

NATIONAL CHINTAN SHIVIR - 2026

KEY FACTS

- **Dates:** April 24 – 26, 2026.
- **Venue:** Chandigarh.
- **Organized by:** Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE).
- **Theme:** "Antyodaya ka Sankalp, Amrit Kaal ka Pratibimb – Viksit Bharat @2047" (A Resolve for Antyodaya, A Reflection of Amrit Kaal – With the Resolution of a Developed India).

MAJOR DIGITAL INITIATIVES

The following portals and applications are critical from an examination perspective:

1. **SAMAVESH Portal:** Launched for the comprehensive monitoring and implementation of social justice schemes.
2. **NMBA 2.0 App:** Designed to strengthen the second phase of the **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan** (Addiction-Free India Campaign).
3. **SETU App:** Acts as a bridge to connect beneficiaries with social security and self-employment schemes.
4. **SMILE App:** Supports the rehabilitation of transgender individuals and persons engaged in begging under the **SMILE** (*Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise*) scheme.

FOCUS AREAS (KEY PILLARS)

The Shivar focuses on five primary sectors for deliberation:

- **Education:** Ensuring seamless scholarship delivery and enhancing educational access.
- **Health & Care:** Setting minimum standards for **Dementia Care Homes** and prioritizing senior citizen welfare.
- **Sanitation:** Upholding the dignity of sanitation workers and achieving '**Mission Zero**' sanitation-related deaths.
- **Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan):** Focusing on 'Early Intervention' for children and simplifying the disability certification process.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Improving access to credit (loans) and fostering socio-economic development for marginalized communities.

EXAM-ORIENTED HIGHLIGHTS

- **Concept of Antyodaya:** Refers to reaching the last person in the queue (**Last-mile delivery** of services).
- **Institutional Framework:** The **National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)** will sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various universities to enhance social research and defense.
- **Policy Guidelines:** Release of **Model Guidelines for Beggar Homes** to standardize the rehabilitation process across India.

Summary: This Chintan Shivir serves as a collaborative platform to enhance Centre-State coordination. It aims to make social justice the foundation for achieving the goal of a '**Viksit Bharat**' (Developed India) by 2047.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE - 2026

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Occasion:** National conference held to commemorate **Earth Day**.
- **Venue:** Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
- **Theme:** "Environmental Sustainability in the 21st Century: Science, Society, and Solutions."
- **Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Jitendra Singh (Union Minister).
- **Core Slogan:** Creating '**Green Jobs**' and '**Green Entrepreneurship**' through a Green Economy.

KEY SCHEMES AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

These missions and funds are frequently asked about in competitive exams:

1. **National Green Hydrogen Mission:**
 - **Outlay:** Over ₹19,000 crore.
 - **Objective:** Decarbonization of heavy industries (especially Steel and Cement) and facilitating the transition to clean energy.
2. **RDI Fund (Research, Development, and Innovation Fund):**
 - **Value:** ₹1 lakh crore.
 - **Purpose:** To support startups and innovators through a collaborative funding model between the government and private stakeholders.
3. **LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment):**
 - A global vision introduced by PM Modi to promote sustainable living and environment-friendly choices.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (GREEN ECONOMY)

According to the Minister, "Green Jobs" will see massive growth in the following sectors:

- **Renewable Energy:** Solar manufacturing and biofuels (e.g., converting used cooking oil into fuel).
- **Electric Mobility:** Battery production and grassroots innovations like converting internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles into electric vehicles.
- **Circular Economy:** Creating wealth from waste.
- **Ocean Energy:** Utilizing India's vast coastline to explore ocean energy as a complement to solar and wind power.

STRATEGIC SECTORS

- **Nuclear Power:** Focused on increasing nuclear energy capacity for long-term energy security.
- **Private Participation:** Enabling private sector investment in strategic domains like **Space** and **Nuclear Energy** to boost innovation.
- **Net Zero Target:** Adopting decarbonization technologies in carbon-intensive sectors like steel and cement.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (KEY TERMS)

- **Green Jobs:** Employment in economic sectors that contribute to preserving or restoring environmental quality.
- **Circular Economy:** An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources (**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**).
- **Decarbonization:** The process of reducing carbon emissions to mitigate global warming and climate change.

Summary: This conference underscored that India, with its 1.4 billion population, is not just a developing nation but a leading global force in climate action and green transition.

11TH INDIA-EGYPT JOINT DEFENCE COMMITTEE (JDC)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Meeting:** 11th India-Egypt Joint Defence Committee (JDC).
- **Dates:** April 20 - 22, 2026.
- **Venue:** Cairo, Egypt.
- **Indian Delegation Led by:** Shri Amitabh Prasad (Joint Secretary, International Cooperation).

BILATERAL DEFENCE COOPERATION PLAN (2026-27)

A forward-looking roadmap for the next two years was agreed upon, focusing on five pillars:

1. **Military Interaction:** Expanding structured military dialogue mechanisms.
2. **Training:** Strengthening joint training exchanges.
3. **Maritime Security:** Enhancing cooperation in maritime safety and security.
4. **Military Exercises:** Increasing the scope and complexity of joint military exercises.
5. **Defence Technology:** Collaborating in defence production and technological exchange.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY & EXPORTS

The meeting showcased the significant growth of the Indian Defence Industry:

- **Production:** India's defence production value has surpassed the **\$20 billion mark**.
- **Exports:** India currently exports defence products worth approximately **\$4 billion** to over 100 countries.
- **Co-Production:** Both nations are exploring opportunities for the **Co-development** and **Co-production** of defence equipment.

SIGNIFICANT SIDELINE EVENTS

- **Navy-to-Navy Staff Talks:** The inaugural staff talks between the two navies were held alongside the JDC meeting.
- **Information Fusion Centre (IFC):** The role of India's **Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** in promoting regional maritime security was highlighted.

- **Heliopolis War Memorial:** The Indian delegation paid homage to Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during World War I and II.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (BACKGROUND & MILESTONES)

- **MoU:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation was signed in September 2022 during the Indian Defence Minister's visit to Egypt.
- **Strategic Partnership:** Bilateral ties were elevated to the level of a "**Strategic Partnership**" in 2023.
- **Strategic Importance:** Egypt is a vital partner for India in West Asia and Africa. Cooperation is essential for security in the **Suez Canal** and **Red Sea** regions.

Summary: This meeting not only reinforces the bilateral defence bond but also signals India's commitment to maintaining regional security and stability in the Afro-Asian region.

VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY (VPA) AND NORWAY

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Visit:** A high-level delegation led by the Norwegian Ambassador to India, **Ms. May-Elin**, visited the Visakhapatnam Port.
- **Reception:** The delegation was received by **Roshni Aparanji Korati**, Deputy Chairperson of VPA.
- **Primary Focus:** Port Modernization, Sustainability, and Advanced Maritime Technologies.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

1. **Green Port Initiatives:**
 - Transforming VPA into an environmentally conscious gateway.
 - Showcasing extensive solar power projects implemented to reduce the port's carbon footprint.
2. **Mechanization:**
 - Enhancing operational efficiency through complete mechanization of port activities and improving its strategic importance in international trade.
3. **Blue Economy:**
 - Promoting sustainable use of ocean resources and exploring investments/technical cooperation from countries like Norway in maritime infrastructure.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **India-Norway Maritime Ties:** Both nations share strong maritime relations. Norway's expertise is particularly vital for India's "**Green Shipping**" initiatives.
- **Visakhapatnam Port (VPA):** One of India's major ports. It is a deep-water, natural harbor located on the East Coast.
- **Maritime India Vision 2030:** The Government of India aims to modernize ports and transform them into "Green Ports." This visit aligns perfectly with that vision.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** By utilizing renewable energy (Solar Power) in ports, India is working towards achieving **SDG 7** (Affordable and Clean Energy) and **SDG 13** (Climate Action).

Conclusion: This visit reflects the growing international interest in India's maritime infrastructure. Through technical collaboration with Norway, the Visakhapatnam Port is set to become a more modern and eco-friendly maritime hub.

NADENDLA BHASKARA RAO (1935 - 2026): AN ANALYSIS

1. POLITICAL CAREER

- **Beginning:** He entered active politics in the 1970s.
- **Key Role:** He was one of the founding members of the **Telugu Desam Party (TDP)**. He played a pivotal role when the TDP first came to power in 1983 under the leadership of **N.T. Rama Rao (NTR)**.
- **Positions Held:** He served as the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), and a Member of Parliament (MP) in the Lok Sabha.

2. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This section is particularly important for exams covering the "**Political History of Andhra Pradesh**" and the "**Role of the Governor**":

- **Shortest Tenure as CM:** He holds the record for the shortest tenure as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, serving for only **31 days**.
- **1984 Political Crisis:** In August 1984, while N.T. Rama Rao was in the United States for medical treatment, Nadendla Bhaskara Rao was sworn in as Chief Minister with the support of the then Governor. This event is considered a major turning point in AP politics.
- **Restoration of Democracy:** Following a massive 'Save Democracy' (Prajawamyapunaruddharana) movement, NTR was eventually reinstated as the Chief Minister.

3. CURRENT CONTEXT

- **Family Background:** His son, **Nadendla Manohar**, is a prominent leader and currently serves as the **Minister for Civil Supplies** in the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

EXAM-ORIENTED INSIGHTS

- **Constitutional Significance:** This historical event is often cited when discussing **Articles 163 and 164** of the Indian Constitution, which deal with the discretionary powers of the Governor regarding the appointment and dismissal of a Chief Minister.
- **Regional Politics:** It serves as a case study for the evolution of regional parties in India and the dynamics of State-Centre relations during the 1980s.

INDIA-SRI LANKA DIVING EXERCISE (DIVEX 2026)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Exercise Name:** DIVEX 2026 (India-Sri Lanka Diving Exercise).
- **Edition:** 4th Edition.

- **Date:** Commencing April 21, 2026, for a duration of one week.
- **Venue:** Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- **Indian Vessel:** INS Nireekshak.

ABOUT INS NIREEKSHAK

In competitive exams, questions regarding the specific classification and capabilities of naval vessels are common:

- **Type:** It is a **Diving Support and Submarine Rescue Vessel** of the Indian Navy.
- **Functions:** Its primary responsibilities include supporting deep-sea diving operations and rescuing personnel from distressed or sunken submarines.
- **Key Features:** The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art '**Diving Bells**' and '**Recompression Chambers**' to manage underwater pressure changes for divers.

OBJECTIVES OF DIVEX 2026

1. **Interoperability:** To improve coordination and joint operational capabilities between the two navies.
2. **Underwater Operations:** To share expertise in conducting specialized underwater missions.
3. **Best Practices:** To exchange advanced methods and protocols in maritime defense and rescue operations.
4. **Operational Cohesion:** To strengthen bilateral relations for ensuring security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **Bilateral Relations:** Defense cooperation between India and Sri Lanka is a vital component of the **SAGAR** (*Security and Growth for All in the Region*) vision.
- **Other Key Exercises:** Notable bilateral and multilateral exercises between the two nations include:
 - **SLINEX:** Naval Exercise.
 - **Mitra Shakti:** Army Exercise.
 - **Dosti:** Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise involving India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.
- **Strategic Location:** The Port of Colombo is a critical hub in Indian Ocean trade routes. India's presence here is strategically significant for regional security.

Conclusion: This exercise reflects India's "**Neighborhood First**" policy, emphasizing the maintenance of robust defense ties with neighboring countries.

THAILAND AND CAMBODIA: TA KWAI TEMPLE DISPUTE

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Recent Event:** The Thai government organized a Buddhist religious ceremony at the ruins of the **Ta Kwai Temple**.
- **Context:** Commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the deadly 2011 border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia.

- **The Conflict:** Cambodia strongly opposed this ceremony, declaring the "presence of Thai authorities" in the area to be "unlawful."

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- **Location:** The temple is situated on the border between Thailand's **Surin** province and Cambodia's **Oddar Meanchey** province.
- **Temple Significance:** It is an ancient **Khmer** Empire-era Hindu/Buddhist temple dating back to the 11th-12th centuries.
- **Root of the Dispute:** Both nations claim sovereignty over this region due to mapping discrepancies originating from a 1904 treaty between French colonial authorities and Thailand (then known as Siam).

THE 2011 CLASHES AND SIGNIFICANCE

- **The Conflict:** In April-May 2011, heavy exchange of fire occurred between the militaries of both countries near the **Ta Kwai** and **Ta Moan** temple complexes, resulting in casualties on both sides.
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ) Intervention:** Following the clashes, the ICJ intervened, ordering both nations to withdraw their military forces from the disputed areas and establish a **Provisional Demilitarized Zone**.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **International Relations:** Despite both nations being members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), these bilateral border disputes continue to affect regional stability and integration.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The **Preah Vihear Temple**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is also located along this border and remains a primary flashpoint for conflict between the two nations.
- **Geopolitics:** This dispute reflects broader global issues regarding the determination of international borders and the lingering complexities of colonial-era mapping.

Conclusion: The persistence of tensions in this region even 15 years later highlights the ongoing challenges in resolving territorial and border disputes within Southeast Asia.

UKRAINE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Financial Aid:** The EU has given the green light to unblock a **90-billion-euro** (\$106 billion) loan for Ukraine.
- **The Conflict:** The funds were previously stalled due to a months-long dispute between Ukraine and Hungary over repairs to the '**Druzhba**' oil pipeline.
- **Resolution:** Following the completion of pipeline repairs, Russian oil supply to Hungary and Slovakia has resumed. Consequently, Hungary has withdrawn its **Veto**.

GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. **Druzhba Pipeline:**
 - It is one of the world's longest oil pipeline networks.

- It supplies crude oil from Russia to Eastern European nations, including Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.
 - **Exam Perspective:** This pipeline plays a critical role in the energy security of Central and Eastern Europe.
2. **Political Shifts:**
- **Viktor Orban**, the long-serving pro-Russian Prime Minister of Hungary, suffered a significant election defeat. He is set to be succeeded by **Peter Magyar**.
 - Orban's administration frequently blocked EU's pro-Ukraine decisions due to his sympathetic stance toward the Kremlin.
3. **20th Round of Sanctions:**
- With the resolution of the pipeline feud, EU member states have reached a preliminary agreement to impose the **20th round of sanctions** against Russia.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **Financial Crisis in Ukraine:** As the Russian invasion enters its fourth year, this 90-billion-euro loan is vital for Ukraine to plug its massive budget deficit and sustain its economy.
- **EU Decision-Making (Veto Power):** Major decisions within the European Union require consensus. This event highlights how a single member state (like Hungary) can leverage its **Veto Power** to stall collective regional initiatives.
- **Energy as a Weapon:** This incident serves as a prime example of how countries utilize energy supplies (Oil/Gas) as a **diplomatic weapon** or leverage during wartime.
- **US Role and Global Context:** At a time when US aid has faced domestic hurdles and global oil markets are volatile due to the conflict in Iran, this EU support package serves as a critical lifeline for Kyiv.

Conclusion: The unblocking of these funds not only provides economic stability to Ukraine but also signals a renewed sense of unity within the European Union in its stance against the ongoing invasion.

CHINA AND TAIWAN: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ANALYSIS

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Incident:** Taiwan's President **Lai Ching-te** was forced to cancel his official trip to the African nation of **Eswatini**.
- **The Cause:** **Seychelles, Mauritius, and Madagascar** denied airspace access to the Taiwanese President's aircraft, preventing the flight from crossing their territories.
- **China's Response:** Beijing lauded the three African nations for their decision, viewing the cancellation of the trip as a significant victory for China's diplomatic strategy.

CORE CONCEPTS & STRATEGIES

1. **One-China Principle:**
 - China maintains that there is only one sovereign state called China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of it.
 - Currently, only **12 countries** worldwide maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan (Eswatini being one of them).
2. **Airspace Diplomacy:**

- This marks the first instance where a President's foreign visit was cancelled entirely due to the denial of airspace access.
 - This represents a **new tactical evolution** in China's strategy to diplomatically isolate Taiwan on the global stage.
3. **Economic Coercion:**
- Taiwan alleges that China is using its vast economic influence and "checkbook diplomacy" in Africa to pressure nations into non-cooperation with Taipei.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **Eswatini:** A small landlocked country in Southern Africa (formerly known as Swaziland). It remains one of the few remaining diplomatic allies of Taiwan.
- **Republic of China (ROC) vs. People's Republic of China (PRC):**
 - **ROC:** The official name of the government in Taiwan.
 - **PRC:** The official name of the government in mainland China.
- **Diplomatic Recognition:** Under international law, formal recognition by other states is a key indicator of sovereignty. By enforcing the "One-China" policy, Beijing effectively strips Taiwan of this legal standing in international forums.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **Diplomatic Ties:** Formal administrative and political relations between two nations.
- **Airspace Access:** The right granted by a country to allow foreign aircraft to fly over its sovereign territory.
- **Coercion:** The practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats (often economic in this context).
- **Sovereignty:** The supreme power or authority of a state to govern itself.

Conclusion: This development highlights China's growing influence in Africa and its intensified efforts to restrict Taiwan's international space. For students of International Relations, this is a clear case study of how geography (airspace) and economics are used as tools of geopolitical leverage.

THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Date:** April 26, 1986 (at 1:23 AM).
- **Location:** Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, near the city of **Prypiat**, Ukraine (then part of the Soviet Union).
- **Incident:** During a flawed safety test, a sudden power surge led to the explosion of the nuclear reactor core, releasing massive amounts of radioactive contamination into the atmosphere.

WHY IS CHERNOBYL UNIQUE? (ANALYSIS)

Why has this disaster endured so strongly in popular imagination compared to the Bhopal Gas Tragedy or the nuclear tests at Semipalatinsk?

1. **Atomic Prestige:** The Soviet Union utilized nuclear energy as a symbol of its scientific and technological superiority. This disaster proved that this "prestige" was largely an illusion built on systemic flaws.
2. **The Invisible Enemy:** The enemy here was **Radiation**. It is invisible to the eye but destroys the body's organs from within.
3. **Political Failure:** The Soviet government remained silent for two days after the accident. The world only learned of the disaster after radiation alarms were triggered at a nuclear plant in **Sweden**.

RECOMMENDED READINGS (SOURCES)

These sources are excellent for gaining deep insights into the disaster for competitive exams:

- **Midnight in Chernobyl (Adam Higginbotham):** A comprehensive account of the technical failures and human errors involved.
- **Chernobyl: History of a Tragedy (Serhii Plokyh):** Explains how the Soviet bureaucracy and political culture rendered the disaster inevitable.
- **Voices from Chernobyl (Svetlana Alexievich):** A haunting collection of personal testimonies highlighting the human suffering and psychological trauma.

EXAMINATION PERSPECTIVE (EXAM POINTS)

- **Science & Technology:** Understanding nuclear reactor construction, the process of a **Nuclear Meltdown**, and the environmental hazards associated with nuclear power.
- **International Relations:** Analysts argue that the Chernobyl disaster was a contributing factor to the **dissolution of the Soviet Union** (as the *Glasnost* policy led to a loss of public trust in the state).
- **Disaster Management:** Following this incident, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) significantly tightened global safety norms and protocols.
- **Environment:** The **Zone of Exclusion** (a 30 km radius) has become a unique site for studying how nature thrives and evolves in the absence of human intervention.

CONCLUSION

While the Bhopal Tragedy was largely a case of human error, Chernobyl was a **Systemic Failure**. Consequently, it remains more than just an accident; it is a permanent scar on human history and a critical lesson that must never be repeated.