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Top Stories of The Day

- *Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 Becomes India's First Private Orbital Rocket to Reach Space Successfully*
- *IAF Rafale Fighters Arrive in Australia for Exercise **Pitch Black 2026** to Boost Air Cooperation*
- *EPFO Launches **VISHWAS 2026 Scheme** for Digital Settlement of Damages and Penalty Disputes*
- *CCPA Imposes **₹1 Lakh Penalty on SpiceJet** for Dark Pattern Violations on Booking Platform*
- *West Indies Cricket Legend Sir **Garfield Sobers** Passes Away at 89, Leaving Historic Legacy*
- *India Implements National **Anti-Doping Acts 2022 and 2025** to Strengthen Clean Sports System*
- ***Iraq Signs Major Oil Agreements** with Western Companies to Revive Iraq-Syria Pipeline Project*
- *Indian Navy Receives Additional **MH-60R Seahawk Helicopter** from US to Enhance Maritime Operations*
- ***Supreme Court** Upholds Royalty on Royalty Provision Under MMDR Act for Mining Sector*
- ***RBI Penalises Muthoot Finance** and Other NBFCs for Regulatory Compliance Violations*

Skyroot's Vikram-1 Becomes India's First Private Orbital Rocket to Reach Space



Why is it in News?

- Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital rocket, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. The mission marks a historic milestone in India's private space sector by successfully placing multiple payloads into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

About Mission Aagaman

• Mission Name: Mission Aagaman
• Launched By: Skyroot Aerospace
• Launch Vehicle: Vikram-1
• Launch Site: Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh
• Objective: To demonstrate the capability of India's first privately developed orbital launch vehicle and deploy multiple satellites into Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
• Mission Type: Technology demonstration and commercial satellite launch mission.
• Payloads: Carried multiple customer and technology demonstration payloads.
• Significance: Mission Aagaman marks the first successful orbital mission by an Indian private space company, opening a new era for commercial space launches in India.

Why is it called 'Aagaman'?

- The word "Aagaman" means "arrival" in Hindi. The mission symbolizes the arrival of India's private space industry into the field of orbital launches, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the country's space journey.

About Vikram-1

• Developer: Skyroot Aerospace
• Named After: Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space programme.
• Type: Four-stage small satellite launch vehicle.
• Payload Capacity: Up to 350 kg to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
• Technology: Uses three solid-fuel stages and a restartable liquid-fuel upper stage with advanced propulsion and guidance systems.

About Skyroot Aerospace

• Founded: 2018
• Headquarters: Hyderabad, Telangana
• Founders: Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka (former ISRO scientists).
• Significance: India's first private space startup to successfully launch an orbital-class rocket.

Significance

- The successful launch marks the beginning of India's private orbital launch era. It strengthens India's commercial space capabilities, encourages private participation in the space sector, and supports the country's goal of becoming a major player in the global space economy.

Additional Key Facts

- IN-SPACe: Established in 2020 to promote and regulate private participation in India's space sector.

- ISRO: Continues to provide technical support and infrastructure for private space missions.
- Low Earth Orbit (LEO): Extends from about 160 km to 2,000 km above Earth's surface and is commonly used for Earth observation and communication satellites.

Exam Focus Points

- Rocket: Vikram-1
- Mission: Mission Aagaman

- Company: Skyroot Aerospace
- Launch Site: Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota
- Achievement: India's first private orbital rocket
- Payload Capacity: 350 kg to LEO
- Founded: 2018
- Headquarters: Hyderabad, Telangana
- Named After: Dr. Vikram Sarabhai

Exercise Pitch Black 2026: IAF Rafales Arrive in Australia for Multinational Air Combat Exercise



- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed its Rafale fighter aircraft to Australia to participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)'s premier multinational air combat exercise.
- The Indian contingent comprises 4 Rafale fighter aircraft, 2 C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft, and over 120 Air Warriors.
- The exercise will be held from 20 July to 7 August 2026 at RAAF Bases Darwin, Tindal, and Amberley in Australia and involves the participation of 19 countries.
- It aims to enhance interoperability, operational cooperation, and combat readiness among friendly air forces.

Key Highlights

- Exercise: Pitch Black 2026.
- Host Country: Australia.
- Participating Nations: 19.

- Theme: High-end multinational air combat training and interoperability.

About Exercise Pitch Black:

- Hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).
- First conducted: 1981.
- Frequency: Biennial (every two years).
- Primarily conducted in Northern Australia.

Focuses on:

- Offensive Counter Air (OCA) operations.
- Defensive Counter Air (DCA) operations.
- Large-force employment.
- Multinational interoperability.
- Complex simulated combat missions.

About the Rafale Fighter Aircraft:

- Manufacturer: Dassault Aviation (France).
- Generation: 4.5-generation multirole fighter aircraft.
- Inducted into IAF: 2020.

Indian Air Force Bases:

- Ambala (Haryana).
- Hasimara (West Bengal).

Capable of:

- Air superiority missions.
- Precision ground strikes.
- Maritime strike operations.
- Nuclear deterrence.

Equipped with:

- Meteor Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile.
- SCALP long-range cruise missile.
- HAMMER precision-guided weapon system.

About the C-17 Globemaster III:

- Strategic heavy-lift transport aircraft.
- Manufacturer: Boeing (USA).

Used for:

- Strategic airlift.
- Troop deployment.
- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- Heavy equipment transportation.

India–Australia Defence Cooperation:

Major bilateral and multilateral engagements include:

- AUSINDEX (Naval Exercise).
- Exercise AUSTRALIND (Army Exercise).
- Exercise Malabar (Quad Naval Exercise).
- Exercise Pitch Black (Air Force).

- Defence cooperation is guided by the India–Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) established in 2020.

Both India and Australia are members of:

- Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue).
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- East Asia Summit (EAS).
- G20.
- India hosted its first multinational air exercise, Exercise Tarang Shakti, in 2024, showcasing growing defence cooperation with friendly air forces.

Exam Focus Points:

- Exercise: Pitch Black 2026.
- Host: Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).
- Host Country: Australia.
- Venue: Darwin, Tindal, and Amberley Air Bases.
- Indian Aircraft: Rafale and C-17 Globemaster III.
- Indian Contingent: 4 Rafales, 2 C-17s, 120+ Air Warriors.
- Participating Nations: 19.
- Frequency: Biennial.
- First Held: 1981.
- Related Partnership: India–Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020).

EPFO Launches VISHWAS 2026 Scheme for Amicable Settlement of Damages and Penalty-related Disputes



- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has launched VISHWAS 2026, a one-time dispute resolution scheme to facilitate the amicable settlement of disputes relating to damages and penalties imposed under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions (EPF & MP) Act, 1952 and the Code on Social Security, 2020.

- The scheme seeks to promote voluntary compliance, reduce litigation, and provide employers with a transparent, fully digital, and time-bound mechanism for resolving pending disputes.
- It came into force on 29 June 2026 and will remain operational for six months.

Key Features of the Scheme:

- Applications to be filed online through the EPFO Employer Portal using Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) or e-Sign.
- Provides a time-bound digital settlement process.
- Dedicated VISHWAS Cells to be established in EPFO field offices for implementation.
- Covers eligible disputes relating to damages and penalties under:
 - Section 14B of the EPF & MP Act, 1952.
 - Section 128 of the Code on Social Security, 2020.

Categories of Cases Covered

The scheme covers four broad categories:

- Cases where damages or penalty orders are under challenge before judicial forums.
- Final orders where recovery is pending or only partly completed.
- Cases where notices have been issued but final orders are yet to be passed.
- Cases where notices for damages or penalties have not yet been issued.

Reduced Penalty Rates under VISHWAS 2026:

- For defaults prior to 14 June 2024, damages/penalties will be recalculated at concessional rates:
- Period of Default Reduced Rate
- Up to 2 months 0.25% per month
- 2 to less than 4 months 0.50% per month
- More than 4 months 1.00% per month

- These reduced rates are intended to encourage speedy settlement of pending cases.

About EPFO:

- Established: 1952.
- Parent Ministry: Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- Chief: Ramesh Krishnamurthi
- Headquarters: New Delhi.
- Statutory Basis: Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.

Functions:

- Administers the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF).
- Manages Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995.
- Manages Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI), 1976.
- Provides retirement savings and social security to organised sector workers.

About the EPF & MP Act, 1952:

- Principal legislation governing provident fund, pension, and insurance benefits for organised sector workers.
- Applicable to specified establishments employing the prescribed minimum number of employees.
- Section 14B empowers EPFO to recover damages for delayed PF contributions.
- Interest on delayed payments is governed under Section 7Q of the Act.

About the Code on Social Security, 2020:

- One of the four Labour Codes enacted by Parliament.
- Consolidates 9 central labour laws relating to social security.

Extends social security provisions to:

- Organised workers.

- Unorganised workers.
- Gig workers.
- Platform workers.
- Section 128 deals with damages and penalties for defaults under the Code.

Additional Key Facts:

- The Four Labour Codes
- Code on Wages, 2019
- Industrial Relations Code, 2020
- Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020
- Code on Social Security, 2020

Social Security Schemes under EPFO:

- Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)
- Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995
- Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI), 1976

- Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Minister: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

Exam Focus Points:

- Scheme: VISHWAS 2026.
- Implementing Agency: EPFO.
- Parent Ministry: Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- Effective Date: 29 June 2026.
- Duration: Six months.
- Nature: One-time dispute resolution scheme.
- Applicable Laws: EPF & MP Act, 1952; Code on Social Security, 2020.
- Relevant Sections: Section 14B (EPF Act), Section 128 (Code on Social Security).
- Application Mode: EPFO Employer Portal (DSC/e-Sign).
- Headquarters of EPFO: New Delhi.

Ministry:

CCPA Imposes ₹1 Lakh Penalty on SpiceJet for Using Dark Patterns on its Booking Platform



- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a ₹1 lakh penalty on SpiceJet for automatically enrolling consumers into its SpiceClub loyalty programme and obtaining consent for promotional communications through pre-ticked checkboxes without explicit user consent.
- The CCPA held that these practices amounted to prohibited "dark patterns", violating the

Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, and the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.

Why was SpiceJet Penalised?

The CCPA found that SpiceJet's booking interface:

- Automatically enrolled users into the SpiceClub Loyalty Programme.
- Used pre-selected consent boxes for promotional messages.
- Required consumers to actively opt out instead of seeking affirmative consent.
- Reduced consumer autonomy and influenced purchasing decisions unfairly.

- Violated the principle of free, informed, and explicit consent.

What are Dark Patterns?

- Dark Patterns are deceptive user interface (UI) designs that manipulate or mislead users into making decisions they might not otherwise make.

Common Types of Dark Patterns:

- Trick Question – Confusing wording that misleads users.
- Forced Action – Requiring users to take unnecessary actions to complete a transaction.
- Interface Interference – Highlighting one option while obscuring alternatives.
- Basket Sneaking – Adding products/services without the user's knowledge.
- Confirm Shaming – Using guilt-inducing language to discourage opting out.
- Subscription Trap – Making cancellation difficult.

The CCPA classified SpiceJet's practices as:

- Trick Question
- Forced Action
- Interface Interference
- Legal Provisions Involved

Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

- Protects consumer rights against unfair trade practices.
- Establishes the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).
- Empowers the CCPA to investigate, recall unsafe goods, impose penalties, and order discontinuation of unfair practices.

Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020:

- Require e-commerce entities to obtain explicit and affirmative consent.
- Rule 4(9) prohibits recording consent automatically through pre-ticked checkboxes.
- Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023
- Issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- Define and prohibit deceptive interface designs that impair consumer choice.
- Applicable to all digital platforms, marketplaces, advertisers, and sellers.

About the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):

- Established under: Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- Headquarters: New Delhi.

Functions:

- Protect consumer rights.
- Investigate unfair trade practices.
- Regulate misleading advertisements.
- Issue directions, impose penalties, and order product recalls where necessary.

Additional Key Facts:

- Consumer Protection Act, 2019
- Replaced the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Introduced:

- Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).
- Product liability provisions.
- Mediation mechanism.
- Regulation of e-commerce.
- Action against misleading advertisements.

Consumer Rights in India

The Act guarantees six consumer rights:

- Right to Safety.

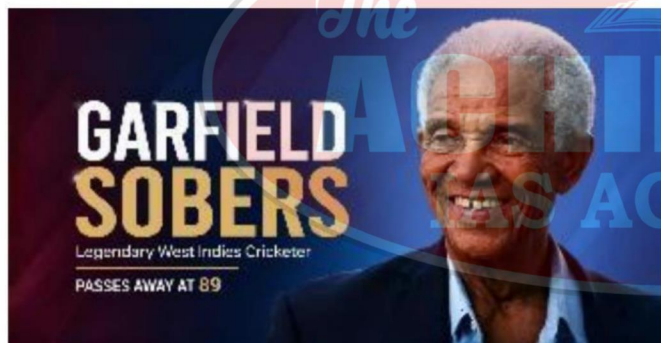
• Right to Information.
• Right to Choose.
• Right to be Heard.
• Right to Seek Redressal.
• Right to Consumer Education.
• Department of Consumer Affairs
• Ministry: Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
• Responsible for consumer welfare policies and implementation of consumer protection laws.

Exam Focus Points:

• Authority: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).
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• Penalty: ₹1 lakh.
• Company: SpiceJet.
• Issue: Dark patterns using pre-ticked consent boxes.
• Relevant Law: Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
• Relevant Rules: Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.
• Guidelines: Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.
• Relevant Rule: Rule 4(9) – Explicit and affirmative consent.
• Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

Legendary West Indies Cricketer Sir Garfield Sobers Passes Away



- West Indies cricket legend Sir Garfield "Garry" Sobers passed away at the age of 89.
- Widely regarded as the greatest all-rounder in cricket history, Sobers represented the West Indies from 1954 to 1974 and set numerous batting, bowling, and fielding records.

Key Highlights:

• Full Name: Sir Garfield St Aubrun Sobers.
• Country: West Indies (Barbados).
• Career: 1954–1974.
• Role: Left-handed batter, left-arm fast-medium and spin bowler.
• Regarded as: Greatest all-rounder in cricket history.
• Test Matches: 93.
• Runs: 8,032.

• Batting Average: 57.78.
• Centuries: 26.
• Test Wickets: 235.
• ODIs: 1 match.

Major Achievements:

- Scored 365 against Pakistan in 1958*, then the highest individual Test score, a record that stood until 1994.
- Became the first cricketer to hit six sixes in one over in first-class cricket (1968).
- Captained the West Indies in Test cricket.

Honours and Awards:

- Knighted (Sir) in 1975 for services to cricket.
- Declared a National Hero of Barbados in 1998.
- The Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy is awarded annually by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to the ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year.

About the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy:

• Instituted by: International Cricket Council (ICC).
• Awarded for: ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year.

- One of the highest individual honours in international cricket.

About Barbados

- Capital: Bridgetown.
- Currency: Barbadian Dollar (BBD).

About the International Cricket Council (ICC):

- Founded: 1909 (as Imperial Cricket Conference).
- Present Name Adopted: 1989.
- Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Members: 108 (Full and Associate Members).

Additional Key Facts:

- The West Indies cricket team represents a group of Caribbean nations and territories, not a single sovereign country.
- Sir Garfield Sobers' 365 (1958)* remained the highest individual Test score until Brian Lara (West Indies) scored 375 against England in 1994.

- Brian Lara later set the current world record with 400 against England in 2004*.
- The first player to hit six sixes in an over in international cricket was Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa) in the 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup.

Exam Focus Points:

- Cricketer: Sir Garfield "Garry" Sobers.
- Country: West Indies (Barbados).
- Known As: Greatest all-rounder in cricket history.
- Highest Test Score: 365* (1958).
- Historic Feat: First to hit six sixes in an over in first-class cricket.
- Knighted: 1975.
- National Hero of Barbados: 1998.
- Named After Him: Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy (ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year).

Government Notifies National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 and National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025



- The Government of India has notified the commencement of the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025 to strengthen India's legal and institutional framework for clean sport. The Acts aim to align India's anti-doping regime with international standards, protect athletes' rights, ensure fair competition, and

enhance the credibility of the country's anti-doping programme.

Why in News?

The Central Government has brought into force:

- National Anti-Doping Act, 2022
- National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025
- The notification strengthens India's anti-doping governance and institutional independence.

Key Highlights

Legislation Enforced:

- National Anti-Doping Act, 2022

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| • National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025 |
| • Ministry: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. |
| • Objective: Prevent doping in sports and promote clean competition. |

Focus Areas:

- | |
|---|
| • Athlete protection. |
| • Institutional autonomy. |
| • Transparent dispute resolution. |
| • Alignment with global anti-doping standards. |
| • Strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of India's anti-doping programme. |

Objectives of the Acts:

- Prevent the use of prohibited performance-enhancing substances.
- Safeguard athletes' rights through fair procedures.
- Ensure integrity and fairness in sporting competitions.
- Strengthen independent anti-doping institutions.
- Improve transparency in testing, investigations, and adjudication.
- Bring India's anti-doping framework in line with international best practices.

Key Features of the National Anti-Doping Act, 2022:

- Provides a statutory framework for anti-doping regulation.
- Establishes an independent anti-doping governance structure.

Regulates:

- Doping control.
- Sample collection and testing.
- Investigations.
- Results management.
- Appeals and dispute resolution.
- Protects athletes through due process and procedural safeguards.

National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025:

The Amendment Act:

- Strengthens institutional autonomy.
- Improves governance and accountability.
- Enhances procedural fairness.
- Streamlines dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Aligns India's framework with evolving global anti-doping standards.

About NADA (National Anti-Doping Agency)

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|--|
| • Established: 2005. |
| • Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. |
| • Director General: Ashish Bhargava |
| • Headquarters: New Delhi. |

Functions:

- Conducts dope testing.
- Implements anti-doping rules.
- Promotes anti-doping education and awareness.
- Coordinates with international anti-doping organisations.
- Monitors compliance with anti-doping regulations.

About WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency)

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|---|
| • Established: 1999. |
| • Headquarters: Montreal, Canada. |
| • President: Witold Bańka |
| • Purpose: Promote, coordinate, and monitor the fight against doping in sports worldwide. |
| • Publishes the World Anti-Doping Code and the annual Prohibited List of banned substances and methods. |

International Framework:

India's anti-doping framework aligns with:

- World Anti-Doping Code (WADA Code).
- UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005).

- International standards for testing, education, laboratories, therapeutic use exemptions, investigations, and results management.

Additional Key Facts:

- UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport
- Adopted: 2005.
- Facilitates implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code by governments.
- India is a State Party to the Convention.

World Anti-Doping Code

- Published by WADA.
- Harmonises anti-doping policies across sports and countries.
- Covers: Testing.
- Investigations.
- Prohibited substances.
- Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE).

- Education.
- Results management.
- Compliance monitoring.

Exam Focus Points:

- Acts: National Anti-Doping Act, 2022 & National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025.
- Ministry: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- National Agency: NADA.
- Global Agency: WADA.
- WADA Headquarters: Montreal, Canada.
- International Convention: UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005).
- Global Standard: World Anti-Doping Code.
- Objective: Clean sport, athlete protection, and fair competition.

Iraq Signs Major Oil Deals with Western Companies, Including Agreement to Revive Syria Pipeline



Why is it in News?

- The Government of Iraq has signed several agreements with Western oil companies to increase oil and gas production. One of the key agreements aims to revive the Iraq–Syria oil pipeline, which has remained inactive for many years.

Key Considerations

- Country: Iraq
- Partners: Western oil companies, including BP (United Kingdom) and TotalEnergies (France).
- Sector: Oil and Gas
- Key Agreement: Revival of the Iraq–Syria oil pipeline.
- Objective: To increase oil exports, boost energy production, and strengthen regional energy cooperation.
- Pipeline Route: Connects Iraq's oil fields to Syria's Mediterranean coast for exporting crude oil.
- Additional Focus: Development of oil fields, natural gas projects, and energy infrastructure.

About the Iraq–Syria Oil Pipeline

- Purpose: To transport Iraqi crude oil to Mediterranean ports through Syria.

- **Status:** The pipeline has remained largely inactive due to decades of conflict and political instability.
- **Benefit:** Its revival will provide Iraq with an additional export route and improve regional energy connectivity.

About Iraq

- **Capital:** Baghdad
- **Currency:** Iraqi Dinar (IQD)
- **Official Languages:** Arabic and Kurdish
- **President:** Abdul Latif Rashid
- **Prime Minister:** Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani
- **Neighbouring Countries:** Türkiye, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria.

Significance

- The agreements are expected to increase Iraq's oil production, improve export capacity, attract foreign investment, and support economic growth. Reviving the Iraq–Syria pipeline could also strengthen regional energy cooperation and diversify Iraq's oil export routes.

- **BP:** A multinational oil and gas company headquartered in London, United Kingdom.
- **TotalEnergies:** A multinational energy company headquartered in Paris, France.
- **Iraq:** One of the world's largest holders of proven crude oil reserves and a founding member of OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries).
- **OPEC Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.

Exam Focus Points

- **Country:** Iraq
- **Partners:** BP and TotalEnergies
- **Project:** Revival of the Iraq–Syria oil pipeline
- **Objective:** Increase oil exports and strengthen regional energy cooperation
- **Capital:** Baghdad
- **Currency:** Iraqi Dinar (IQD)
- **Organisation:** OPEC
- **Significance:** Expanding Iraq's energy infrastructure and export network.

Additional Key Facts

Indian Navy Receives Another MH-60R Seahawk Helicopter from the United States



Why is it in News?

- The Indian Navy has received another MH-60R Seahawk multi-role helicopter from the United States, strengthening India's maritime defence

capabilities. The helicopter is part of India's ongoing defence procurement programme to enhance surveillance and anti-submarine warfare operations.

Key Considerations

- **Organisation:** Indian Navy
- **Helicopter:** MH-60R Seahawk
- **Manufacturer:** Lockheed Martin (Sikorsky Aircraft)
- **Supplier:** United States
- **Role:** Multi-role maritime helicopter

- **Purpose:** To strengthen maritime surveillance, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), search and rescue (SAR), and surveillance operations.
- **Procurement:** Part of India's agreement to acquire 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters from the United States.
- **Delivery:** The newly delivered helicopter is among the remaining aircraft under the contract.

About MH-60R Seahawk

- **Type:** Multi-role naval helicopter.
- **Primary Roles:** Anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and logistics support.
- **Features:** Equipped with advanced radar, sonar, torpedoes, missiles, and electronic warfare systems.
- **Operator:** Used by the United States Navy and several allied countries.

About the Indian Navy

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Chief of the Naval Staff:** Admiral Krishna Swaminathan
- **Role:** Safeguards India's maritime interests, protects sea lanes, and ensures national security in the Indian Ocean Region.

Significance

Supreme Court Upholds 'Royalty on Royalty' Under MMDR Act



Why is it in News?

- The induction of another MH-60R Seahawk enhances the Indian Navy's operational readiness and strengthens its capability to monitor and respond to maritime threats, particularly in the Indian Ocean Region.

Additional Key Facts

- **Foreign Military Sales (FMS):** India's MH-60R helicopters are being procured from the United States through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme.
- **Lockheed Martin:** An American aerospace and defence company headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, USA.
- **Sikorsky Aircraft:** A subsidiary of Lockheed Martin that manufactures the MH-60R Seahawk helicopters.

Exam Focus Points

- **Organisation:** Indian Navy
- **Helicopter:** MH-60R Seahawk
- **Manufacturer:** Lockheed Martin (Sikorsky)
- **Supplier:** United States
- **Total Helicopters Ordered:** 24
- **Primary Role:** Anti-submarine warfare and maritime surveillance

- The Supreme Court of India has upheld the validity of the 'royalty on royalty' provision under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act). The judgment clarifies how royalty-related payments should be calculated for mining leases.

Reason Behind the Move

- To Clarify Royalty Calculation: The Supreme Court clarified that certain charges under the MMDR Act can legally be calculated based on the royalty amount, ending confusion over the method of calculation.
- To Avoid Revenue Loss: If these charges were not calculated correctly, state governments could lose significant revenue from mining activities.
- To End Long-Standing Legal Disputes: Mining companies had challenged the validity of the "royalty on royalty" provision. The judgment settles this issue and provides legal certainty.
- To Ensure Uniform Implementation: The ruling creates a common method for calculating mining dues across all states, preventing different interpretations.
- To Strengthen Mining Regulation: It reinforces the government's authority to levy statutory mining charges under the MMDR Act, 1957, ensuring better regulation of the mining sector.

What is 'Royalty on Royalty'?

- Royalty: A payment made by mining companies to the government for extracting minerals.
- Royalty on Royalty: Certain additional payments are calculated based on the royalty amount itself, rather than only on the quantity or value of minerals extracted.
- Purpose: To determine the total amount payable by mining lease holders under the MMDR Act.

About the MMDR Act, 1957

- Full Form: Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

- | |
|---|
| • Objective: Regulates the mining sector, mineral exploration, and mining leases in India. |
| • Administered By: Ministry of Mines, Government of India. |
| • Scope: Governs the grant, renewal, and regulation of mining leases and mineral concessions. |

Significance

- The judgment provides legal clarity on royalty calculations, reduces uncertainty in the mining sector, and strengthens the government's framework for collecting mining-related revenue.

Additional Key Facts

- | |
|---|
| • Royalty: A statutory payment made to the government for the extraction of minerals. |
| • Ministry Responsible: Ministry of Mines. |
| • MMDR Act: The primary legislation governing the mining and mineral sector in India. |

Exam Focus Points

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|--|
| • Court: Supreme Court of India |
| • Act: Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 |
| • Ministry: Ministry of Mines |
| • Issue: Royalty on Royalty |
| • Judgment: Provision upheld as valid |
| • Sector: Mining and Minerals |

RBI Imposes Monetary Penalties on Muthoot Finance and Three Other NBFCs for Regulatory Violations

Why is it in News?

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on Muthoot Finance and three other Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for violating regulatory guidelines.

The penalties were imposed due to deficiencies in regulatory compliance and do not affect the validity of customer transactions.

Reason Behind the Move

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted supervisory inspections of these financial companies and found several violations of its regulatory guidelines. To enforce financial discipline and ensure proper compliance, RBI imposed monetary penalties. The penalties are administrative in nature and do not affect the validity of customer transactions or agreements.



Entities Involved and Reasons

- Muthoot Finance Ltd.
- Penalty: ₹5.80 lakh
- Reason: Failed to periodically review customers' risk categorisation and did not deploy robust software to effectively identify and report suspicious transactions, violating RBI's KYC/AML norms.

Avail Financial Services Ltd.

- Penalty: ₹6.20 lakh
- Reason: Its Managing Director held directorships in two other Middle Layer NBFCs, violating RBI governance norms. The company also breached the single-party exposure limit, exposing itself to excessive lending risk.

Satya MicroCapital Ltd.

- Penalty: ₹3.10 lakh
- Reason: Failed to classify certain restructured loan accounts as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) as required under RBI norms.

PAN Emami Cosmed Ltd.

- Penalty: ₹3.10 lakh

- Reason: Exceeded the prescribed credit exposure limit to a single group of borrowers, violating RBI prudential norms.

Dhani Loans and Services Ltd.

- Penalty: ₹2.70 lakh
- Reason: Penalised for non-compliance with RBI's regulatory directions relating to financial operations and compliance requirements.

Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Ltd.

- Penalty: ₹2.70 lakh
- Reason: Penalised for non-compliance with RBI's regulatory guidelines during supervisory inspection.

About the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- Established: 1 April 1935
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Governor: Sanjay Malhotra
- Role: India's central bank responsible for monetary policy, banking regulation, financial stability, and currency issuance.

About Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)

- Meaning: Financial institutions that provide loans, investments, and other financial services but do not hold a banking licence.
- Regulator: Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Functions: Provide credit, gold loans, vehicle loans, housing finance, and other financial services.
- Difference from Banks: NBFCs cannot accept demand deposits such as savings or current account deposits.

Exam Focus Points

- Regulator: Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Entity Penalised: Muthoot Finance and three other NBFCs	RBI Headquarters: Mumbai
Reason: Violation of RBI regulatory and compliance norms	RBI Governor: Sanjay Malhotra
Sector: Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)	Objective: Strengthen regulatory compliance and financial discipline.

Lets Revise

- ❖ What is the name of India's first successful private orbital rocket mission? **Mission Aagaman**
- ❖ Which company successfully launched Mission Aagaman? **Skyroot Aerospace**
- ❖ Which rocket was used in Mission Aagaman? **Vikram-1**
- ❖ Exercise Pitch Black, frequently seen in the news, is a multinational air combat exercise hosted by which country? **Australia (Royal Australian Air Force).**
- ❖ Which organisation launched the VISHWAS 2026 Scheme? **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).**
- ❖ The Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, frequently seen in the news, were issued by which authority? **Department of Consumer Affairs.**
- ❖ The Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy, frequently seen in the news, is awarded annually by the ICC for: **ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year.**
- ❖ In which year was the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) established? **2005.**
- ❖ Which pipeline is planned to be revived under Iraq's new energy agreements? **Iraq-Syria Oil Pipeline**

- ❖ Which two major Western energy companies signed agreements with Iraq? **BP and TotalEnergies**
- ❖ What is the main objective of reviving the Iraq–Syria oil pipeline? **To increase Iraq's oil exports through the Mediterranean.**
- ❖ Which maritime helicopter was recently delivered to the Indian Navy by the United States? **MH-60R Seahawk**
- ❖ Which country supplied the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter to the Indian Navy? **United States**
- ❖ How many MH-60R Seahawk helicopters has India contracted to procure from the United States? **24 helicopters**
- ❖ Which company manufactures the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter? **Lockheed Martin (Sikorsky Aircraft)**
- ❖ The 'royalty on royalty' judgment is related to which Act? **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act)**
- ❖ What does the term 'royalty' mean in the mining sector? **A payment made by mining companies to the government for extracting minerals.**
- ❖ The MMDR Act was enacted in which year? **1957**
- ❖ Why did the RBI impose a penalty on Muthoot Finance Ltd.? **Failure to comply with KYC/AML norms, including inadequate review of customer risk categorisation and suspicious transaction monitoring.**



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IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS IN UPSC EXAMINATIONS

Current Affairs hold a crucial place in the preparation for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. A comprehensive understanding of recent national and international developments helps aspirants strengthen their General Studies foundation and develop a well-rounded perspective on important issues. Topics such as government policies, schemes, economy, international relations, science and technology, environment, defence, social justice, governance, reports, indices, appointments, awards, and major global events are highly relevant for both the Prelims and Mains examinations. Regular study of current affairs not only enhances factual knowledge but also improves analytical ability, critical thinking, answer-writing skills, and decision-making aptitude. Since UPSC questions often connect contemporary developments with static subjects, consistent preparation of current affairs enables aspirants to understand issues in depth and present balanced, informed, and relevant answers. It also plays an important role in Essay writing, Ethics, and the Personality Test, giving candidates a strong edge throughout the examination process.

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