs with stopovers for replenishment and maintenance.



Route of Navika Sagar Parikrama II:

1. Goa to Fremantle, Australia
2. Fremantle to Lyttleton, New Zealand
3. Lyttleton to Port Stanley, Falkland Islands (Completed Phase 3)
4. Port Stanley to Cape Town, South Africa (Upcoming Phase 4)
5. Cape Town to Goa (Final Leg)

About INSV Tarini:

- INSV Tarini is a 56-foot sailing vessel built by M/s Aquarius Shipyard Ltd.
- It was inducted into the Indian Navy on February 18, 2017.
- The vessel has sailed over 66,000 nautical miles (1,22,223 km) and participated in the first edition of Navika Sagar Parikrama in 2017.
- It is equipped with state-of-the-art navigation, safety, and communication systems, ensuring a smooth and secure voyage.

Significance of the Expedition:

The Navika Sagar Parikrama II stands as a testament to women's empowerment in maritime operations, reinforcing India's role as a global naval force. With INSV Tarini reaching Port Stanley, the expedition moves closer to its final destination, showcasing resilience, skill, and determination on the high seas.

4 India's Upcoming Greenhouse Gas Inventory Submission to the UN

Context: India is in the **final stages** of preparing its **first-ever Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)**, fulfilling its commitment under the **2015 Paris Agreement** on climate change.

What is the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)?

The **Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)** is a comprehensive document that presents a nation's **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory**, **sector-wise emissions sources**, and **mitigation strategies**.



Key Features of the BTR:

- Aims to **enhance transparency and accountability** in climate action.
- Follows a **standardized reporting format** set by the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.
- Unlike previous reports such as **National Communications and Biennial Update Reports (BURs)**, the BTR **undergoes an external review** by **independent UNFCCC experts**.
- Initially required only from **developed nations**, but the **2015 Paris Agreement** extended this requirement to **all countries**.
- As per **COP 21 (2015)**, nations had to submit their **first BTR by December 2024**, but several countries, including **India**, **missed the deadline**.
- The process accelerated at **COP 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan**, where nations began following the UNFCCC's prescribed format.

India's Emissions Data and Projections:

- The BTR will provide emissions data up to 2022.
- India's **last BUR (2020)** reported a **7.93% decline in GHG emissions from 2019**, primarily due to the **economic slowdown caused by COVID-19**.
- The **upcoming BTR is expected to show an increase in emissions**, reflecting **economic recovery**, which aligns with **global trends**.
- Despite this increase, **India's share in global emissions remains between 4% and 5%**.
- In **per capita terms**, India's emissions **remain less than one-third of the global average**.

What are Biennial Update Reports (BURs)?

BURs are reports submitted by **developing countries** to the **UNFCCC** as part of their commitment under the **Paris Agreement** and **Cancún Agreements**.

Purpose of BURs:

- Provide **updates on GHG inventories**.
- Outline **mitigation actions and their impact**.
- Highlight **financial, technical, and capacity-building needs**.
- Developing countries are required to **submit BURs every two years**.
- These reports undergo **International Consultation and Analysis (ICA)** to ensure **transparency and credibility**.

Significance of India's BTR Submission:

India's **first-ever BTR** marks a **crucial step** in its commitment to **climate accountability and global cooperation**. While emissions may rise due to **economic growth**, India remains dedicated to **sustainable development**, maintaining a **relatively low per capita emissions footprint** compared to global standards.

5 Discovery of Rare Kalyana Chalukya-Era Kannada Inscriptions in Telangana

Context: Three rare Kannada inscriptions from the Kalyana Chalukya era have been discovered in **Telangana**, shedding new light on the history and culture of the 12th century. These inscriptions, dated **1129 CE, 1130 CE, and 1132 CE**, belong to the reign of **Emperor Someswara-III Bhulokamalla** of the **Kalyana Chalukya** dynasty.



Details of the Inscriptions:

- The **first inscription** provides details about the construction of the **Bijjeswara temple** and the **donations made by a local village chief**.
- The **second and third inscriptions** record **various donations** offered to the temple.

Who Were the Kalyana Chalukyas?

The **Kalyana Chalukyas**, also known as the **Later or Western Chalukyas**, were successors of the **Chalukyas of Badami**. Their rule extended from **973 AD to 1180 AD**, with their capital at **Kalyan (now in Bidar district, Karnataka)**.

- **Taila II** was the first ruler of this dynasty, known for his victory over **Rajaraja Chola in 992 AD**.
- They controlled the **Deccan region**, playing a crucial role in shaping its political and cultural landscape.

Art and Cultural Contributions:

Architecture:

The Kalyana Chalukyas were renowned for their **architectural brilliance**, with some of the most magnificent temples and **ornate stepped wells (Pushkarni)** built during their time.

Notable Temples:

- **Kasi Vishveshvara Temple** (Lakkundi)
- **Mallikarjuna Temple** (Kuruvatti)
- **Kalleshwara Temple** (Bagali)
- **Mahadeva Temple** (Itagi)

Famous Stepped Wells:

- **Manikesvara Temple Pushkarni** (Lakkundi) – used for **ritual bathing and temple rituals**.

Literature and Language:

The **Kalyana Chalukya era** was a **golden period** for **Sanskrit and Kannada literature**. Several literary giants emerged during this time:

- **Pampa** – One of the greatest Kannada poets.
- **Ranna** – Celebrated for his epic poetry.
- **Durgasimha & Nagavarma** – Significant contributors to Kannada literature.

Religious Developments:

This period saw the **flourishing of Shaivism**, with various sects such as:



- Pashupata
- Lakulisa
- Kalamukha

Additionally, this era marked the rise of a **new socio-religious movement** under the leadership of **Basavanna**, leading to the emergence of the **Lingayat tradition**.

Significance of the Discovery:

These newly discovered inscriptions provide **valuable insights into temple patronage, governance, and religious practices** of the **Kalyana Chalukya period**. They also highlight the **rich cultural and architectural legacy** that continues to influence the **Deccan region** today.



6

Supreme Court Issues Key Directives on Remission of Sentences

Context: In the case of **Re Policy Strategy for Grant of Bail**, the **Supreme Court (SC)** has issued crucial directives regarding the power of the **appropriate government** to **remit** (reduce or waive) a convict's sentence, either partially or entirely.

The ruling emphasizes the government's obligation to ensure a **fair and transparent remission process** for eligible prisoners.



Legal Framework Governing Remission:

The authority to grant remission is governed by:

- **Section 432 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**
- **Section 473 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**

These provisions empower the **appropriate government** to decide on **sentence reductions** based on legal guidelines.

Key Supreme Court Directives:

1. Mandatory Consideration for Remission:

- **States and Union Territories (UTs)** that have an existing **remission policy** must consider eligible convicts for remission, even if they have **not applied for it**.
- **States/UTs without a remission policy** must **formulate one within two months**.

2. Conditions for Granting Remission:

- The **criteria for remission** must be **reasonable, specific, and feasible**.
- Authorities must consider the **nature of the crime** and **public safety concerns** before granting remission.

3. Revocation of Remission:

- If remission is revoked, the government must **record valid reasons** and provide the convict with an **opportunity to respond**.

What is Remission?

Definition:

Remission refers to the **reduction or mitigation** of a convict's **sentence duration** without altering the **nature of the sentence** itself.

Constitutional Provisions for Remission:

- **Article 72:** Grants the **President of India** the power to **pardon, commute, or remit** sentences for offenses under Union laws.
- **Article 161:** Grants similar **remission powers to the Governor** for offenses under **state laws**.

Important Supreme Court Judgments on Remission:

1. Mafabhai Motibhai Sagar Case (2024):

- A **permanent remission order** cannot be **withdrawn or canceled** unless the convict is **given a fair opportunity to be heard**.

2. Mahender Singh Case (2007):

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- Convicts do not have an absolute right to remission, but they are legally entitled to be considered for it.

3. Kehar Singh Case (1988):

- Denying prisoners the opportunity for remission goes against the principle of rehabilitation.

Significance of the SC's Directions:

The Supreme Court's ruling reinforces the importance of transparency, fairness, and due process in granting remission. By ensuring that remission is not arbitrary and that all eligible convicts are considered, the decision strengthens rehabilitation-focused justice while balancing public safety concerns.

