

Union Cabinet approved Royalty Rates for mining three critical and strategic minerals - Lithium, Niobium, and Rare Earth Elements

- Critical minerals are **those minerals that are essential for economic development and national security**, judged by **two parameters**: economic importance, and supply risk.
- Such royalty rate approval **will enable Central Government to auction blocks for these critical minerals for the first time** in the country.
 - ⊕ **Mineral Royalty** is economic rent **due to the sovereign owner** (government) in **exchange for the right to extract mineral substances**.
 - ⊕ **Second Schedule of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDRA), 1957** deals with the royalty rates of minerals.
- If not specified, the **royalty rate for minerals is 12% of the Average Sale Price (ASP)**. Now, **approved royalty rates** for lithium, Niobium, and REE are 3%, 3 %, and 1 %, respectively.
- Presently, **India's mineral royalty rates are among the highest** in the world, thus impacting the competitiveness of sector and putting the economic burden on mining companies.
- **Significance**
 - ⊕ Aligning rates with global **practices will boost mining sector investment**.
 - ⊕ Lower royalty **rates would encourage future mineral exploration** in India.
 - ⊕ Assist in reducing import **dependency**, advancing self-reliance efforts, and minimizing supply chain disruptions.

Initiatives of critical minerals exploration

- **Amendment to MMRDA in 2023 delisted six minerals**, including Lithium and Niobium, from **list of atomic minerals**, thereby allowing private sector participation.
- Provided for **auction of mining lease and composite license of 24 critical and strategic minerals** by central government.
- **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.**, a government JV, **aims to secure critical minerals** globally, focusing on Australia and South America.

82nd Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) Foundation Day celebrated



Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)




About CSIR: It is the **largest publicly funded multi-disciplinary industrial R&D organization** in India.

- With 37 R&D institutes across India, it is **one of the world's largest network of government-funded R&D laboratories**.



Genesis: CSIR was set up in 1942 as an **autonomous body**.



Members: Ministry of Science and Technology.

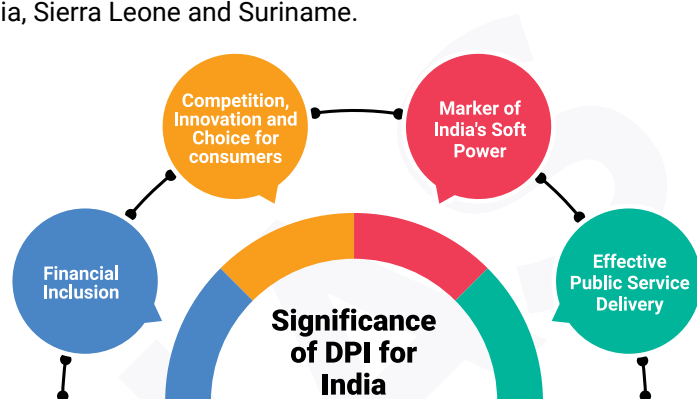
- Its **president** is PM of India.

Key contributions of CSIR

Sector	Contribution
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It pioneered first indigenously developed SWARAJ Tractor in 1965, to meet the needs of small farmers. ➤ In 1990, CSIR scientists created bamboo flowering within weeks by using tissue culture technologies.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CSIR developed cheaper processes for manufacture of anti-HIV drugs cocktail, at a fraction of the original price.
Indigenous Supercomputer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By CSIR, Flosolver, India's first parallel computer was built in 1986.
Disaster management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In 1993 Latur earthquake, CSIR- designed precast slabs, planks and joists helped provide shelter to affected families.
Intellectual Property Rights and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indelible ink used for general elections in India was developed by CSIR laboratories in 1952. ➤ CSIR has a patent portfolio of 1,132 unique patents in force, out of which 140 patents have been commercialized.
Strategic areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CSIR has designed and developed HANSA, India's first all-composite aircraft.

Union Cabinet approves MoUs signed with France, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad and Tobago for cooperation in Digital Technologies

- MoUs intends to promote closer **cooperation** and **exchange of experiences** and **digital technologies-based solutions** in the implementation of **digital transformation at population scale** in respective countries.
- India has emerged as a leader in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and DPI has become a **key facet of India's diplomatic outreach** to the developing world. Such outreach include:
 - Rollout of **India's UPI** in Bhutan, Nepal and its linkage with Singapore's PayNow.
 - MoU on **sharing India Stack** with Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Sierra Leone and Suriname.
 - Agreements for **creating Aadhaar like digital identity system** with countries like Philippines, Morocco, Burkina Faso and Sri Lanka.
- DPI refers to a set of **foundational population-scale technology systems** on which the digital economy operates and which are powered by **interoperable open standards or specifications**.
 - It is a **critical enabler of digital transformation** and is helping to **improve public service delivery** at scale.
 - A strong DPI has **three foundational systems** - identity, payment systems, and data exchange.
 - India Stack** is a collective name for India's DPI consisting of **three layers** - Identity (Aadhaar), Payments (UPI, APB, AePS), and Data exchange (DigiLocker and Account Aggregator).



CWRC Directs Karnataka to ensure release of water

- The **Cauvery Water Regulation Committee(CWRC)** during its 88th meeting had directed Karnataka government to release 3000 Cusecs of Cauvery water every day.
 - CWRC was notified **as per the Cauvery Water Management Scheme in 2018** to give effect to the decision of the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)**.
 - CWDT was established in **1990**, to adjudicate Cauvery dispute between **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Puducherry**.
- CWRC along with 'Cauvery Water Management Authority' (CWMA) was **constituted by the Central Government under section 6A of the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956**.
 - Only **Union** (Union list, entry 56) can regulate **Interstate rivers**.
 - Article 262** provides for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers or river valleys.
- In the context of sharing water of inter-state rivers, SC had earlier referred to international rules like the **Helsinki Rules of 1966** and **Campione Rules**.
 - Helsinki Rules of 1966** recognise equitable use of water by each basin State taking into consideration the socio-economic needs and availability of resources.
 - Campione Rules** hold that basin States would manage the waters of an international drainage basin in an equitable and reasonable manner.



Solar Cells and Module exports from India to US are up to 1000% higher over the last year

- **Solar Module** is a **photovoltaic panel** that is an **assembly of connected solar cells**, that absorb sunlight to generate electricity.
- Most Indian exports **cater to the US**, which has restricted China's solar modules due to **trade barriers**.
- Currently, domestic manufacturers receive **three types** of support viz:
 - ⊕ **PLI scheme** for **solar PV module manufacturing**, which is expected to **add 48 GW** of new manufacturing capacity over the next three years.
 - ⊕ **40% basic customs duty** to encourage domestic manufacturing.
 - ⊕ **Approved List of Models and Manufacturers** by **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**, that enlists eligible models and manufacturers complying with **BIS Standards**.
- **Concerns**
 - ⊕ **Solar developers in India** pay an extra 8-9 cents per Watt-peak as customs duty, despite low domestic sales by Indian manufacturers.
 - ⊕ Imports **via FTA countries** undermine the **Basic Customs Duty**.
- **Other steps for the Solar module market**
 - ⊕ Programmes on **low-cost financing for solar investments**, **Scaling Solar E-Mobility**, etc. under the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
 - ⊕ Mandated **Domestic Content Requirement**, under schemes like **PM-KUSUM**, and **Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Programme**, etc.
 - ⊕ **Preference in Public Procurement**, through '**Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order**'.

Union Cabinet approved the establishment of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

- **MY Bharat**, an **autonomous body** will benefit **youth** in the **age group of 15-29 years**, in line with the **definition of 'Youth' in National Youth Policy**.
 - ⊕ MY Bharat is **supported by a technology platform**.
 - ⊕ Would help to **increase Youth outreach efforts** of the **Department of Youth Affairs** under the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.
- **Objectives**: Make it a **whole Government platform** for **youth development** and allow youth to **become agents of community change**.
- **Need**
 - ⊕ Existing schemes **need re-evaluation** due to **urban-rural shifts over the last 50 years** in the country.
 - ⊕ **Bridge the gap** between **rural, urban, and Rurban youth** by **understanding their unique needs**.
 - ⊕ Leveraging youth to achieve the **goal of Amrit Bharat by 2047**.
- **Impact**:
 - ⊕ **Act as a one-stop shop** for **young people** and various central government ministries.
 - ⊕ Create a **centralized youth database** and offer **suitable opportunities** for voluntary work.
 - ⊕ Enhanced efficiency through **Convergence of existing programs**.
 - ⊕ Improved **two-way communication** to **connect youth** government initiatives.

➤ **Other initiatives for Youth development**: Scheme of **National Youth Corps (NYC)**, **Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakaram**, **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana**, **Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram**.

Also in News



Osiris-Rex spacecraft (Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, and Security-Regolith Explorer)

- NASA showed its **first asteroid samples** delivered last month by **Osiris-Rex spacecraft**.
 - ⊕ These samples are expected to offer clues to whether asteroids colliding with Earth billions of years ago brought water and other key ingredients for life.
- **OSIRIS-REx** is the first U.S. mission to **collect a sample from an asteroid**.
 - ⊕ It collected sample from **near-Earth asteroid Benu**.
 - ⊕ This mission will help scientists investigate **how planets formed and how life began**, as well as improve our understanding of asteroids that could impact Earth.



'One CGIAR' Global Initiative

- **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)** joins **One Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)** global initiative.
 - ⊕ ICRISAT is an **international research institute** with a focus on tropical dryland agrifood system innovation.
 - ⊕ **ICRISAT in India** is one of **CGIAR's research centers**.
- One CGIAR is a **reformulation of CGIAR's partnerships**, and global presence, aiming for greater integration and impact in the face global challenges.
- CGIAR is a **publicly-funded network of agrifood systems research centers**, established in 1971.
 - ⊕ **Aims**: build a **unified approach to transforming food, land, and water systems** to address the challenges of the climate crisis.
 - ⊕ Project of **Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)**, an international research program, is carried out under a **consultative group on CGIAR** headquartered in France.



Lakadong Turmeric

- Padma Shri award winner Saioo is known as "Turmeric Trinity" because she made the **Meghalaya Lakadong turmeric** famous through her tireless work.
- **Lakadong Turmeric**
 - ⊕ Cultivated in the **black alluvial soil during the monsoon months** in Lakadong, Jaintia Hills.
 - ⊕ **3 times more potent than regular turmeric** and has 7 to 12% of curcumin content.
 - ⊕ It was brought under the "One District One Product" scheme in West Jaintia Hills district.
- She has now planned to promote 'Makhir' ginger.
 - ⊕ Makhir is one of the two types of ginger popular in Meghalaya (other one being 'Nadia' ginger) having unique pungency and medicinal properties.



Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE)

- RISE is an initiative of **World Bank and G7** under Japan's Presidency.
- RISE is a **\$40 million partnership** project to **diversify supply chains for clean energy products**.
 - ⊕ It is an outcome of concern regarding the **concentration of key mineral resources**, especially in China.
 - ⊕ **Aims:** to support **low- and middle-income countries** in **playing bigger roles** in the midstream (mineral processing and refining) and downstream (component manufacturing and assembly) in **supply chains of clean energy products**.



USS Gerald R Ford Aircraft Carrier

- USA has deployed **USS Gerald R Ford aircraft carrier** to assist Israel in considering an **attack by Hamas on Israel**.
- **About Aircraft**
 - ⊕ It is the **World's largest aircraft carrier** and is nuclear-powered, that can **operate for 25 years without a refuel**.
 - ⊕ It can **carry up to 90 aircraft** and a crew of over 4,500 personnel.
 - ⊕ It can **speed over 30 knots (56 kmph)**.



Baltic connector pipeline

- A subsea **gas pipeline and telecommunications cable** connecting **Finland and Estonia** under the Baltic Sea have been damaged.
 - ⊕ **Baltic connector pipeline** connects Inkoo in Finland with Paldiski in Estonia, running across Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea.
- Baltic Sea is arm of the North Atlantic Ocean, extending northward from southern Denmark almost to the Arctic Circle.
 - ⊕ It **separates the Scandinavian Peninsula from the rest of continental Europe**.



Operation Ajay

- India launched Operation Ajay to **facilitate the return of approx. 18,000 Indian citizens in Israel**, amidst the Israel-Hamas war.
- Operation will be conducted through **specially chartered flights** and Indian Navy ships.



International Council on Archives (ICA)

- ICA Congress Abu Dhabi 2023 commenced with the theme "Enriching Knowledge Societies".
- **About ICA**



International Council on Archives (ICA)



Secretariat: Paris, France



Genesis: Created in **1948**, under the auspices of **UNESCO**, it is a neutral, non-governmental organization.



Objective: Promote management and use of records and archives.

- ◆ **Preservation of archival heritage** of humanity around the world.

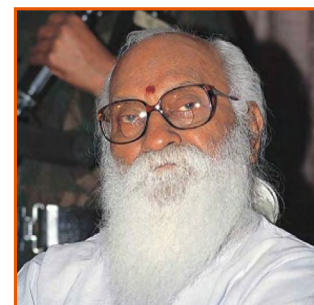
- ◆ **Director General, National Archives of India is the Treasurer** of the **South West Asia Regional Branch** of ICA.

Personality in News



Nanaji Deshmukh (1916- 2010)

- He was a **social reformer, educationist and politician**.
- He started the country's **first Saraswati Shishu Mandir** at Gorakhpur in 1950.
- He was the founder of **Deendayal Research Institute** in Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh).
 - ⊕ Through DRI, he set up alternative rural development models based on traditional knowledge.
- He was also responsible for starting **India's first rural university, Chitarkoot Gramodya Vishwavidyalaya**.
- He took part in Bhoodan Movement started by Vinoba Bhave, played role in the **JP Movement** and was founding member of the Jan Sangh.
- **Values:** humility, compassion and service to the downtrodden.



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR