

**PRELIMS EDGE 2025****02-02-2026****BHARAT-VISTAAR**

Context: New AI tool for farmer Bharat VISTAAR launched in Budget.



About Bharat-VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources):

- It is a **multilingual AI tool** that aims to provide information to farmers **in their own language** on crop planning, packages of practices and pests, weather forecasts, markets, scheme information, eligibility, application, and grievance.
- It will **integrate the AgriStack portals and the ICAR package on agricultural practices** with AI systems.
- This will enhance farm productivity, enable better decisions for farmers and reduce risk by providing customised advisory support.
- The finance minister allocated Rs 150 crore for the Bharat-VISTAAR for the next financial year (2026-27).

- The first version of Bharat VISTAAR will be launched in Hindi and English and will gradually become capable of responding in regional languages.
- It will evolve through collaboration with not-for-profit organisations, AI startups, technology firms, and AI Centres of Excellence.
- It leverages the national AI ecosystem, including the India AI Mission and BHASHINI.
- It is **interactive**; farmer feedback flows back into Government systems. This will help in evidence-based policy making and research prioritization.

AgriStack

- ✓ Agri Stack is the digital foundation being set up by the government to make it easier to bring various stakeholders together to improve agriculture in India.
- ✓ It enables better outcomes and results for the farmers by using data and digital services.
- ✓ Agri Stack aims to make it easier for farmers to get easier access to cheaper credit, higher-quality farm inputs, localized and specific advice, and more informed and convenient access to markets.
- ✓ It also focuses on making it easier for governments to plan and implement various farmer and agriculture-focused benefit schemes.

Source: Bharat Vistar to SHE Marts: FM Nirmala Sitharaman announces new initiatives for agriculture and rural sector (The Indian Express)

BIOPHARMA SHAKTI SCHEME

Context: Budget 2026-27 has announced a new scheme for promotion of biopharmaceutical manufacturing in India.

About Biopharma Shakti Scheme:

- Biopharma SHAKTI (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology & Innovation) is designed to develop India into a global **biopharmaceutical manufacturing hub**.
- This will build the ecosystem for domestic production of biologics and biosimilars.
- It will include a Biopharma-focused network with **3 new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)** and upgrading 7 existing ones.
- It will also create a **network of over 1000 accredited India Clinical Trials sites**.
- **Financial Outlay & Time Period:** ₹10,000 crore over the next five years.
- This initiative will catalyse investments in advanced biomanufacturing infrastructure, promote innovation and enhance India's capabilities in **high-value, next-generation therapies**.
- It will focus on building a **biopharma-centric innovation and manufacturing network**, responding to India's rapidly changing disease profile marked by a rising burden of **non-communicable diseases** such as diabetes, cancer and autoimmune disorders.

Biologics

- ✓ Biologics are **complex medicines derived from living organisms**.
- ✓ Their complex manufacturing processes have traditionally limited their availability, primarily serving high-income countries.

Biosimilars

- ✓ These are **highly similar versions of biologic medicines**, developed through comprehensive analytical studies and rigorous preclinical and clinical trials to ensure therapeutic equivalence.
- ✓ These products offer equally effective and safe alternatives thereby increasing market competition and reducing the costs of biologic therapies.

Source: Govt announces measures to make India hub of medical tourism, biopharma & ayurveda drugs (The Indian Express)

DIVYANGJAN KAUSHAL YOJANA

Context: New schemes introduced for disabled individuals in Budget.



About Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana:

- It is launched for persons with disabilities.
- It is aimed at training them for dignified livelihood opportunities.
- **Financial Support:** It has been allocated ₹200 crore for the upcoming fiscal.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice
- Under this yojana "industry-relevant, customised training specific to each divyang group" will be provided for creating "dignified livelihood opportunities"

- **Sectors Covered:** Information Technology, Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC), Hospitality, and Food and Beverages, which offer “task-oriented and process-driven roles”.

Source: Outlay hiked for SC, tribals, disability welfare schemes (The Indian Express)

EKALAVYA MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Context: Funding for Ekalavya Model Residential Schools has been enhanced under the Budget 2026-27.



About Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):

- EMRS started in the year **1997-98** to impart quality education to **ST children in remote areas**.
- **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** is the nodal ministry.
- The aim of the scheme to **build schools at par with the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas** with focus on special state-of-the-art facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development.
- EMRS are established in the States/UTs from the grants received under **Article 275(1)** of the Constitution of India.

Features:

- Ekalavya Model Schools are co-educational residential schools from Class VI to XII.

- Each school has a **capacity of 480 students** with equal number of seats for boys and girls.
- **Non-ST students** can be admitted in these schools on seats **up to 10%** of the total seats.
- CBSE curriculum is followed in these schools, and education is completely free.
- The **National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)**, an autonomous organization has been set up under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to establish and manage EMRS across the country.

Source: Outlay hiked for SC, tribals, disability welfare schemes (The Indian Express)

TERMS IN NEWS

Sovereign Gold Bonds



- These bonds are **government securities denominated in grams of gold**.
- The **SGB Scheme** was first launched by the Government of India (GOI) on October 30, 2015.
- They are **substitutes for holding physical gold**. Investors have to pay the issue price, and the bonds will be redeemed upon maturity.
- **Issuance:** The bond is issued by the Reserve Bank on behalf of the GOI.

- **Eligible to invest in the SGBs:** The bonds will be restricted for sale to **resident Indian entities**, including individuals, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.

Investment Limits in SGBs:

- The bonds are issued in **denominations of one gram of gold** and in multiples thereof.
- The minimum investment in the bond shall be one gram, with a **maximum subscription limit of 4 kg** for individuals, 4 kg for HUFs, and **20 kg for trusts**.
- In case of joint holding, the investment limit of 4 KG will be applied to the first applicant only.
- **Term:** The term of the bond will be for a period of **8 years**, with an exit option in the 5th, 6th, and 7th years, to be exercised on the interest payment dates.
- Bonds are sold through **offices or branches of Nationalised Banks**, Scheduled Private Banks, Scheduled Foreign Banks, designated Post Offices, Stock Holding Corporation of India Ltd. (SHCIL), and the **authorised stock exchanges** either directly or through their agents.

Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage

- CCUS is a suite of technologies that capture CO₂ emissions from major sources like power plants, refineries, and industries, or remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.
- **Working of CCUS:** CCUS involves three main stages — capture, transport, and storage (or use) of CO₂.
- **Capture methods include:**
 - Post-combustion: Separates CO₂ from flue gas using solvents after fuel combustion.

- Pre-combustion: Converts fuel into a hydrogen–CO₂ mix before burning, then separates CO₂.
- Oxy-fuel combustion: Burns fuel in pure oxygen, producing CO₂ and steam for easy capture.

- Captured CO₂ is compressed and transported via pipeline, ship, rail, or road and **injected into deep geological formations like depleted oil and gas fields or saline aquifers** for long-term storage.
- Alternatively, it may be used in commercial applications.

• Role in Tackling Climate Change:

- Reducing emissions in hard-to-abate sectors like steel, cement (7% of global emissions), and chemicals.
- Producing low-carbon electricity and hydrogen to replace fossil fuels across industries and transport.
- Removing existing CO₂ from the atmosphere through Bioenergy with CCS (BECCS) and Direct Air Capture (DACCS).
- It can be installed on coal, gas, or biomass plants, enhancing energy security by diversifying low-carbon energy sources.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Bharat VISTAAR is a newly launched initiative by the Government of India for:

- (a) Providing AI advisories to farmers
- (b) Enabling heritage tourism in India
- (c) Promotion of the aviation sector
- (d) Setting up a marketplace for female entrepreneurs

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Biopharma SHAKTI Scheme:

1. It aims at developing India into a key biopharmaceuticals manufacturing hub.
2. It will establish three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. With respect to the Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. It will provide industry relevant customized training to each divyang group.
2. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice.
3. Animation and Visual Effects is one of the emerging sectors planned for skill training.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q4. With reference to the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. They are government securities denominated in grams of gold.
2. They are aimed at bringing idle gold lying with Indian households into the economy.
3. The maximum subscription limit for an individual is 4kgs.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q5. With reference to Eklavya Model Residential Schools, consider the following statements:

1. These are schools set up by the Ministry of Education to impart education to ST students.
2. They are established in the States/UTs from the grants received under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answers:

1. A
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. B