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NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE FORCE



- It was established under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**.
- **Aim:** It is aimed at specialized response to natural and man-made disasters.

Organization Structure:

- Initially established in 2006 with 8 Battalions, the NDRF has now expanded to 16 Battalions.
- The NDRF functions as **an independent disaster response agency** but draws its personnel from various central paramilitary forces. Its organizational framework ensures coordination between central and state disaster management authorities.
- **Parent Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
- **Controlling Authority:** National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
- **Head:** Director General (DG), NDRF

Composition: It mainly consists **personnel deputed from drawn** from the CAPF, viz Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Sashastra Seema Bal and Assam Rifles.

Role: It is a **multi-skilled and highly specialist force** capable of dealing with all types of natural and man-made disasters like Floods, Cyclone, Earthquakes, Landslides, Building-collapse, Trains and road accidents etc.

- It has been **very active in responding to natural** disaster under multi-lateral and bi-lateral agreement at International level.

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PM SVANIDHI SCHEME



- The Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme was launched in
- It is a Central Sector Scheme supporting street vendors through affordable working capital, financial inclusion and social protection measures.

Implementation: It is a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Department of Financial Services (DFS).

Key Features of PM SVANidhi Scheme:

- **Working Capital Loan:** Collateral-free loans of ₹15,000, ₹25,000, and ₹50,000 are provided in three progressive tranches with interest subsidy and credit guarantee support.
- **UPI-linked RuPay Credit Cards:** Vendors successfully repaying the second tranche are eligible for UPI-linked RuPay Credit Cards with limits up to ₹30,000.
- **Digital Adoption:** Cashback incentives of up to ₹1,600 are provided to street vendors for retail/wholesale digital transactions to encourage digital adoption and financial literacy.
- **SVANidhi se Samriddhi (SSS):** Socio-economic profiling of beneficiaries and their families is undertaken to link them with eight selected Central welfare schemes and create a holistic social security net.
- **Capacity Building & Entrepreneurship Development:** Vendors are provided with training in financial literacy, digital literacy, and food safety & hygiene in collaboration with FSSAI.

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SAFE DEFENCE FUND



- The **Security Action for Europe (SAFE)** instrument is a **joint borrowing scheme** backed by the **European Union (EU)**.

- The regulation setting up the **SAFE instrument** entered into **force in 2025**.

- It is aimed at **boosting the bloc's defence capabilities** and helping member states meet new, more ambitious NATO spending targets.
- **Focus:** The assistance helps EU member states **make rapid and significant increases** in their **defence investments** through common procurement.

Loan: Through this instrument, the EU is providing financial assistance in the form of loans **worth up to €150 billion**.

Fund Allocation:

- The instrument **finances urgent and large-scale investments** in the European defence technological and industrial base.
- Allocation of the **budget is demand-driven**.
- Disbursements take the **form of competitively priced long-maturity loans**, to be repaid by the beneficiary EU member states.
- While only Member States can obtain SAFE loans, the following countries **may participate in common procurement**:
 - EU acceding, candidate, and potential candidate countries;
 - **Countries** that have **signed Security and Defence Partnerships** with the EU, such as Albania, Canada, **India (signed in 2026)**, Japan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Norway, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

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JAGO AI ASSISTANT



- It is an **AI conversational assistant** to extend the reach of **tribal welfare schemes and programmes**.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.

Features:

- The AI-powered chatbot is designed to simplify access to information related to tribal welfare schemes, **government policies, programmes, guidelines, and official documents**.
- It enables them to ask questions in simple language and receive relevant responses faster.
- It has the potential to significantly improve the way tribal welfare information is accessed by citizens.
- Currently the languages available in **Jago** are **English and Hindi**.

Significance:

- It can help **bridge the gap between government information** and its intended beneficiaries by making complex policy and scheme-related information more accessible.
 - Its AI-based architecture also **provides a foundation for continuously** expanding the knowledge base with new schemes, policies, and official documents, officials added.
 - It can contribute to more efficient, transparent, accessible, and technology-driven delivery of tribal welfare services.
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META'S \$17 BILLION CHILD SAFETY SETTLEMENT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR TEENS — AND FOR INDIA

Recently, Meta agreed to **pay over \$17 billion** over the next decade to settle claims brought by 47 US states, Washington DC, and other territories, while also committing to **strict new limits** on how teenagers use Facebook and Instagram.

Meta denies wrongdoing. Indian regulators are now closely studying the agreement as a potential blueprint for domestic social media regulation for minors.

What Was Meta Accused Of?

- The case was brought by a bipartisan coalition of US state attorneys general, who alleged Meta designed Facebook and Instagram to keep **young people compulsively engaged**, knew about serious risks, and misled the public about them.
- They also accused Meta of **collecting personal data** from children under 13 without complying with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) — a 1998 federal law enacted years before Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok existed.

What Has Meta Agreed to Change?

- For the settlement's first five years, Meta will impose:
 - A **combined two-hour daily limit** on Facebook and Instagram for users under 18 (direct messaging excluded); a verified parent can adjust this limit.
 - **Overnight blocking**: teens blocked from most platform features between midnight and 6 am.
 - **Notification restrictions**: most push notifications disabled between 10 pm and 7 am, and muted between 8 am and 3 pm on school weekdays (direct messaging remains available).
 - A **non-personalised feed option**, likes and reactions hidden by default, restrictions on cosmetic-procedure filters, and stronger age-assurance and parental control systems.

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Unresolved Legal Questions

- The settlement **ends** the states' trial without a judgment on Meta's underlying liability, while thousands of other cases remain pending. The agreement explicitly does not establish a standard of care or serve as precedent elsewhere.
- It also leaves unresolved the recurring question of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (1996), which generally shields internet platforms from liability for user-posted content.
 - Plaintiffs have tried to bypass this by arguing their claims target platforms' own design choices, not third-party content.

Why India Is Watching Closely

- Indian regulators are studying the settlement closely. The Centre is weighing interventions on children's social media access. These include age-based restrictions, usage-hour limits, and stronger parental consent rules. Discussions remain at an early stage.
 - The US case offers a useful template.
 - It shows enforceable restrictions secured through regulation and legal action, not platform goodwill alone.
 - This could shape India's debate on responsibility. Should platforms bear the burden, or parents and children?
 - India favours a **graded model over a blanket ban**. Separate restrictions are proposed for three age groups: 8-12, 12-16, and 16-18. The logic is simple: a 17-year-old and an eight-year-old need different rules.
 - Discussions have covered fixed daily usage windows, evening or night-time login curbs, and parental-consent requirements. The government says any new law will follow wider public consultation.
 - The settlement's **cross-platform pressure mechanism** also matters for India. Platform-wide consistency is already part of India's policy conversation. Curbs on a few platforms could simply push children toward less-regulated ones.
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BRICS+ AND INDIA - BUILDING A MULTIPOLAR WORLD THROUGH COOPERATION

- The idea of BRIC was proposed by Goldman Sachs economist Jim O'Neill in 2001.
- Brazil, Russia, India and China began high-level ministerial consultations in 2006 and held their first summit in 2009. South Africa joined in 2010, giving rise to BRICS.
- Over time, BRICS has evolved from an economic grouping into a broader platform for cooperation among emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs).
- Its expansion reflects the growing demand for a more representative and **multipolar** global order.

BRICS+ - Growing Global Weight:

- BRICS+ currently comprises **11 members** — Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, UAE and Saudi Arabia — along with 10 partner countries.
- Its growing significance stems from its demographic and economic weight -
 - BRICS and BRICS+ represent roughly **45% and 55%** of the global population, respectively.
 - BRICS+ economies account for around 35–45% of global GDP in PPP terms and collectively exceed \$30 trillion in nominal GDP.
 - The grouping is expected to record significantly faster growth than the **G7** in the coming years.
 - Countries such as Argentina, Algeria and Türkiye have also shown interest in joining.
- Thus, BRICS+ is increasingly becoming an important forum for **South-South cooperation**, economic coordination and reform of global governance.
- **Core significance:** Its strength lies not merely in economic size but in its ability to provide a platform for countries seeking greater representation in institutions shaped largely by the post-World War II order.

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India's 2026 BRICS Presidency - Four Priorities:

- With the 2026 BRICS Summit scheduled in New Delhi, India has an opportunity to shape the group's future agenda.
- India's priorities are centred on **four themes** -
 - **Resilience:** Strengthening supply chains, energy security, food security and institutional capacity against global disruptions.
 - **Innovation:** Promoting technological cooperation, digital transformation, emerging technologies and inclusive innovation.
 - **Cooperation:** Deepening coordination among developing countries on economic, financial, political and developmental challenges.
 - **Sustainability:** Addressing climate change, sustainable development, green transition and resource security while ensuring that development remains people-centric.

Way Forward:

- BRICS+ must **avoid** becoming merely an **anti-Western or anti-G7 bloc**. Its long-term relevance will depend on whether it can deliver practical economic and developmental outcomes.
- India should focus on -
 - Reforming global financial and governance institutions;
 - Expanding local-currency and alternative payment mechanisms;
 - Building resilient and diversified supply chains;
 - Promoting digital public infrastructure and technological cooperation;
 - Enhancing climate and energy cooperation;
 - Strengthening developmental finance;
 - Expanding youth, educational and cultural exchanges.
- **India-China relations:** As they continue to involve concerns like border disputes, strategic competition, etc., India's approach needs to **combine** engagement with strategic caution, rather than either confrontation or excessive dependence.

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CORBETT TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located on the foothills of the **Himalayas** in **Uttarakhand**.
- It was originally established as **Hailey National Park** in 1936.
- It is not only the first national park in India, but also the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.
- It is spread over the **Bhabar and lower Shivalik regions** with a deep-water table.

Terrain: The terrain is undulating with several valleys.

Rivers: The rivers **Ramganga, Pallaen, and Sonanadi** flow through the valleys.

Vegetation: North Indian tropical moist deciduous forests and tropical dry deciduous forests:

- In general, the vegetation comprises **sal and mixed forests**, interspersed with **grass lands** and riparian vegetation.
- The grasslands **are locally known as 'Chaur'**, which are an outcome of abandoned settlements or past clearings.

Flora: Evergreen Sal and its associated trees, the Sheesham, and the Kanju are found extensively on the ridges.

Fauna: Tigers and elephants, leopards, sambar, hog deer, spotted deer etc.
