

CURRENT AFFAIRS SUPPLEMENT 12

The Caste Census

Explained: Demands for a caste census, and what happens now after its approval

WHY IN NEWS?

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the enumeration of castes in the upcoming Census, fulfilling a decades-old demand. This decision reverses the government's previous stance in Parliament from 2019, signaling a significant shift in policy.

Caste Census Demand

- **Census in India:** The Census exercise in India has its origins in the colonial era, starting with the first official Census in **1881**.
- **Caste Census Demand:** Since **1951**, Census data has included the numbers of **Scheduled Castes (SCs)**, **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**, and religious denominations, but caste data for other groups was excluded.
- **Last detailed caste data:** 1931 Census.
- **1941 Census:** It included caste data, but it was not published.
- **Post-independence:** The government avoided caste enumeration.
- **Demand for Caste Census:**
 - Raised mainly by parties representing OBCs, including farmers and artisans.
 - No government has conducted a complete caste count in independent India.

Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC):

- **First conducted:** in **1931**
- **Aim:** To collect detailed data on the economic status of Indian families across rural and urban areas, identifying indicators of deprivation. It also gathers information on caste names to evaluate the economic conditions of different caste groups.
- **Purpose of SECC:** The SECC is specifically used to determine the beneficiaries of state support and welfare schemes.

SECC 2011	Census 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessed socio-economic status of rural and urban households.• Started on June 29, 2011 by the Ministry of Rural Development via door-to-door survey.• Conducted mainly in 2011–12, extended till 2013 in some states.• Covered 24 lakh enumeration blocks, each with ~125 households.• Data used for policy, research, and welfare program implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted February 9–28, 2011, before SECC.• Under Ministry of Home Affairs, supervised by Registrar General of India (RGI).• Caste census administered separately by RGI.• Data is confidential under the Census Act of 1948, meaning individual information is protected and not used for direct policy decisions.

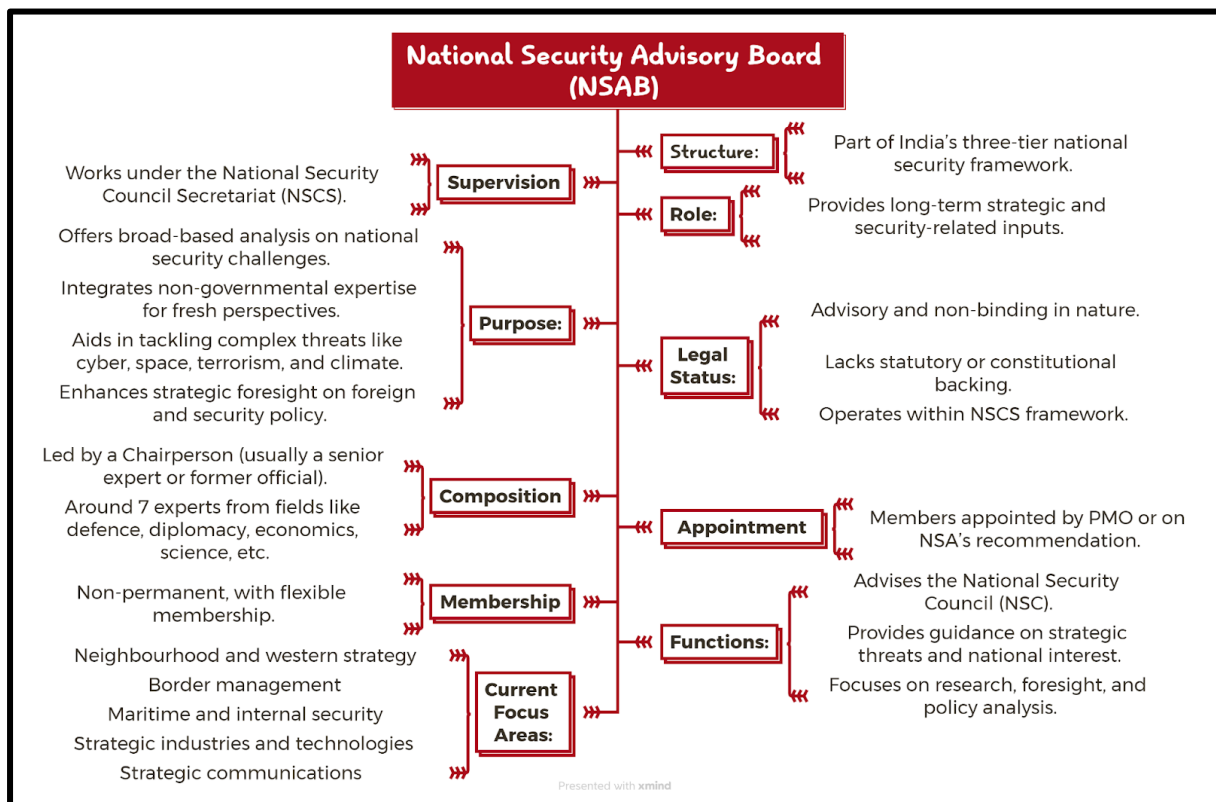
- Personal data is accessible to government departments for benefit allocation.

National Security Advisory Board

National Security Advisory Board revamped: Ex-R&AW chief Alok Joshi appointed head

WHY IN NEWS?

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the reconstitution of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), appointing Alok Joshi, the former R&AW chief, as its new chairman. The revamped NSAB will include retired military officers and an IFS officer, aiming to provide long-term analysis and policy recommendations to the National Security Council (NSC).



Restatement of Judicial Values

Public comments on PM-CJI puja meet are based on a 1997 document on judicial values adopted by Supreme Court

WHY IN NEWS?

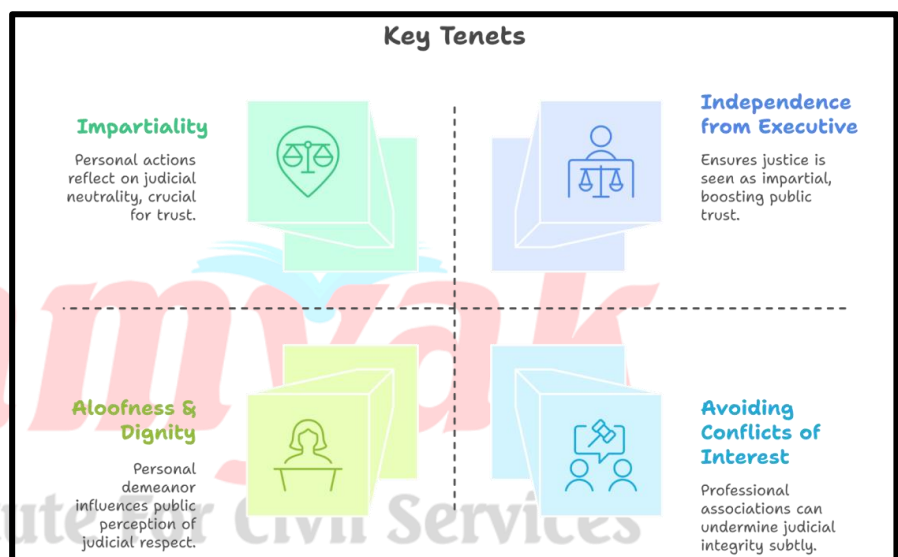
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's videographed visit to Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud's residence for Ganapati puja has triggered debate over judicial propriety and independence. Critics cite the **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life** (1997), which advises judges to avoid actions—official or personal—that may erode public confidence in judicial impartiality.

Restatement of Values of Judicial Life:

- The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, adopted in a Full Court Meeting of the Supreme Court on May 7, 1997, serves as an ethical guide for the judiciary.
- It contains principles intended to uphold the public's trust in the impartiality and integrity of judges, including those in the Supreme Court and High Courts.

Key principles include:

- Judges must ensure that justice is done and seen to be done.
- Must avoid any act that erodes public trust in judicial neutrality.
- Should maintain aloofness consistent with the dignity of office.
- No close association with practicing lawyers in the same court.
- No hearing of cases involving family, close relations, or companies they hold shares in (unless disclosed).
- Should not express political views, give media interviews, or accept gifts (except from close relations).
- Must not engage in speculation, fundraising, or seek perks not clearly allowed.
- Judges must remember they are always under public gaze.



Related Global Principles

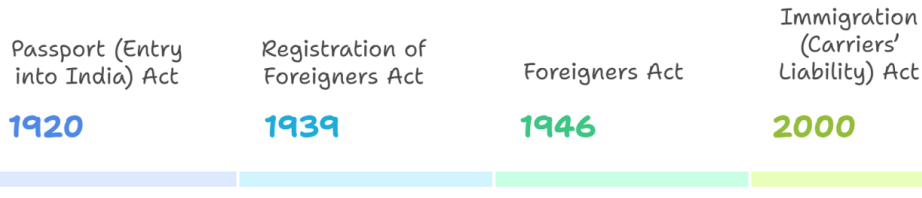
- **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2006):** Outline six core values — independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence & diligence.
- **UN Basic Principles (1985):** Emphasize judicial autonomy, non-interference, and right to fair trial.

IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGNERS BILL, 2025

WHY IN NEWS?

The Union Government has introduced a new Immigration Bill aimed at overhauling and modernizing the regulatory framework concerning the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners in India. The Bill seeks to replace four outdated laws, some dating back to the colonial era.

The current legal regime on immigration is fragmented across multiple statutes:



Key Provisions of the Bill

1. **Unified Legal Framework:** The Bill repeals the four older laws and aims to consolidate all immigration-related functions—entry, regulation of stay, registration, and exit of foreigners—under a single comprehensive law.
2. **Entry and Stay Restrictions**
 - a. Foreign nationals may be denied entry or stay if they pose risks to:
 - i. National security
 - ii. Sovereignty and integrity
 - iii. Public health
 - iv. India's international relations
3. **Finality of Immigration Officers' Decisions:** Decisions made by immigration authorities will be binding and not subject to appeal, giving them wide discretionary powers.
4. **Tracking of Foreigners:** Certain institutions (e.g. educational institutions, hospitals, nursing homes) will be mandated to report the presence and details of foreign nationals under their care or enrolment to immigration authorities.
5. **Stricter Penal Provisions:** Violation of immigration rules such as entering India without valid documentation may invite Up to 5 years imprisonment, or ₹5 lakh fine.

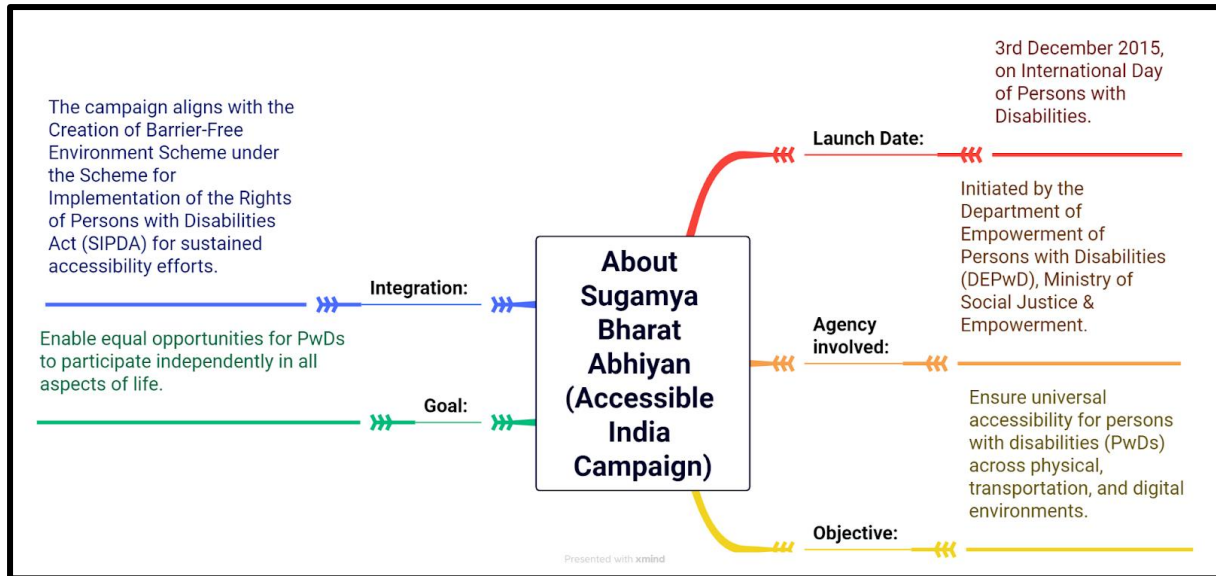
Existing Governance Mechanisms (Pre-Bill)

1. **Bureau of Immigration (BoI):** Set up in 1971 under MHA, it handles visa issuance and management of foreigner entries.
2. **Registration Requirements:** Foreigners (including those of Indian origin) on long-term visas (over 180 days) must register with FRRO (Foreigners Regional Registration Officer).
3. **Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000:** Holds airlines and carriers responsible for ensuring passenger compliance with visa/passport norms.
4. **Citizenship Act, 1955:** Governs acquisition of Indian citizenship and status such as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI).

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

WHY IN NEWS?

The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign) completed 9 years in 2024, since its launch on December 3, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Major Initiatives under Sugamya Bharat

- **Accessibility Audits:** Evaluations of government buildings to assess and improve access for the disabled.
- **Framing of Accessibility Standards:** Guidelines for barrier-free infrastructure and services.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Public outreach to promote empathy and understanding of disability-related challenges.

Components of the Accessible India Campaign

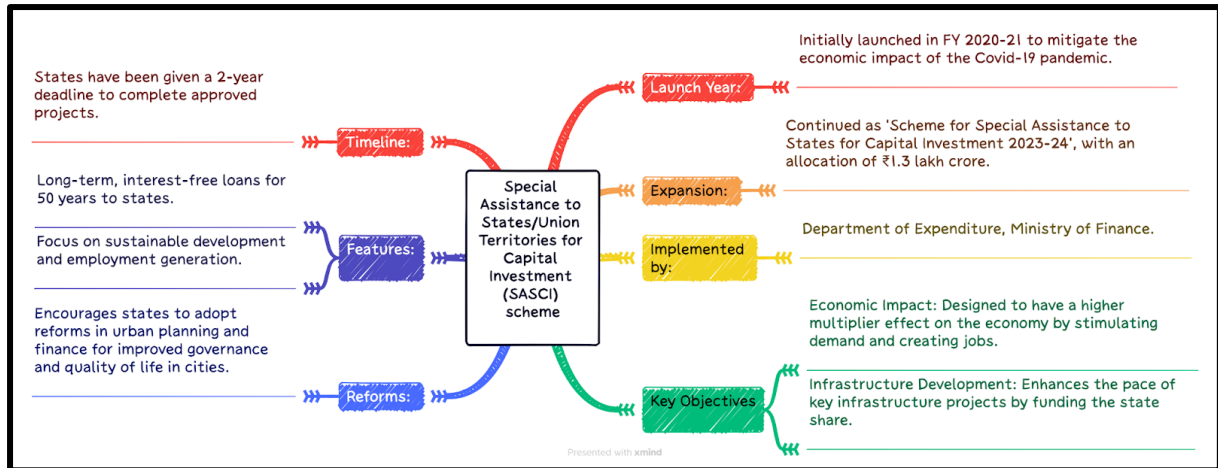
- **Built Environment Accessibility:** Focuses on making public buildings and infrastructure barrier-free and accessible to PwDs.
- **Transportation System Accessibility:** Aims to create accessible modes of public and private transport for PwDs.
- **Information and Communication Ecosystem Accessibility:** Enhances accessibility in digital and communication platforms to provide equal access to information for all.

Special Assistance to States/Union Territories for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme

Centre approves INR 3,295 cr for tourism infra developments under SASCI scheme

WHY IN NEWS?

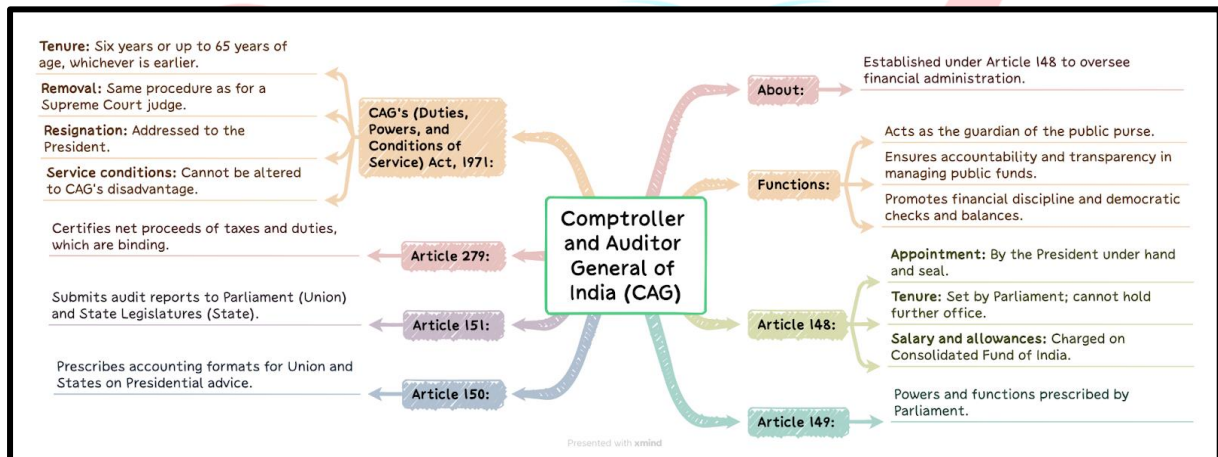
The Ministry of Tourism recently approved 40 projects for the development of lesser-known tourism sites in 23 states across India. This initiative is a significant step toward promoting a balanced distribution of tourists, easing pressure on high-traffic sites, and fostering regional economic growth through sustainable tourism. The funding for these projects has been facilitated under the Special Assistance to States/Union Territories for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme.



Comptroller and Auditor General of India

WHY IN NEWS?

K Sanjay Murthy assumed office as the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India recently. A 1989-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Himachal Pradesh cadre, Murthy succeeds Girish Chandra Murmu, who demitted office on Wednesday.

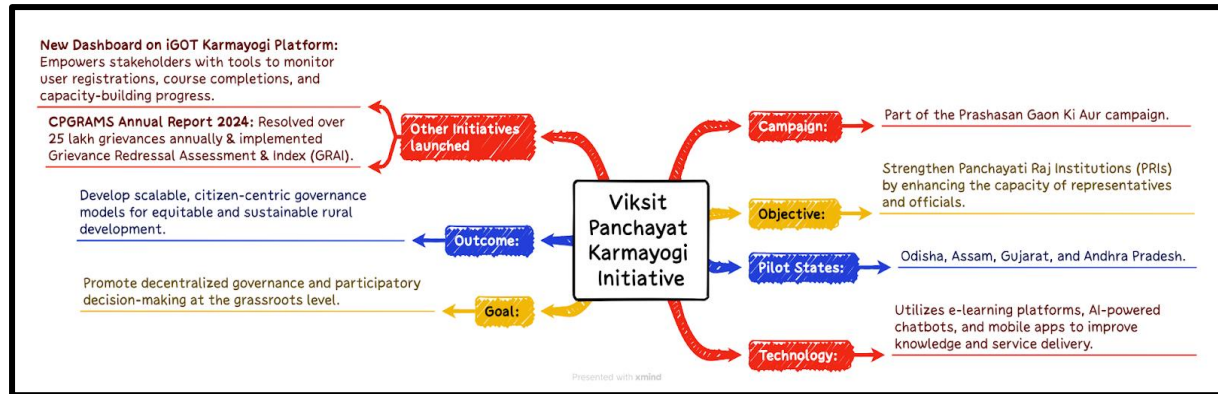


Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi' Initiative

Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches 'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi' Initiative to Empower Grassroots Governance

WHY IN NEWS?

In a significant step towards strengthening grassroots governance, the 'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi' initiative was launched on Good Governance Day.



Telecommunications (Procedures and Safeguards for Lawful Interception of Messages) Rules, 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

The Union Government has notified the Telecommunications (Procedures and Safeguards for Lawful Interception of Messages) Rules, 2024, empowering law enforcement and security agencies to intercept phone messages under specified conditions. These rules replace Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951.

Key Provisions of the 2024 Rules

- **Competent Authorities for Interception**
 - Union Level: Union Home Secretary
 - State Level: State Home Department Secretaries
 - In unavoidable circumstances: Officers of at least Joint Secretary rank may approve interception orders.
- **Operational-Level Authorizations**
 - Applicable in remote areas or during field operations:
 - Central Level: Head or second senior-most officer of an authorised agency.
 - State Level: Head or senior-most officer (not below Inspector General of Police) of an authorised agency.
- **Conditions:**
 - Orders must be reported to the competent authority within 3 working days.
 - Must be confirmed within 7 working days, else interception ceases and collected data is invalid.
- **Destruction of Records**
 - Intercepted data must be destroyed every six months.
 - Exception: If needed for functional purposes or preserved under court orders.

What's New Compared to Rule 419A?

Feature	Rule 419A (Old)	2024 Rules (New)
Applicability	Only in emergent cases	Expanded to remote areas and operational needs
Authorised Officer Limit	No limit on IG-rank officers at state level	Only Head/2nd senior-most can approve
Confirmation Requirement	Not clearly time-bound	7-day deadline , or data becomes invalid
Safeguards for	Introduced after SC ruling	Procedural safeguards made more

Interception

(2007)

specific

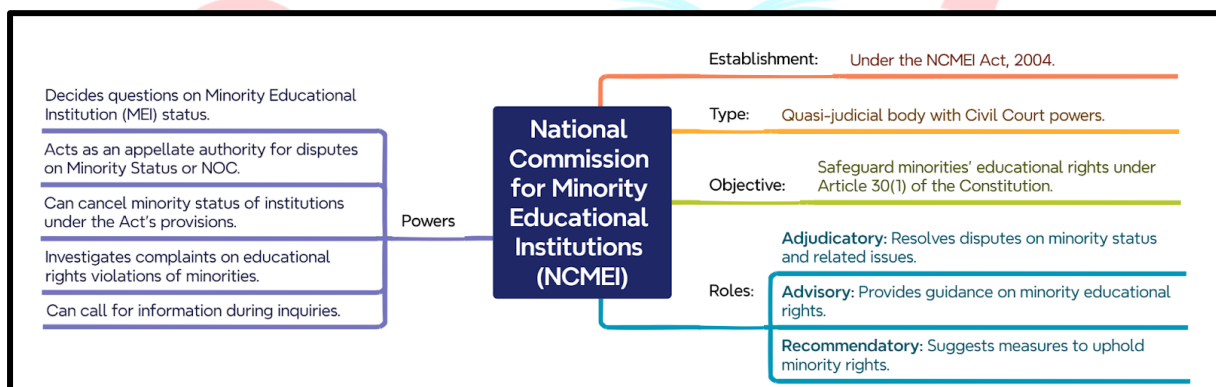
Legal and Historical Context

- **PUCL vs. Union of India (1996)**
 - Supreme Court ruled that phone tapping violates Article 19(1)(a) unless it meets reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).
 - Directed the government to frame safeguards against arbitrary interception.
 - Led to the creation of Rule 419A in 2007 under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- **Shift to Telecommunications Act, 2023**
 - Repeals the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
 - Section 56 provides new statutory grounds for interception, especially for public safety and national security.

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions

WHY IN NEWS?

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged minority educational institutions across India to implement the National Credit Framework (NCrF) and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) as envisaged under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.



Yuva Sahakar Scheme

WHY IN NEWS?

Under the The Yuva Sahakar – Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme significant financial assistance has been sanctioned, aimed at promoting cooperative enterprises, especially among young entrepreneurs.

