



DATE: 13 FEBRUARY 2026

1 Liberalised Remittance Scheme (Source: *Indian Express*)

- The Liberalised Remittance Scheme by the RBI allows resident Indians to remit up to USD 250,000 annually abroad for education, travel, healthcare, gifts, and investments.
- It is a foreign exchange policy initiative introduced by the Reserve Bank of India in 2004, intended to simplify and streamline the process of remitting funds outside India.

Liberalised Remittance Scheme Availability

- LRS is available to all resident individuals, including minors and students.
- The eligible citizens must have an Indian bank account, a valid Permanent Account Number (PAN), and a passport.
- The scheme excludes corporates, Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs), partnership firms, and trusts.

Liberalised Remittance Scheme limit

- A resident individual can remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year for permissible transactions.
- Cannot use the remittances for margin trading, buying lottery tickets, real estate, etc.

Prohibited transactions

- Purchase of lottery tickets, banned magazines, transactions with FATF non-compliant countries, gifting in foreign currency to another Indian resident's foreign account etc.

Budget 2026 Update

- The TCS on LRS for Health and Education has been reduced to 2% from the existing 5%.
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2 One Nation and One Election (Source: *The Hindu*)

The recent One Nation One Election bill which has been passed in the Lok Sabha proposes to hold simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies and local bodies across the country.

What need to be memorised

- The bill was previously analyzed by a high-powered committee chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The initiative will be conducted in two phases – in the first phase, Loksabha and assembly elections will be held together, and in the second phase, local body elections will be conducted within 100 days of the general elections.
- India has witnessed simultaneous elections from 1951-52 to mid 1960s, but the process came to a halt due to the premature dissolution of a few state assemblies during that time period. Thus, the concept of simultaneous elections was a historical practice, not a constitutional mandate.
- Major concerns raised against this bill are regarding federalism, logistical challenges, democratic accountability, and disadvantage for regional political parties.

Advantages

- Will help to reduce the frequency of elections and thereby save time and resources.
- Governments can concentrate on policy and administration without the distraction of repeated election cycles.
- Could streamline voter registration.
- Less pressure to announce populist measures, or freebies, to win voter support, leading to more stable financial management.



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3 Agri Stack (Source: *Indian Express*)

Agri Stack was launched in 2024 as part of the Centre's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Mission in the agriculture sector to consolidate data on a single platform.

- It integrates farmer data, land records, and scheme benefits into a centralized digital platform.
- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare at the Centre in close collaboration with the Revenue and Agriculture departments of State governments.
- This will enhance farm productivity, enable better decisions for farmers and reduce risk by providing customised advisory support.
- The government aims to integrate Agri Stack Registries with all its major agricultural schemes and services, including Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Minimum Support Price (MSP)-based procurement, fertiliser distribution, loans, insurance etc.
- The Agri Stack comprises three foundational registries or databases in the agriculture sector:
 - Farmer Registry: Under the Agri Stack, farmers are given a digital identity (Farmer ID) similar to Aadhaar, which are linked dynamically to the State's land records, livestock ownership, crops sown, demographic details, family details, schemes and benefits availed.
 - Crop Sown Registry: The Crop Sown Registry includes details on crops planted by farmers. This is recorded through mobile-based Digital Crop Surveys on the ground each season.
 - Geo-referenced Village Maps data: The Geo-referenced Village Map Registry comprises geographic information of land records linked with their locations (latitudes and longitudes). So far, 5.4 lakh village maps have been geo-referenced out of the total 6.75 lakh villages. The target is to cover all villages by March 2027.

4 Continental Mantle Earthquakes (Source: *Down to Earth*)

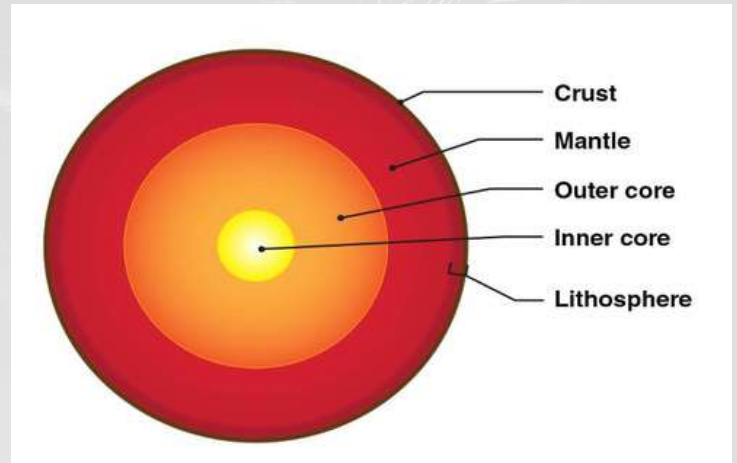
Unlike most earthquakes which originate in the earth's crust at depths of around 10-29km, continental mantle earthquakes originate deep within the planet's mantle (sometimes, even more than 80km below the Moho discontinuity).

What are Earthquakes?

Earthquakes are the sudden shaking of the Earth's surface caused by the release of energy in the lithosphere, which creates seismic waves.

How are Earthquakes formed?

They occur when tectonic plates, which make up the Earth's crust, suddenly slip past or collide with each other along fault lines.



What you need to know about continental earthquakes?

- Continental Mantle Earthquakes occur worldwide but are regionally clustered, particularly beneath the Himalayas and the Bering Strait (areas marked by intense continental collision and lithospheric deformation).
- In these earthquakes, surface shaking is usually less severe than that of shallow quakes of the same magnitude because energy dissipates in the mantle.
- They are identified by comparing S_n (an S wave that travels through the upper mantle) and L_g waves (an S wave that travels through continental crust).



5 Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing system (Source: *Down to Earth*)

The Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) System is a new global mechanism currently being negotiated under the World Health Organization's Pandemic Agreement, adopted at the 78th World Health Assembly in May 2025.

What is the PABS System ?

- It is designed as a multilateral, transparent framework to ensure rapid and timely sharing of biological materials and genetic sequence information of pathogens that have pandemic potential, so that researchers and health authorities can quickly develop diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics, and other countermeasures.
- The PABS System is being elaborated as an annex to the Pandemic Agreement (Article 12), and its draft text is currently being negotiated by member states.

Structural Framework

The PABS system is administered under the authority of the World Health Organization, with participation from Member States, research institutions, industry partners, and international health organisations. Its framework consists of two main pillars:

WHO's New Pandemic Deal

Pathogen Sharing System

Countries and companies will quickly share virus data to speed up making vaccines and treatments.



Fair Access

The deal ensures poorer countries get vaccines and health supplies, unlike during COVID-19



Technology Sharing

Countries agreed to share health tech if everyone agrees, balancing fairness and company profits.



Helping Poorer Countries

The deal promises support to improve hospitals and health systems in countries that need it.



- Access Component: Facilitates rapid and secure sharing of pathogen samples and related genetic sequence data.
- Benefit sharing component: Ensures that countries providing pathogen samples receive equitable benefits derived from their use.

Purpose and Rationale

The goal is to create a predictable and equitable global mechanism so that countries that promptly share pathogen information are not left behind when vaccines, drugs, or diagnostics are developed.