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VAISHNA BISWAS

AIR - 367 | CSE 2025

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31 AUGUST 2026

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AIR 593
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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS-

1. Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope
2. Treated Wastewater Reuse: Need for Context-Specific Policies
3. OBC CREAMY LAYER AND THE INCOME TEST
4. EARLY WARNING SIGNS BEFORE SOLAR FLARES
5. WORRIES BEHIND INDIA'S ROBUST GDP, INFLATION DATA

1.Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope

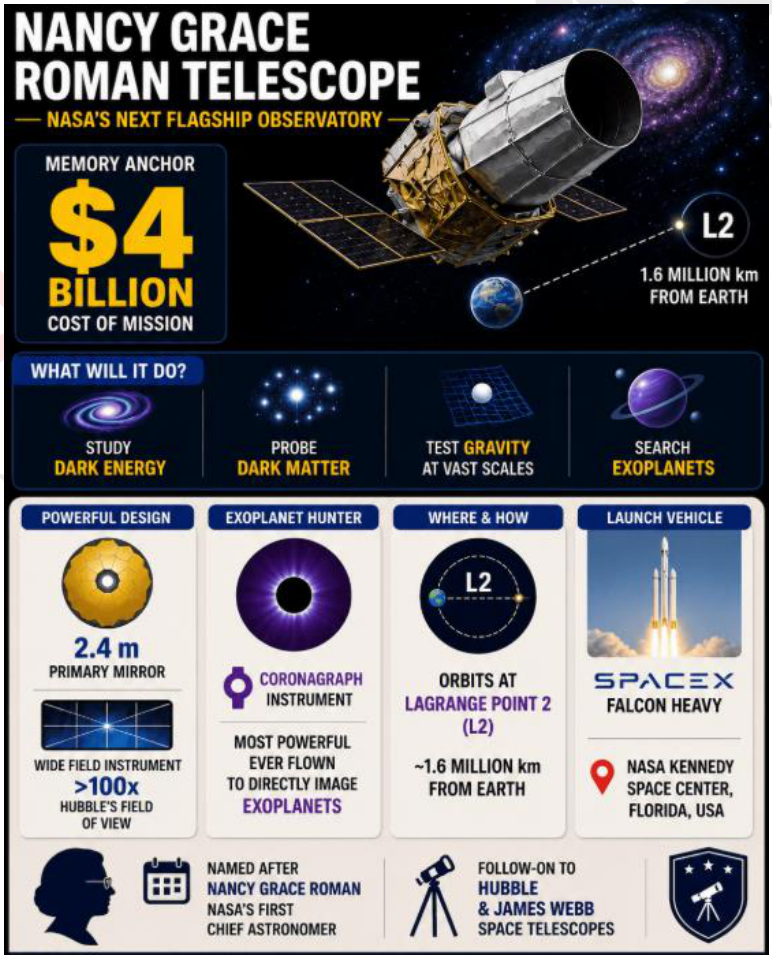
Source: IE

Why in News?

NASA's Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is being developed as a next-generation space observatory to study **dark energy, dark matter, exoplanets and the large-scale structure of the Universe**.

Key Highlights

- The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope is a flagship space observatory of NASA, with an estimated cost of around $4 billion.
- It is named after Nancy Grace Roman, NASA's first chief astronomer.
- It is designed as a successor to the Hubble Space Telescope and James Webb Space Telescope.
- The telescope will investigate:
    - Dark energy
    - Dark matter
    - **Expansion of the Universe**
    - **Exoplanets**



- The effects of gravity on cosmic scales.

- It is planned to be launched aboard a **SpaceX Falcon Heavy** from the **Kennedy Space Center, Florida**.

Detailed Insights

- The telescope is planned to operate near Lagrange Point 2 (L2), about 1.6 million km from Earth.
- L2 is also used by the James Webb Space Telescope and provides a favourable location for space observations.
- Its primary survey is expected to last more than a year and map over two billion galaxies.
- The telescope has a 2.4-metre primary mirror.
- Its Wide Field Instrument has a field of view more than 100 times wider than Hubble's.
- The Coronagraph Instrument will block the intense light of stars to enable direct imaging of exoplanets.
- The mission will help scientists understand the structure, evolution and expansion of the Universe.
- Despite earlier efforts to reduce or eliminate its funding, the project continued with support from the U.S. Congress.

Lagrange Point 2 (L2)

- L2 is one of the five Lagrange points in a two-body system such as the Sun-Earth system.
- It lies approximately 1.5–1.6 million km beyond Earth, away from the Sun.
- Objects placed near L2 can maintain a relatively stable position with respect to the Earth-Sun system while requiring comparatively little fuel for station-keeping.

UPSC Prelims Question

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope:

1. It is a NASA space observatory designed to study dark energy and dark matter.
2. It is planned to operate near the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2.

3. Its Wide Field Instrument has a field of view significantly larger than that of the Hubble Space Telescope.
4. It is designed exclusively for studying the planets within the Solar System.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 1 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 3 only

UPSC Mains Question

Q. Explain the significance of space-based observatories such as the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope in improving our understanding of dark matter, dark energy and the evolution of the Universe.
(150 words)

2.Treated Wastewater Reuse: Need for Context-Specific Policies

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have recently notified contextualized policies for the reuse of treated wastewater, highlighting the need for state-specific approaches to water management.

Key Highlights

- Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have adopted policies that move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to treated wastewater reuse.
- The policies consider geographical diversity, community needs and the principle of fit-for-purpose reuse.
- India faces recurring water scarcity due to groundwater extraction and competing agricultural, industrial and urban demands.
- The National Framework on Safe Reuse of Treated Water (SRTW), 2022, treats wastewater reuse as a national priority and calls upon states to develop their own reuse policies.

- The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) has helped expand sewage-treatment infrastructure, but greater emphasis is needed on actual reuse.

Detailed Insights

- State policies incorporate community participation, blended finance, public-private partnership pathways and digital monitoring.
- Treated wastewater can serve as a drought-proof resource for agriculture, industry, urban landscaping and ecological restoration.
- Water security increasingly requires recycling existing water resources rather than depending only on new freshwater sources.
- The National SRTW Framework promotes local solutions within a national vision and encourages states to establish reuse targets and milestones.
- Wastewater reuse can strengthen climate resilience, reduce freshwater dependence and support low-carbon urban development.
- Effective reuse requires coordination among utilities, urban departments, irrigation agencies and industries.
- Existing schemes and funded programmes can be leveraged to create financial momentum for wastewater-reuse targets.
- Public awareness is important because misconceptions regarding the safety of treated water can hinder its acceptance.
- The National SRTW Framework and state policies use the term “Apna Jal” to encourage public acceptance of treated wastewater.
- While some states have developed clear reuse strategies, others continue to lag, creating a need for wider adoption.

National Framework on Safe Reuse of Treated Water (SRTW), 2022

- Provides a national framework for the safe reuse of treated wastewater.
- Emphasizes that water solutions should be locally contextualized despite having a national vision.
- Encourages states to establish their own wastewater-reuse policies, targets and milestones.
- Promotes treated wastewater as a potential resource for multiple sectors.

UPSC Prelims Question

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the National Framework on Safe Reuse of Treated Water (SRTW), 2022:

1. It treats the reuse of treated wastewater as a national priority.
2. It encourages states to develop their own policies for treated-water reuse.
3. It advocates a uniform wastewater-reuse policy irrespective of geographical and community differences.
4. It promotes the use of treated wastewater for purposes such as agriculture, industry and urban landscaping.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 4 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a) 1, 2 and 4 only

UPSC Mains Question

Q. India's water security increasingly depends on the reuse of treated wastewater. Discuss the significance of contextualized state-level policies in promoting safe and sustainable wastewater reuse.
(150 words)

3.OBC CREAMY LAYER AND THE INCOME TEST

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

The Supreme Court will consider the Centre's plea seeking clarification on its March 11 judgment concerning the income test for determining the OBC creamy layer.

Supreme Court Judgment

- In Union of India vs Rohith Nathan, the Supreme Court held that the DoPT had incorrectly applied the income test to certain OBC candidates.
- The Court directed the government to create supernumerary posts for affected OBC candidates who faced "hostile discrimination".
- The Centre has argued that retrospective implementation could have cascading effects on services settled since 2012.

Creamy Layer Concept

- The concept originated from the Supreme Court's 1992 Indra Sawhney judgment.
- It seeks to exclude socially and economically advanced members of OBC communities from reservation benefits.
- The DoPT issued an Office Memorandum in 1993 specifying the criteria for creamy-layer exclusion.

Income Test Issue

- The 1993 DoPT memorandum excluded salary income and agricultural income from the income/wealth test.
- A 2004 DoPT communication appeared to favour including salary income for OBC candidates whose parents worked in PSUs or private employment.
- The Supreme Court held that applying the income test, including salary income, without establishing equivalence with government posts amounted to "hostile discrimination".

Centre's Concerns

- Retrospective implementation may require creation of a large number of supernumerary posts.
- It could create complications regarding seniority and settled appointments.
- The Centre has sought clarity on whether the existing income test should continue for CSE 2025 candidates.
- It has also argued for considering salary income as a separate basis in certain cases.

Significance

- The issue concerns the correct interpretation and uniform application of the OBC creamy-layer criteria.
- It highlights the need to balance reservation benefits for genuinely disadvantaged OBC candidates with administrative certainty and settled service conditions.

4.EARLY WARNING SIGNS BEFORE SOLAR FLARES

Source: Indian Express

Why in News?

A study using Aditya-L1 data has identified small, short-lived brightenings appearing hours

before major solar flares, offering a potential early warning signal for space weather forecasting.

Key Findings

- Small brightenings were observed in the Sun's atmosphere several hours before major solar flares.
- These pre-flare events were found to occur near the region where the major flare later developed.
- The study indicates that repeated small energy releases may progressively destabilise the magnetic field, eventually triggering a major flare.
- The research used simultaneous UV and X-ray observations from three Aditya-L1 payloads: SUIT, SoLEXS and HEL1OS.
- Scientists from Manipal Centre for Natural Sciences, Manipal Academy of Higher Education and ISRO conducted the study.

Aditya-L1 Payloads

- SUIT observes the Sun in near-ultraviolet wavelengths and studies the photosphere and chromosphere.
- SoLEXS measures low-energy X-ray emissions from energetic solar activity.
- HEL1OS detects high-energy X-ray emissions associated with processes in the solar corona.
- Near-ultraviolet observations are important because these wavelengths are largely blocked by Earth's atmosphere.

Significance

- The findings can improve the prediction of solar flares and space weather events.

- Better forecasting can help protect satellites, communication systems and astronauts from harmful space weather.

5.WORRIES BEHIND INDIA'S ROBUST GDP, INFLATION DATA

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

India has maintained GDP growth above 7% and contained inflation despite global disruptions, but concerns remain over the sustainability of this growth.

Key Highlights

- India's GDP growth has remained above 7% over the past three financial years.
- Q1 GDP growth is expected to remain above 7%, with HSBC and SBI Research projecting 7–8% growth.
- Retail inflation has remained close to the RBI's 4% target despite strong demand and supply pressures.
- A 125-basis-point repo rate cut between December 2024 and December 2025 supported economic activity.
- Lower GST rates in 2025 improved purchasing power and boosted consumption.
- Higher exports to the US and front-loaded manufacturing also supported growth.
- The current account deficit has remained low at around 0.3% of GDP, partly due to strong services exports.

Concerns

- Rising food and non-food goods inflation could put upward pressure on headline inflation.
- Credit growth driven by government schemes and gold loans may create financial risks.
- A stronger El Niño could adversely affect agricultural output.

- The sustainability of the low CAD remains uncertain if services export growth weakens.
- Services account for about 55% of GDP, making the economy vulnerable to a slowdown in services exports.
- A rise in services inflation or weakening services exports could force the RBI to raise interest rates, affecting economic growth