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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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Kolkata Topper

VAISHNA BISWAS

AIR - 367 | CSE 2025

TODAY'S DATE

10 OCTOBER 2026

---SATURDAY-----

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★ OUR PROVEN LEGACY ★

OUR UPSC TOPPERS 2023



IPS LAXMAN PRATAP
RANK - 597
FORMER ASST. COMMANDANT IN BSF
CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA

OUR UPSC TOPPERS 2024



IRS SARLA JAKHER
AIR 593
CITY COLLEGE KOLKATA



IRS TANMAY
AIR 346
IIT KHARAGPUR





DAILY CURATED NEWS | EXAM ORIENTED ANALYSIS | SMART NOTES & INFOGRAPHICS | BOOST YOUR PREPARATION

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS-

1. **Why Stubble Fires Keep Coming Back?**
2. **India's WorldSkills Medals Reflect Patient Investment**
3. **Ladakh Governance Model**
4. **Critical Minerals Stockpiling Policy**
5. **Madhya Pradesh HC Strikes Down 27% OBC Reservation**

1.Why Stubble Fires Keep Coming Back

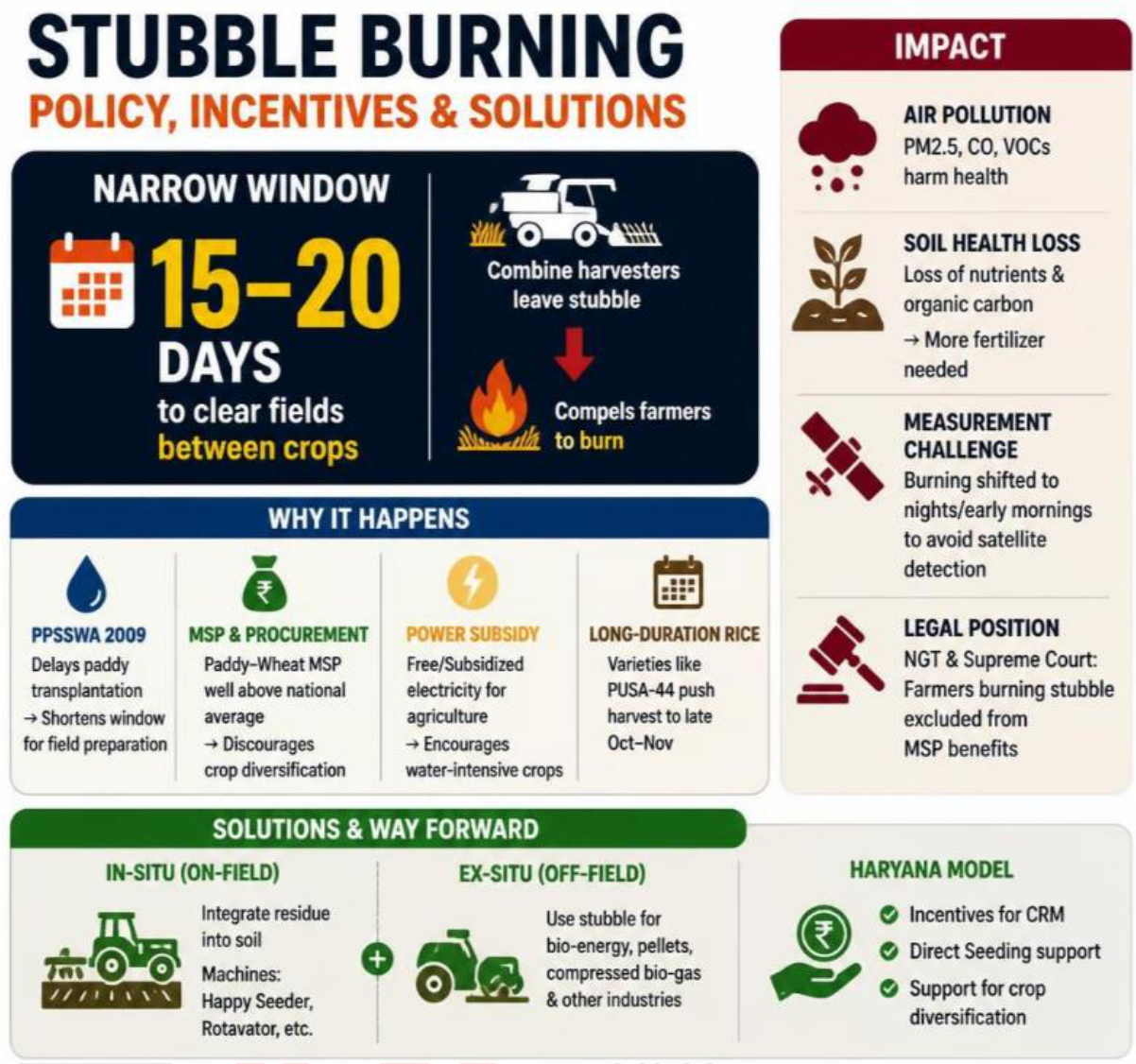
Source: The Hindu, Page 10 Subject: Environment | Agriculture | Air Pollution | Government Policies

Why in News?

Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana continues to contribute significantly to air pollution in North India. Its persistence reflects the interaction of groundwater conservation laws, the paddy–wheat cropping cycle, procurement incentives and barriers to adopting crop residue management technologies.

Causes of Recurring Stubble Burning

- Punjab Preservation of Sub-Soil Water Act, 2009 (PPSSWA): Delayed paddy sowing and transplantation to reduce groundwater depletion. This pushed harvesting towards late October and early November, leaving farmers with limited time to prepare fields for wheat sowing.



- Paddy–wheat cropping cycle: Long-duration varieties such as PUSA-44 further narrow the interval between harvesting paddy and sowing wheat.
- MSP and procurement incentives: Assured procurement of paddy and wheat encourages farmers to continue cultivating these crops rather than diversify towards less water-intensive alternatives.
- Subsidised electricity: Free or subsidised agricultural power encourages continued cultivation of water-intensive paddy.
- Economic and technological barriers: Crop Residue Management (CRM) machinery involves costs and logistical difficulties, while alternative uses of residue may lack adequate collection, transportation and processing infrastructure.

Environmental and Health Impacts

- Air pollution: Stubble burning releases particulate matter, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds, worsening air quality and harming human health.

- Soil degradation: Burning destroys organic matter and depletes essential soil nutrients, potentially increasing dependence on chemical fertilisers.
- Regional pollution: Smoke from agricultural fires contributes to seasonal air pollution across North India, although its contribution varies with weather and other emission sources.

Solutions and Implementation Challenges

- In-situ management: Machines such as the Happy Seeder enable wheat sowing without removing paddy residue, allowing it to be retained or incorporated into the soil.
- Ex-situ management: Crop residue can be collected and used for bioenergy and other productive applications, provided sufficient collection and processing infrastructure exists.
- Financial incentives: Haryana has supported CRM machinery, direct seeding and crop diversification through financial assistance.
- Enforcement: The National Green Tribunal and Supreme Court have upheld the exclusion of stubble-burning farmers from MSP benefits, as reported in the source.
- Measurement gaps: The CREAMS protocol relies on polar-satellite observations. Farmers shifting the timing of fires may make some incidents harder to detect, potentially resulting in undercounting.

Way Forward

- Align groundwater conservation policies with the practical requirements of the paddy–wheat cropping calendar.
- Promote crop diversification through reliable procurement, market access and incentives for alternative crops.
- Improve access to affordable CRM machinery through custom-hiring centres and cooperative arrangements.
- Expand biomass collection, storage, transportation and processing networks to create viable ex-situ uses.
- Combine polar and geostationary satellite data, as recommended by ISRO scientists, to improve the detection and assessment of agricultural fires.
- Move beyond punitive measures towards coordinated action involving farmers, State governments, procurement agencies and technology providers.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Q.With reference to stubble burning in North India, consider the following statements:

1. The Punjab Preservation of Sub-Soil Water Act, 2009, delayed paddy transplantation to conserve groundwater.
2. The Happy Seeder is associated with in-situ crop residue management.
3. Ex-situ crop residue management involves using residue for purposes such as bioenergy.
4. The MSP and procurement system has encouraged crop diversification away from paddy and wheat in Punjab and Haryana.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct. Assured procurement of paddy and wheat tends to discourage diversification, making statement 4 incorrect.

UPSC Mains Practice

Q."Stubble burning is not merely an environmental problem but also a consequence of agricultural policy and economic incentives." Examine its causes and suggest an integrated strategy to address it.

2.India's WorldSkills Medals Reflect Patient Investment

Source: The Hindu, Page 10 Subject: Governance | Skill Development | Human Capital | Employment

Why in News?

India secured 10th position at the 48th WorldSkills Competition, held in Shanghai, China, in September 2026. The Indian contingent won 26 medals, including six silver medals and 20 Medals for Excellence, marking its largest-ever medal haul.

India's Performance at WorldSkills

- WorldSkills is often described as the "Olympics of skills" and provides an international platform to demonstrate vocational and technical competencies.
- The 2026 competition featured over 1,400 young participants from approximately 70 countries across 64 skills.

- India improved from 13th position at WorldSkills Lyon 2024 to 10th position in 2026.
- India's ranking improved from 39th in 2011 to 10th in 2026, reflecting progress in vocational training and skill development.
- The six silver medallists were:
    - Smriti Nambiar – Bakery
    - Mohammed Salam – Dental Prosthetics
    - Kovid Gangrade – Digital Interactive Media Design
    - Parth Vohra – Industrial Design Technology
    - Mehrunissa Begum – Logistics and Freight Forwarding
    - Saniya Joshi – Retail Sales
- The achievements of participants such as Kaif Khan in Car Painting demonstrate the potential for identifying talent beyond conventional educational settings.

India's Skill Development Ecosystem

- The selection and training process follows a multi-stage pathway, beginning with district and state competitions, progressing through regional competitions and culminating in the IndiaSkills national finals.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) support this ecosystem in collaboration with industry experts.



- Industry-linked training helps align vocational education with practical workplace requirements.
- Recognition of medal winners by the Prime Minister also highlights the importance of improving social acceptance of skill-based careers.

PM-SETU and the Skill-Ex Approach

- Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU): A ₹60,000 crore centrally sponsored scheme aimed at upgrading 1,000 government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- The scheme seeks to modernise training infrastructure and make vocational education more industry-aligned through a hub-and-spoke model.
- Skill-Ex: Emphasises investment in human capital alongside capital expenditure (Capex) and operational expenditure (Opex).
- The approach recognises that physical infrastructure alone cannot ensure productivity; skilled workers are necessary to operate equipment, use technology and generate economic value.

The WorldSkills Phenomenon

The WorldSkills Competition is the world's largest and most prestigious vocational skills event. Held every two years, it gathers young professionals (mostly under 22) to compete against global benchmarks in trades ranging from traditional crafts to cutting-edge technologies.

India's Recent Triumph (WorldSkills Shanghai 2026)

India has just concluded its most successful run ever at the **48th WorldSkills Competition** held in **Shanghai, China** (September 22–27, 2026).

- **Rank:** India broke into the **Top 10** for the first time, securing the **10th position** globally.
- **Medal Haul:** A record-breaking **26 medals** in total, including **6 Silver Medals** and **20 Medallions for Excellence**.
- **Breadth of Talent:** The performance spanned diverse sectors—from **Bakery** and **Dental Prosthetics** to **Digital Interactive Media Design** and **Logistics**.
- **Key Fact:** For the first time, India participated in 11 newly introduced skill categories, such as **Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drones)** and **Industry 4.0**, winning medals in three of them.

🛠️ **The Ecosystem in India**

The preparation for this global stage is a massive domestic exercise led by the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.

1. **IndiaSkills:** The national-level competition that serves as the gateway to WorldSkills.
2. **NSDC:** The **National Skill Development Corporation** spearheads the training and selection process.
3. **Industry Linkage:** Private sector giants (like Maruti Suzuki, Toyota, and Mahindra) partner to provide "world-class" training environments for competitors.

Significance and Way Forward

- Employability: Industry-relevant skills can improve access to jobs and reduce skill mismatches.
- Demographic dividend: Investment in skills can convert India's large working-age population into a productive economic asset.
- Way forward: Strengthen apprenticeships, industry partnerships, ITI infrastructure, trainer quality and career counselling while ensuring that training leads to recognised qualifications and sustainable employment.

UPSC Prelims Practice

Q.With reference to India's participation in WorldSkills 2026, consider the following statements:

1. India secured 10th position at the competition held in Shanghai, China.
2. The Indian contingent won six silver medals and 20 Medals for Excellence.
3. PM-SETU aims to upgrade 1,000 government ITIs through an industry-aligned training model.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All three statements are consistent with the supplied source. India ranked 10th at WorldSkills 2026, won 26 medals in the stated categories, and PM-SETU aims to modernise 1,000 government ITIs.

UPSC Mains Practice

Q."Investment in human capital is as important as investment in physical infrastructure for realising India's demographic dividend." Discuss with reference to vocational education and skill development initiatives.

3.Ladakh Governance Model

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is scheduled to hold talks with Ladakh representatives on October 15 to discuss a proposed governance model, the powers of an elected body and constitutional safeguards for the Union Territory.

Key Proposals and Issues

- The proposed model includes an additional constitutional provision, Article 371(R), and a directly elected UT-level body with constitutionally defined powers.
- The MHA has sought details from the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) regarding the body's composition, powers and relationship with the existing Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs).
- The proposed model aims to provide Ladakh with a distinctive governance framework, different from a state or a Union Territory with a legislature.
- The Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance have emphasised the need for a directly elected, constitutionally empowered UT-level legislature.

MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT

- Article 371 authorises the President to give the Governor special responsibility for separate development boards.
- These boards cover Vidarbha, Marathwada, Saurashtra, and Kutch, requiring annual reports to the Assembly.

Separate Development Boards

State	Regions Covered
Maharashtra	Vidarbha, Marathwada, the rest of Maharashtra
Gujarat	Saurashtra, Kutch, and the rest of Gujarat

Four-Point Agenda of Ladakh Representatives

- Statehood: Demand for full statehood for Ladakh.
- Constitutional safeguards: Protection under the Sixth Schedule.
- Job reservation: Safeguards for local employment opportunities.
- Separate parliamentary constituencies: Greater representation in Parliament.

Significance

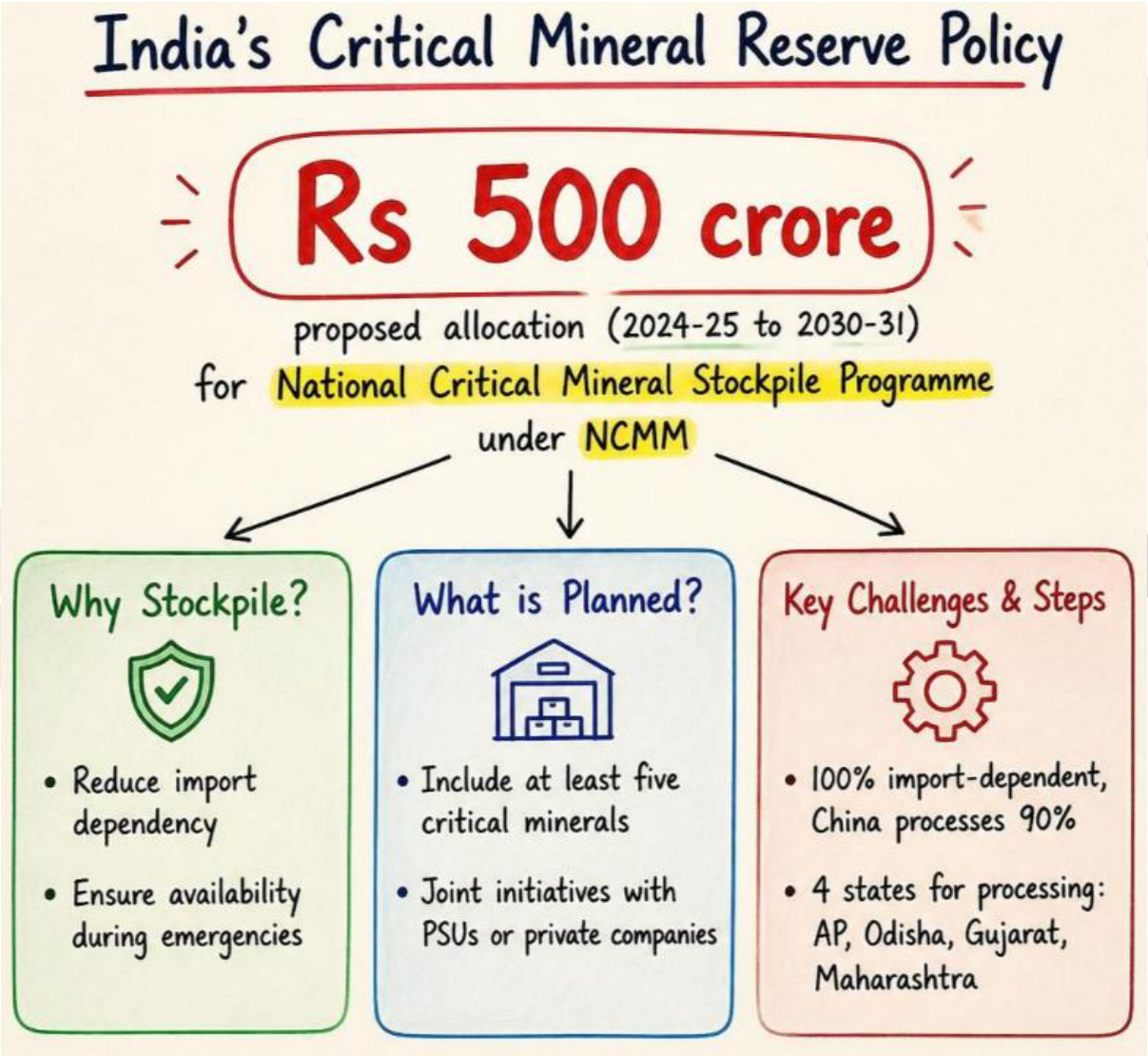
- The demands reflect concerns about democratic representation, protection of local culture and land, employment opportunities and greater control over local governance following Ladakh's reorganisation as a Union Territory in 2019.

4.Critical Minerals Stockpiling Policy

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

- India is expected to introduce a critical minerals stockpiling policy to reduce import dependence, mitigate supply-chain disruptions and ensure the availability of essential minerals during emergencies.
- The proposed policy envisages a National Critical Mineral Stockpile Programme under the National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM), with an allocation of ₹500 crore for 2024–25 to 2030–31.



Key Features

- The National Critical Mineral Stockpile will initially include at least five critical minerals.
- India is highly import-dependent for most critical minerals and has limited domestic processing capacity.
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL), India's overseas mineral acquisition vehicle, has faced challenges in securing mineral assets abroad, including lithium assets in Argentina.
- The government plans to involve Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private companies in implementing the stockpiling programme.
- Four states have been identified for mineral-processing plants: Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh for rare earths, Odisha for nickel, and Maharashtra for lithium.
- The policy also emphasises indigenous processing technologies to strengthen domestic capabilities.

Significance

- Critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth elements are essential for electric vehicles, wind turbines and other clean-energy technologies.
- China accounts for approximately 90% of global critical-mineral processing, creating a strategic supply-chain vulnerability for India.
- Stockpiling and domestic processing can strengthen supply security, reduce import dependence and support India's clean-energy transition.

5.Madhya Pradesh HC Strikes Down 27% OBC Reservation

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

- The Madhya Pradesh High Court struck down the 2019 state law increasing Other Backward Classes (OBC) reservation from 14% to 27% in public employment and higher education.
- The court held that the state had failed to establish exceptional circumstances justifying a breach of the 50% reservation ceiling.

Key Findings

- The judgment relied on the 50% reservation ceiling laid down in Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992) and subsequent Supreme Court precedents, including Jaishri Laxmanrao Patil.

- According to the data cited in the judgment, OBCs accounted for 33.87% of higher education enrolment and 28.16% of government positions in Madhya Pradesh.
- The court noted that the proposed 27% OBC quota, combined with existing reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), would take total reservation beyond 63%.
- Appointments made under the enhanced quota between March 2019 and September 29, 2022, will be protected and adjusted against future recruitment drives.
- For appointments after September 29, 2022, recruitment will proceed on an 87% basis, with the remaining 13% to be filled from the unreserved category, as stated in the source.
- Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stated that the state government would examine the judgment and consider further legal proceedings.

Constitutional Provisions and Significance

- Article 14: Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
- Article 15(4): Enables special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, SCs and STs.
- Article 16(4): Allows reservation in public employment for backward classes that are inadequately represented in state services.
- The ruling highlights the requirement for evidence-based justification when reservation policies exceed the generally applicable 50% ceiling.