

NEXT IAS

DAILY NEWS

ANALYSIS



7th February

EXPLAINED

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2. Conservationists Apprehensive of 'Turtle Trails' Announced in Union Budget
3. Denotified Tribes Seek Constitutional Recognition, Separate Census Entry
4. Transaction Tax Hiked on Futures & Options (F&O) to Curb Speculation
5. CCI Orders Probe into IndiGo's Operational Disruption in Dec
6. IIT-Bombay Researchers Overcome Key Bottleneck in CAR-T Cell Cancer Therapy

Playlist Link:



What to Read: <https://bit.ly/3FYdutC>

Daily News Analysis: <https://bit.ly/4ge9BgF>

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EXPLAINED

1. 84% WASTE PICKERS FROM SC, ST, OBC COMMUNITIES: UNION GOVERNMENT DATA

News Title

84% Waste Pickers from SC, ST, OBC Communities: Union Government Data

Short Summary

For the first time, the Union Government has released national-level data on waste pickers under the NAMASTE Scheme, revealing that 84.5% belong to SC, ST and OBC communities, highlighting the caste-based nature of hazardous sanitation work in India.

Key Findings from the Article

- Total waste pickers profiled: 1.52 lakh (validated by urban local bodies).

Social category-wise distribution	Gender composition
SC: 60.3% (≈92,089)	Women: 48.7%
OBC: 13.7% (≈20,954)	Men: 51.3%
ST: 10.5% (≈16,329)	Transgender persons: 0.007%
General category: 10.7%	
Other communities: ~4.8%	

Regional variation:

- Delhi & Goa: Majority waste pickers from General category
- West Bengal: General category workers outnumber SC/ST/OBC combined
- Occupational hazard → 859 deaths reported during sewer and septic tank cleaning since 2014

What is the NAMASTE Scheme?

About

- NAMASTE stands for National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme, launched in 2023.
- Duration: 2023–24 to 2025–26 (3 years).
- Aims to eliminate hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks through mechanisation
- Covers 4,800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across India.

- Replaces the earlier Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS).

Objectives

- Formalisation and rehabilitation of sanitation workers
- Zero fatalities in sanitation work
- Promotion of mechanised sanitation (no direct human contact with waste)
- Safety, dignity, health protection, and livelihood support

Beneficiaries

- Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)
- Waste Pickers (included from 2024)

Implementing Ministries & Agency

- Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)
- Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- Implementing Agency: National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)

Who is a waste picker (official definition):

- Person informally engaged in collecting and recovering recyclable solid waste from streets, bins, dumps, processing or disposal facilities.

KEY COMPONENTS

For Sewer And Septic Tank Workers (Ssws)	For Waste Pickers (Added In 2024)
Digital profiling through mobile application	Enumeration and profiling
PPE kits and safety equipment	Seasonal / need-based PPE kits
Occupational safety training and skill upgradation	Skill development and safety training
Health insurance under Ayushman Bharat–PMJAY	Ayushman Bharat–PMJAY coverage
Subsidised sanitation vehicles and equipment.	Capital subsidy for waste collection vehicles and livelihood project.
Promotion of Sanipreneurship via capital subsidy and training	

2. CONSERVATIONISTS APPREHENSIVE OF 'TURTLE TRAILS' ANNOUNCED IN UNION BUDGET

News Title

Conservationists Apprehensive of 'Turtle Trails' Announced in Union Budget

Why in News

Union Budget announced development of 'turtle trails' at key olive ridley turtle nesting sites along the coasts of Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala, raising concerns among conservationists.

Key Facts

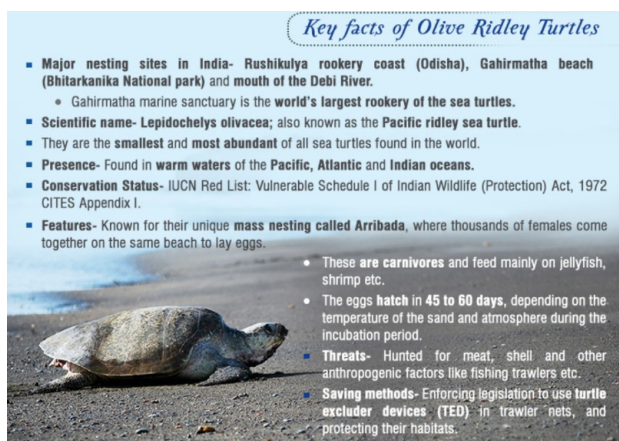
- Species involved: Olive Ridley turtles, protected under Schedule I of WPA, 1972, require disturbance-free beaches for arribada (mass nesting), making eco-tourism near nesting sites ecologically sensitive.

What are 'Turtle Trails'?

- Proposed eco-tourism infrastructure near turtle nesting beaches
- Aimed at regulated tourist access to nesting sites

About Olive Ridley Turtle

- It gets its name from the olive green colouration of its carapace (shell).
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I



Distribution of Olive Ridley Turtle

- They are mainly found in the warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans.
- Major nesting sites in Odisha:
 - Gahirmatha → is known as the world's largest

rookery (a colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.

- Rushikulya → One of the largest mass nesting sites in the world
- Devi river mouth



Features of Olive Ridley Turtle

- They are omnivorous, meaning they feed on both plants and animals.
- They are solitary, preferring the open ocean.
- These turtles spend their entire lives in the ocean, and migrate thousands of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year.

Concerns Highlighted

- Mass nesting sites require minimal human disturbance
- Potential threats from: Artificial lighting, Tourist movement, Mechanised boats, Photography and flash use
- Disturbance may affect: Nesting behaviour, Hatchling orientation (light-sensitive)

Important Related Terms

- Arribada:**
 - Spanish term meaning "arrival"
 - Refers to synchronous mass nesting by sea turtles
- Rookery:**
 - A nesting colony of turtles

3. DENOTIFIED TRIBES SEEK CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION, SEPARATE CENSUS ENTRY

News Title

Denotified Tribes Seek Constitutional Recognition, Separate Census Entry

Why in News

Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs) have demanded a separate column in the 2027 Census and constitutional recognition, claiming long-term misclassification under SC, ST and OBC categories.

Who are Denotified Tribes?

Denotified Tribes (DNTs) are communities that were notified as “criminal tribes” by the British colonial government under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA), 1871, and were later denotified after Independence when the Act was repealed in 1952.

Despite denotification, many of these communities continue to face social stigma, exclusion, and economic marginalisation.

Historical Background

Criminal Tribes Act, 1871

- Enacted by the British to control nomadic and semi-nomadic communities
- Entire communities were labelled “criminal by birth”
- Subjected to: Forced registration, Surveillance, Restricted movement, Mandatory settlement in camps

Repeal and Denotification

- CTA repealed in 1952
- Communities were officially “denotified” → Hence the term Denotified Tribes

Population and Distribution

- Estimated population:
 - ♦ Ranges from 6 crore to 10 crore (no official census data)
- Spread across India, with concentration in: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka

Key issue: DNTs are not enumerated separately in the Census

Categories within DNTs

Broadly, three overlapping groups are recognised:

1. Denotified Tribes (DNTs) – Previously notified under CTA
2. Nomadic Tribes (NTs) – Communities with no permanent settlement, dependent on mobility
3. Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs) – Partially settled, seasonally mobile

Collectively referred to as DNT/NT/SNT communities

- Main demands:
 - ♦ Separate Census column (2027)
 - ♦ Separate constitutional recognition / Schedule
 - ♦ Sub-classification to reflect graded backwardness
- Issue raised:
 - ♦ DNTs currently scattered across SC, ST, OBC or unclassified categories
 - ♦ Leads to invisibility in data and welfare targeting

4. TRANSACTION TAX HIKE ON FUTURES & OPTIONS (F&O) TO CURB SPECULATION

News Title

Transaction Tax Hiked on Futures & Options (F&O) to Curb Speculation

Why in News

The Union Budget 2026–27 proposed an increase in Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on Futures & Options (F&O) trades to curb excessive speculation, even as trading volumes in derivatives had already declined.

Key Budget Announcements

- STT on Futures: Increased from 0.02% → 0.05%
- STT on Options:
 - ♦ Premium: 0.1% → 0.15%
 - ♦ Exercise of options: 0.125% → 0.15%
- Objective stated by Government:
 - ♦ Discourage speculative trading in F&O
 - ♦ Generate additional revenue
- Expected STT collection (2026–27):
 - ♦ ₹73,700 crore

Market-Related Data

- Sensex fall on Budget day: ~1.9%
- Nifty 50: Closed ~2% lower
- India VIX (volatility index): Rose ~13%

- Trend in F&O volumes:
 - ♦ Trading volumes in single-stock and index derivatives have already declined (as per World Federation of Exchanges data).

What are Futures & Options?

- Derivatives → Financial instruments whose value is derived from an underlying asset (stock, index, commodity, etc.).

Aspect	Futures Contract	Option Contract
Nature of Contract	Agreement to buy or sell an asset at a future date at a fixed price	Contract giving right to buy or sell at a fixed price in future
Obligation	Both buyer and seller are legally bound to execute the contract at expiry	Only seller is obligated; buyer may choose to exercise or not
Upfront Cost	No premium; only margin money is paid by both parties	Premium paid upfront by buyer to seller
Risk & Return (Buyer)	Unlimited profit and unlimited loss depending on price movement	Loss limited to premium paid; profit can be very high (call option)
Execution at Expiry	Compulsory settlement irrespective of market price	Optional for buyer; contract may lapse if not profitable

Securities Transaction Tax (STT)

What is STT?

- It is a direct tax levied on the purchase and sale of securities traded on recognised stock exchanges in India.
- It is levied and collected by the Central Government of India → governed by the Securities Transaction Tax Act, 2004.
 - ♦ The Act specifically lists taxable securities transactions, i.e., only notified transactions attract STT.

Key Features

- Transaction-based tax: Levied on the value of the transaction, irrespective of profit or loss.
- Mode of collection:
 - ♦ Deducted at the time of transaction itself, similar to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS).
 - ♦ Collected through stock exchanges or market intermediaries and remitted to the government.
- Introduced → Through the Finance Act, 2004.
- Objective:
 - ♦ Simplify taxation of securities trading.
 - ♦ Curb tax evasion in capital markets.

Securities on Which STT is Levied	Securities / Transactions Exempt from STT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity shares • Derivatives (Futures & Options) • Equity-oriented mutual fund units • Unlisted shares sold under Offer for Sale (OFS) in an IPO and subsequently listed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commodity derivatives • Currency derivatives • Off-market transactions (not routed through stock exchanges)

Tax Rates

- STT rates vary depending on:
 - ♦ Type of security (equity, derivative, mutual fund)
 - ♦ Nature of transaction (buy/sell, delivery/non-delivery)
- Central Government has the power to revise STT rates periodically.

Important Pointers

- STT is not linked to income or capital gains.
- Applies only to exchange-traded securities.
- STT helped shift focus from complex capital gains tracking to transaction-based taxation.
- India is among the largest derivatives markets globally by volume.
- F&O trading is cash-settled in India (no physical delivery).

5. CCI ORDERS PROBE INTO INDIGO'S OPERATIONAL DISRUPTION IN DEC

News Title

CCI Orders Probe into IndiGo's Operational Disruption Dec

Why in News

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ordered an investigation against IndiGo Airlines following large-scale flight cancellations in December 2024, suspecting abuse of dominant position in the domestic aviation market.

Key Facts from the Article

- Airline involved: IndiGo
- Period of disruption: December 2025
- Flights cancelled: ~1,600 flights out of ~2,300 daily flights
- Market share of IndiGo: ~65% of domestic air passenger traffic
- Allegation:
 - ♦ Abuse of dominant market position during operational crisis
 - ♦ Charging high last-minute airfares when alternatives were limited
- CCI direction:
 - ♦ Investigation under Section 26(1) of the Competition Act, 2002
 - ♦ Probe to be completed within 90 days

Legal Provisions Involved

Competition Act, 2002

- Section 4 – Abuse of Dominant Position
Abuse includes:
 - ♦ Unfair or discriminatory pricing
 - ♦ Limiting supply or services
 - ♦ Denial of market access
- Section 26(1) – CCI may order investigation by the Director General (DG) if a prima facie case exists.

About Abuse of Dominant Position

- A firm is dominant if it enjoys a position of strength enabling it to:
 - ♦ Operate independently of competitive forces, or

- ♦ Affect competitors or consumers in its favour
- Important:
 - ♦ Dominance itself is NOT illegal
 - ♦ Abuse of dominance is prohibited

Penalty Provision

- If abuse is proven, CCI can impose → Penalty up to 10% of average turnover for the last three financial years

About Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- Established: 2009
- Statutory body under: Competition Act, 2002
- Administrative ministry: Ministry of Corporate Affairs

Composition: Chairperson + 6 Members

Role of CCI

- Eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition:
 - ♦ E.g., in the Umar Javeed vs. Google case, the CCI directed Google not to restrict app developers from distributing apps via side-loading (installing apps on a device from outside the official app store).
- Protect the interests of consumers:
 - ♦ E.g., CCI fined Meta for abusing dominance by sharing WhatsApp's user data with other Meta companies.
- Advise the government on competition issues:
 - ♦ E.g., the competition assessment toolkit by CCI to help the government analyse laws and regulations to identify aspects that restrict competition.
- Inquire, investigate, pass orders and impose penalty on anti-competitive practices → powers of a civil court (summons, evidence, etc.)
 - ♦ E.g., in the Google search bias case, it imposed a Rs 135 crore penalty.
- Regulate Mergers:
 - ♦ E.g., it approved the Walmart-Flipkart merger after evaluating concerns such as predatory pricing, deep discounting, impact on offline retailers, etc
- Adapting to evolving challenges:
 - ♦ E.g., Digital Markets Division (DMD) was constituted by CCI to cope up with challenges posed by digitization to fair competition
 - ♦ Study technology and its impact on competition

- Assisting in work relating to the draft Digital Competition Bill (DCB), etc.

6. IIT-BOMBAY RESEARCHERS OVERCOME KEY BOTTLENECK IN CAR-T CELL CANCER THERAPY

News Title

IIT-Bombay Researchers Overcome Key Bottleneck in CAR-T Cell Cancer Therapy

Why in News

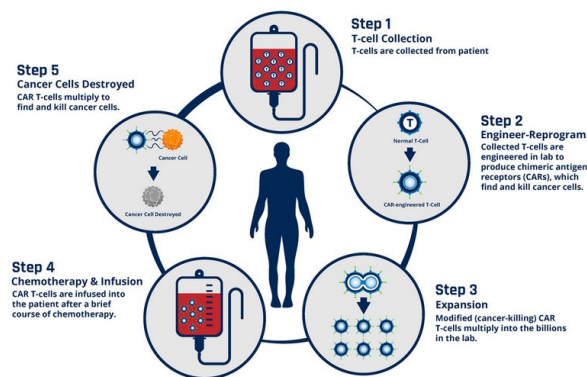
Researchers at IIT-Bombay have developed a cost-effective and efficient method to retrieve healthy T-cells for CAR-T cell therapy, addressing a major bottleneck in advanced cancer treatment.

What is CAR-T Cell Therapy?

- CAR-T = Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell therapy
- A type of immunotherapy → Treatment using body's immune system
- T-cells: White blood cells central to immune response.
 - T-cells are a type of white blood cells that act as the body's front line soldiers.
 - They patrol the blood stream and tissues, looking for infections or abnormal cells such as cancer.
 - When they detect a threat, T-cells either kill the harmful cells directly or signal other immune cells to join the fight.

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acronym for Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-Cell Therapy; Innovative immunotherapy in which T-cells (a type of white blood cell) are genetically modified to express a receptor (CAR) that targets specific proteins on cancer cells.
Objective of the Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To treat blood cancers, especially B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (B-ALL) and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (B-NHL) ; Still under trials for solid tumours Aimed at patients whose disease relapsed or was resistant to conventional treatments (chemotherapy, radiation). Specifically targets CD19, a protein found on the surface of B-cells, which includes cancerous B-cells.

How Does CAR T-Cell Therapy Work?



Implementation and Structural Mandate	<p>Developed jointly by IIT-Bombay and Tata Memorial Center , Mumbai since 2015.</p> <p>Approved by DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) in March 2021 for Phase 1 trials in children and adults with relapsed B-ALL and B-NHL.</p>
Future Scope for Phase II	<p>Phase 1 Trials: Conducted from 2021 to 2023 on children and adolescents with B-ALL and adults with B-NHL, with promising results matching international standards in terms of efficacy and safety.</p> <p>Phase 2 Trials: Have been approved and are currently ongoing. These trials will expand on the efficacy and long-term safety of the therapy, including larger cohorts of patients.</p>

Bottleneck in CAR-T Therapy

- Need for large numbers of healthy T-cells
- Conventional 2-D cultures are inefficient
- 3-D biomaterial scaffolds improve growth but:
 - Make cell retrieval difficult
 - Damage T-cells during extraction

Key Findings from the Study

- Institution: Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay
- Journal: Biomaterials Science
- Problem addressed:
 - Difficulty in retrieving viable T-cells after growing them on 3-D biomaterial scaffolds

- Solution developed:
 - ♦ Manually dissolving biomaterial scaffolds using a growth medium
 - ♦ Uses a relatively harsh enzyme but at low concentration
 - ♦ Enables higher yield and survival of T-cells
 - Outcome:
 - ♦ Retrieved T-cells remained functional and continued to proliferate
 - ♦ Potential to improve reliability and affordability of CAR-T therapy
- Significance of IIT-B Research**
- Improves cell recovery efficiency
 - Reduces cost of therapy
 - Enhances feasibility of indigenous CAR-T development
 - Supports India's effort in advanced cancer therapeutics
- CAR-T Therapy in India**
- India's first indigenous CAR-T therapy: NexCAR19
 - Developed by IIT-Bombay & Tata Memorial Centre
 - Approved by DCGI (2023)
 - Costs significantly lower than overseas therapies

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