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Current Affairs Today – February 5, 2026

5 February 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

February 5, 2026 brought a landmark DRDO SFDR missile technology demonstration, NITI Aayog's circular economy reports, and key judicial, social welfare, and international cooperation developments.

DRDO DEMONSTRATES SOLID FUEL DUCTED RAMJET (SFDR) TECHNOLOGY

DRDO successfully demonstrated **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** propulsion technology at the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha** — the backbone propulsion for the upcoming **Astra Mk-3 Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)**. SFDR is an air-breathing engine using boron-based solid fuel and atmospheric oxygen, sustaining speeds of **Mach 2 to 3.8** at altitudes from sea level to 20 km. Range: **50–340 km**; nozzle-less booster achieves supersonic speed in **3 seconds**. India joins an elite group alongside the European Meteor missile and China's PL-15 in possessing SFDR capability. Hot gas valves use carbon-carbon composites and tungsten-copper alloys.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Defence indigenisation, air-breathing propulsion, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence.

YANTRA INDIA LIMITED GRANTED MINIRATNA CATEGORY-I STATUS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh granted **Miniratna Category-I status** to **Yantra India Limited** — one of the seven DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Undertakings) created after the corporatisation of the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) on October 1, 2021**. Yantra achieved this within 4 years of corporatisation.

Miniratna Category-I status empowers the board to approve capital expenditure up to **Rs 500 crore** without prior government approval, enabling autonomous decisions on new projects, modernisation, and equipment purchases. Products include carbon fibre composites, ammunition, armoured vehicles, artillery, and main battle tanks.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Defence production, OFB corporatisation, DPSU reforms, Miniratna/Navratna classification.

NDMA RELEASES FIRST-EVER DISASTER VICTIM IDENTIFICATION (DVI) GUIDELINES

The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** released India's inaugural "**National Guidelines on Comprehensive Disaster Victim Identification and Management**" — released on the 25th anniversary of the **2001 Gujarat earthquake**. The four-stage DVI process: (i) systematic recovery of remains, (ii) post-mortem data collection (fingerprints, DNA, dental records), (iii) ante-mortem data collection, (iv) scientific reconciliation. Key provisions: creation of a **National Dental Data Registry**, prohibition of mass autopsies, cultural sensitivity protocols. Innovations: integration with **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)**, portable Rapid DNA machines (90-minute profiles), blockchain-based chain-of-custody.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Disaster management, NDMA mandate, forensic governance, Disaster Management Act 2005.

SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM APPROVES AD HOC JUDGES UNDER ARTICLE 224A

The **Supreme Court Collegium** approved appointment of five retired judges as **ad hoc judges** in the Allahabad High Court under **Article 224A** to address judicial pendency. Article 224A allows retired HC judges to be temporarily reappointed with the President's prior consent and the judge's voluntary consent. Related provisions: Article 127 (CJI can request HC judge as ad hoc SC judge if quorum unavailable); Article 128 (CJI can request retired SC/HC judges to sit as SC judges). Despite over 6 crore cases pending in Indian courts, Article 224A was rarely invoked until the Supreme Court issued guidelines in 2021 encouraging its use.

UPSC Angle (GS2): Judicial reforms, judicial pendency, constitutional provisions for ad hoc judges.

NITI AAYOG: THREE REPORTS ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN MOBILITY

NITI Aayog released three reports on **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs)**, **Waste Tyres**, and **E-waste/Lithium-ion Batteries** at the International Material Recycling Conference (IMRC), Jaipur. Key projections: ELVs will grow from **23 million (2025)** to **50 million (2030)**; e-waste from **6.19 MMT (2024)** to **14 MMT (2030)**; Li-ion battery demand from **29 GWh (2025)** to **248 GWh (2035)**. India generates ~1.68 lakh tonnes of municipal solid waste daily, only 55–60% processed. The 6Rs of Circular Economy: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbishment, Recover, Repair**. Related: E-Waste Management Rules 2022, EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility), GACERE (Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency).

UPSC Angle (GS3): Circular economy, waste management, EPR, sustainable development.

EXERCISE KHANJAR XIII — INDIA-KYRGYZSTAN SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISE

The **13th edition of Exercise KHANJAR** commenced at **Missamari, Assam**, between India's **Parachute Regiment (Special Forces)** and Kyrgyzstan's **ILBRIS Special Forces Brigade**. Initiated in **2011**, this annual exercise focuses on counter-terrorism, urban warfare, mountainous terrain operations, sniping, building intervention, and high-altitude warfare. Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked Central Asian nation bordering Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; capital: Bishkek. The Fergana Valley (shared with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) is hydrocarbon-rich and strategically significant.

UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3): India-Central Asia relations, defence diplomacy, SCO context.

SAMPOORNATA ABHIYAN 2.0 — NITI AAYOG

NITI Aayog launched **Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0** (January 28 – April 14, 2026) to fast-track saturation of key development indicators across **112 Aspirational Districts (5 KPIs)** and **513 Aspirational Blocks (6 KPIs)**. Focus areas: child nutrition, Anganwadi amenities, girls' sanitation in schools, bovine vaccination (FMD), TB case notification, and Village Health Sanitation & Nutrition Days (VHSNDs). The **Aspirational Districts Programme** was launched in January 2018; **Aspirational Blocks Programme** in January 2023. Together they cover the most development-deprived geographies.

UPSC Angle (GS2): Rural development, NITI Aayog schemes, inclusive governance, SDGs.

NBDSA: 60% OF ORDERS CITE COMMUNAL HARMONY VIOLATIONS

Data from the **News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA)** — the self-regulatory body of private TV and digital news — showed nearly **60% of its orders over three years** cited **communal harmony code violations**. NBDSA operates under News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Regulations, 2008. Powers: adjudicates complaints, acts suo motu, issues warnings/censures, imposes penalties. It is a self-regulatory organisation (SRO), not a government body. Two-tier redressal: first to broadcaster, then to NBDSA.

UPSC Angle (GS2): Media regulation, Article 19 (freedom of speech), SRO vs statutory regulation.

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$830 MILLION FOR ITI MODERNISATION

The **World Bank** approved an **\$830 million loan** to modernise India's **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** and align vocational training with labour market needs. Loan terms: 19.5-year repayment period with 4-year grace period. The loan supports the Viksit Bharat vision and aims to upgrade ITI infrastructure, curricula, and teaching quality.

UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3): Skill development, vocational education, World Bank lending to India.

INDIA-BHUTAN POWER SECTOR COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP

India and Bhutan signed/renewed a **Power Sector Cooperation Partnership** for expanded hydropower development and cross-border electricity trade. Bhutan's hydropower potential is substantial; India finances and purchases power under a buy-back arrangement. This partnership reflects India's **Neighbourhood First** policy and energy diplomacy priorities.

UPSC Angle (GS2): India-Bhutan relations, hydropower diplomacy, neighbourhood policy.

INDIA JOINS BRICS CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COMPETENCIES (BCIC)

India formally joined the **BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies (BCIC)** with the **National Productivity Council (NPC)** designated as India's nodal body. Focus: Industry 4.0 adoption, productivity enhancement, MSME support. NPC is under the Ministry of Labour & Employment; BCIC is a BRICS-UNIDO joint initiative.

UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3): BRICS, UNIDO, industrial policy, NPC mandate.

INDIA-TANZANIA 4TH JDCC MEETING

The **4th Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC)** meeting between India and Tanzania was held in **Zanzibar**. Topics: military training exchanges, maritime security, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, and cyber security. Tanzania is strategically important for India's Indian Ocean security vision (SAGAR).

UPSC Angle (GS2): India-Africa relations, defence diplomacy, SAGAR doctrine.

FIRST RRB CO-BRANDED RUPAY CREDIT CARD — PNB × TRIPURA GRAMIN BANK

Punjab National Bank (PNB) partnered with **Tripura Gramin Bank (TGB)** to launch India's **first Regional Rural Bank (RRB) co-branded RuPay Credit Card** during TGB's Golden Jubilee celebrations. **RuPay** is NPCI's (National Payments Corporation of India) domestic card payment network, enabling digital financial inclusion in rural areas.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Financial inclusion, digital payments, rural banking, RRB structure.

AIM SUMVAAD — INCUBATOR CONCLAVE

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog organised **SUMVAAD**, bringing together 100+ Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) and Community Innovation Centres (CICs). Launched the **National Innovation Challenge 2026** and **National Incubation Awards**; introduced the **National Incubator Assessment Framework**. AIM is the government's flagship programme to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in India.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Innovation ecosystem, startup India, NITI Aayog, incubation policy.

BIOMATERIALS — INDIA'S EMERGING CIRCULAR ECONOMY SECTOR

India's policy focus on **biomaterials** (materials derived from biological sources as substitutes for fossil-based products) is growing. India's bioplastics market: ~USD 500 million (2024). Key segments: Bio-PET (drop-in), PLA/Polylactic Acid (drop-out), and novel biomaterials (self-healing, bio-active implants). Notable players: Balrampur Chini Mills (PLA plant, UP), Phool.co, Praj Industries. Policy: Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), e-Waste Management Rules 2022, Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules 2022.

UPSC Angle (GS3): Biotechnology, green manufacturing, circular economy, EPR.

UPSC RELEVANCE

SFDR (Mach 2–3.8, 50–340 km, Astra Mk-3); OFB corporatisation (October 1, 2021; 7 DPSUs); Yantra India (Miniratna-I, Rs 500 crore capex limit); Article 224A (ad hoc HC judges, President's consent); NDMA DVI Guidelines (4 stages, National Dental Data Registry, ABHA); Circular Economy 6Rs; ELVs (23M→50M by 2030); e-waste (6.19→14 MMT by 2030); Exercise KHANJAR (13th edition, Missamari, Assam, since 2011); Sampoonnata Abhiyan 2.0 (112 districts, 513 blocks); NBDSA (SRO, 2008 regulations); World Bank ITI loan (\$830M, 19.5-year); NPC (BCIC India nodal; under Labour Ministry); RuPay-RRB first card (PNB+TGB).

*Article 224A and judicial pendency; NBDSA and media self-regulation; India-Bhutan energy diplomacy; India-Tanzania JDCC; Aspirational Districts vs Aspirational Blocks. **GS-3:** SFDR and defence indigenisation; NITI Aayog circular economy reports; EPR framework; biomaterials policy; ITI modernisation.*

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DRDO SFDR:

Technology: Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet — air-breathing engine using atmospheric oxygen

Fuel: Boron-based solid fuel

Speed: **Mach 2 to 3.8** (sustained supersonic)

Range: **50–340 km**; duration: 50–200 seconds

Altitude: Sea level to **20 km**

Booster: Nozzle-less; achieves supersonic in **3 seconds**

Application: **Astra Mk-3 BVRAAM** (Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile)

Comparable systems: European **Meteor** missile; Chinese **PL-15**

Test site: ITR, **Chandipur, Odisha**

OFB CORPORATISATION:

Date: **October 1, 2021**

No. of DPSUs created: **7** (from Ordnance Factory Board)

Yantra India Limited: Products include ammunition, composites, armoured vehicles, MBTs

Miniratna Category-I capex autonomy: **Rs 500 crore**

NDMA DVI GUIDELINES:

Occasion: 25th anniversary of **2001 Gujarat earthquake** (January 26, 2001)

Process: 4 stages (systematic recovery → post-mortem → ante-mortem → reconciliation)

Innovations: National Dental Data Registry, portable Rapid DNA (90 min), blockchain chain-of-custody, ABHA integration

CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLES — JUDGES:

Article 224A: Ad hoc retired HC judge; President's + judge's consent required

Article 127: Ad hoc SC judge (CJI requests HC judge if SC quorum unavailable)

Article 128: Retired SC/HC judge can sit as SC judge (CJI's request)

CIRCULAR ECONOMY — NITI AAYOG 2026:

ELVs (End-of-Life Vehicles): **23 million (2025) → 50 million (2030)**

E-waste: **6.19 MMT (2024) → 14 MMT (2030)**

Li-ion battery demand: **29 GWh (2025) → 248 GWh (2035)**

6Rs: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbishment, Recover, Repair**

Daily MSW India: **~1.68 lakh tonnes** (55–60% processed)

EXERCISE KHANJAR:

Participants: India (Para SF) + Kyrgyzstan (ILBRIS Brigade)

Started: **2011**; 13th edition: **February 2026**

Venue: **Missamari, Assam**

Focus: Counter-terrorism, urban warfare, mountainous terrain

ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS & BLOCKS:

Aspirational Districts Programme: Launched **January 2018**; **112 districts**; 49 KPIs

Aspirational Blocks Programme: Launched **January 2023**; **513 blocks** in 329 districts; 40 KPIs

Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0: January 28 – April 14, 2026; KPIs per district: 5; per block: 6

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

NBDSA: News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority; SRO under NBDA; operates under 2008 Regulations; 60% of orders = communal harmony violations

World Bank ITI Loan: **\$830 million**; repayment: **19.5 years** + 4-year grace; aligned with Viksit Bharat

NPC (National Productivity Council): Under **Ministry of Labour & Employment**; India's nodal body for BCIC

GACERE: Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (India is member)

EPR: Extended Producer Responsibility — producers liable for end-of-life management of their products

Sources: Drishti IAS, IndiaBix

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